

of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church. We rightly claim the equality of the elders, the moderator simply being *primus inter pares*, holding equal office and clothed with equal authority. So much for our theory; what of our practice? It seems to me beyond all dispute that this equality is long since a thing of the past. We have come to distinguish two classes of elders, a superior and inferior, the teaching and ruling, the clerical and lay. They do not have equal ordination; one is ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands, the other simply by prayer. Equality of authority is gone; one has a prescriptive right to the highest offices in the Church, the other is as rigidly excluded. Thus we end by practically establishing three orders, or a modified episcopacy on a small scale. What solitary reason can be advanced for not permitting the so-called ruling elder to administer the Sacrament? Why should he not be eligible for the moderatorship of Presbytery, Synod, or even General Assembly? Is it for want of men of ability? Can it be supposed that the men who take a foremost place in Parliament, on the Bench, at the Bar, and in the Exchange, are incapable of conducting the business of our highest Church courts? Not to speak of illustrious elders in Britain and the United States, men who have made themselves famous in the annals of history, we have in our Dominion men perfectly able to conduct the most difficult business of our highest Church courts. When we get back to primitive Presbyterianism, there will be a higher ideal of the eldership, and increased activity.

IV. Lastly, the want of training is an obstacle in the way of their usefulness. We expect them to preach and teach, visit and pray, without furnishing them with any training for the work. A severe course of study and experience in the mission field is required of one preparing for "the ministry," but nothing in the nature of preparation is required for the eldership. Hence the elders are seldom heard in prayer meeting, or in the Sabbath service. Many, in absence of the settled pastor, are helpless to conduct the worship. In this respect we might well borrow a leaf from the work of other religious denominations. An adequate training, theoretical