

upon the flock committed to their charge, both publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein." They are set apart to their office by the Session already in existence, the Minister invoking the Spirit of God upon them in an ordaining prayer.

The Westminster Assembly, without adopting the term "Elder," strongly asserted, as we have seen, the position that there must be representatives of the congregation associated with the Minister in the government of the congregation. "As there were in the Jewish Church elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the Church, so Christ, who hath instituted government and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in His Church, beside the Minister of the word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereupon, who are to join with the Minister in the government of the Church, which officers reformed churches commonly call Elders." They do not accept the title of the ruler, but they assert the thing, "Church rulers." They thought that confusion resulted in the Church of Scotland from the use of the word "Elder," because they reserved the Greek word *presbuteros* as equivalent to "bishop" or "minister."

By whatever title known, they, in the Church Courts, are the chosen representatives of the membership of the congregation through whom the self-government of the Church is secured. We have seen that at the very beginning of the Christian organization, the advice or consent of the disciples, at large, was obtained before the eleven Apostles would choose a substitute for Judas Iscariot, or would ordain deacons. In accordance with that ideal, we find that at the Council of Jerusalem and on other occasions, account is taken of the co-operation of "the whole church," meaning thereby the whole body of the faithful through their representatives. The Westminster divines make a happy use of this scripture phrase to set forth their conception of the unity of Christians. Our Presbyterian system, they contend, is a government of the whole church by the whole church; in which "the whole is responsible for each, and each is answerable to the whole." It is a spiritual democracy, if you will, in contradistinction to the papal system, which is imperialistic. But the ordination of these "elders" or "church rulers" is of a different kind from that of the Ministers. The latter are solemnly set apart, by the