

A SERMON OR ADDRESS

...ON THE...

Elder Moderator and the Ruling Elder.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
PRESBYTERY OF WESTCHESTER, SYNOD OF NEW  
YORK, AT STAMFORD, CONN.,  
OCTOBER 1, 1894,

...BY...

RALPH E. PRIME,

A RULING ELDER OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
OF YONKERS, N. Y.

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIRING FROM THE MODERATOR'S CHAIR  
OF THAT PRESBYTERY.

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*"I magnify mine office."*

ROM. xi. 13.

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## MEN, BRETHREN AND FATHERS :

On the 17th of April last, at its spring stated meeting, in the church at White Plains, I was chosen Moderator of the Presbytery of Westchester. It is an unusual thing in any judicatory of our Church, and an unheard-of thing in the old conservative Presbytery of Westchester, for never before in its history, nor in the history of any of its ecclesiastical predecessors, has a layman, a ruling elder, been chosen as its Moderator. This honor has, in the general practice of the Church, been reserved for those of our brethren, the elders called to exercise the ministry or function of preaching. I do not understand that this preference given to our ministerial brethren was, because of any actual superior fitness of those brethren as a class, above the fitness of their brethren who were ruling elders, but on account of some fancied grace belonging to them, not individually but as a class, and not possessed by the other elders, and which grace came in some mysterious way. Then, besides, it has been supposed that the *function of preaching a sermon* was, in some way, monopolized by the preaching elder, and that the possession of that function in some way was requisite to the person, who in an orderly way could come to this chair. When my name was mentioned for Moderator, a minister, a co-presbyter of yours and mine, old, reverend and honored, and who sat with me in the same pew, in the church in which we were assembled, turned quickly and said to me: "What about the sermon?" I did not reply instantly, and before the question could be put to the Presbytery, he again asked: "Will you preach the sermon?" I was not able to answer at once, and as no

other name than mine was nominated, I was in the usual course of things chosen, and chosen without that question of my friend having been first answered. At the close of the first session of Presbytery at which I presided, a large body of co-presbyters, both teaching and ruling elders, came to me, and with great kindness expressed their gratification and satisfaction, in the departure which had been made, and in the recognition of the rights and the parity of the elders of every name, in my election as Moderator, but many of whom were puzzled about the matter of the sermon, and failed not to inquire if I would preach it. I have listened since that day to the expressed desire of many, that I should not shrink from the task, and I am persuaded that desire was not out of craving to see something new, or novel in that line; nor was it the intimation of an impossibility, nor was it to embarrass me with the suggestion that there was yet to come, a duty belonging to the place, which I would find it difficult to meet or unseemly or out of order to perform. I am convinced, many if not all of them, were thus minded from a desire that there should not be any new departure from the precedent of the past, when a ruling elder is chosen Moderator, and that when a ruling elder is elected Moderator, he should do as Moderators do, and are required by our book to do. There are two places in the Form of Government of our Church where I find this sermon mentioned. In the chapter entitled "Of Moderators," being chapter xix, paragraph or section iii, it is provided, "The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be chosen from year to year, or at every meeting of the Presbytery, as the Presbytery may think best." The Moderator of the Synod and of the General Assembly shall be chosen at each annual meeting of those Judicatories, and the Moderator, or in case of his absence another member appointed for the purpose, shall open the next meeting with a sermon and hold the chair till a new Moderator is chosen; and in the chapter entitled "Of the Presbytery," which is chapter x of the Form of Gov-

ernment, at paragraph or section xi, I read: "At every meeting of Presbytery a sermon shall be delivered if convenient." Of course the last provision may be claimed to refer to some other sermon than the Moderator's opening sermon, but giving it application to that sermon also, and reading as lawyers do, the several parts of a statute, or several statutes, relating to the same subject matter, together as one statute or provision, these two provisions read together would seem to make the preaching of a sermon, a required exercise in the case of the Moderator of the General Assembly or of the Synod, but an optional one, when it comes to the Moderator of Presbytery. So that construing the law of the Church after the rule I have stated, it has become to me a question of convenience, if I should serve you in that regard. The Presbytery recently, at its fall stated meeting at Mt. Kisco in 1893, after an unusually long discussion, by a very decided vote, refused to change the practice of the past, so as to relieve the then chosen Moderator and others to follow him, from the duty of opening the succeeding stated meeting with a sermon. So that very recently and in the case of my immediate predecessor this Presbytery has said that it will not dispense with this exercise. I was one of those who spoke in favor of and voted for the continuance of this practice. Believing as I do, in the one office of the elder, the preacher and the ruler, each assigned to the performance of a different function belonging to the one office; believing as I do in the equal official fitness of the ruling elder with the preaching elder, to be the Moderator of any Presbyterian judicatory; having spoken and voted so recently as I did, against the doing away with the practice, how could I now, with any consistency, rest the matter upon convenience, as that word is used in the book, and refuse to speak to you at this time, claiming that it was not convenient to do so. Since you choose me to the post of Moderator, you have called upon me by your appointment to perform the duty of presiding

and taking part in the solemn exercise of the ordination of a brother to the gospel ministry, and his installation as pastor, and on another occasion to preside at the installation of another brother as pastor of another of our churches. In each of these cases, I found trouble in some of the words of our book, carelessly chosen, but the Word of God and your command was my sufficient warrant. You could have appointed, according to the book, another member to preach the sermon to-day. You choose not to do so. I find myself confronted with the situation.

