

THE
ELDER-MODERATOR
DEBATE,
1886-7.

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PRINCETON. N. J.

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Elder-moderatorship

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REQUEST TO PUBLISH.

CAPT. E. R. MONFORT :

Dear Sir—The undersigned believe that the adoption of the Elder-Moderator Overture would be highly injurious to our Church especially with the implications assumed by those who champion it. If we are to obliterate the distinction between ministers and elders, then it ought to be done by a consistent revision of the whole book. In any event, it will greatly help all parties to read both sides. We are, therefore, earnestly in favor of the full publication and widest circulation of the discussion. It will go far to prevent any tendency among our people to either prelacy or independency. We highly commend the thoroughness and fairness of your management of the discussion.

MINISTERS.

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 B. W. Chidlaw, D.D., . Cincinnati, O.
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 Col. John Kennett, . Cincinnati, O.
 Daniel Potter, . Steubenville, O.

ELDER-MODERATORSHIP:

A

DISCUSSION

OF THE

ELDER-MODERATOR OVERTURES,

BY



E. R. MONFORT, LL.D.,

Editor of the "Herald and Presbyter," Cincinnati, O.,

AND

W. C. GRAY, PH.D.,

Editor of the "Interior," Chicago, Ill

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE "HERALD AND PRESBYTER" AND THE "INTERIOR."

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1887.

EXPLANATORY.

This discussion grew out of declarations of Dr. Gray in answer to articles by Rev. Drs. Patterson and Ritchie, as well as the editors of the *Herald and Presbyter*, defying us to meet him in the discussion of the Elder-Moderator Overtures on Scripture ground. After six articles had been published, it was agreed that the propositions to be discussed should be :

I. Ruling elders and ministers are not of the same scriptural order, though they have some functions in common.

II. It is inexpedient to adopt the overtures now before the Church concerning the eligibility of ruling elders to the moderatorship.

I agreed to discuss the scriptural questions involved, although the Assembly, in submitting the overtures, did not intend any investigation or change of the Bible basis of our church polity. In defending our system, I have tried to show that Jesus Christ, the antitype of prophets, priests and kings of the Jewish Church, became, when on earth, the visible Head of the Church, claiming all power in heaven and on earth; appointed his apostles, the first presbytery, to be his representatives and witnesses, and sent them to preach and dispense the sacraments and ordination; they first chose a successor to Judas, "to take part with them in this ministry and apostleship," and then began to preach and dispense holy ordinances; that they soon ordained Paul as an "apostle and a preacher," and with him, Barnabas as a minister; that Timothy, Titus, and others, were ordained ministers by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; that ministers were preachers and rulers in unity of office, exercising rulership in the churches where they were pastors, and general rulership over all the churches, in virtue of their presbyterial ordination, authority and membership; that they and the churches they planted were the visible Church—superseding the Jewish economy and administration, which ceased to have any authority, as a visible organization and government in the Kingdom of God, and became the enemy of the Church of Christ, as it is to this day; that the apostles, and the ministers they ordained, appointed elders in every church, most probably the choice of the people, as in the election of the first deacons; that the parochial elders were only rulers, in conjunction with these preaching elders or ministers, in churches where there were pastors; that the functions and duties of ministers and parochial elders were different—that the latter were rulers only, and that the office of the former, is rulership and preaching in unity; that ruling elders are representatives of the people in the church at home and as delegates to higher courts; that the duties of a moderator require the exercise of ministerial functions, and, though a ruling elder could preside over some proceedings, it would lead to debate and confusion in deciding what he could do or could not do as moderator; that the overture, if adopted, would make our system a confusion and a contradiction, and that it is inexpedient to adopt it. This is the line of argument that I have pursued in the discussion. I ask the reader carefully to note that all Dr. Gray's quotations of authorities, save one, have reference to the parity of the ministry as against prelacy, and no reference to the parity of ministers and ruling elders.

I am glad to print on the last page of the cover of this pamphlet the call for its publication, hoping for a more careful reading thereby. Dr. Gray, before the debate, proposed to join me in the publication of the discussion, but declined when it was ended. Instead of assisting in the publication and circulation of the whole discussion, he has published a treatise of his own, and I am left to do the work alone. I ask all to read and circulate the pamphlet—especially among ruling elders.

E. R. MONFORT.

ELDER-MODERATOR DISCUSSION.

I.

"Herald and Presbyterian," November 3, 1836.

THE ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

THE *Interior* takes the ground that there is no real difference between the Old Testament and New Testament elders; that ruling elders have scriptural authority for administering the sacraments of the Church; that ruling elders are eligible under our present Form of Government to the position of moderator in our church courts; that the overtures before the Church are only a formal expression of what ruling elders are entitled to enjoy under our present Form of Government; that those who oppose these views are seeking to degrade the eldership, and that we in Cincinnati are either ignorant of, or afraid to discuss, the scriptural and constitutional questions involved; and further, that ministers should not and can not discuss the question from the standpoint of a ruling elder. From these propositions we respectfully dissent. We believe that there is scriptural authority for both preaching and ruling elders; that their authority and functions are not the same, although having some functions in common, and that the discussion of the true status of both and their relations to each other and the Church may be fully and frankly carried on without subjecting us to the unjust criticism of attempting to degrade the office of ruling elder. Now, therefore, the writer, being a ruling elder, has made a proposition for a public discussion, which has been sent to Dr. Gray.

A PROPOSITION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor of the Interior:—

You are a ruling elder and so am I. You are the editor of a Presbyterian paper and so am I. You object to ministers speaking for the elders, because they "do not look at the matter from our standpoint." My standpoint and yours are the same, and hence my right to speak you will not question. You and I hold different views, and therefore I propose that we discuss the question, for six weeks or more, whether ruling elders should be made moderators, and publish the debate in the *Interior* and the *Herald and Presbyterian*. I believe the readers of both papers would enjoy such a discussion, if free from discourtesy and invidious personalities, and confined to the questions at issue. If you are agreed, I will undertake to establish the following propositions:

1. Ruling elders, according to our Form of Government, are not eligible to the office of moderator in our church courts, except in church sessions where there is no minister, and where it is impracticable, without great inconvenience, to procure the attendance of a minister.

2. Ruling elders and ministers are not of the same order, although they have some functions in common.

3. It is inexpedient to adopt the overtures before the Church, making ruling elders eligible as moderators.

I will write and publish the first article, and the next week you can print it in your paper with your reply, and the next week I will insert your article with my second, and so on to the end. You have noticed that the majority of presbyteries have postponed action on the overtures until the spring meetings. It is a good time to discuss the question. You think that we here in Cincinnati are afraid of this question. I will be able, as I suppose, to show that I am willing, frankly and fully, to discuss every point in the light both of the Scriptures and the Constitution of our Church. Respectfully,

E. R. MONFORT.

"Herald and Presbyter," November 10, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

DR. GRAY'S ANSWER.

Dr. E. R. Monfort, of the Herald and Presbyter:—

DEAR BROTHER:—Pardon me for employing a sanguinary illustration when I say that, while I am not familiar with the "code," I remember in a general way that the challenging party did not include, in his cartel, requirements in regard to the locality and topography of the ground, the positions of the combatants and the character of the weapons. It would not have been considered modest. But as there are to be no "invidious personalities" between us, I will not impugn your native coyness, but beg leave to suggest that your program is not conducive to profitable debate.

I. Your first proposition is stated negatively—that ruling elders are not now eligible to the moderatorship; and you ask me to insist that they are already eligible. But by advocating an amendment to the law I tacitly admit that the amendment is necessary. You, therefore, ask me to assist you against myself. I think it quite probable that you and I together could get me down. But with so many preachers in your vicinity who seem anxious to speak for the elders, while they speak against them, you can afford to excuse me.

II. The real issue before the Church *could* be debated upon your second proposition, if both disputants chose to do so; but the terms of the proposition do not *compel* it. The Scripture saith: "Him who is weak in faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." You are weak in the faith concerning the eldership, Bro. Monfort, and I desire to feed you on the milk of the word.

III. Your third proposition again brings up the question of the present eligibility of elders. You must have some sort of a dead-fall rigged up for me, with that question for the bait. I will take it by saying that I believe they are now eligible—so now pull your string and let us see what comes of it.

IV. You state affirmative propositions negatively so as to take to your side the advantage of the affirmative. Very well, I will concede this or any other advantage to you, short of abandoning the real question at issue.

Having disposed of your by-play, Bro. Elias, let us now come down to business.

The question is a question of amending a subordinate standard to make it more fully conform to the supreme standard. The only authority in such a case is that supreme standard—the Holy Scriptures. Our Confession of Faith positively excludes all human authority, including itself, from any voice in such decisions. This is the bed-rock of evangelical Christianity, and on that rock, and nowhere else, can the truth in this controversy be established.

For this reason, in answer to your challenge for a debate, I offer to discuss the following questions with you:

I. Is the office of the elder in the Presbyterian Church the office instituted by divine authority, and by that name designated in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

II. Do the Scriptures make a distinction between the elder who labors in word and doctrine, and the elder who rules, such as to give official superiority in rulership to the elder who teaches?

III. Is it expedient to adopt an overture which shall clearly define the eligibility of the ruling elder to the moderatorship of the higher courts in our branch of the Presbyterian Church?

The above questions bring out the two scriptural considerations of lawfulness and expediency. You may consider them as put negatively, if you choose, and lead off accordingly.

I suggest that each article be limited to one column—making two, one on each side, in one paper.

It seems to me that we ought to be able to say what we have to say in less than six weeks. If we are going to be that long-winded, let us keep mum about it at the start, and break it to our afflicted subscribers gradually. I am, dear Bro. Monfort, affectionately yours,

WM. C. GRAY.

"Herald and Presbyter," November 10, 1886

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, *Editor of the Interior*:—

DEAR BROTHER:—Your illustration taken from the dueling code is not pertinent, for the reason that the only weapons and place possible to us are our editorial pens and the columns of our papers. You claim the right, moreover, to name the cause of controversy. In other words, you are ready to meet me at the place, and with the weapons proposed, if we can find another basis of disagreement.

My propositions were framed in view of the public utterances of the *Interior* from time to time. They set forth the grounds of difference between us, while your new propositions clearly avoid some points of difference which I deem vital to the discussion. Moreover, it is not accurate to say that I am the challenger. I have taken up the gauntlet that you have several times thrown down. I have simply accepted your challenge, and upon questions which you proposed. You said in the *Interior* of October 14th, in reply to Dr. Patterson:

Tell us whether the Presbyterian elder is a true scriptural elder. Tackle that question, Doctor; it is not worth while for us to challenge the weathercocks on the Cincinnati vanes, or the choppers of sausage logic below, to answer that question. Some of them don't know, and those who do know are afraid.

Then again in the same paper you say:

The arguments of Drs. Hays, Ritchie and the Monforts make no pretense to be founded on Scripture, and we make bold to say that those gentlemen, and others who hold with them, *dare* not place the discussion on that high ground. Anything less than such a discussion of a scriptural question is mere petty twaddle.

This is certainly a challenge, and was so understood by your readers, as well as by myself.

My first proposition, that ruling elders are not eligible under our Form of Government to the moderatorship, except in the church session when an emergency exists, was based upon your frequent assertion that they are eligible. This you say in your article, have frequently said, and repeat in your reply to Dr. Ritchie in the *St. Louis Evangelist* of October 21, viz.:

If the Presbyterian elder is a true scriptural elder, then he is officially competent to perform any duty to which the Presbytery, Synod or Assembly shall call or appoint him. If he is a ruler in God's house, he is competent to rule as moderator. We do not believe that our "Book" is against this view, or that any amendment is necessary, though we favor the overtures to remove any doubt.

