

complexity of requirement, it is perfectly legitimate and consistent with the principles of the scriptures and with the practice of the Apostolic church, to establish additional offices. And these may, in the fashion of the world, be marked by titles of one sort and another. But in the spiritual order, there is strict parity. The offices are but manifestations of one and the self-same Spirit. And their occupiers are no more superior or inferior as such to each other than are the members of the human or any other body.

In brief, the Eldership is the manifestation, in human embodiment, through diversities of gifts, of the one Divine Spirit. To the diversities of those manifestations none but the Spirit can set limitations. The sign or mark by which His presence may be ascertained is no external ceremony, as of laying on of hands, or conferring of title, or wearing a peculiar dress,—nor by any device of this sort in his presence guaranteed, or can it necessarily be secured. Equally, by the lack of device of this sort, neither can his presence be excluded, nor, where the fruits of the Spirit are clearly growing, may His presence be denied. Forms of Ordination are becoming and proper,—desirable, it may be reasonably averred. But it is impossible for one guided by the analogy of scripture, to attach any importance whatever to the forms of any sort, considered in themselves.

Holding thus, as I do, the strict parity of the Eldership in its widest interpretation, differentiated only by reference to the kind of work to be done, the spirit in which it is done, and the greater or less degree of qualification for such work, I feel no difficulty with references, *e. g.*, to the moderatorship of any of our church-courts. Has any Elder, or person holding any office in the church,

shown himself possessed of the gift to rule well, and of the knowledge requisite satisfactorily to discharge that or any other duty? On Presbyterian principles, be the practice what it may have been, he may warrantably be chosen to occupy such a position.

Again, I feel no difficulty as to the appointment of any one to an office to which, if thought proper, the title of Bishop may be attached. Our own admirable Superintendent of Missions in the North West furnishes a case in point.

I would with diffidence venture a little farther, and contend that the time is ripe for a reconstruction of our methods of induction to pastorates. These are, I will not say in all cases, quite too elaborate. In a Presbytery such as that with which it was my privilege for many years to be connected, it is growingly difficult to pay full respect to customs sufficiently easy and perhaps profitable where the territory is less extensive, and the charges are generally self-sustaining. I would venture to suggest, as a first step toward a new departure, that formalities, often meaning so little, now gone through at all inductions, be dispensed with in all cases where a congregation is not self-sustaining. The repeated proposal of the same questions bearing upon orthodoxy, motives, &c., does certainly not tend to increased reverence therefore, in the face of short pastorates and frequent changes.

It is open to any church to establish as many and as great a variety of courts as its necessities may demand. While perfectly satisfied with those existing among us, I connect no idea of fixedness or of special "divine prescription" with the courts as now constituted. And our various Committees are evidence that the church needs more than Sessions.