The choice of a ruling elder for Moderator of a Presbyterian Judicatory, although an unusual event, is not altogether without precedent. It has happened in all the courts of this Church, from the very highest to the lowest, and not only in these last days, but from the very Reformation period. When the Scotch Reformers were fresh from Geneva, and their study of the Presbyterian system, and its foundation in the Holy Scripture and its appointment of God, they, in 1567, chose George Buchannan to be Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Scotch Church of the Reformation was then but seven years old, or more accurately it was but seven years since the first Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had been elected. George Buchannan was born in Scotland near the town of Sterling, in 1506. His parents were poor. At the expense of an uncle, favored with wealth, he was sent to the University of Paris for education. The death of his wealthy relative within two years compelled him to abandon his studies at Paris, and he returned home to Scotland. He next served as a soldier in the wars with England. Later he entered the University of St. Andrew's. Still later, in France, he was chosen a professor in a continental college, but having adopted the Protestant faith he again returned to Scotland. At this time he published a satire against the Franciscan monks, and that precipitated a persecution, which landed him in

prison. It was about 1537. He was yet not thirty-one years of age. He escaped to England and thence to France in 1540, and there remained seven years, during which time he occupied himself with teaching, and supplied his purse with its rewards. With a powerful and influential friend, he went to Portugal, but his friend soon died and he was seized as a heretic and cast into the prison of the Inquisition. He had regained his liberty and was back in France in 1553, and back in his native land in 1560. Prior to this he may have tried the difficult rôle of concealing his religious opinions, but now he openly professed his faith and espoused the Protestant cause, notwithstanding which, his high scholarship introduced him to the court of the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots, and he became classical tutor to the Queen, and afterward preceptor of the youthful James. Meanwhile, in 1567, he was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He was satirist, poet, historian, scholar, soldier, and not least of all, a Scotch ruling elder. Such was the character and history of the first ruling elder Moderator of whom we have record. That the election of such men fell into disuse cannot be laid to the account of poor material in such a man. That we have reached a time in our Church history when the pendulum swings back, and that which has been done is now done again, suggests the recalling of this story.

The General Assembly of our own Church, in 1885, provided for the appointment of a Vice-Moderator, and this office was filled in the Assembly of 1888, and which met at Philadelphia, by General James A. Beaver, a ruling elder. The thought of the ruling elder in connection with the Moderatorship, in the General Assembly, has not been confined to the second place, for at the Saratoga Assembly, which met in the year 1879, the elder William E. Dodge, a ruling elder, than whose name none is more familiar to your ears, was nominated for Moderator by a minister as well known as such, as was his nominee well known as a

ruling elder. Mr. Dodge, with great modesty, refused to allow his name to be used or to become a candidate, and the possibility passed by.

At the Portland Assembly in the year 1892, Mr. George Junkin, of Philadelphia, was nominated for Moderator. He is a lawyer and a devoted and most useful ruling elder, honored in the world, yet more happy in serving the Church. He has long and faithfully and lovingly served on its Boards, and on its Committees, and as Treasurer of many of its trusts, and well deserved any honor the Church could lay on him. Mr. Junkin asked to be excused and to have his name withdrawn as a candidate for the honor, but the Assembly refused to permit it, and though he failed of election by the ballot, no word of question of his eligibility was spoken.

This present year the General Synod of the Reformed (Dutch) Church chose for Vice-Moderator Elder Austin Scott, of the Second Church of New Brunswick, N. J., who, though a layman, presided at several sessions of Synod, and who, in case of the failure of the Moderator or President to open the next Synod with a sermon, may be called upon to perform that duty.

Our sister Church, the great Southern Presbyterian Church, a Church priding itself upon, if not overdoing, its conservatism, has made a new departure in this matter. Last year, 1893, its General Assembly meeting at Macon, Ga., after no less than three ballots were had, to reach a choice, chose for its Moderator, Judge James W. Lapsley, a lawyer and a ruling elder. He was placed in nomination by a minister, who withdrew his own name, two others having been nominated, and substituted the name of this honored ruling elder. He was chosen above his ministerial brethren. No word of challenge of his official qualification was spoken, and he well deserved the honors his Church put upon him. A man of ripe years and experience, full of vigor and energy, abounding in love for his Church and for its Head, the

Master of us all, he had so sealed his love, by the gift of so many of his children, that he was called the father of ministers and missionaries.

The Presbytery of Missouri, in connection with the same Southern Presbyterian Church, at its fall meeting in 1887, chose as its Moderator Ruling Elder John C. Miller, of Kytesville, Mo., a brother of Rev. Alexander Miller, of this Presbytery of Westchester. His service was recognized as peculiarly practical and useful, above that of the average minister.

Earlier than any other of the supreme judicatories of the American churches, came the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which in 1884 elected Hon. John Frizzell, a ruling elder, to be Moderator of that General Assembly, and in 1887, the General Assembly of the same Church elected to that office Ruling Elder Nathan Green, and in 1891, it chose Ruling Elder E. E. Beard to the same office. In that Church, I am informed, for many years past it has been a common event for Synods and for Presbyteries to elect ruling elders to the office of Moderator.

In 1881, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England chose as Moderator of Synod, Dr. Collingwood Bruce, a ruling elder, who had been engaged in teaching, and who was not a minister of the Gospel. He was a man beloved and respected for his own personal merits, also, for that he was the father of Sir George B. Bruce, another ruling elder, who had for many years been a useful and valuable officer, and the Chairman, or convener of the Home Missions Committee of that Church. Dr. Collingwood Bruce had received the honorary doctor's degree and was actually called "Reverend," being a licentiate, but had never been ordained and was not borne on the roll, other than as a ruling elder.

In the year 1890, the Presbytery of La Crosse, in the Synod of Wisconsin, elected Hon. George McMillan, a rul-

ing elder, to be Moderator of the Presbytery. It is said of him that he was a man admirably qualified for the place. This would however go without saying, for the discharge of his duties was with such satisfaction, that in the fall of 1892, he, being a member of Synod, was chosen and served with credit and satisfaction as Moderator of the Synod of Wisconsin. Thus the Synod of Wisconsin set its approval on the act of the Presbytery, and in the year 1883, when the minutes of that Synod came up for review, showing, of course, the election of that ruling elder to be Moderator, those minutes were by the General Assembly approved without exception.

The Synod of Northern Illinois had at one time its Moderator in the person of Judge Samuel Moore, of Chicago, a ruling elder and a lawyer. The Presbytery of Springfield, in the Synod of Illinois, also recognized the ruling elder as qualified, by electing one to be Moderator of that Presbytery, and the Presbytery of Milwaukee, in 1885, elected Mr. Robert Menzies, a ruling elder, to be its Moderator, which act was before the General Assembly of 1886 at Minneapolis, on the question of his rights to sit as corresponding member at the next meeting, and his orderly election was not questioned.