My second proposition was based upon your frequent assertion that there is no difference between the teaching and ruling elder; that ruling elders have the scriptural authority for performing all the functions of the teaching elder, including the administration of the sacraments. In the *Interior* of October 21 you said:

It would be scripturally lawful for us [ruling elders] to exercise any ministerial function, and we would not hesitate to do it in circumstances where the glory of God and the consolation and edification of his people seemed to require it.

This was said in reply to a criticism charging you with holding that elders have the scriptural right to administer the sacraments. I have, therefore, a right to believe that you hold that elders have "scriptural authority for performing all the functions of the ordained minister."

My third proposition raises the question of the expediency of adopting the overtures now before the Church, and certainly it is a plain expression of our different views. The three propositions taken together are a clear statement of our disagreement, which is not the case with those you present, as they obscure or abolish the differences between us.

Your *first* uses the phrase "office of an elder." A minister is an elder. Our controversy has reference to "ruling elders," which is the name always used in our Form of Government, and in the overtures now before the Church.

Your *second* presents the question whether ministers have "official superiority in rulership." About this we do not differ. I hold that ministers and elders are equal as rulers. A moderator does not rule except when he gives a casting vote, or decides a point of order, and these are not ministerial acts, although some acts of a moderator are necessarily ministerial.

Your *third* is abstract in form. It does not affirm nor deny the expediency of adopting the present overtures, which is now the question before the Church.

When you say, in italics, "*The question is a question of amending a subordinate standard to make it more fully conform to the supreme standard,*" you beg the question. I think I will be able to show that the amendment proposed will diminish the conformity of our church polity to the "supreme standard," the Scriptures, and my judgment is that a majority of the presbyteries will so vote. Again, when you affirm that "our Confession of Faith excludes all human authority, including itself, from any voice in such decisions," you can hardly have forgotten that the Confession professes to be an expression of the teaching of Scripture, and that it requires church officers to believe it by taking a solemn vow; and you can hardly mean that the Church has no authority, in voting upon the pending or other overtures, to decide for itself what the Bible teaches on such questions. Certainly the Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice, but neither you nor I are infallible interpreters. All we can do is to give our opinions, and let the Church decide. Such a decision is the Confession, and it is worthy of some authority with you and me, for have we not adopted it "as containing the system of doctrine contained in the word of God"?

You say that I "state affirmative propositions negatively, so as to take the advantage of the affirmative." Not at all! My propositions will have to be supported by affirmative testimony as fully and completely as if stated affirmatively. I will have no advantage in this, nor do I seek any.

Your anxiety because of the apparent inconsistency of your position in holding that the Book makes ruling elders eligible to the moderatorship and at the same time favoring the amendment, is groundless. You may consistently do this if your aim is to remove the doubts of others and not your own. You may also favor the amendment to make our Standards "more fully or plainly scriptural" without fear of "a dead-fall rigged up with such a bait." In the same connection let me ask you not to charge me, as you have some others who disagree with you, with seeking to degrade the eldership. I believe the eldership to be an intelligent, earnest and consecrated class, who will read this debate for the sole purpose of better informing themselves as to their place and duties.

Now, therefore, if you are ready to discuss these propositions, I promise you to avoid all "doubtful disputations," and deal in "the milk of the word" and in the law of our church polity. Respectfully,
E. R. MONFORT.

IV.

"Herald and Presbyterian," November 17, 1885.

THE ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. Gray, of the *Interior*, does not reply to my article of last week, for the reason, no doubt, that I was unable to send a proof in time for him to prepare an answer. All that he says in his last number is contained in the following:

"Our beloved friend in Cincinnati is writing around in a wild way for reinforcements. He does not seem to have much confidence either in the editorial staff of which he is a part, or in the ministers in his immediate vicinity, who are afraid to give the Assembly discretionary powers in the election of its moderator. Dr. Monfort is calling for help in all parts of the Church. Dr. Howard Crosby, of New York, writes us:

"*My Dear Dr. Gray:*—I have just sent E. R. Monfort a letter in reply to a query, as follows: "Dear Brother Monfort: The ruling elder (as I take it, is a *spiritual ruler* in the church—the deacon being a helper in temporal things. Hence he is included in the category of 1 Tim. iii. 1-7. "Bishop and elder" being synonymous (comp. verse 5). He differs from the "minister" (so-called) only as not *preaching* (1 Tim. v. 17). The church has only elders and deacons as officers. The elders are all of the same order, and hence should be eligible to the moderatorship. This is to me the only consistent doctrine; otherwise elders are *no* elders, but deacons." H. C.

"We hear of these appeals by Dr. Monfort for help, on all sides. The plan is, we suppose, to let loose an avalanche of them upon us in the course of the debate.—*Interior*, Nov. 11th."

My note to which Dr. Crosby replies, was not an appeal for aid, but a request for his definition in as brief a form as possible of a minister and a ruling elder. The

same request was sent to six or eight others, my purpose being to examine the different shades of opinion, if they should differ, and thereby be able to reinforce my own views. All but two have replied to my letters, and among these Dr. Crosby stands alone. All the others stand by the Form of Government as the best interpretation of Scripture. This course, which was adopted without consulting any one, my judgment approves, and I might have done well to go further, for I regard it as the duty of every one who undertakes to discuss so important a question, to exhaust every source of information, whether it be found in the Scriptures, the Form of Government, the opinions of religious teachers, books, magazines, Minutes of the General Assembly, or elsewhere. It is very obvious I could not expect aid from Dr. Crosby, after his declaring himself so fully and frankly at the last General Assembly as favorable to the election of ruling elders as moderators. A good lawyer, when he has an important case, is always concerned as to the grounds of opposition, and the evidence that may be produced at the trial. A military commander will take the deepest interest in the strength and movements of the enemy. So my limited experience in law and war has led me to desire an interview with clear-headed men like Dr. Crosby, who differ with me. These letters were not intended for publication, and it was not my plan to let loose an avalanche of them upon Dr. Gray in the course of the debate. Nor do I believe that Dr. Crosby expected him to publish his letter in the *Interior*. It was simply as Dr. Crosby says, "In reply to a query," and it meets the point.

In reply to Dr. Crosby, now that his letter has been published, I will say: 1. I can not accept his opinion that "the Church has only elders and deacons as officers;" only two officers instead of three; for I believe that our Standards are consistent with Scripture when it is said in

Chap. III., Sec. 2. The ordinary and perpetual officers in the church are Bishops or Pastors; the representatives of the people, usually styled Ruling Elders; and Deacons.

2. I can not agree with him when he says: "He (the ruling elder) differs from the minister (so-called) only as not preaching." They differ, also, in their authority as to the administration of the sacraments and ordination, as well as church censures. The minister or pastor is an elder, but he is more than an elder, as our Church Constitution says:

Chap. IV. The pastoral office is the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills this office, hath, in Scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the angel of the church. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. And as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

Some of these definitions of a minister apply in part to ruling elders, and some do not. That we may know the place assigned to the ruling elder in our Church, and how he differs in office or degree from the minister, the Form of Government says:

Chap. V. Ruling elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers. This office has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments, and of those who rule well but do not labor in word and doctrine.

This definition shows that the ruling elder is not the same with the minister in grade and functions. It is, therefore, clear that he can not do all that is required of a moderator, for the offices are manifestly not the same.

I do not forget that Dr. Crosby gives what he regards as scriptural definitions, and that quotations from our Form of Government do not disprove all that he claims. I draw on our Standards only to show that I hold the same views with the framers of our Book; that his interpretation of the Scripture is erroneous. I will give the Scripture argument in due time.

Although I have no intention of publishing the answers to my note to a half dozen or more eminent men, chiefly theological professors, I feel like doing so since the publication of what Dr. Crosby wrote, especially for the reason that all take a different view from him. I have no reply from Dr. Skinner, but when it comes I feel quite sure he will be found to be in harmony with other teachers of theology. Here is what Dr. A. A. Hodge, of Princeton, has to say:

PRINCETON, N. J., November 1, 1886.

Dr. E. R. Monfort—Dear Sir:—According to our Book, a ruling elder is (1) a layman engaged in secular life—a doctor, or merchant, or farmer, or otherwise. However men may object to the distinction between lay and clerical, it is impossible to exclude it as long as the ministry is set apart from all worldly business and consecrated entirely to sacred things; as long as it is made a distinct profession, for which men are prepared by a special education, and in which they are supported by a professional income. And all experience proves that it is injurious, in the highest degree, to the interests of the Church, if these are left at the disposal of the clerical class alone. According to our Book the ruling elder is, in (2) the second place, chosen to represent the people in the church courts, and (3) as such a representative to rule in the exercise of the church power vested in the people fundamentally.

A minister is all this and more, for the higher office includes the lower. He is a representative of the people and rules in virtue of their election as pastor. But besides this (1) he is ordained to preach and teach as an ambassador for God, and to administer sealing ordinances; (2) in order to this he is set apart to the distinct clerical order or profession, specially educated and salaried to that end, and separated from all secular pursuits. The movement in favor of making elders moderators is certainly new. It was never in the minds of the founders of the Reformed or Presbyterian churches, or of their successors. It has no meaning, unless it is a practical deduction from the theory that ministers of the gospel and ruling elders have received the same ordination and occupy the same office. This is (1) pure episcopacy. Each congregation would be presided over by a bench of clergymen, of whom one would be set over the rest by his special education and functions, and by his permanent presidency as pastor; (2) this proposed new system would be purely hierarchical, leaving absolutely no room for lay representation. Hence it would be in its principles and necessary logic absolutely un-Presbyterian—the opposite of our historic Book.

Yours truly,

A. A. HODGE.

Dr. Shedd, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, it will be noted, holds the same views with Dr. A. A. Hodge and his father, Dr. Charles Hodge. He writes:

NEW YORK, November 3, 1886.

Dr. E. R. Monfort, Esq.—Dear Sir:—I am glad that you have undertaken to defend the positions laid down in your printed list, and should be very willing to aid you in any way. But I am not an expert in church polity. If I were to construct an argument, I should avail myself of Dr. Charles Hodge's views of the eldership as given in his "Church Polity." (See index, articles "Elder" and "Eldership.")

Yours very truly,

W. G. T. SHEDD.

Prof. McClelland, of Allegheny Theological Seminary, and other ministers write the same strain.

E. R. MONFORT.

V.

"Herald and Presbyterian," November 24, 1886.

THE ELDER-MODERATORSHIP.

Dr. E. R. Monfort, of the Herald and Presbyterian: Dear Brother:—Putting aside the minor matters in your letter, let us come to an agreement. My first proposition for debate was:

I. Is the office of the elder in the Presbyterian Church the office instituted by divine authority, and by that name designated in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

The only objection you make to this proposition is that the word "ruling" is omitted. Very well, let it be amended so as to meet your wishes; it will then read, stated negatively:

I. The office of the ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church is not the office instituted by divine authority and designated by the name "elder" in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

In regard to my second, you say:

Your second presents the question whether ministers have "official superiority in rulership." About this we do not differ. I hold that ministers and elders are equal as rulers.

Very good indeed. We are now agreed that ministers and elders are equal in rulership.

I will, if you wish, accept your second, after making it clear by inserting the word "scriptural," which would make it read:

II. Ruling elders and ministers are not of the same scriptural order, though they have some functions in common.

But it may perhaps be regarded as a repetition of the first, and therefore not necessary.

I will accept your third if you will make it colorless in regard to the existing situation. You certainly do not wish me to accept a form of statement which implies what I do not believe. Put it in some such way as this:

III. It is inexpedient to adopt the overtures now before the Church concerning the eligibility of ruling elders to the moderatorship.

