

such as "Senior," "Sire," "Sir," "Monsieur," "Senator." The natural elders of the people are the fathers and grandfathers, venerable for their grey hairs, and beautiful with the snows of age; but truly venerable only when wisdom crowns the hoary head, and truly beautiful only when clothed with the beauty of holiness. The "Elders" are found as leaders, representatives, and rulers in patriarchal times, and among the children of Israel throughout the whole compass of their wonderful history. The tribal chiefs or Sheikhs of Syria and Arabia to this day are the Elders of the people. The Elders of the Jews were the rulers of the Synagogues, and it was under their care that the services in the Synagogues were conducted. The Elders of the primitive church are in Scripture ranked with the Apostles, in investigating difficulties, receiving reports, exercising authority, issuing recommendations and decrees. Peter and John, princes among the Apostles, class themselves with the Elders.—The Eldership held an important and honored place in the church under the old dispensation; and it was continued in the church under the new dispensation. Indeed it is perhaps the only office which the Christian Church has inherited from the Jewish Church. The Eldership in this full meaning comprehends our Presbyters, Bishops, Overseers, Pastors, Teachers, Rulers. All these church officers are of the same rank; all these are different names of the same class of officers according to the gifts conferred on them and the work they have to do.

The Presbyterian Church, following primitive example, has a plurality of Elders in every congregation. And although we are not all considered to be grey-haired, venerable, or patriarchal, yet we all should have the sober-mindedness, the stability, the exemplary piety, strong faith, and the judicial calmness, that come with years; and as for the matter of age,—if we were as sure to improve and advance step by step in other necessary qualifications as we are to advance in years, all would soon be well with us and we would not need to be ashamed in the gate.

Ruling Elders of the right stamp are called by the voice of the people, divinely qualified, and set apart by the authority of Jesus Christ, to be leaders in the church. At their ordination they express belief in the Word of God and in a Kingdom of Christ in this world distinct from, and not subordinate to, any earthly power. They acknowledge the Presbyterian form of church government to be in accordance with the Word of God; and they promise submission to the church, in the Lord. They solemnly pledge themselves that, while cherishing a spirit of brotherhood to all the faithful followers of Christ, they will seek the purity, edification, peace and extension of this church. They declare that zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire to advance the interests of His kingdom are their great motives and chief inducements to enter the office of the Eldership; and they promise through grace, faithfully, diligently and cheerfully to discharge all its duties.

Solemn vows! tremendous responsibilities! Who is sufficient for these things! We are rulers in the House of God; we are leaders in the Kingdom of Christ.

It is essential that the Elder should rule well his own heart, his temper, his mind. For if he cannot rule himself, how can he rule his household?—and if he cannot rule his own house it is not fit that he should bear rule in the House of God. In every respect he should be blameless, honest, true. The obligations that rest on all Christians press with redoubled weight upon him. If the common soldier should be brave, skillful and loyal, the officer should possess these qualities pre-eminently. We owe it to our office that none of our doings, in the market place, or in the committee room, in the rail car, or in the street, in the drawing room; or in the wayside inn, should be in any measure questionable, tainted with meanness or selfishness, or beneath the dignity of Christian manhood.

A Ruling Elder's theology should at least extend to a thorough knowledge of the Bible and the symbols of our church. He should be well acquainted with all the work of our own church in the Home Mis-