At the April meeting of the Presbytery of Buffalo, in 1877, it chose Ruling Elder Joseph H. Plumb for its Moderator. He was not a lawyer, but was a retired man of business, in easy circumstances, at leisure, popular, genial, intelligent, capable, and he, from a love of the affairs of the Church, had a knowledge of and a taste for ecclesiastical matters and was often the delegate from his session. The minutes of the Presbytery of Buffalo showing the election of that ruling elder to be its Moderator, I believe were submitted to the Synod of Western New York for review, and were approved without exception.

In the year 1891, the Presbytery of Philadelphia North chose Gen. Wagner for its Moderator. He presided at all its

sessions and performed all the acts prescribed for a Moderator, including the part of the Moderator at an installation, and also at the opening of the next meeting. The minutes of that Presbytery came up for review before the Synod of Pennsylvania, and showing these facts, though no exception was reported by any committee against the election as disorderly, yet members of Synod sought to have the disapproval of Synod set against it, but found so little support that the proposers deemed it best to withdraw criticism, and the minutes of Presbytery were approved without exception. The same Presbytery, having thus the approval of Synod, last spring repeated itself by again choosing a Moderator from its ruling elders, in the person of Franklin L. Sheppard, Esq.

At its stated fall meeting in October, 1892, the Presbytery of Boston elected Ebenezer McPherson, a ruling elder of the Church at East Boston, to be Moderator of Presbytery, and he served acceptably as such.\*

It may be stated, in passing, that no less than eight of our Presbyteries, at different times and in some cases for long terms of years, have been served in the office of Stated Clerk, by brethren who were ruling elders, and two of the Presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod of New York now have and for several years past have had a ruling elder as the Stated Clerk of each of them, one of whom has been continuously in office for more than twenty-four years.† Our book nowhere requires that either Moderator, Clerk,

\* At the spring meeting of the Presbytery of West Jersey held since this paper was written Ruling Elder Thomas W. Synnott, of the Church, Wenonah, N. J., was chosen Moderator.

† Elder Thomas N. Sellers was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Knox, 1870-71 and 1878-83, all inclusive; Elder Henry M. Clark was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Lyons, 1871-94, inclusive and still is; Elder Charles E. Walker was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Gunnison, 1885-86 inclusive; Elder William L. Squire was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Indian Territory, 1885-86 inclusive; Elder William L. Squire was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Muscogee, 1867; Elder Alfred B. King was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of West Africa, 1889-93 inclusive; Elder J. Corwin Jacks was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Genesee, 1893-94 inclusive and now is; Elder E. P. Searle was Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Kingston, 1893-94 and is today.

or Treasurer of Presbytery, Synod or Assembly, shall be a member of the judicatory.

From what has already been said, we may safely conclude, that the choosing of Moderators of our Presbyterian judicatories, from the ruling elders, is neither out of order, nor without precedent. We have had it in the earliest times as well as in these days. The revolution in that direction to-day is safe, and is but a return to the precedent set by our fathers. Though we hold doctrine unalterable, because it is God's truth, which cannot change, or pass away, yet in these things because they are matters of order only, and because it is in order to choose either an elder who is a preacher or an elder who is a ruler, to be Moderator, we may exercise, or refrain from exercising, the right and from time to time change, as the occasion or the circumstances shall move us.

Having said so much to explain to all who may hear me how I came to be in this office, and to justify it as orderly and as founded on precedent in our Church, and a practice approved in all our courts, wherever brought to attention, or under review, there are some thoughts which seem to me to be practical and appropriate to the occasion, and becoming to be said by a ruling elder.

A large measure of your time has been taken in the historical statement you have heard, and you have not yet heard the text which, according to modern practice, is necessary to every sermon, and as I did not give it you in the beginning, let it be found in the middle, to be a guide and to circumscribe what more shall be said.

St. Paul teaches us to respect and magnify official duty and privilege. In the eleventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, at the thirteenth verse, he says, "Inasmuch as I am an Apostle to the Gentiles, I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE."

These words of the Apostle occur in a sort of parenthesis, and Tertius wrote the words as Paul dictated them, to

show that he, Paul, in his yearning and passion for the salvation of his kinsmen, the Jews, did not forget who he was nor his great mission to the Gentiles. That eleventh chapter begins with those wonderful words, "I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew." And then he proceeds, with more and more glowing affection and power, to set forth the benefits of the call of the Jews to be God's people, and how the fall of the Jews out of favor, became the riches of the Gentiles, and yet still there remained mighty promises to the Jews, and the exhaustless mercy, and the power of God to bring them back, and that as in Elijah's time, it seemed as though but one was faithful, yet God then, as before, had a remnant of the faithful ones; and then, lest he should seem to have entirely forgotten to whom he was writing, and his mission to them, he throws in this assurance, this parenthesis, that he has not forgotten that he is writing to Gentiles, and inasmuch as he is the Apostle to the Gentiles, he magnifies his office, that office, and yet he would by his earnest words provoke those of his own flesh, his own nation, Jews, that some of them should be saved. There are parentheses in the Bible which, like the silences of the Bible, are full of lessons. Paul was an Apostle. Primarily he referred to that office. The qualification for that office was limited to the natural seeing of the Lord Jesus, or to the miraculous showing of Himself to those whom He chose thus to qualify. The time of seeing Him with the natural eye passed when He passed into the unseen, and He has not deemed it necessary to qualify any one since Paul by the miraculous showing of Himself. The Apostle would not, were he here to-day, limit the teaching of his words only to the magnifying of the Apostolic office. I think he would tell us that it becomes us, as called of God into His Church, and into the work of His Church, into any office or service in the Church, to magnify

the work to which we are called. He would say to us, "Those words apply to you elders, New Testament elders, called either to preach or to rule.

And now it occurs to me, first, that here is a call for individual effort and energy. The highest office that can be conferred upon a man can scarce honor him who does not fill it. An office, no matter how humble, may be magnified by the incumbent. The mantle of Elijah, fallen upon the shoulders of a lazy, idle, unimpassioned prophet, would have remained as unheard of as the man upon whom it fell. The minister who finds satisfaction in the prefix before his name, or in any other official badge, even be it that of Secretary, is not magnifying his office. The ruling elder who is content to see his name on the Church list as an officer, and surrender his judgment as a ruler in God's house into the keeping of the minister, is not magnifying his office. It was a poor effort at wit, that is said to have led a prominent and honored minister to say, what did him but poor honor, concerning the usefulness of men called of God to be elders, that they accompany the minister to Presbytery, and open the gates and carry his bag and pay his bills. God's Book gives no warrant for attaching such duties to the office.

