

MAY RULING ELDERS BE
MODERATORS?—II.

BY REV. JOHN A. G. CALDER.

The subject now is narrowed down to this. Have we Scripture example for the practice of clerical elders presiding in church courts. It is of course a notorious fact that the Moderator of the district Presbytery in the Jewish Church was a priest, and that like the teaching elder he ruled not as a priest but as an elder, and was, in every act of government, associated with the elders of the people. Take such verses as, "Amariah the chief priest was over them in the Lord," and the chief priest commanded them, etc. From these words of Scripture we learn "by good and necessary consequence," first, that the Sanhedrim had a president; and second, that the president was a clerical elder. Again, it is a common place of history that in every Synagogue there were a bishop, presbyters and deacons. The bishop was called by the several names of bishop, pastor, presbyter and angel of the Synagogue. As he preached and presented the prayers of the congregation he was called the angel and messenger, and as he presided over both the Assembly and the Senate of elders he was called the president or chief ruler. This evidence furnished by history is practically confirmed by many incidental notices in the New Testament. Let two suffice. They are found in Luke xiii. 14 and Acts xviii. 8. These passages, read in the light that has been thrown on the Synagogue by Selden and others, plainly show two things; one, that every Synagogue had a president or chief ruler, and the other, that the chief ruler was the bishop or pastor of the Synagogue.

But the Synagogue was the model upon which the polity of the New Testament was founded. It received the marked commendation of Christ—Matt. xviii. 15-17—and the apostles were not unmindful of the advice of their Master. After Pentecost, they observed the model in ordaining officers, in forming Presbyteries in the several churches and in ruling and governing these Presbyteries. Indeed the elders of the Synagogue became in many cases the elders of the Christian Church, and the president of the Senate became the president of the Presbytery. So clear is this that candid men of all shades of opinion freely admit it. And yet the testimony of the early Church may briefly be cited. One of the apostolic fathers writes, "I exhort that you study to do all things in divine concord; your bishops presiding in the place of God, your elders in the place of the council of the apostles, and your deacons being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ." Another Father, who lived shortly after the time of the apostles, tells us that "the synagogue and afterwards the Church had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the Church." The *Apostolic Constitution* names three classes of officers, teaching elders, bishops or pastors, ruling elders and deacons. The ruling elders it adds are the "Counsellors of the pastor and the Senate of the Church."

Let us take a step farther. It is equally safe to affirm that if the Synagogue was the model of the Church of the first century, the form and order of both, are the form and order of the Church founded and organized by the Scottish Reformers. The law, however, of the Sanhedrim and Synagogue in regard to the presiding officer was the law of the Primitive Churches and has for centuries been the law of all the Presbyterian churches in the world.

But what were the grounds on which the law rested? Were they local and temporary or were they common to all men and all times? In the Sanhedrim and Synagogue there was a division of labour, and a separation of office-bearers into classes. This principle, so necessary to the life and growth of the Jewish Church, carried with it the inevitable conclusion that the same principle would be

found in the Church of the New Testament. And so we are not surprised to find it fully endorsed by the apostles. They affirm again and again that gifts are various and duties diverse—Acts vi. 1-6; Rom. xii. 7-8; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11; 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17. They clearly set forth, moreover, that teaching elders, pastors or ministers are ordained to preach the gospel—2 Tim. iv. 2—to administer ordinances—1 Cor. x. 16—to ordain pastors—Acts xiii. 1-3—Acts xiii. 1-3—to administer rule—1 Tim. v. 17—and that "Governors," or "Elders," have as their proper and only function the exercise of government—1 Tim. v. 17. To cut the matter short, the administration of Church power in connection with doctrine, the sacraments and the ordination of ministers is always exhibited in Scripture as belonging to teaching elders alone. But of the ruling elders we are expressly told that their whole work is to "rule well." Their duties, therefore, are special; they are confined to one department of Church work and consequently they have no right to take part in the symbolic acts by which men are ordained to the higher and nobler work of the ministry. Like begets like is a law in the spiritual as truly as it is in the natural world. But if they cannot ordain pastors they cannot of course fill the Moderator's chair at the ordination and induction of pastors. It would indeed be a shocking inconsistency for an elder to take an ordinary man by the hand and say, "We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this ministry with us." Ruling elders have, in a word, no authority to perform some of the most important duties assigned the Moderator of Presbytery and Session. And common sense as well as Scripture teaches that it is highly improper and absurd to elect men to an office the duties of which they have no right to discharge.

