

will the few zealous ones undertake to approach them and say, "We are sorry to inform you that your usefulness is gone, and it would be better for all parties if you would step down and out." These and other dark methods, not unknown in the experience of ministers, are totally unheard of with respect to elders. Yet it is felt on every hand that these incapables should be made to withdraw. Moreover, the very best of our elders must reach the limit of usefulness. The General Assembly has fixed the age for a minister at seventy, when he is gently let down with the title of pastor emeritus—whatever that may mean—and with a place on the list of annuitants. Dr. Chalmers used to regard sixty as the time to cease work, and make the remainder of the three score and ten a Sabbath of years, whilst many of our congregations think a minister merely marks time after fifty. The time has not been so fixed for elders, but in the course of nature they must become physically unable to attend to the duties of their office, and with advancing age the mind inevitably tends to conservatism. Desirous of having all things continue as they were from the beginning, every new departure is regarded with suspicion and frowned upon. Hence the increasing desire among members of the Church for young men rather than old ones in the Session, young men full of vim and energy. But how is this evil to be remedied? Only in one way; by a time limit. Let the elders be elected for a term of years only, three or more, as the case might be, and, like the managers, so many retiring each year, of course open for re-election if deemed expedient. In this way, and in no other, would minister and congregation have the opportunity of weeding out cumberers of the ground, who are not only useless, but positively hurtful by their example to others.

II. A second defect in the work of the eldership is want of time. On an average there is one elder for every fifteen families, or twenty-eight members, and to visit, teach and attend to these, as they should be attended to, calls for a serious demand upon their time. Four rounds a year, none too often, spending a decent amount of time in religious conversation, would require not less than about a fortnight. Doubt-