Now what is this office, that I suggest we ought to magnify? It is not fully appreciated and considered, that it is a Scriptural office, appointed of God, for His service, His work in His Church. There was an eldership in old patriarchal times. Those elders were with the people in the wilderness. The old Mosaic law said much about those elders. The same eldership went with the people into the Babylonish captivity, and tarried with them while the seventy years rolled on, and returned with the return of the people to the land of Canaan, and the order was kept up and continued down to the coming of our Lord, and He found them there. We shall find them in heaven. John saw them in heaven when he had his vision on Patmos. I love

to think of the one Church, now called the Christian Church, as the Church of all ages, as the same Church, the Church of Abraham, and the Church of the wilderness, and the Church that followed the ark, and that worshiped in the temple, and that went to and returned from Babylon. But it is not necessary to go beyond the Apostolic age for our purpose at this time. I believe that the Presbyterian system, with its presbuteroi (πρεσβυτέροι), or elders, and its Presbyteries, small or large, beginning with the session which is Presbytery, and ending with the General Assembly, which is no more than another Presbytery, is the Scriptural form of Church government, and that all other organizations are modifications or changes of the Scriptural model. It is not a government by a mass meeting, nor by prelacy, but one by representatives. Our Book does not recognize the pastor as the representative of the Church, but the ruling elder is the representative of the people—the Church. These elders were in apostolic times, as now, chosen by the people. The original Greek word used in Acts xiv. 23, and translated in the King James Version, "and when they had ordained," but translated in the Revised Version, "and when they had appointed," is chirotonásantes (χειροτονήσαντες), and means beyond question an appointment, by show of hands, or in other words, a bona fide election by the people. There was also a plurality of elders in each church, and the plural I think is always used in speaking of them, as in Acts xx. 17, Acts xiv. 23, and this too when speaking of a single Church organization. Some of the same officers labored in word and doctrine, and others in government, as in ruling, as we read in 1 Tim. v. 17. And Peter who was an Apostle and a preacher, declares of himself that he is also an elder, and Paul spoke of the Ephesian elders as overseers, and also as those who fed the flock. This time and occasion will not suffice more than to state what has been said, not to discuss further these propositions.



The office, my brethren, which we hold, is Scriptural, ordained of God. Surely this is reason enough why those men, chosen of God, and by the suffrages of His people, to the office of elder, should magnify it.

The office is a Scriptural office. It relates to the people of God in their relation to Him by whom they are called. It is higher than an earthly office. Its influence is not limited by earthly lives, or by earthly organizations, but extends beyond life and time and into the skies. Who can mark the limit of the influence on the souls of the people, which an elder may have, who is up to his duties and privileges. What is it to magnify the office. St. Paul did not say, "I praise mine office." That would be a very different matter. Such could be in words, fulsome words only, but to magnify will be in deeds, and not words only. He strove to magnify the office to which he was called, by a faithful discharge and exercise of its functions, its uses, its powers, its privileges. Called to bear the Gospel to the Gentiles, he dared to speak well of his own nation, and to yearn after them, that they too might be saved, and through the same Lord Jesus they had rejected and he had persecuted, when blinded by another kind of zeal, and in all his speaking for them, he never forgot for a moment the call to the Gentiles. He shunned not to declare the whole Gospel. He was not a speaker of the things that pleased the ears of the hearer, but was a faithful mouth of God, to declare His whole truth. Pure of the blood of all men, because he shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God, the bitter things with the sweet. Not a man server, but a servant of God. A time server in the only good sense of the term, and that because he proclaimed his message in season and out of season, in every hour and in every place in which he found opportunity and in which he lived. Determined that his office should not be scandalized, by the evil-minded who should allege that he served for gain, he steadfastly refused to be compensated or supported by his brethren and steadily

wrought with his own hands for his daily bread. He understood that office in God's house was not for dignity and power, but for duty and for service and for work. My brethren, do our lives show that we have these qualities which Paul had? What better example of what it will be to magnify the office of elder in the Church of Jesus Christ, than the example of the great Apostle to the Gentiles—he whose are the words, "I magnify mine office." No do nothing comes up to this standard. It is sad to see one chosen to this station for service in the Church who is a mere ornament, a place filler, an office bearer. I am afraid there are many elders upon whom the duties and responsibilities of the office sit very lightly and who are supremely contented to sit in the office but are indifferent to any practical work, all interested in some project of the pastor for the good of God's people, and willing that he should spend his time and energy and do the work. Some, too, are without the first quality or talent for service; who were mistaken when they thought they were called to the eldership, and like some others, utterly mistook their calling and never should have accepted the office. We will not wonder long what the Apostle would have said or written about such unprofitable servants. Such men do nothing to magnify the office. Nothing will so magnify the office to which God has called us, and in which He requires our service, as that we find out what it means, what it has for us to do, and faithfully as God's servers and not as man pleasers, exercise all the functions, duties and privileges which belong to us.

Is the pastor accountable at all for any low standard of service in, or respect for the office which prevails with the elders or the people? Has the pulpit told what the office is and what it means? Do you pastors in your contact with the elders show them their spheres of usefulness, you refusing to take upon your shoulders what belongs upon theirs? Do you insist upon you having the benefit, in their official spheres, of their independent judgment? Do you give

them countenance, and moral help, in their loyalty to the powers in, and the courts of the Church. In these things do you magnify their office and teach them to magnify it, or is it otherwise with you?