Now let me try to clear away some of your minor objections by satisfying them or dispelling them.

You say that I have avoided some points which you consider vital to the discussion. Very well, I will debate with you any point on which we may differ in regard to the eldership, on any grounds you may choose, provided you first debate the scriptural question pure and simple.

You say I challenged you. Nay, brother, unless I did so by "challenging the panel." I have repeatedly said that I did not believe that any man on your side dared to discuss this question as a question of Scripture. If, as you now say, your first letter to me was intended as a reply to my general challenge, then you publicly admitted the charge, and showed that you did not dare to meet the scriptural issue. You substituted another question, and one not now before the Church; namely, the present eligibility of elders.

I do not care for your violation of a personal right (which right every one acknowledges, and which even a duelist would respect), by dictating terms in your challenge, except for the fact that under it you are trying to force side issues upon me in place of the main question.

You remind me that the Standards are scriptural. Very well, then; if the teachings of the Scriptures and the Standards are identical on this subject, what possible apology have you to offer for not going to the Scriptures alone? As a lawyer, you know that no judge would allow you to put a synopsis in evidence when the full original was in court, and you never would make yourself ridiculous in a courtroom by proposing such a thing. But the matter is more serious than that. Refusing to accept the Scriptures as the only authority is disobedience to our Lord's command. It is to put the word of man on an equality with the word of God. It is to cast reproach on the primary principle of our Confession of Faith and the distinctive principle of evangelical Christianity. Any Romanist will cheerfully go to the Scriptures with you if you will allow him to put his interpretation of them as of equal authority with the text. It is of no use for you to deny that you are in this category until you bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Your acts are facts; your words may be dreams.

It is ridiculously absurd to ask us to submit a question, raised by a constitutional movement to amend the Standards, to the Standards. If we did not believe them capable of the construction you put upon them, what a set of blunderheads we would be to urge the amendment! If the Standards must, like the Scripture, be tested by themselves, then we have popery in doctrine, as we practically have had prelaty in policy. It is because you gentlemen know that you can put the plausible construction upon the Standards, which construction it is the object of the amendments to forbid; it is because you know this that you make the ridiculous demand upon us to submit the question of amending the Standards to the Standards. And it is equally because you know that the Scriptures are dead against you that you can not be coaxed or taunted into a debate of the scriptural question.

You say the name "ruling elder" "is always used in our Form of Government." You are a rash man to propose to argue a question on the basis of a book which you evidently have not read. The simple scriptural term "elder," is used in the Form of Government twenty-eight times—much more than twice as many as the phrase "ruling elder." Of these the instances in which you will admit that the simpler term is applied to our class are about double as many as those in which "ruling elder" is used (note 1). You say:

When you say in italics, "*The question is, a question of amending a subordinate Standard to make it more fully conform to the supreme Standard,*" you beg the question. I think I will be able to show the amendment proposed will diminish the conformity of our church polity to the "supreme Standard," the Scriptures, and my judgment is that a majority of the presbyteries will so vote.

The proposition that the way to amend a subordinate Standard is to make it more fully conform to the supreme Standard, is an axiom—a self-evident proposition. Is that the reason why you call it "begging the question"? Or is it because you think that I assert that the amendment will make it more fully conform? If so, it is then self-evident that I give you your full field to deny it, so that it is absurd to say I begged the question. You take the last position and say that you will be able to

show the contrary. If so, then I have begged none of your premises. And now, let me demand in conclusion: If you know that you are "able to show that the amendment proposed will diminish the conformity of our polity to the supreme Standard, the Scriptures," why in the world do you "stand trembling on the brink" of the scriptural question "and fear to launch away"? WM. C. GRAY.

VI.

"Herald and Presbyterian," November 24, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, of the Interior:—

DEAR BROTHER:—Since reading your last article, I am satisfied we shall agree upon the issues to be discussed. I am still at a loss, however, to know why you do not desire to discuss my first proposition, which raises only the question of the eligibility of ruling elders to the moderatorship under our present Form of Government, especially in view of your first effort "to clear away the minor objections." You now say:

You say that I have avoided some points which you consider vital to the discussion. Very well; I will debate with you any point on which we may differ in regard to the eldership, on any grounds you may choose, provided you first debate the scriptural question pure and simple.

You are mistaken as to my refusal to discuss the questions from a scriptural standpoint. I constructed my propositions in what seemed to me the logical order. My second was framed in view of the presentation of a scriptural argument, and it was my purpose to go into the Scriptures when we reached it. You need not have any fears on that question, nor waste any time in pressing it upon me. Your first proposition, as now presented, is:

1. The office of the ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church is not the office instituted by divine authority and designated by the name "elder" in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

What you have in view in this, will be included in the scriptural argument on your second. I think we agree that the ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church holds an office instituted by divine authority, and designated by the name elder in the Scriptures. I may possibly differ with you, if you hold that the term elder in the Scriptures, in every place it is used, is equivalent to "the ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church." Sometimes it is used to designate a spiritual ruler; sometimes political or secular; sometimes both, and often only an old man. We may differ on some points, but we certainly can not take opposite sides on your first proposition as a whole.

You agree to accept my second proposition with the word "scriptural" inserted. I do not see that this changes the proposition, as the scriptural argument must be made under it. Very well, the issue is joined on the second, which will be number one, as follows:

I. Ruling elders and ministers are not of the same scriptural order, though they have some functions in common.

I will also accept the form you propose for the third, which will be number two, as follows:

II. It is inexpedient to adopt the overtures now before the Church concerning the eligibility of ruling elders to the moderatorship.

Furthermore, to hasten the joinder of issues, I am willing to confine the discussion to this proposition alone, if you choose, and I will promise to give attention "first" to proving that it is inexpedient to adopt the overtures, for the reason that "ruling elders and ministers are not of the same scriptural order, though they have some functions in common." This will insure you the scriptural argument from my standpoint, which you regard as of so much importance, which I promised and always intended to give. Now, it lies with you to say whether we shall discuss the two propositions, or the latter, which covers all the ground of "lawfulness or expediency."

You still seem to think that I have "some sort of a dead-fall rigged up," with these questions for bait. I assure you I am ready and anxious for the debate on its merits, and will frankly and fully present my side. With this in view, I have

accepted your last two propositions, and, if you agree, will begin the debate at once.

There are several minor matters in your article to which I make no reply. They may come up in the course of the debate, and if I take up time with them now, we may keep on skirmishing until the end. I am as anxious for the debate as you are. If you accept the issue as now presented, we need not waste further time with preliminaries.

E. R. MONFORT.

Since the above was in type we have had a call from Dr. Gray, who, after reading what we say above, agrees that the discussion shall proceed upon the two propositions. Next week we will argue the first, which is as follows:

No. 1. Ruling elders and ministers are not of the same scriptural order, though they have some functions in common.

VII.

"Herald and Fresbyter," December 1, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor Interior:—

Having settled the questions to be discussed, I will undertake to establish the first proposition, viz.:

1 Ruling elders and ministers are not of the same scriptural order, though they have some functions in common.

In a public discussion it is important to agree as to the meaning of terms. In this case, happily, we do not differ. (1) The terms ruling elders and ministers are used in our propositions and in the overtures before the Church in the same sense. (2) Moreover, as the overtures, if adopted, will become a part of our Form of Government, it follows that the meaning of the terms ruling elders and ministers in the propositions and the overtures must be the same as in the Form of Government. This you will not deny, for certainly you can not be in favor of adding to the Form of Government, or amending any of its chapters, so as to make it as a whole contradictory or confused by using the same terms in different senses. (3) We can not differ in regard to the meaning of these terms, for the reason that the Form of Government as it now is, and will be, if amended by the adoption of the elder-moderator overtures, contains, and will contain, careful and complete definitions of the orders or offices of ruling elders and ministers verified by Scripture quotations. It seems to me we ought to have little difficulty in finding out the functions of the two offices, what they have in common and wherein they differ. I will begin with the definition of ruling elders:

Chap. V. Ruling elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers. This office has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments, and of those who rule well but do not labor in word and doctrine.

There is but one function in this definition, and it is not independent. It is relative. It is "exercising government and discipline," and doing so "in conjunction with pastors or ministers," and that is the whole of it. Exercising government and discipline includes promoting good order, advising, warning, guiding, reproving, rebuking, suspending and excommunicating.

This view of the office is scriptural. Such a ruler is referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. xii. 23: "And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments," etc. The last term means rulers. All of these offices, some of them belonging only to the early church, and some permanent, are spoken of in the same passage as differing, "Are all apostles, are all prophets," etc. The same order is evidently referred to in Rom. xii. 6-8, where it is said: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; . . . he that ruleth, with diligence." The order of ruling elder is also indicated when we are told (Acts xv. 22) that the "apostles and elders with the whole church" sent an epistle to the church at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas from Antioch went through Asia Minor and "ordained them

elders in every church." Paul left Titus in Crete "to ordain elders in every city." All the churches had elders, a session; not a *single* elder. Dr. Hatfield says: "No instance is recorded in the New Testament of a church, however small, having but a single elder." The elders belonged to the locality, and were rulers only. Ruling elders in the Christian Church were like the elders of Israel, chosen by Moses, as his session, "to exercise government and discipline in conjunction with" himself. They were rulers, and only rulers. They had no higher function or authority. Moses was both ruler and prophet, and I may add was the moderator also. No one of the seventy elders aspired to that dignity.

The *difference* in order and functions of the two offices will be readily seen when we examine the definitions of the ministry in our Standards and in the Scriptures. Our Book says:

Chap. IV. The pastoral office is the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills this office hath, in Scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the angel of the church. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. And as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

In our Standards the term minister is used over a hundred times, which is fourfold more than the use of all the other terms in this definition. This is well, for it is also used in the Scriptures for the office proportionately oftener than pastor, bishop, angel, steward and ambassador. Elder is often applied to ministers, who are elders as well as ministers. Both ruling elders and preaching elders are certainly referred to when Paul says (1 Tim. v. 17): "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine." Ministers are surely meant when it is said, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us;" "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament;" "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." If all these terms are proper designations of the ministry—bishop, pastor, minister, elder, angel, ambassador and steward—what are the functions of the office? What functions have ministers in common with the ruling elder? What functions that are different or of higher degree? In what do the offices or orders differ?

A minister, as a presbyter or elder, has the same functions with the ruling elder. There is no difference between them in rulership. They have the same right to discuss and decide. A minister as a bishop (overseer) and pastor not only exercises ministerial functions, but also those of a ruler, and the ruling elders are so far his associates, having in conjunction with him pastoral care and oversight. Without, therefore, claiming that bishop and pastor necessarily and only must be applied to ministers, I find the higher functions in other designations of the office of the holy ministry, in those that lift the office above the plane of ruler to that of official representative of the King and Head of the Church, such as messenger of God, ambassador of Christ, steward of the mysteries of God. The higher functions of the minister are exercised in his official capacity as preacher and teacher, and as he is a dispenser of the grace of God in the ordinances of the church, in preaching the gospel, blessing the people, dispensing the sacraments, and by conferring office by ordination. This official service he performs, not as the representative of the people, but of God, and because he was called of God as was Aaron. Ruling elders are never asked in regard to a call of God. Their call is from the people, while no one can enter the ministry without having been examined by the presbytery as to his views in seeking the ministry and his evidence of a call of God. I think I may therefore adopt as my own the language of the New School General Assembly of 1860 (Minutes, p. 242), in its action denying the right of ruling elders to lay on their hands in presbytery at the ordination of a minister, on which both Assemblies took the same ground, viz.:

It can not be denied that, in the Bible, a distinction is recognized between those presbyters who rule only, and those who both rule and preach. Some are set apart expressly to preach the gospel and to administer the ordinances of God's house. They are presbyters in common with others, but as ministers of Christ, they have functions and rights peculiar to themselves, and are required to possess proper qualifications.

