

it devolves especially upon the Ruling Elders to maintain the public worship of God in that congregation—to watch with redoubled care over the spiritual welfare of the people.

The Ruling Elders have a large majority in the Kirk Session, and are therefore to the extent of their power and influence responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of all Sessional affairs.

They have an equal voice and vote in the Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies with ministers, and they have therefore an equal weight of responsibility with respect to the policy and work of the church as a whole. Indeed if we are to bear in mind the fact that they are distinctively *Ruling Elders* we might possibly feel prepared to look to them for controlling influence in the government of the church all the way up from her primary congregational courts to her general councils. It is at any rate in the highest degree desirable that our Ruling Elders should become more generally alive to their responsibilities as rulers, not merely in the congregation, but in relation to the church at large, and should thus dutifully attend meetings of the higher church courts whenever practicable.

Our responsibilities are in proportion to our abilities and our opportunities; and these opportunities are becoming daily more inviting. The Sabbath School, the Prayer Meeting, the Bible Class, sick-beds, death-beds, sad homes of the hungry and ignorant poor, the godless neighbourhood, the mission school; the schemes of the congregation and of the church; church courts; here is scope enough for all our energies; here is an arena most inviting to all who love hard and steady work for the Master's sake. Woe unto us if in the face of such opportunities we sink into self-wise obstructives, sulky and mulish do-nothings, or glib tongued fault-finders.

Our responsibilities as Elders are impressively indicated by the fact that the Christian people are divinely commanded to obey us—to acknowledge us—to esteem us very highly; and, if we rule well, to count us worthy of double honour. Christ dwells in the church; we are His officers, and our

special work, our highest honour is to lead, instruct, encourage, assist the members of His body. "All these things we profess and promise as we shall be answerable at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints, and as we would be found in that happy company."

THE LORD HATH NEED OF THEM.

Joy and gratitude should fill our souls at the thought that the Lord hath need of us or anything that is ours. He might carry on His work through a succession of stupendous miracles. He might make angels alone his ministers. We might live our little life without ever enjoying the honour of being fellow-workers with God.

He has graciously ordained it otherwise. He hath need of every one of His children, and of all that they can do for Him and give to Him. One can come with his matchless learning and critical acumen—like Joseph Addison Alexander; the Lord hath need of him, and has a place in the vineyard where he may toil with all his skill. The Lord hath need of the devoted life and apostolic labours of W. C. Burns—because hundreds of millions of our race still sleep the sleep of spiritual death under grim shadow of paganism. He needs the eloquence of Guthrie, the power and earnestness of Spurgeon,—the manifold talents of all great and good men. He needs the magnificent benefactions of the wealthy, the gifts of the millionaires. He needs the strength of the strong man and the wisdom of the wise. But he hath need also of the lisping hosannas of our little children, and of the zeal and faith and love of the common people. There is a place for the *cri* of the poor as well as for the dollars of the rich.

He sends one or two of his disciples to you and He asks you for your aid. He declares through them that He hath need of you in various ways. Perhaps it is to build a church—a place where souls are to be born, a place whence the sweet incense of praise shall ascend to His glorious name from the hearts of contrite sinners. Perhaps it is to strengthen His cause in some