Perhaps we shall reach a more practical treatment of this part of the subject, if we ask ourselves the question, "In what can we magnify the office," and at the same time try to answer it. We have already held up St. Paul as an example to you. In considering further the sphere of the office, it is naturally suggested to us, that there are several distinct places and relations, in which we are called upon to exercise the functions of the office and to be elders. And in one of those we are now gathered, in Presbytery. The ruling elder is the delegate from the session of which he is a member, and as such he is the representative of the people of the church. In Scotland, the minister sits in Presbytery only when he is pastor. In this country, as I have stated, the minister never represents the church. He is never a member of Presbytery by reason of any relation he sustains to the church, but only because he is ordained minister or preaching elder, and as such by the provisions of our book he is enrolled as a member of Presbytery. In fact the moment before ordination, as a candidate, or as a licentiate, he is a church member, but the moment after ordination he has ceased to be a church member and has become a member of Presbytery. Hence the churches are here represented only by the ruling elders. Does the fact increase in his own eyes the importance of the ruling elder's office as he sits a member of Presbytery? It ought to. I remember the charge to the pastor delivered by a member of this Presbytery, at the meeting of this Presbytery at South Salem in May last, when a young minister was ordained and installed. There were many practical things he said, but the one that suits me now to use was his charge to the newly-ordained minister, to remember that he had become a Presbyter, that new duties and responsibilities and privileges had settled upon him, as

a member of Presbytery, and that it was quite as much his duty, as well as his privilege, to exercise his office as a Presbyter, and regularly be found in his place at the meetings of Presbytery. Those words with far greater force apply to the ruling elder, appointed to represent his church at Presbytery, and consult and legislate for the interests of that part of the kingdom of heaven. To fail of such faithfulness; to neglect that trust; to rely upon others to do or to have faith that what is right will be done; or even to make the purchase of a farm or of a yoke of oxen, or the marrying of a wife, an excuse without reason, for the dereliction, is scarce magnifying the office by faithfulness. I know, brethren of the ruling eldership, that our ministerial brethren are not without large responsibilities for these sins of ours. Brethren of the ministry, of how much importance do you regard it, that each church shall be represented at each meeting of Presbytery by the ruling elder delegate? Your rules for years past have required a minister who did not attend each meeting of Presbytery, to account to Presbytery for the delinquency, yet never so far as I have been able to learn, until this present year, has the idea ever occurred that the elder delegates were of the importance to require them to say why they were not in attendance. The Synod and the General Assembly are courts which, being delegated bodies, are required to consist, as near as may be, of an equal number of the ruling elders with the preaching elders. Do you in your committee work recognize this parity or equality? Are your committees always made up with this in view, or is it deemed necessary to a Presbyterial committee, that it should have the mysterious virtue of a ministerial chairman? And when the committee consists of an odd number, is it always necessary that there should be more ministers than ruling elders? Do these things tend to teach the importance of the attendance of the ruling elders to their duties?

My brethren of the ministry, in these things do you honor the officer whom God hath chosen? Brethren of the ruling eldership, see to it, and make yourselves worthy of the parity with your brethren, which is, the Scriptural eldership. The Committee on Examinations of this Presbytery has time out of mind been composed solely of ministers, save that within about one year, one ruling elder was after some effort procured to be added to it, to fill a vacancy. Is it a fact that all the learning in this Presbytery is confined to those on the roll of the ministers? Such is not the fact generally in matters of education. At least three of our most prominent colleges have chosen presidents who are laymen. It has been the justifiable pride of the people of our Church, that its people are the most cultured and liberally educated of any people in our land. Has God in these times when culture and education is not given miraculously, called by the voice of his people to the office of elder, only such concerning whom this sad invidious thing can be said, that they are not qualified by education. If our people deserve to be called the most cultured, and the most liberally educated, our God certainly has called some, yes many of His elders, from those thus best qualified to serve Him. Are there not among the ruling elders of this Presbytery, some whose education has been so liberal, that they will grace the learning of that Committee, and add to its efficiency and strength even when a paper written in one of the dead languages is under consideration? And are there not others, who are quite as well acquainted with literature and the arts and sciences, as any of our ministerial brethren? And in theology as sound! To claim all this for some ruling elders is not to belittle you ministers. You, and the Book too, require these ruling elders to vote, and thus participate in the decision upon the qualification and fitness of each candidate for the ministry. Yet you practically regard them as unfitted to serve on that Committee, or to consider in commit-

tee, what they are required to vote upon. This is hardly consistency. I know it will be said that no dependence can be placed upon the regular attendance of the ruling elders for service when wanted. But, my brethren, magnify the office of elder and see if you will not have better attendance and satisfactory committee work, from the ruling elders. Select qualified men for your work if you can find them, and help those men and teach them to feel their responsibility to God and to His Church, and that in fact an equal responsibility is upon them, and then let us see the result. If any one chooses to reflect upon the qualifications of some men sometimes chosen for this office in the Church, let it be remembered, by such, that though all men are born with equal political rights, all men are not born with like qualities, and are not of equal power, and as for the ruling elders, they are chosen certainly up to the quality which you have required for the use Presbytery makes of them. If you would raise the standard of the men to be chosen to any office, show by using them, the standard required for usefulness, and that standard will be met by the men sent to you. Do you think that the people would fail to honor their own intelligence and loyalty to the Church by not choosing a better quality of men to the ruling eldership, if the Presbytery showed in its use of the ruling elders that the duties and responsibilities demanded better men? If they did so fail, it would be their fault, not yours.

There is another place in which we may in our work magnify the office of ruling elder. Every ruling elder is a member of session. The pastor is the Moderator of session, but you cannot shift your responsibilities on him. How many of us have ever read Section 6 of Chap. ix of the Form of Government, where certain powers and duties are specified as of the session? If we but scarcely knew what is laid upon us, we will scarce be found doing it. Brethren, these are momentous times in which we live. The doctrines of the day are the doctrines of anarchy. Though

we live in a day of inventions and wonders, we are living also in the age of cranks. It sometimes seems to me, men study to be queer; to differ from their fathers, and from all who have gone before, for the sake merely of differing. Men are seeking after something new. Religion has experienced this, and in theology, and as to the obligations of the moral law and as to the sanctity of the Sabbath, as to the authority of the Bible, yes, as to what in fact is the Bible, men are run mad. Have we no responsibility here? What as connected with God's house and His people have we to do with this state of things? On all moral subjects, the pulpit speaks because upon it rests a responsibility. Do you think, brethren of the ruling eldership, that you have in the session to which you respectively belong no responsibility in these things? Do these things not affect the flock committed to your oversight? For instance, is the Sunday morning secular newspaper a good preparation for going to the Sabbath morning sanctuary worship? Do any of *you* prepare yourself for God's house in that way? Do the Saturday night entertainments of these days conduce to spirituality on the Lord's day? Was there no real merit in the preparation for holy time, which began the Sabbath in old New England at sunset on Saturday eve? These questions I ask to start a thought, to set you inquiring if there may be a reason why the elder in the session should be thinking in these things which seem to belong to the world, and are of the kingdom of darkness and may have infected the flock. The things mentioned have a glamor about them and they are called liberty, but it is only license to do evil, and they are evils. How can we save, yes, get away our people from these things? Wax in Ulysses' ears was good while there was found nothing better. But there is a better. A personal consecration of self which takes with it all that one has; a life that is full of love for the right, because it pleases God and thinks not of itself, is the anti-