The difference of order and function thus indicated in the Scriptures is important in the discussion of the elder-moderator overture. The office of moderator in a church court involves the exercise, not only of government, but of the functions belonging exclusively to the ministry. For instance, a moderator must offer the prayer of ordination with the laying on of hands. In my view, that an elder can not do this, I am sustained by the action of both the Old and New School Assemblies. There are also other things which equally involve ministerial functions. The overtures, indeed, recognize this by providing that where an elder is chosen to the office, he shall call a minister to perform "any acts appropriate only to an ordained minister." Not only does our Constitution, as it is, require the distinction for which I contend, but the Constitution as it would be, if amended by the adoption of the overtures which you favor, will recognize it more strongly. The expediency of adopting these overtures is not now before us. It will come up in the discussion of our second proposition. All I now contend for is that the offices are different, though they have some functions in common. This I think I have sustained with scriptural proof.

Episcopalians, who hold to three orders, neither representing the people, will not agree with me; nor will Congregationalists, for their polity is government entirely by the people; but Presbyterianism is neither a hierarchy nor a democracy. Our ministry is called of God, and perpetuates itself. Our ruling elders are the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government in conjunction with pastors and ministers.

E. R. MONFORT.

VIII.

"Herald and Presbyterian," December 1, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

DR. GRAY'S FIRST ARTICLE IN THE DEBATE.

We are then agreed on two very important propositions, namely: that the ruling and teaching elders are of equal authority, and that the office of the Presbyterian ruling elder is designated by the simple name "elder" in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. I now call the attention of that class of ecclesiastics in the Presbyterian Church who deny both these propositions, to the fact that their position is regarded as indefensible, even by those who agree with them in opposing the overtures. It seems to me, however, that Dr. Monfort, in admitting these two fundamental truths, has given himself very narrow room to stand upon.

Dr. Monfort says, as the reader has observed: "My note was not an appeal for aid." Dr. Shedd replied to that circular note: "I should be very glad to aid you in any way, but," etc., showing that Dr. Shedd understood Dr. Monfort to be calling for help.

When Dr. Crosby's reply to Dr. Monfort's circular letter was received, and the fact thereby became apparent that the latter was accumulating a masked battery of heavy guns against the elders, it immediately called to mind a similar strategem devised by Satan on the second day of the battle in heaven. During the night the infernal hosts "concocted and adusted" gunpowder of "spirituous and fiery spume" (something like Dr. Shedd's logic), and guns as huge as trunks of trees, which were ranged in league-long batteries and masked with clouds of winged warriors. At Satan's word they parted right and left—

"Immediate in a flame all heaven appeared;
From those deep-throated engines belched—whose roar
Emboweled with outrageous noise the air,
Disgorging foul
Their devilish glut—chained thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes."

Michael and his angels were knocked endwise, and very much astonished, but quickly recovering—

"Light as the lightning glimpse they ran, they flew;
From their foundations loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load—
Rocks, waters, woods—and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting—"

flung them on the devil and his big guns until guns and devils were buried five miles deep!

And so, Elias, if you would not have your masked battery of theological great guns served in the same way, you had better take them in out of the rain. It is not worth while to waste much real estate in disposing of them. If it were, I should fling upon them the Presbyterian Church of England, the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of the United States (South), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, three Pan-Presbyterian councils and scores of presbyteries of our own Church—all of whom accept the same "Form of Government," but all of whom believe that ruling elders are, and of right ought to be, eligible to the moderatorship. If you want human authority, I fling twice ten thousand learned and loyal Presbyterians *down upon* each several one of your big guns. Now dig them out if you can!

You undertake to refute Dr. Crosby with quotations from the "Form of Government." I am too apt to see the humorous side of things, but a glance at the whole situation makes your serious argument a matter of entertainment. Why, there you stand, holding the garments of those who hit the "Form of Government" with a stone at every opportunity; and yet you solemnly ask Dr. Crosby to be bound by it! You are a director of Lane Seminary, as your venerable father also is; you two, I understand, having paramount influence in it. Your Seminary sends out its students fully taught and believing that there is no divinely-instituted form of church government whatever. If your theological professors were as loose in regard to the doctrines of the Confession as they are permitted to be in regard to church polity, they would be flung instanter over the fence by the nearest presbytery. Professor Morris, of Lane, teaches:

"Our Lord seems to have left the matter of (church) organization very much in abeyance. Neither have the apostles so fully defined their conception as to make imperative one unvarying and fully authoritative method of construction for all lands and times. . . . Presbyterianism, *jure divino*—a system directly prescribed and enjoined as to details in the New Testament—can no more be proven than a *jure divino* Prelacy or Independency.—*Ecclesiology*, pp. 121-139.

The late Professor Humphrey, of Lane, said in his lectures:

"Systems of church polity, as such, were left by the Apostolic Church to be worked out afterward. No present system of church government or polity can claim to be *jure divino*."—*from a written report by Rev. A. J. Brown.*

Such being the teaching of your own Seminary, is it not rather cool to call Dr. Crosby to the bar of a book, the scriptural authority of which is repudiated by and with your own directorial consent?

Our "Form of Government" is a noble production—the noblest work of the kind, in my opinion, that was ever framed by the mind of man. I prize it only second to the Confession of Faith. But it needs to be made conformable to its proof-texts, and a slight change will do it. As a loose creed makes loose thinking, so a loose polity makes loose discipline. The prevailing ram-shackle looseness of the teaching and ideas of church government needs to be keyed up to the Scripture standard. *That work would have been done by the Westminster Assembly* when our Standards were framed, but the Presbyterians of that body were compelled by military necessity to compromise. If the Scotch army had been at their backs, the elders would, from that day to this, have had all that we claim for them. Of this, more hereafter.

Dear Doctor Archie Hodge has ascended to the General Assembly above. His brilliant mind and kindly heart soared to heaven; his body he laid in the grave; and with that fine sense of the fitness of things which marked his character, he consigned his wrong-headedness, by mail, to Cincinnati. I was aware that he and some more of the Princetonians had prelatival ways of thinking. Notice that he three or four times uses the word "clergy" in its various forms to designate the Presbyterian ministry. A clergyman (*Klerikos*) is a priest. The word belongs exclusively to priestly hierarchies. He speaks of "lay representation," another prelatival phrase, which is equally foreign to Presbyterian literature and thought. He thinks if we make clergymen of our elders (which God forbid) we shall have no "lay representation;" and that those who are engaged in secular employment are thereby wholly secularized. How about Paul, the tent-maker? Our people who have a rotary-eldership and double-g geared rotary pastorship, will not complain of a lack of representatives. What they ask is that their *representatives be allowed to represent*. They do not want one set of them to be disfranchising the other.

Rev. Dr. George Gillespie, the distinguished Westminster Assembly divine, in his defense of the eldership (written A. D. 1640) seems to be replying to Dr. Hodge's letter to Dr. Monfort, so apt to it are his words. He says:

It is fit we should know them (the elders) by their right names, lest we nickname and miscall them. Some reproachfully and others ignorantly call them lay elders. But the distinction of the clergy and laity is popish and anti-christian; and some who have narrowly considered the records of ancient times, have noted this distinction as one of the grounds whence the mystery of iniquity had the beginning of it. The name of clergy appropriate to (appropriated by) ministers is full of pride and vainglory, and hath made the holy people of God to be despised, as if they were profane and unclean in comparison of their ministers.—*Government, Chapter 1.*

I now propose to occupy a little space in beginning a statement of the Elder's Plea for Recognition, and I could not do so in any way more satisfactory than to quote a passage from a sermon of Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York, at the installation of his son, Rev. Thomas C. Hall, a short time ago, as pastor of the Forty-first Street Church of Chicago:

In primitive times the head of the family was the ruler. When several families were associated together, the ruling power was shared by all the heads of families in common. When the association of families became larger, a town was organized, and then delegates were chosen to rule. Hence, the elders of the town. In our Savior's time the synagogues were governed on this principle. Hence, the elders of the congregation. The government of the synagogues was transferred to the Christian Church. When churches were organized among Jews, little or no mention is made of it, because they were familiar with it. But when churches were founded among Gentiles, this principle of government by local elders was introduced, and pains taken to have it adopted and understood. As, for example, Paul's directions on this point to Timothy and Titus. When the congregation became larger, persons who had gifts were chosen to be teachers along side of and in connection with the ruling elders. Just as in the organization of a bank, the directors at first might manage its affairs along with their own business. But when the time comes that the bank requires more labor than the directors can bestow upon it, the directors choose one of their number and set him apart from his personal business to have charge of the affairs of the bank. Thus originated the teaching office in the Christian Church. It is along this line of common sense, history and of New Testament Scripture that the Presbyterian Church seeks to fulfill her mission to disciple mankind. It is a simple, scriptural, God-honored method. Our Presbyterian Church, like the synagogue, like the early Christian Church, is a government by representatives. It commends itself to the common-sense of men, and it stands all along its history God-sanctioned.

I will further avail myself of a quotation indicating the position which I propose to maintain and defend. Dr. George Gillespie, above quoted, thus summarizes the doctrine of the Presbyterians of the Westminster Assembly:

The administration of deacons is exercised about things bodily; the administration of elders about things spiritual. The former about the goods; the latter about the government of the church. Now, elders are of three sorts: 1. Preaching elders, or pastors. 2. Teaching elders, or doctors. 3. Ruling elders. All these are elders because they have voice in presbyteries and all assemblies of the church, and the government of the church is incumbent to them all.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, one order in God's house, unity in trinity, diversity in unity. This sublime simplicity is, and can only be, of God; and it is therefore as resistless in truth as it is God-like in conception.

WM. C. GRAY.

IX.

“Herata and Presbyter,” December 8, 1886.

THE ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor of the Interior:—

DEAR BROTHER:—Your “first article in the debate,” as you designate it, reprinted on our second page, evidently has no reference to the propositions under discussion, but is in reply to a former article of mine. You must have written your opening paragraph, in which you speak of points of agreement, from memory, for they are inaccurate. You say we have agreed that “the ruling and teaching elder are of equal authority.” I said “that ministers and elders are equal as rulers,” not in authority. A minister has authority to preach and do other things not matters of rulership. Your second statement is also defective—“that the office of the Presbyterian ruling elder is designated by the simple name elder in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.” I said, “I think we agree that the ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church holds an office instituted by divine authority and designated by the name elder in the Scriptures.” I find the office in the New Testament only, and not always meant where the term elder is used.

As to whether my letters to Dr. Crosby and others were appeals for aid, I have

said all I care to on this subject. But whether they were or not is unimportant, and can have no bearing on the subject of discussion.

It is hardly proper to class Dr. Hodge, Dr. Shedd, myself and the whole Westminster Assembly with "the devil and his angels," and somewhat premature to threaten us, thus early in the discussion, with their doom. By what law of suggestion did the doings of myself and friends remind you of Satan and his perpetrations, and his dreadful doom, and that awful poetry? You propose to bury us "five miles deep," and all Presbyterian churches and councils are to be piled on us. You claim that you are able to hurl twice ten thousand "learned and loyal Presbyterians" upon each of my "big guns." But prophecy and history, promise and performance, are not the same. The way you make pompous threatenings reminds me of a certain very large man in Old Testament times, a citizen of Gath, and how he made loud proclamation, in swelling words, as to what things he would do, and do them easily, and how very shortly he fell in a duel with a little fellow whom he held in very low estimation. For myself, I will not indulge in predictions of victory in our debate, and I think you would do well, also, to proceed in the discussion, under the advice of Ahab to Benhadad—"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off;" especially as you are no better armed than was Balaam when he said to his troublesome traveling companion: "I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee." It certainly would have been premature, at that time, after the manner you are doing with me, for Balaam to have made a picture of himself, sword in hand (the very sword he wished he had), cutting up his adversary, as Samuel hewed Agag in pieces. The painting would not have been any more historical than your description of our contest as like that of Michael and his angels with the dragon and his angels. Let us wait for the facts.

