

counts Elders. Every good man who leads a quiet inoffensive life, doing nothing very distinctively christian or unchristian, is not on this account necessarily qualified for the proper discharge of the duties of the eldership. The fact that a man is singularly good-natured and tolerant, and prone to reconcile contradictories in theology and practical conduct, does not point him out as fit for the office. Mere negative attributes are not enough. Positive qualities and the vigor of character which they impart are demanded. The elder, above all things, must be a man of God—the significant designation by which Old Testament prophets were known. He should be fully persuaded in his own mind and able, by consistent godly living, to convince those who have spiritual discernment that he is a temple of the Holy Ghost; for “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” and therefore not fit to be an elder.

More than this, he should feel himself moved by an inward divine impulse constraining him to undertake this work. This divine call is in reality his primary and highest title to office. He receives and holds his patent direct from the Court of Heaven. God the Holy Spirit first makes elders and ministers, and the Church merely selects, trains, and installs in office those who are thus divinely fitted for it. When she does otherwise she does wrong, and brings upon herself weakness and deadness.

But can the Church, and can a man himself discern that he is fitted for a certain office? Why not? Has not Christ given her the promise of the presence of his Spirit and the providential guidance of his own hand in such matters? And are not good men consciously moved by the truth and the Spirit of God to consecrate themselves to the special service of the Redeemer? There is no need of