dote and the Gospel is the handbook. If mature men cannot be reached, look out for the young, of whom, some, even if born like tigers, can be converted. The children are the hope of the Church. How do you reach them? In the session of your churches how much time is spent in consideration of the affairs of the Sunday-school? Do you know who the teachers are and what is taught? Do you know if the handbooks used are those which honor or which would destroy the Bible? Do you know if teachers and scholars alike are taught to say "Hexateuch" for "Pentateuch," and thus insidiously cultivate the habit of questioning the truths of the Bible? Do you see to it that the Catechism is taught there? The General Assembly has said that the session is responsible for the Sunday-school, and that that heritage of sound words should be taught there. The Church is the trustee of comfortable words, of sound words. Paul wrote to Titus, who was an elder, to hold fast the faithful word which he had been taught, that he might be able by *sound doctrine* to *exhort* and *convince*. Why is it, my brethren, that our Church is chosen as the field for proselyting? The Baptists seldom get into other folds. The Methodists generally hold their own. But our young people specially are led off and away, and coaxed off and away, and the same of some not so young. The pastor of the Scotch church in Dresden told me that he had actually heard the minister of the American Episcopal Church in that city say of American Presbyterians, that they came to Dresden as Presbyterians and attended his church because it was American, and he sends them home to America good Episcopalians. And he is not the only one conducting that business of plundering the churches rather than warring upon the world, the flesh and the devil. Go you to any of our seaside or mountain resorts, and how many of our Presbyterian people you may find who choose rather to attend the same church that seeks to catch them, than the meeting together of our own people.

They seek them and are glad to catch them. And you cannot ask them to close their doors to the children of your flock. Are you elders for the honor of the Church, watching out for the flock committed to your charge? Are you planning to keep them in their own church home? The Methodists make much of what they say their Church stands for, Arminianism and free grace, as though we did not also proclaim a free salvation to whosoever will! The Baptists are not behind in proclaiming Immersion, the distinguishing mark of their Church. The Episcopalians are most forward in heralding theirs as the true Church; theirs the only true ministry; theirs the vaunted apostolic succession. But we poor Presbyterians, as it were, are forbidden to preach or teach Church, lest we shall drive souls from the gates of heaven, or hurt the feelings of some fellow-mortal. Was the Holy Ghost afraid to utter any of the truths of the New Testament? Did Paul shun to utter those very forbidden teachings? Do we fear the opinions of men more than we fear God? Grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles. The historian Froude, observing the lessons of history, seeking for the causes of what he observes in the story, asks in effect, how it came to pass, that if Calvinism is indeed the hard and unreasonable creed which modern enlightenment declares it to be, it has possessed such singular attractions for some of the greatest men that ever lived? How is it, if it be fatal to morality, because, as they say, it denies free will, that the first symptom of its operation is to obliterate all distinction between sins and crimes, and make the moral law the rule of life for States as well as for men? If it be a creed of intellectual servitude, how was it able to sustain the bravest efforts ever made by men to break the yoke of unjust authority? Why, "when all else failed; when patriotism covered its face, and human courage was broken down, when intellect was content to philosophize in a closet, and abroad, to worship with the vulgar, and emotion and sentiment and piety

became handmaids to superstition and forgot the positive difference between lies and truth, that slavish form of belief called Calvinism, in one or the other of its forms, has borne an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity and has preferred rather to be ground to powder, like flint, than bend before violence or melt under enervating temptation?" No, no, my brethren, you cannot down a creed that bears such fruits, that makes such men. It needed such a faith, and the men it made, to fight Rome and win in the Reformation, and it needs a faith that will produce such men to-day, to fight the same powers again, in the battle soon to be on. The people of Nazareth were filled with wrath because the Lord Himself taught them the doctrine of God's elective grace, and like characters will for the same reason be angry with us, but the time has now come when all that has distinguished our Church from other Churches should be taught from the pulpit, and not only there, but in the Sunday-school and in the family. That which has made our Church the grandest Church on this continent, yes, the greatest of all the Reformation Churches, grandest in work, grandest in gifts, grandest in the devotion of her children, should again be brought to the front and emphasized. We should look at what it is and teach our children what made it great that it may make them great. Let us be done with that great American flirtation which for six years has troubled us. Organic unity is not the Church unity of the Bible; our Lord never prayed for it; His words teach us no such thing. His prayer was for a unity which did not destroy the difference between Himself and the Father; no loss of identity, no loss of individuality. He expressly and purposely spoke of more flocks than one, in one fold. Our Church has had its share in the work of calling the world to Christ, in the offer to the "whosoever." Have we been afraid of the rest of the story? Has our Church continued to declare and to teach the whole counsel of God? Have we been afraid to tell and to teach and

praise the whole story as our Church receives and teaches it?

You are as a session overseers of God's house. To you especially it is committed, to rule as to the service in the sanctuary. Our book nowhere locks you up to a prayer book or a rubric, or a canon of service, to prevent your properly meeting in the public service, the spiritual demands of your people, their tastes and needs, and cravings, in the matter of worship. Do you turn this matter over upon the minister, to plan, or let alone, or follow in the old ruts that have been marked for the sanctuary worship in your particular Church, and made it an iron-bound form from time out of mind; or have you had this matter on your hearts, and occupying your minds, how that the meeting together of God's people, in the sanctuary for worship shall build up and comfort the saints, as well as never omit to sound the Gospel "come." Our Directory for Worship has a chapter "Of the Worship of God by Offerings." How many have read that chapter? Have you been devising the way in which as a solemn act and as a part of the public service of worship, the gifts of the people shall be made not as to the Church, nor as to the trustees, nor as a work of merit to the giver, nor as an unwelcome moment or act, but shall be made as a gift to our God, from a grateful people, and that these gifts shall be so gathered and received and devoted to him, as that the hearts of the people of God shall be made to rejoice in the privilege of giving to Him, whose is every beast of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, and the world and the fullness thereof, and who needeth not what we return to him, of that which always is first his gift to us? And has it ever occurred to you as a session charged with the duty of providing for the sanctuary service, that you may enrich that service without making it sensuous, and make it more profitable, and healthful, and suggestive, and worshipful, to God's people, not by any ritual, which must be a poor imitation of the