I shall have to pass without answer what you allege as to Dr. Hodge's "wrong-headedness," and the "prelatical" trend of Princeton; and as to Dr. Shedd's "spirituous and fiery spume" logic. Our readers may judge between you and these brethren of the theological seminaries.

I see nothing in the quotation from Dr. John Hall to disprove my position. Suppose the early elders did sometimes select ministers from their own ranks, what of it? We are not debating the ancient methods of choosing ministers, but rather their standing and functions after they were chosen and ordained. When the elder, that had simply ruled, was set apart to labor in word and doctrine, did he not receive higher functions than he had before? and were all ministers ruling elders before their ordination as ministers? I think it probable that for the first few years the first ministers had been elders. Young men must have been scarce. Dr. Hall is right, as I suppose.

As to the intimation that the Westminster Assembly lacked backbone, or that "if the Scotch army had been at their backs, the elders would, from that day to this, have had all that we claim for them," the simple facts are: The Assembly was called to determine the true scriptural doctrines and polity of the Church. It was composed of the best scholars of the age. At the beginning of its sessions the majority were in favor of Episcopacy. The deliberations lasted five years, and the result, so far as church polity is concerned, is embodied in our Standards, viz.: That the Lord Jesus is King and Head of the Church; that the ministry is divinely appointed to teach and to rule; that the elders have ruling functions only, and that particular congregations are united in a bond, not only of union, but of discipline.

As to your reference to Lane, I have not the influence in the Seminary you seem to think, and if I had, I see nothing to object to in the quotations from Drs. Morris and Humphrey. I hold with them, and the whole Church, that our system is not *jure divino* in all its details, and that our whole polity does not rest on such scriptural demonstration as would warrant us in denying Episcopal or Congregational ordination. I do believe, however, that its principles, among them the distinction between ministers and ruling elders, are thoroughly scriptural. If you were an Episcopalian or a Congregationalist, my argument might be prefaced by some reference to the polities of those churches; but, arguing with a Presbyterian elder, I have assumed that you accept the Presbyterian system and believe, as I do, that the Presbyterian elder is a scriptural elder, and the Presbyterian minister a scriptural minister; though your argument, thus far, is not directed so much in favor of the overture as against

the Presbyterian system. It may be that I can pacify you in regard to *jure divino* Presbyterian government, by pointing out that our Form of Government itself disclaims the idea. In Chap. I., Sec. 5, it says: "There are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ." This latitude is also provided for in the chapters on ordination. As to doctrine, a vow is prescribed, declaring that the Confession of Faith is according to the Scriptures; but as to church order, we only are asked to say that we "approve" of the government and discipline of the Church. The *jure divino* covers doctrine, but not church polity. It is very clear that you are wrong, and the professors of Lane, Union, Princeton and Allegheny are all good expounders of true Presbyterian order.

You speak as if you were very confident when you denounce the terms "clergy and laity," as used by Dr. Hodge and others. You say: "A clergyman (*Klerikos*) is a priest. The word belongs exclusively to priestly hierarchies. He [Dr. Hodge] speaks of 'lay representation,' another prelatical phrase, which is equally foreign to Presbyterian literature and thought." Clergyman is derived from the Greek *kleros*, which means lot, inheritance, and it is supposed that it is applied to ministers for the reason that their living is provided for. They are clerks, and are paid by their employers. They live of the gospel, either by the bounty of the state or of their congregations; which is not true of ruling elders, who live by their trades or professions, and are, therefore, called laymen, which means, of the people. There are many terms used to designate ministers, and not one of them is wicked or heretical. They are called minister, messenger, shepherd, bishop, pastor, rector, preacher, parson, doctor, domine, herald, clergyman, elder, etc. It is an error to say that clergy and laity "are foreign to Presbyterian literature." The General Assembly of 1829 (Minutes, page 263) says: "The word of God and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church recognize the distinction of clergy and laity." So it would appear that the scare you are sounding concerning these terms, is a false alarm.

Your quotation from Rev. George Gillespie at the close of your article, and your remark that it indicates "the position I [you] propose to maintain and defend," is novel. You give his position, viz.: "Now, elders are of three sorts—(1) preaching elders or pastors, (2) teaching elders or doctors, (3) ruling elders." According to Webster, sorts are orders or classes. Have you forgotten that you have engaged to prove that elders are of one sort or order or class? If you succeed, I have nothing to do, for I have promised to prove that there are two. I shall have one sort left. Two from three and one remains. However, there is no profit to me in your new enterprise, as I have already given my argument to prove that ministers are not of the same order with ruling elders.

The application of your closing paragraph is not clear. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father," is scriptural, and I believe it, but why do you add, "One order in God's house"? The words naturally mean that the order and ritual of all churches should be alike; they can not mean that ministers and elders are of one order, although this is the subject under discussion. If they have any bearing on our debate, they mean that ministers, elders, deacons and members are of "one order," and being so, the Church has no officers. It seems to me that the various positions you "propose to maintain and defend" are in conflict: (1) There are three sorts or orders of elders, not to mention deacons; (2) all elders are of one order, and (3) there is no distinction whatever between officers and members. This may be "sublime simplicity," but I do not believe it is "from God," or that it is "resistless."

It seems to me, further, that your extremely rhetorical sentences are made to adorn assertions which, when dressed in plain language, fail to support the positions you have set yourself to "maintain and defend." E. R. MONFORT.

X.

"Herald and Presbyter," December 15, 1836.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dear Dr. Monfort:—The deliverances of assemblies and definitions of the Form of Government seem to be your Scripture. I will, therefore, give further reasons

why I adhere to the word of God as the only reliable authority. The Westminster Assembly was almost unanimously Calvinistic, hence the Confession is consistent with itself and the Scriptures. But there were three parties in the Assembly on church-government—the Presbyterians, Prelatists and Independents. The Presbyterians were in the majority, but the Prelatists held a Gibraltar in the king and parliament—who immediately after restoration drove Presbyterianism out of England. A powerful influence in favor of compromise was the desire to secure Protestant uniformity, in order that it might present a united front against the common enemy, and to this necessity the Presbyterians were alive. Hence, while they would not compromise doctrine, they were willing to go to the verge of conscience in regard to polity. But their sacrifices resulted in nothing. Kingly and prelatical pride and arrogance would not submit to the simplicity of pure Christianity.

The compromise of the eldership is spoken of by Baillie (Vol. II., p. 110) who says:

Sundry of the ablest were flat against the institution of any such office by divine right, such as Dr. Smith, Dr. Temple, . . . and many more beside the Independents. . . . There is no doubt we could have carried it by far the most voices; yet, because the opposites were men very considerable, and above all, gracious little Palmer, we agreed upon a committee to satisfy, if it were possible, the dissenters.

Baillie further says that:—

All of these were even willing to admit of elders in a prudential way *i. e.*, as an expedient human arrangement, but this seemed to us most dangerous and unhappy, and therefore it was peremptorily rejected. We trust to carry at last with the contentment of sundry ones opposite, and the silence of all their divine and scriptural institution.

He then expresses a hope for the advance of the Scotch army, "which will much assist our arguments." The compromise effected we have in our Form of Government—the predicating the whole Presbyterian system upon one word—and that not applicable—the word "governments." No such makeshift would have been permitted had that famous Assembly been untrammelled. If you choose to quote the result of that compromise, and so construe it as to disfranchise ruling elders, I am content. It certainly will not have influence in our Church, any more than it has had with other great Presbyterian churches. We will see, as we proceed, how radically erroneous are the conclusions you arrive at upon that basis.

The reader will notice that Dr. Monfort three times slips in the words "order" and "orders"—"the order of the ruling elders." The word is hostile both to the Scriptures and to our Standards, and yet without it Dr. Monfort's theory vanishes. The Roman apostasy took the word "ordus," a caste or rank in the Roman Empire, and, putting the word "holy" before it, set up the hierarchy upon it, and called the rank above rank "holy orders." Christ absolutely forbids it. "Call no man master—for one is your master, even Christ." True Presbyterianism recognizes no superiors or inferiors in God's house. He that would rule must take the place of a servant and rule by love. There are to be no lords over God's heritage.

The next fundamental error in Dr. Monfort's theory is, that the kingdom of God is a limited monarchy, in which there are two coordinate and often opposing interests, each of equal authority. One of these is God, and he is represented in the kingdom by the ministry. The other is the people, and they are defended against the encroachments of the divine Sovereign by the ruling elders! Ridiculous as it is when baldly stated, that is his idea of the church! "This official service," he says, "the minister performs, not as the representative of the people, but of God." Ruling elders, he insists, are not called of God. "Their call is of the people." So God must make compromises with the people, and the people make concessions to God! If such were a true interpretation of our "Form of Government," our fathers made a worse compromise than they knew; but it is not true.

Christ is the only sovereign. Obedience to him is the sole object of the government of the Church. Elders, whether preaching, teaching or *presiding*, "must seek the word from the mouth of the Lord, and declare what they have received of him." If any of them be not called of Christ into his service, and do not represent him alone, they are not of his fold. Effectual calling is Christ's call to the returning sinner and to the ascending saint, and to all in his kingdom between. He who comes into Christ's kingdom can only come on God's effectual call; much more he who assumes in Christ's name any official service, humble or exalted, in Christ's house. The opposite doctrine is so monstrous that Dr. Monfort will not adhere to

it. The Church very properly exercises greater care in ascertaining the fact of God's call to one who gives his whole time to the ministry of the word and doctrine, than to one who does not; but she gives too little care in seeking for the will of the Spirit in regard to those who perform less important labor.

Dr. Monfort's last general error in this article is in insisting that the moderator's office involves "ministerial functions." The office of the moderator is a necessary element in the divine plan of church procedure and work; but it is simply a chairmanship. I shall call your attention to the fact that the word translated "rule"—"elders who rule well"—means to preside, to be set over. The word exactly describes the position of a presiding officer. He, then, who hedges about the duty or privilege of presiding with requirements which will exclude from it a majority of Christ's presiding officers, is opposing Christ's authority.

As prejudice has arisen out of misapprehension, permit me to say that no intelligent elder desires to assume ministerial functions, without obtaining the right to their exercise through the lawful channel, the presbytery. If God by his Spirit and providence should seem to one of us to call him to other ministerial work than that now assigned him, it would be for the authority in God's house to decide the question for him. Situations are supposable in which it would be an elder's duty to perform the higher duties, but exceptions indicate no law. Solomon dedicated the temple. John Knox, John Calvin and Andrew Melville were not ordained ministers—but these exceptions make for nothing against the rule.

Moses was moderator of the general assembly for forty years. He was no king or priest, nor even a preacher, like Noah. He was a prophet; but so was Amos the humble shepherd, and so were other humble men and women. He must have held the position of an elder, unless his position was entirely exceptional. The judges—nearly all the moderators under the theocracy were elders—Jephtha, Barak, Gideon, Eli and Samuel were priest-moderators.

