

sion field and away off among the Heathen; and as a Presbyterian office-bearer he should know something of the position of the brethren throughout these Provinces and the wide world. There is no church more widely scattered than ours, and there is none that can justly lay claim to a unity so hearty and so thorough throughout all her branches. A knowledge of the Presbyterian cause in all its vast extent will strengthen and cheer us and greatly increase a healthy feeling of brotherhood.

Our position as Ruling Elders demands experience, wisdom, simplicity of aim, and purity of motives. Ministers look to us for co-operation, help and council in all their work. We are to be to a large extent their eyes to see and report, and their hands to execute. The people look to us for guidance; and they should be able to do so in good faith. Let us magnify our office not to aggrandize ourselves, but to glorify Him who appointed this office and to justify the wisdom of His arrangements in the face of men. For, however Scriptural our church order, our ritual, our standards,—if we, the office-bearers, cease to be living workers in the church, the church must either cast us off or herself share in our doom of death. The Jewish Church was divine in her constitution and ritual to the minutest particular; everything was prescribed, from the garments of the priests to the pins of the Tabernacle; yet when the Jews came to idolize the means and regard them as the end, God rejected the whole system and stamped upon it the seal of His reprobation. If we exalt our church system, any part of it, into the place due to Christ, if we sacrifice souls to it, we make a Moloch of it; we may be sure that God's frown shall darken all our way, and the system in which we glory shall gather shame and not honour from our conduct,—a shame in which we must deeply share.

Other churches in their organizations are striving to reach the Presbyterian model. The largest body of Christians in America, the Methodists, are about to introduce into their system what is practically equivalent to our Ruling Eldership. Even the prelatic churches find it necessary to move in the

same direction. This is a testimony to the efficiency of our order for which we should be grateful. The question that presses upon us is this, shall we, in our sphere, repel other bodies from our system by showing them how dead and cold and useless—how worldly, and weak, the Presbyterian Eldership is?—or shall we show them as we ought, loyal, brave and honest Christian men mighty in the Scriptures, strong and prevailing in prayer,—“laymen” so far as everyday secular work is concerned,—of the people, with and among the people,—but “clergy” in the best and only true sense of the word,—men who love the church for the sake of Him whose the church is,—who rally round their Pastors and aid them by their prayers, counsels, and labours of love; men who instruct the ignorant, warn the erring, rebuke the unruly and rebellious; who visit the sick, help the poor, sympathize with the sorrowing; men who are not afraid or ashamed of the Cross, and are models of temperance, integrity, common sense, manliness, and devotion to the Redeemer's Kingdom.—A consistent Christian life is the best argument in favour of the religion of Christ; a consistent and efficient Eldership doing well their work in Session, and Presbytery, and Synod, is the best practical argument in support of Presbyterianism. We have therefore grave responsibilities with relation to churches not of our order. God has entrusted us with a good, a rational, a scriptural model; let us be true to it not only for the sake of those who are within our church, but also for the sake of those who are without.

We are elected by the people and ordained or set apart by the authority of the church. If in any degree worthy of our place it is true also that the Holy Ghost has called, elected, and ordained us, and given us a place in the true Apostolic succession. Our commission is from heaven. We have vowed to God; we owe to us if we neglect to perform our vow. Our office is a precious talent committed to us by God; let us take heed that we use it so that when our account is given in we shall get the reward of good and faithful servants. We are ac-