livery of another Church, which is not like us, either in doctrine or worship, or taste, or in life, and copying which is therefore entirely out of good taste and highly undignified, but by the use, by you, of the talents and gifts of God's people, who are of your Church? Have you in the number of your people, or among the eldership of your Church, any to whose voices God has given melody and sweetness and sympathy, and whose voices He has taught them to use to pleasure and edification? Did it ever occur to you that you might enlist such a voice in the very sanctuary service, and take away none of its solemnity or sacredness, and yet add to its dignity, and majesty, and sweetness, and comfort? I do not propose that the elders or the laymen should preach every Sunday or even statedly, or in any way crowd out the minister from his place. Do you doubt that the reading of the Scripture at Hawarden every Sunday in the regular service of the sanctuary by England's greatest layman, Mr. Gladstone, lends interest and freshness to the worship, not simply because it is Mr. Gladstone who reads, but because Mr. Gladstone's voice is a great gift, and because Mr. Gladstone uses his voice as a great reader does? I spent a Sunday once in Glasgow and attended the evening service in the old Barony Church, a church of our own Presbyterian persuasion, a church in connection with the Church of Scotland. Rev. Dr. Marshall Lang, whose name all of you have heard, was the minister and conducted the service and preached the sermon, but when the time appointed for the reading of the Scripture came, one of the elders rose from his pew and walked to the reading desk, or pedestal, at the head of the middle aisle of the church and opened the book and read a lesson from the Old Testament in a sweet tender voice, and with an unction and emphasis which showed that he was intimately acquainted with the Word he read. Then a hymn was sung, and again the same elder read a New Testament lesson, with like power. Do you say that your duty does not call upon you to utilize

such talent in your churches, if you have it? Do you magnify your office, if you do not study to use all the talents God has given to His people in your churches, to edify and instruct and help and comfort His people who assemble and worship with you.

In the service of praise, do you magnify your office by taking upon yourself what belongs to you in that regard? Praise is a part of sanctuary worship, and the whole matter of worship lies with you. Praise has been a necessary and invariable exercise in every public act of worship in all the history of God's people. Our Scotch and Scotch-Irish ancestors and our brethren of those races to-day, and also a noble number of families in our own Church in this day, practically regard worship in the family as incomplete without its song of praise, so that the reading of the Word, the sacrifice of praise and the voice of prayer, make up the exercise at the family altar. There are in the Old Testament Hebrew, words used over three hundred and fifty times and rendered into the English words "praise," or "sing," or "song," while the other Hebrew words used also to signify praise, and which sometimes mean fulsome words of praise, occur only forty-seven times, and by far in the great majority even of those cases, the context shows that these are also used of praise in song. In the New Testament Greek, originals are used more than fifty times to signify praise in song, and almost always it is praise of the Divine Being. Song seems to have been to the Divine mind an expression of the heart's feelings in harmonious sounds. In that wonderful lesson which God taught Job out of the whirlwind, he says: "The morning stars sang together." Seven generations only from Adam came Jubal, and he was the father of all such as handled the harp and the organ. To whatsoever use musical instruments were and are put God consecrated them to His own praise, and He invited His people to praise Him with cornets and with the trumpet, the psaltery, the harp, the timbrels, with stringed instru-

ments and organs and cymbals, and He saith, "Let every-thing that hath breath praise the Lord." The gladness of Moses after the Red Sea could only find expression of his joy in a song, and so also at the close of his life in reviewing God's wonderful dealings with his people. David was the sweet singer of Israel, and he was a musician as well. The joy of the people at the completion of the first temple, and also at the second, found expression in song. The Book of Psalms is not only a body of pious experience, but is a body of songs fitted for the lips and hearts of God's people. The angels on the hills of Bethlehem celebrated the coming of the blessed Lord with songs of praises. Paul and Silas found solace in songs in a dungeon. A hymn was sung at the last supper. When we get to heaven and God shall count and write up His people, the eighty-seventh Psalm says: "As well the singers as the players of instruments" shall be found in the number. And those who shall sing the new song of the redeemed, the Book of the Revelation tells us shall be elders, every one of whom shall have a harp, and who shall be joined in a chorus sung by angels, and by the elect to the number of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. Shall you who do not sing in the sanctuary here have any part in that song there? Song is the natural language of the heart. The Church educates its people for heavenly joys and praise. They should be trained here for the hereafter. He who sings not praises here will scarce know how to sing in heaven. You educate your pious young men for the ministry of the Word. Why not educate others of your pious men and women for the ministry of song, and let them begin the sacrifice of praise here? It will give zest and zeal to musical study if the young Christian studies music as for God's service. Be not satisfied with one voice, or with four voices, but train and use many voices in the sanctuary. Remember what a grand chorus there will be in heaven. Study you elders and people to give God the very

best you can command. Blessed indeed is the pastor and people whose singers are all lovers of Jesus. Do not let the sanctuary praise take care of itself. See you elders that it is the best your people can give. Remember the words of David, who said: "I will not sacrifice to God of that which costs me nothing." There is a great tendency in these days to farm out Christian work and not do ourselves what other willing hands are ready to do. There are choice spirits in every church, upon whom we always call, two or three, perhaps only one; women, choice souls, who are the pastor's best helps, his best hands, on whom he and the session rely and lean. Why is it that all falls upon them? Why are there no more? Have you no responsibility for this lack of numbers of ready helpers? There are several reasons why this should not be. When these few faithful women marry, or move away, or go to heaven, you ought to have been educating others to take up their work. If not, who will fill the vacant place? It is of great moment as a help to the piety of the people that they should all have their energies always trained and used in the church work. Idleness is the chance for Satan to get in. Worldliness is Satan's trap to steal the soul. Those who have no work to do for the Master are in danger. Have the elders no responsibility to see that work is provided for such? There is an overdisposition to omit duties, lest we men trench on the dignity and duties of the preaching elder. Strangely the old first Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, the book of 1560, provided for the ruling elders, "They should take heed to the doctrine, diligence and behavior of the minister and his household, and, if need be, admonish them accordingly." So that the ruling elder became an overseer of the minister as well as of the people.