But the Presbyterian Church has, according to the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Whitby, been wandering in the mist and fogs for centuries, and the mists and fogs, they say, must be chased away. These Presbyteries have, in a word, taken upon themselves to change an order of government that can be changed only by the Supreme Court; and by their irregular procedure they hope to dispel every cloud that obscures the moral vision of the Church and send the full tide of life through every channel of Church work. The motion is a good one. But a wise man tells us it is always dangerous to violate, on any pretence, the principles which the experience of ages has proved to be the safeguard of all that is most precious to a community. The members of the recalcitrant Presbyteries have solemnly engaged "to defend the government of the Church and to follow no divisive course from the present order established therein. The present order is that ministers only can be chosen Moderators of church courts. The present order has been the order in Presbyterian Churches for thirty-five centuries, and was sent down to Presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act, "A.N.T. Presbyterian" to the contrary notwithstanding. But the practice of centuries and the present order of the Church are tossed aside with as little ado as most men make when they cast away an old and useless garment. The procedure of these Presbyteries, therefore, is irregular. It is more; it is bad. It is the worst possible, and would have been the worst possible, if it had been established from time immemorial. Well, we have historical traditions and practices that are dear to the memories and hearts of our people; if they are without the authority or contrary to the rules of the Word of God change them, but change them in a constitutional way. The Church of Christ is older than the Church of Calvin and Knox, and the example of the Sanhedrim, the Synagogue and the Primitive Churches rises higher, perhaps, than the practice of the Presbyterian Church. But if their example differs from the order now in force, let the restless agitators of change take the laboring oar and by clear and satisfactory evidence point out wherein the difference lies.

HELPS TO NATURE STUDY.*

BY W. M. R.

Our Maker evidently meant us to have always within easy reach an inexhaustible supply of healthy recreation as a counteractive to the weariness of this work-a-day life of toil and worry into which we are so apt to settle down, and before we know to drift into dreary regions to discouragement and despair. To remedy this we need only lift the latch, and "becoming as little children," pass into God's great kindergarten, which some one has appropriately named "out of doors." We shall find it stored with an endless variety of object lessons of wondrous beauty and most marvellous ingenuity, suited to develop and discipline our mental powers, enlarge their ranges, stimulate our imagination, give pointers to our inventive faculties, minister aesthetic delight, and above all lift our thoughts from sordid grovelling to ennobling fellowship with our beneficent Father.

Each of these hints of blessing in the study of nature might furnish distinct themes for enlargement, did time and space permit, but let it suffice for the present to illustrate them all by introducing to our readers a helpful handbook on "The Natural History of Aquatic Insects" by Prof. J. O. Miall, which has just appeared. In it we find, not only much that is the result of original research, but valuable gleanings from older and foreign authors, not accessible to ordinary readers. These are given to us in clear and simple style, comparatively free from technical phraseology, and aided by many beautiful illustrations, they pour streams of light upon many mysterious problems of insect life, which most often have presented themselves to the observant and inquiring. We find ourselves exclaiming, how wonderful the works of our God! What stores of pleasure lie around us unexplored! For ages men have been puzzling over the best methods of life and travel on earth, water and air, while the great Creator had given us many a startling solution and suggestion, as to how these desiderata might be realized in the structure and transformations of insignificant insects. Even poetic genius finds inspiration in such fields. Witness Tennyson's graphic portraiture of an every day romance:—

To-day, I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.
An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail;
He dried his wings, like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew,
A living flash of light he flew.

Who that has watched the mazy gyration of the little water beetles on the surface of the summer pool has not desired to know more of their life history? Even around the career of our tiny tormentors, the mosquitos, we find a succession of wonderful revelations as we peruse these pages, and almost condone the annoyance they give us in view of the interest we find in the marvels of their structure and adventures, from the moment of embarkation in the eggraft till their graduation and equipment in readiness for delicate surgical operations. Let the reader take the book with him in his first summer outing and he will find its added interest amply repay the cost and trouble involved in its study, when

"The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current stain,
Some show their gaily-gilded train,
Quick glancing in the sun."

Too much importance cannot be attached to the glass supplied to the windows of our churches. Stained glass should always be provided as it gives a solemnity to the inside and an attractiveness from the outside, and in these days when good cheap windows in this line can be obtained as well as good expensive ones, there is no excuse why all these sacred buildings should not have this glass in their windows. The Dominion Stained Glass Co., 94 Adelaide St., west, Toronto, make a specialty of all classes of this work, and are always pleased to give any information that the building committee or others may require in this line. Their prices and work will meet the circumstances of any kind, and both large and small orders will be turned out promptly and satisfactorily. An invitation is given by the firm to call and see their samples, or designs with estimates will be freely supplied on application.