What is an elder? The primitive elder was the spiritual and civil head of his family and tribe, and when he died he was worshiped as a god. This ancient office was adopted into the divine economy and sanctified. The Hebrew elder performed the most striking of all the Messianic rites, the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb (Ex. xii. 22), and this he continued to do till Christ died. He was to teach the meaning of the rite (verse 27). The office was sanctified and the Spirit of God breathed into it, so that elders became prophets and teachers as well as rulers.

"And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease" (Num. xi. 25).

They saw God's glory in the mount (Deut. v. 23). The people were to go to them to learn of God's dealings with men (xxxii. 7). Job was an elder. He performed the priestly office for his own household, but not for others. But I need not dwell on a truth which will not be disputed—that the elders held their office till Christ came, and were ruling the synagogues in which Christ preached. It is hardly worth while here to negative a claim made by prelatists that these elders were civil officers. The Hebrew economy was a theocracy until the time of Saul, and the civil was swallowed up in the spiritual. Civil officers are not, at their inauguration, so endowed with the Spirit of God that they prophesy, and that without ceasing. The elders, at Christ's advent, were wholly occupied with religious government and instruction.

"And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying: Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation to the people, say on" (Acts xiii. 15).

"For Moses of old times hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day" (Acts xv. 21).

The civil rule was in the hands of the Romans. It is admitted that the elders ordained in every city of the Gentiles in which a Christian church was established were these same elders charged with the spiritual oversight of the people. Out of the one office came all the spiritual ministries of the kingdom. The priestly office, having been fulfilled in Christ, disappeared from among men. The eldership alone remained, and will remain when all that is temporal shall have passed away. (Rev. iv. 4.)

Dr. Monfort says of the scriptural elders: "They were rulers, and only rulers. They had no higher function or authority." These were the *presbuteroi*, the presbyters, the bishops. It really is not worth while to contradict so preposterous a statement. Dr. Monfort did not mean to say that.

Dr. Monfort admits that our Presbyterian elders are occupying this ancient and divinely-appointed office, but he is unwilling that they shall be trusted with the full exercise of its functions. They have, he says, equal authority, but they shall not exercise it except in the most subordinate of possible ways. "I am not a hierarchist," he says, and when we ask him what else his superior and inferior ranks of spiritual officers are, he answers: "God makes the ministers, but the people [it is well he did not say the devil] make the elders." That does not help the matter at all. There stands his hierarchy all the same, no matter where he says it came from. His system is the hierarchy which never yet failed to foster human pride, to corrupt the Church and dishonor Christ's spiritual temple. As I have already shown, Dr. Monfort's theory is destructive in every direction. I will in due time prove that this pernicious hierarchical idea first came into the Church long after the apostolic church had gone to its reward. Now let us look at the texts adduced.

Meyer, spoken of by Charles Hodge as the "prince of exegetes," on 1 Cor. xii. 28 says:

"Governments" is rightly understood by most commentators according to the meaning of the word, of the work of the presbyters (bishops). It refers to their functions of rule and administration in virtue of which they were *gubernatores ecclesie*.

Alford says:

"Governments"—a higher department, that of presbyters or bishops, the direction of the various churches.

Hooker warns us—

Not to surmise incompatible offices where nothing is meant but sundry graces, gifts and abilities which Christ bestowed.

Thus three leading exegetes show us what is evident on the face of the text, that "governments" does not refer to an office, but to a function—a function now, as then, exercised by teaching elders and ruling elders equally. The opposite construction not only has no reason in it, but it contradicts the existing facts. The "governments" are not manned by the ruling elders exclusively. What I am now fighting for is, that they shall be recognized as entitled to an equal share in them.

Romans xii. 8: "He that ruleth with diligence." Dr. Monfort says this refers to ruling elders. The word *proistemenas*, translated ruleth, literally means *presides*. If it refers to ruling elders, it plainly indicates them as the material for moderators. If his exposition be correct, then the elders who preach are excluded from presiding or ruling. An enumeration of *offices* is altogether foreign to the context. The apostle is here, according to Alford, exhorting each member to keep its true place, and work without boasting against another.

When he says, "He that ruleth with diligence," he implies that he who is by God set over others, be they members of the church or his own household, must not allow himself to forget his responsibility, and take his duty indolently and easily, but must *proistasthai spondias*, making it a serious matter of continual diligence.

And now for the great crucial text, 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine." No exposition can make the truth plainer that here is one office having two functions. In regard to this, Meyer says:

The indications of verse 17 are, that there were presbyters who, in addition to the work of presiding, devoted themselves to teaching and preaching. But that there was a marked division between two classes of elders—ruling and teaching elders—is neither stated nor rendered probable by the verse.

Dr. Monfort has not quoted, and he can not quote, a text which, either on the face of it, or under critical exegesis, gives a shadow of foundation to his theory of two "orders" of spiritual offices. Much less has he given the shadow of a shade of scriptural reason why the "elders who rule well" should be excluded from ruling, and be disfranchised and put on the tails of committees. I conclude by calling especial attention to the fact that his theory and the prevalent practice render that just and beautiful commendation of God—"especially those who labor in word and doctrine"—an impracticable nullity. We are not permitted to account them especially worthy of double honor. Give us liberty, and we will show voluntarily that we account them worthy. As it is, we have no choice. The free-will offering is wrested from our hands by rude compulsion, and all the sweetness is taken out of it. What God intended is rendered impossible.

WM. C. GRAY.

"Herald and Presbyter," December 15, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor of the Interior:—Your long article in reply to my argument in favor of our first proposition requires but a short response. Your quotation from Baillie confirms what I said of the Westminster divines. Prelacy was strongest at first; compromise began to appear; Presbyterians resisted; Baillie said: "We trust to carry our view at last;" and they succeeded. Although the Standards agreed upon were not adopted in England, the book was accepted in Scotland and Ireland, and we have it in our Church. Baillie and you and I are agreed. There was no compromise.

Your objection to my use of the term "orders" is hardly worthy of notice. Order follows ordination to office. If the office and ordination differ, the order differs, as in the case of ruling elders and ministers. We can not give up words because prelatists use them. We can not give up to them such terms as office, order, ordination, baptism, pardon, or any word we need to use. The Bible tells of "the high priests and priests of the second order;" also of the order of Aaron and Melchisedek. "Order" is as good a word as "sorts," which you adopt.

I knew my reference to a "call to the ministry" would puzzle you. You have practically denied that there is such a thing as a call to the ministry, by spreading it out equally and very thin alike over ministers, elders and private members. If you have the same call with your pastor, why don't you preach? Bro. Brown says with Paul: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel;" but when you were ordained you at once started on a voyage to Tarshish. Your excuse is that you must wait for the presbytery to send you. Your authority is given by your ordination; and, upon your theory, you should not "neglect the gift that is within thee."

You say the word "rule" means "preside." Preside over whom? Should each elder preside all the time over the session? or, as a session, preside over or rule the people? The idea of moderatorship is not in the word.

What you say about "limited monarchy," "compromise," etc., is a caricature of my argument. The doctrine of the Scriptures and of our Form of Government is that ruling elders are the representatives of the people, and that ministers are called of God to dispense, in the name of Christ, holy ordinances. We should avoid saying anything that may seem to depreciate the work of the ministry. Ministers are the ambassadors of Christ.

Your knowledge of Moses is at fault. He was the ruler of Israel, though not called King or Sultan or Czar. He was of the tribe of Levi, and ordered and supervised the whole scheme of the priesthood. He was a prophet, which includes teaching and preaching. He was a type of Christ (Deut. xviii. 15), the great Prophet, Priest and King of the Church. He was a very suitable man for moderator, though I do not know that he ever presided over a deliberative body. He had the functions if they had been needed at any time.

You say Samuel was a "priest moderator." I do not know that he was any "sort" of a moderator; but if so, he must have been a prophet moderator, which is the proper order for the honor. I know nothing about Barak, except that he was an employé of Deborah the prophetess, who "judged Israel at that time." She must have been the moderator, if there was any. You can not prove by me that Jephtha or Gideon or any of the Old Testament people were moderators. Is this what you meant by "the Scripture argument" upon which you have been insisting?

What profit is it to you to say that the Hebrew elders before the Exodus "sprinkled the blood of the paschal lamb"? So did every head of every family. Moses called the elders and gave the commandment, and "the children of Israel did as commanded." (Ex. xii. 28).

Your quotations from Meyer, Alford and Hooker I agree with, except the last from Meyer. I hold that ministers and ruling elders exercise the same functions in ruling (and these are the functions which they have in common); and so when ministers labor in word and doctrine, they exercise functions that do not belong to ruling elders. Different functions and different names make different orders or

offices. In exercising rulership, though of different orders, there is no superiority over one another. Your exegeses are sound.

When Meyer says I Tim. v. 17 does not state or make probable two classes of elders, I may reply that, while he and some others may hold this view, the doctrine of the Westminster Assembly, which is the doctrine of our Form of Government, has been maintained by all Presbyterian churches, viz.: "This office (ruling elder) has been understood by a great part of the Protestant Reformed Church to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments, and of those who rule well, but do not labor in word and doctrine." For over three hundred years this text has been interpreted in the same way.

The theory, that Old Testament and New Testament elders are the same, is an error. The name is the same, for there was no other word in general use to indicate the office of ruling. At first all rulers were old men, and the word came into general use even where rulers were young men, and to this day we have senators, aldermen, sheiks, of the same derivation, meaning rulers, though not aged persons. Elders in Old Testament times had various functions. They had political power at first in their tribes. During the Exodus they were associates of Moses, and so to a great extent under the judges and kings, having more local power as their tribes were together. In the Captivity, and after their return to Jerusalem, their rule was partial and often impossible, because the theocracy was gone and they were in subjection to Gentile rule. The synagogue was not a divine institution, but only a wise expedient to preserve what was Jewish. When Christ came, the leaders of the synagogue were his greatest enemies; the chief priests and elders putting him at last to death, and afterward persecuting his disciples wherever they went. The New Testament Church, though a continuation of the Jewish Church, did not come from the Jewish synagogue, though like it in some respects. It came from Christ incarnate, who said, "All power in heaven and earth is given to me"; who appointed his twelve apostles his witnesses and representatives, and promised them, "Whoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;" "On this rock I will build my Church;" "Begin at Jerusalem, and go into all the world and teach and baptize." After the ascension the apostles and disciples met and chose Mathias, in place of Judas, "to take part of this ministry and apostleship." Then on the day of Pentecost they began to preach and baptize and observe the Lord's Supper. Then the visible organization of the Christian Church began. What ecclesiastical meetings they had, whether elders were chosen by the apostles or others, what records they kept, we know not. We do know, however, that soon a pastoral letter was sent "by the apostles and elders" from Jerusalem to the church at Antioch. And we know, moreover, that shortly after the apostles called the disciples together and told them to "look out from among them seven men, whom we may appoint" as deacons. Having no record of the election of the first elders, we have here a precedent in favor of their election by the people and as their representatives. Then, in planting churches outside of Jerusalem, elders were ordained in every church. It may be said the Christian Church was modeled after the synagogue. This is, however, not entirely so. There never was an elder before Christ, whose rulership was confined to spiritual things. The similarity is only or chiefly in name. Besides this, the care of temporal things, in the interest of the Church, was in a few days taken from the ministry and eldership, and given to the new office of deacons, which had no place in the Jewish economy. I do not believe you will be able to produce a single fact in the history of Old Testament elders that can in the slightest degree bear upon the question of the rights of elders to the moderatorship in the Christian Church. The spiritual leader of the Jewish Commonwealth was the prophet. He was teacher and preacher. He was above the priesthood and eldership, or rulership. In so far as the outward form of the organization of the Christian Church grows out of the Jewish, or resembles it in offices and administration, ministers are the successors of the prophets, and it is also true, that in so far as there is anything in the Church, since the coming of Christ, that corresponds with the priesthood and its dispensation of spiritual blessings, it belongs to the Christian ministry, as it is set apart to administer sealing ordinances in the use of the water of baptism, the wine and bread of the New Testament Passover, and the consecrating prayer and laying on of hands in ordination. All this Christ conferred upon his apostles with the authority of rulership

and the duty of transmitting the same to faithful men. In conjunction with them ruling elders are chosen to exercise only government and discipline, and as representatives of the people.