Paul in his letter to Titus speaking of elders generally says that an elder should be no striker, nor given to filthy lucre. Certainly those qualities do not apply to him at the Presbytery or as a member of session. To what sphere do they

apply? That an elder must be clear of these faults indicates that they belong to his daily life, among men with his fellows. Hence the elder should magnify his office in the world, in his contact with men, and in the sight of men, by his daily life. The herdmen of Abraham and Lot quarreled, and Abraham said unto Lot, "Let there be no strife between me and thee, for we be brethren." But the Holy Ghost did not fail to record as well a greater and more potent reason that the Canaanite and Perizite dwelled then in the land. Brethren, the Canaanite is in the land to-day. Let us remember in our daily walk and conversation, that the unbeliever is judging our religion by us, our profession by our works. How is it then with us? Have we been faithful in our lives? Has our dwelling been always safely in the land of promise, far away from the brook of Egypt, or do we live so near the line that when occasion serves us, we can be over in the land of leeks and onions, and back again before Sunday. If we are clear ourselves of these open injuries to God's cause, how is it with our families? Are there those for whom God holds us accountable, who are thus dishonoring God and God's cause, and thus dishonoring us as officers in God's house? We cannot wash our hands in innocency, and say we have nothing to do with it, for the world certainly judges us by the lives of those who ought to respect us, and the office we hold, and who ought to honor us and honor that office, by such lives as will not reflect upon us. That ever-sounding, never-ending, spiteful rejoinder of Cain was recorded for all time. We are our brothers' keepers.

Brethren, are we personally loyal to our Church, and honest towards ourselves and our brethren, in the matter of the vows we took at our ordination? Did we take those vows without any secret evasion of mind or mental reservation, and honestly, and in the way the Church understood them? I believe it is settled by the consensus of all parties, that the qualifications and beliefs in doctrine required at the



ordination of an office bearer in the Presbyterian Church must always afterward continue, in order to qualify such person for a continued exercise of the office, and when the qualification ceases the right to exercise the office ceases. This is but a statement of an axiom. Honesty requires all this in business matters. Why not as well in the Church? However much we may be charmed with the character, and gentleness, and loveliness of a brother, none of those things without other things too will qualify a man for a Presbyterian elder. The cords and stakes of our fold are so wide and ample, as to take in and hold in Church membership all of every name, and kindred, and tribe, and faith who believe in and rest upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and believe in what those words imply, but the office bearer must be more. He must not only have the qualification for Church membership and the character and reputation described in the New Testament, but he must also believe in what our Church teaches in her standards is meant by the New Testament expression, in the form of sound words. It was not long since that I was present in company with another elder in the house of a well-known Presbyterian gentleman, a member of one of our strongest suburban Presbyterian churches. There was an existing vacancy in the eldership of that Church, and he was urged to allow the use of his name at an election to be held to fill that vacancy in the eldership. He is one of the loveliest of men. His face beams with goodness. His hand is ever busy in the work of doing good. He is growing towards the end of life, and all desired too, that he, in his last years, should be honored by the office, as well as honoring it. We told him in the sweetest words heart and tongue could command of the love of the people for him, and our own personal affection for him, and of the earnest desire not only of the people of his own church, but of all who knew him, that he would consent. With very great emotion he too spoke of the love of which we had spoken, and then told us how he

had been compelled to decline another office which required the same vow as a qualification, and which he believed the Presbyterian elder, to be an honest man, must take in frankness and fullness, honestly and without any mental reservation, and without any construction, which was not the construction the Church put upon the words; that he regretted he could not so take the vow, and hence could not become a Presbyterian elder, but that he could remain a member of the Presbyterian Church, so broad and ample were its borders, and could be happy there and love that Church as he had always done, though he could not write his name below the office bearer's vow. My brethren, that man magnified the office he declined. He is a Prince in Israel. Do we magnify the office by faithful continuance in believing what we said we believed when we took upon ourselves our ordination vows?

And above all how do we stand towards the Word of God? Are we known as believers in it and in its integrity, or do men who would destroy or discredit it find us interested hearers? Are we content and at ease to listen while men call in question the truthfulness of the words of the Lord? He who spake as never man spake obeyed its laws to the minutest particular. For thirty-three years He lived by it. For two years He consorted with men to whom He taught its precepts daily. He knew more than we can ever know of its inherent and exact truthfulness, yet He never uttered one word about the mistakes of the statement of Moses, or of the errors in the Scripture He commended, and never called any of its stories myths, nor its poetry imagination. If it be a book of errors to us in *any* respect, how can we recommend it to others as the guide to life and salvation? How can you and I rest upon such a book for our eternal interests? It has been too much, to some of us, in the deepest of waters, to be surrendered to the attacks of the conceit of irreverent, falsely called scholars. What do they offer in its place? The

mutilated book will not be a book that we shall credit. The book is my Father's message to me. It is better as I have it, than the critics can make it. Brethren, stand by the Bible, in its integrity, God's inspired Word. The Bible is a trust committed to you. Be faithful. So shall you magnify your office.

Finally, my beloved brethren, be comforted in the truth that God rules. There is no such thing as unmitigated evil. The great strikes of the past summer waked up in our hearts a patriotism we did not know existed. Sickness and sorrow and deep waters cause us to seek the companionship and help and comfort of Him, in whose love and peace all ill is forgotten or is overruled or is sanctified. It is in our times of deepest public distress that God seems to pour out His richest blessings. The trying year past, so full of poverty and suffering, witnessed a great outpouring, such a one as has caused the Church to rejoice and to pray for more.

Let us renew our vows and promises. Let us engage for greater faithfulness, personal and official. Let us be prayerful and watchful and earnest and zealous. Let us hold up each other's hands. Let us, so far as in us lies, find our duty as elders and do it. Let us magnify our office, and when we feel our own insufficiency as we will, then let us remember that we shall fail in much, but God cannot fail. We shall pass away, when our work is done, but He and His Word and His Church shall not pass away.