*"The Natural History of Aquatic Insects" by Prof. J. O. Miall, F.R.S. Macmillan & Co., New York, \$1.75.

Teacher and Scholar.

BY REV. A. J. MARTIN, TORONTO.

April 19th, 1896. THE LOST FOUND. { Luke xv. 11-24

GOLDEN TEXT.—Luke xv. 10.
MEMORY VERSES.—18-20.
CATECHISM—Q. 55.HOME READINGS.—M. Isa. i. 10-31. 7*
Jonah i. 1-16 W. Psalm. cxvii. 10-32. 7*
Prov. xiii. 1-25. F. Isa. lv. 1-13. S. Mat. xi. 20-30. Su. Luke xv. 11-24.

There is no more important subject treated of in the Word of God than that which deals with the sinner's restoration to God. Hence we should always strive to present such a view of this matter as will not mislead, but will deal with all the points involved.

If we were to confine our study to this parable for example, we would fall into the error, into which indeed many have fallen, that the atonement is not a necessary pre-requisite to man's restoration. Only when we read and study all three of the parables contained in this chapter are we in a position to grasp the whole truth concerning the matter of the sinner's return to God, as it is here illustrated by the Master. While keeping in view the whole truth taught let us consider our lesson under the headings *the wandering* and *the return*.

I. *The Wandering*—There can scarcely be any doubt that what Jesus had in mind was to make plain the fact that Gentiles as well as Jews are objects of God's favor and care as manifested in the redemption He has wrought, and thus to prepare the minds of the disciples to see when the time came that the outcoming of the Gentiles was a part of the original plan of Jesus. We must be careful to guard against the impression that all men are by birth members of God's family, and that it is only those who consciously rebel against God and wander away from Him, who are in need of Christ's atoning work. We are "conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity," and are "by nature the children of wrath." Let us keep before us clearly that Jesus is here illustrating truth concerning classes and not concerning individuals, though undoubtedly there are many points in which this parable can be made to illustrate most beautifully the return of the individual sinner to God. Turn to the first chapter of Romans, and read there God's inspired record concerning the Gentile wanderings. "Knowing God they glorified Him not as God," "they refused to have God in their knowledge," therefore "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind to do those things which are not fitting." Thus the Gentile world may well be compared to a son, who wearying of the restraints of home, and regardless of his father's claim upon him, and seeking to put all thoughts of his father out of his heart, willfully turns his back upon home and goes out with his father's bounty to seek his own evil way. The Gentile world put God out of their thoughts and though surrounded with the father's bounty and beneficence, yet set its mind upon evil things and sought satisfaction in wrong. Hence the soul famine among them. Think of the destitution of all spiritual food there is in the heathen religions of to-day. All heathen are degraded to the very level of the beasts, and know not where to turn that the cravings and longings of their souls may be satisfied.

II. *The Return*.—The first thing leading to the prodigal's return was his "coming to himself," his recognition of the hopelessness and helplessness of his condition, and the apprehension of the fact that in his father's house there were better things even for the lowest servant. Perhaps the parallel in this last part of the parable with the experience of the individual soul in its return to Christ, is owing to the fact that the return of the Gentile world must be the return of individuals. Though we are told of the time when "nations shall be born in a day," yet nothing is more certain than that that birth must be due to the operation of the Divine Spirit upon the hearts of the individuals constituting those nations. Hence perhaps we will hardly be regarded as inconsistent if we deal with this last part as though it represented the return of the individual to God. First man must be convinced of the misery and guilt of his sin, he must be made to know of the provision which awaits him in the Father's home, and then, made willing, "he will arise and go to the Father." Then, what a surprise! He finds that the Father runs to meet him, and receives him, not to the menial place he feels is his due, but to all the privileges of sonship. His rags are taken away for ever and a beautiful robe put upon him (Christ's righteousness); a ring is put upon his hand (rank as God's son is bestowed upon him); shoes are put upon his feet (he is no longer a slave but a free man); the fatted calf is killed, and a feast prepared (he is made welcome to all the stores of grace); and there is rejoicing over his return (the angels and holy ones rejoice over every penitent sinner more than over all the great events in this world's history). Let us then be up and doing, reaching out after the wandering ones, seeking to bring them to themselves that they may arise and come, and so find a father's love and an eternal reward.