Having said all that is necessary in answer to your reply to my argument in favor of our first proposition, I will give my views of the second, viz.:

It is inexpedient to adopt the overtures now before the Church concerning the eligibility of ruling elders to the moderatorship.

The first overture, which is all that the friends of the measure desire to see adopted, (note 2) is as follows:

Shall Chap. XIX., Sec. 2, be amended by adding the following: "In case the moderator of any judicatory above the church session be a ruling elder, he may open the next meeting with an address, but any acts appropriate only to an ordained minister of the gospel shall be performed by a minister appointed by such ruling elder"?

I will oppose this overture for the following reasons:

1. Because our Form of Government (Chap. IV., Sec. 3) provides that the pastor or some other minister shall always be the moderator of the session, unless it is highly inconvenient (which provision it is not proposed to change by the adoption of the present overtures), which makes it highly improper, for the reason that a minister as moderator is more necessary in the higher judicatories, where the business is much more important and difficult, and where ministers are always present to serve as moderators.

2. Because a ruling elder has not the functions to do the whole work of a moderator in a presbytery or higher court. He can not preside and "exercise the whole power of the presbytery" by laying on hands, making the ordaining prayer at the ordination of a minister, administering a sentence of suspension, or pronouncing the apostolic benediction.

3. Because if the overtures are adopted, and ministers have to take the place of the elder-moderator "to perform any acts appropriate only to an ordained minister of the gospel," there will be difference of opinion and controversy, delay and confusion, in deciding what a ruling elder can do or can not do.

4. Because if ever the office of the ministry and official preaching should be specially recognized and its benefits enjoyed, it is in the meetings of our judicatories. On this subject the editor of the *Baltimore Presbyterian* wisely says:

Our Form of Government and usage, as well as propriety and a full regard to the honor of our holy religion, say that the highest judicatory of the Church should be opened religiously and authoritatively, not with a mere essay or speech, but with a sermon, or in a way that shows Christ as its Head and King. This procedure lends dignity, grace, force and solemnity to the occasion, and also imparts to it a greater air of spirituality and sacredness. We would be sorry to see any innovation in this respect at the convenings of our highest ecclesiastical judicatory.

5. Because the proposed change is based upon the fundamental error that the order and functions of ministers and elders are the same, and, to make our polity consistent, other changes equally erroneous will be called for, such as (1) the right of elders to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, and lay on hands in the ordination of ministers. Both of our Assemblies, while separate, have denied this; and (2) the transfer of the membership and ordination of the eldership to the presbytery, so as to have the equality of the orders recognized, and (3) this must result in nullifying our doctrine of a special call to the ministry, or in requiring such a call in the case of elders, either of which would subvert our system; and (4) it would gradually undermine our theory and practice in favor of an educated ministry.

6. Because it will be injurious in its bearings upon the eldership; (1) it will be raising the standard of qualifications for the eldership, which will discourage many from accepting the office, and may lead many to resign; (2) as some will be regarded as qualified for the moderatorship and others not, there will be invidious distinctions and a sense of humiliation on the part of some.

7. Because it will inevitably lead to constant jealousy for the rights of the two classes of offices, and their keeping up of the balance of honor and power between them, one form of which will be alternating in the chair of moderator.

8. Because it opens the door and invites competition and jealousy between ministers and elders, which must be a constant embarrassment to ministers who can not forget their higher functions, their special training and their devotion to the min-

istry as a profession demanding their whole time, but must be constantly watching lest they be thought to be doing something in violation of the new equality. Most ministers would prefer independency or prelacy to the proposed regime.

9. Because the judicatories of the Church are (1) not ordinary assemblies, but courts of Jesus Christ, gathered by his authority and in his name; (2) the work to be done is the most difficult and important that has been committed to the Church; (3) moderators in conducting and giving official authority to proceedings need the highest qualifications and experience; (4) ministers have had long professional training, and give their whole time to the ministry, and thus constantly add to their knowledge and fitness for their work; (5) elders do not serve the Church as a profession, and are not trained as a class as ministers are; therefore, the eligibility to the moderatorship should be confined to the ministry. E. R. MONFORT.

XII.

"Herald and Presbyterian," December 22, 1856.

ELDER-MODERATORSHIP.

DR. GRAY'S THIRD ARTICLE.

Dear Dr. Monfort:—I must have been "extremely rhetorical," if I gave you occasion to suppose that I classed you with the devil. No, sir, you are a young angel. I was trying to put in the gentlest way possible that the Presbyterian Church of England does not agree with your interpretations. She elected Dr. Collingwood Bruce, a ruling elder, who was not a minister, to her chief moderatorship. The Scotch Assembly elected Mr. George Buchanan, a ruling elder, who was not a minister, to her moderatorship. Dr. J. Monro Gibson, of London, informs me that some time ago the moderatorship of the Free Church of Scotland was offered by influential men to Hon. Murray Dunlap, M. P. for Greenock, but he could not accept. The Southern Presbyterian Church last year adopted an overture similar to the one now before our Church. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church elects elder-moderators. All these have the Assembly's Form of Government—identical with our own. All three of our Pan-Presbyterian councils have elected elder-moderators. Among these were Supreme Judge Strong, Hon. Horace Maynard, Hon. Samuel Sloan, and a number of others. Our last General Assembly submitted the pending overtures by a vote almost unanimous. A score or two of our presbyteries have elected elder-moderators. Now I did not intend to threaten or boast. I only meant to say that these great churches and councils utterly overwhelm your individual authorities.

To say a thing is "thoroughly scriptural" and yet not by divine law, as you do, is bald absurdity, unless the Scriptures are false. Dr. Humphrey said that "No present system of church government or polity can claim to be *jure divino*—by divine law." You indorse the statement and explain by saying, "The *jure divino* covers doctrine, not church polity." And yet you have based three-fourths of your argument on that which you put down as a human invention. So far from agreeing to that, I believe that the vital principle of Presbyterian polity is as divine, and as clearly defined in Scripture, as the doctrine. That divine principle of church government is a government of equal presbyters, meeting on equal terms in local and general presbyteries. The details are involved in the principle as much as a conclusion is involved in its premises. In order to get rid of this God-ordained principle, and provide for a pride-fostering hierarchy, you and yours plunge into a jumble of absurdities. First, with Dr. Humphrey and others, you deny that any form of church government is by divine law. Then you quote what you regard as human inventions as conscience-binding authority. Then you say they are by scriptural law, but not by divine law. Then you affirm three spiritual orders, ministers, elders and deacons—which is stark popery—and then deny that these superior and inferior orders are a hierarchy! You must have a peculiar idea of Presbyterian common sense!

It is this miserable inconsistency that has bred general skepticism in regard to the divine principles of government—and has paralyzed our army of twenty thousand elders, and inflicted infinite loss upon the Church.

I say that the phrase "clergy and laity" is distinctively prelatial, and that the phrase "minister and people" is distinctively non-prelatial. You deny it. An Irishman with a rich brogue on his tongue might as well deny his nativity. An assembly used it! It is one of the evidences of God's care over his Church, that so little of the ignorance, and so few of the blunders of resolution concoeters, get upon the minutes. To keep them all out would require an eternal miracle.

Dr. Gillespie could not have more clearly asserted the doctrine of the Presbyterians of Westminster Assembly, of the oneness of the elders, and the diversity of their employment, than he did. They compromised, and yet, after all, they left hierarchists only inferential standing-room. If that Scotch army, the sons of Jenny Geddes, had been at their backs, that little would have been cleared away.

I have already shown that the eldership was the primitive type of spiritual rule; that when the office was consecrated and the Spirit of God came upon it, the elders immediately began to prophesy, "and that continually"—to teach and exhort the people. This shows what God intended them to do, because they did it under his direct influence. The word "continually" is shown to have ages-long significance, because the apostle James said they "preached Moses"—that is, the law—in the synagogues through all preceding ages. I have shown that they were ruling and teaching in the synagogues when Christ came; that on accepting Christ they continued in one unbroken succession to rule and teach in the churches, and they thus form the golden chain of organic continuity in God's Church from Enoch through Moses and Christ to the Church triumphant, when time shall be no more. When the Harlot of Rome obtained control of God's temple, of course she put them out, and burnt many of them at the stake; but immediately when that power was broken, they arose again, moved by the divine impulse, and began the work to which the Spirit of God had consecrated them four thousand years before. They are doing the same to-day in our churches—ruling and teaching, the better qualified teaching from the pulpit; the less fitted teaching in the homes and in the Sabbath-school. As the ancient elders sprinkled the blood of the paschal lamb, so do the elders now distribute the bread and wine of the memorial feast of God's people. All this Dr. Monfort, and every man who accepts the plain historical statement of the Scriptures, admits. But he says the elders were divided into two "orders," one "*ordus*" higher than the other. When? Where? By whose authority?

Now let me, in one or two sentences, meet and refute the inferences from his quotations of the "Book" and the assemblies. Nowhere in either has the two-*ordus* idea ever been suggested. He confuses the two general departments of duty with the idea of two orders. These two departments so overlap each other that there is no line surveyable between them. The preaching elders rule. The ruling elders teach. Both unite in the administration of the sacraments. Both are installed into one office by ordination. Both take the same obligations as to faith and duty. Both are designated by the same names—presbyters—elders. Both, on a theoretical, perfect equality, constitute our church-courts. The object of our overtures is to make the practice correspond to the theory. Both minister in spiritual things. Neither can serve a congregation of believers without being duly elected by the people. In spite of all that human pride and error, the power of hierarchies and the influence of great names, could do, the Spirit of God has seen to it that identity has been preserved. I proceed now to further fortify this position. Dr. Philip Schaff, in his "History of the Christian Church," gives a very clear summary of the evidences that the elders were of but one order, a part of which I make room for:

The identity of these offices is very evident from the following facts:

They appear always as a plurality, or as a college in one and the same congregations, even in smaller cities, as Philippi.

The same officers in the church of Ephesus are alternately called presbyters and bishops.

In the pastoral epistles, where Paul intends to give the qualifications for *all* church-officers, he again mentions only two—bishops and deacons; but uses the word presbyter afterward for bishop.

Paul sends greetings to the "bishops" and deacons of Philippi; but omits the presbyters, because they are included in the first term, as also the plural indicates.

Peter urges the "presbyters" to attend the "flock of God," and to "fulfill the office of bishops" with disinterested devotion, and without "lording" it over the charge allotted to them.

The interchange of terms continued till the close of the first century, as is evident from the epistle of Clement of Rome (about 95), and still lingered toward the close of the second century.

I omit further scriptural evidences cited by Dr. Schaff. "The distinction," he says, in a note on page 492, "dated from the second century." "The Council of Trent first declared the bishops to be the successors of the apostles, and pronounced

anathemas on those who say that bishops are not superior to presbyters." On page 494 note:

Even Pope Urban (A. D. 1001) says that the primitive Church knew only two orders—the deaconate and the presbyterate. The original identity of presbyter and bishop is not only insisted on by Presbyterians, Lutherans, Congregationalists, but is freely conceded also by Episcopal commentators, as Whitley, Bloomfield, Conybeare and Howson, Alford, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Stanley and others. It is also conceded by purely critical historians, as Rothe, Ritsche, Baur and Renan. *This subject, then, may be regarded as settled among scholars.*

Schaff states (page 495) substantially the view expressed by Dr. John Hall, as quoted in our first article, that the Gentile churches were organized upon the same basis with the Jewish Christian churches, with the familiar board of bishops.

Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, in his "Knowledge of God," page 630, *et seq.*, presents the same facts. After showing that the eldership was a gift of God, "older than that of the call of Moses, which he found and by command of God organized," and that Peter described them, he says:

We learn, therefore, the same things from Paul as before from Peter. God had a church in Ephesus, which, like all his other churches, had office-bearers in it, called elders or presbyters, who were overseers or bishops, who were placed by the Holy Ghost over his flock or church, to take care of it and feed it—that is, to be its pastors, bishops, teachers and rulers.

So Dr. Thornwell's collected writings, Vol. IV., page 290, says:

The genius is one, and that is what is meant by saying the order is one. The species themselves, of course, differ; otherwise they could not be species at all, and the difference is accurately signaled by the epithets *teaching and ruling*. Any other doctrine is stark prelacy. If the ruling elder is a spiritual officer, and yet is not a co-ordinate species with the minister of the gospel, there must be subordination. If they are not equal, one must be higher than the other. If they are not of the same *order*, then they are of different orders, and the parity of spiritual office-bearers is given to the winds. This is the legitimate conclusion of the whole matter—to convert Presbyterian ministers into prelates and Presbyterian elders into their humble subjects.

Rev. Prof. Chancellor, Belfast Pan Council, page 374, topic, "Ruling Elders":

The recently discovered "Teaching of the Apostles" shows conclusively that the organization and order sanctioned by the apostles, continued to prevail during the first half of the second century. * * * That the elders continued to hold the same place of dignity and power during the latter half of the second century and afterward, despite the gradual encroachments of the clerical episcopacy, is admitted.

It is not worth while to heap up authorities to show that what Dr. Schaff says is now "settled among scholars" is true, that there was only one order of ministers authorized by Christ's apostles—the elders—and that there were separated only by the gifts personal to each. This is the plain teaching on the face of the Scriptures, and it is agreed to by all scholars; even, as I have shown, popes and prelates agree to the oneness of the presbyters.

This is a demonstration. It leaves no room for a subordinate class of elders, hence those who insist upon such subordination deny that any principles or plan of church government are revealed in Scripture.

Now, what are the necessary conclusions? That elders are ordained ministers? Yes, they are ordained, and they are ministers in spiritual things. That they have a right to, and are in duty bound to preach and administer the ordinances? Not at all. They have a right to, and are in duty bound to render the ministry to which they are appointed by the lawful authority—that, and nothing more, nothing less. In this they are not exceptional. A preaching elder can not lawfully even come into the bounds of Chicago Presbytery and preach a sermon in one of our churches without leave of the Presbytery. Men are licensed to preach, but forbidden to perform any other functions of ministry or administration. The ruling elder, though he be Christ's called and ordained servant, would not, by the recognition of that fact, be given a degree of independence of church authority in excess of that enjoyed by the preaching elder. The church chooses, and ordains, and appoints, and controls. I am a carpenter, and my employer sends me to hew out beams with the broad-ax in the forest. My brother is a carpenter, and our employer sets him to finishing work in the elegant parlors. I am not fitted to do that class of work—he is. Fitness, after employment by God's call, is the sole determining factor. But the individual has no right to set up his own judgment of his own fitness, nor even to decide the question whether he has the divine call. The Church, representing Christ and voicing his will, decides all such questions. And if she be faithful, and listen to the voice of her Lord in his word, to the still small voice of his Spirit, and study the development of his providences, she will not fail to speak Christ's will.

These elders are called into Christ's kingdom and then called by Christ into special service. They are called to preside and serve in spiritual things. Christ's call to them is by his Spirit, providences and by his Church, which judges of the call and confirms it if it be genuine. To say that the Church shall not be permitted to call one of these presiding officers of Christ to preside in her assemblies, is to forcibly stop her mouth in a case in which Christ calls on her to speak.

But can an elder perform ministerial functions? Certainly, if the assembled Church authorizes him to. Or he can perform such part as is assigned to him, and others perform other parts, as provided for in the overtures. WM. C. GRAY.

XIII.

"Herald and Presbyterian," December 22, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor of the Interior:—

DEAR BROTHER:—You said in reference to my correspondence with distinguished men: "It immediately called to mind a similar stratagem devised by Satan on the second day of the battle in heaven." And now you say: "No, sir; you are a young angel." You are wrong in both cases. I am not an angel of either "sort." I am simply a man. Moreover, I am entitled to have my arguments answered. You seem to have become weary of the scriptural argument, after clamoring so loud for it; and seeing nothing in the Form of Government to help you, betake yourself to resting your argument on weight of personal opinions.

1. You say the English Church "elected Dr. Collingwood Bruce, a ruling elder, *who was not a minister*, to her chief moderatorship." It is true that Rev. John Collingwood Bruce, A.M., LL.D., D.C.L., F.R.S., was moderator of the English Presbyterian Church in 1881, but he was not an "*elder-moderator*;" although, not being a pastor, he may have represented some session, which is often the case in the English Church, and he may have been consequently enrolled with the elders in the records of the Synod. The law of the Synod is in these words: "The moderator must be an ordained minister" (note 3).

2. You say: "Dr. J. Monro Gibson informs me that some time ago the moderatorship of the Free Church of Scotland was offered by influential men to Hon. Murray Dunlap." What of it? You have been offering the moderator's chair for five years, and the offer is out for 1887. The Free Church Assembly, like our own, has never had an elder-moderator.

3. George Buchanan was not a ruling elder in contradistinction from a preaching elder. He was a doctor, but not a pastor. He was principal of St. Leonard's College, Aberdeen, and was an eminent teacher and author. He may be called a layman, as all were who were not pastors or preachers, receiving their living from the legal stipend. He was moderator in 1567, about eighty years before the Westminster Assembly. According to the first (1560) and second or amended (1578) Buik of Discipline, the following extracts explain the polity of the Church of Scotland:

Elderships and assemblies are commonlie constitute of pastors, doctors and sic as we commonlie call elders, that labor not in word and doctrine.

When it is the name of one office some tyme it is taken largely comprehending als weill the pastors and doctors as them who are callit seniors or elders.

As the pastors and doctors should be diligent in teachings and sowing the seid of the word, so the elders should be cairful in seiking the same in the people.

Their principall office is to hald assemblies with the pastors and doctors, who are also of their number, for establishing of gude order and execution of discipline.

For the doctors is give the word of knowledge to open up, bi simple teaching, the mysteries of faith; to the pastor the gift of wisdom to apply the same to the manners of the flock, as the occasion craveth.

Under the name and office of a doctor we comprehend the order in schooles and collidges and universities.

The doctor being an elder, as said is, sould assist the pastor, in the govermente, and concurre with the elders, his brethren, in all assemblies.

Seeing the moderator is frequently called to exercise the power of order, as solemn public ecclesiastical prayer, at least twice every session, to-wit: at its first opening and then at its closing, authoritative exhortation, rebuke, direction, it is convenient the moderator be always a minister.

In the absence of the present moderator of the presbytery, his predecessor in the chair moderates, and in case of his absence the eldest minister.

The moderator of the former synod doth on the morning preach a sermon suited to the occasion.

The moderator of the former assembly opens it with a sermon, but in case of his absence his predecessor in that chair hath the sermon, and in the absence of them both the eldest minister in the town where they meet preacheth and openeth the assembly by prayer, and moderates till a new moderator be chosen.

The minister of the word being an office above that of the ruling elder, can not be liable to the censure of the kirk session.

I take these extracts from the Pardovan Collections, which is the best of authority, and put them together because of their bearing upon the moderatorship of George Buchanan, and also to show that Presbyterian government is what it was from the first in regard to offices and judicatories. It will be seen that every extract helps to confirm the difference in office and order of the ministry and eldership, and their equality in rulership, as well as the expediency of making moderators of ministers only. Even if you had proven that a few ruling elders had been elected moderators in the Scotch and English Assemblies, it would have amounted to nothing in such a discussion. One Scotch elder-moderator, 319 years ago, and one offer by a few persons privately, are certainly a small showing in comparison with the 326 years of opposite law and practice. If you are happy in your transatlantic historical argument, your contentment is admirable. You remind me of Patrick Henry, who had been sitting a long time on the bank of a stream. A friend approached him after some hours with the inquiry, "Have you caught any fish?" The reply was, "None." Then said his friend, "Do you get any bites?" "Not one," said he, "but I got one glorious nibble."

4. Your reference to the Cumberland Presbyterians is of no value to you. Are you not aware that that Church was an exodus from us because the Synod of Kentucky condemned the licensure of four men, by its Presbytery of Cumberland, without the qualifications for the ministry prescribed in our Form of Government.

5. Your reference to the Presbyterian Council is even more of a blunder. Do you not know that this body is not a court of Jesus Christ? It does not exercise government and discipline. It does not even vote on doctrine, polity or duty. Most certainly an elder is as suitable a person to preside in such a body as over presbyterial Sunday-school institutes, or missionary or temperance meetings. Is this what you mean by "burying me five miles deep"?

6. You say a large majority of the last Assembly submitted the overture. It was thought best and safest to have a discussion which only such an overture could give. I have no doubt that a large majority of the last Assembly and in the presbyteries will vote against the overture. It has few friends outside of the diocese of the Interior.

7. As to the *jure divino* argument, you mutilate and change my statements and do me injustice. Whatever is scriptural is "*jure divino*," and I have said nothing to the contrary. My statement, "The *jure divino* covers doctrine, not church polity," was given to explain the difference in the vows in receiving our "confession" and our "government and discipline." The first we "adopt" and the second we "approve." I said, however, in regard to your reference to Drs. Morris and Humphrey, that I hold that, in regard to our government, we do not claim it to be *jure divino* "in all its details." The last clause you omit. I said also, as you say, that our government is *jure divino* in its fundamental principles, and I cite, as you do, its doctrine as to ministers and elders. We only differ as to what these fundamental principles are.

8. Your quotations from Schaff, Thornwell, Breckinridge and others, in favor of the one order of bishops and presbyters or elders have no reference to the equality of the office or order of ministers and elders in our Church. They belong to the controversy with prelatists who hold three different orders of the ministry (bishops, elders and deacons) and three ordinations, and also three functions. You persist in using the words order and orders, as used by hierarchists, and you insist that I must do the same. I use the term order as indicating an office by ordination. Our Book says that there are three offices in the Church. I have proved that these are scriptural. The ordination and the vows are not the same in the case of ministers and ruling elders. Elders do not promise to preach and administer holy ordinances, and they are not commissioned to do so. Now, suppose you quit quoting from the controversy between presbytery and episcopacy, and give yourself awhile to the offices mentioned in the overture, and to their functions.

9. You have said that elders have the same right with ministers to preach, dispense

baptism and the Lord's Supper. I am glad that you have committed yourself thus far. I wish you would go further and say that elders have a right to lay hands on ministers, and that an elder-moderator may exercise the power of the presbytery and by prayer set apart a minister and convey to him, in the name of the Head of the Church, the authority and functions of an ambassador of Christ. This would be consistent, and I think your courage ought to be equal to it. I would like also to know if it is not a part of your scheme to have elders to be members of presbytery, and to be ordained by presbytery, and take the same vows and secure the same functions that belong to ministers of the gospel; or, if that can not be done, to have ministers to be members, not of the presbytery, but of the congregation, and get their ordination in the same way, by the laying on of the hands of the session, or by a council called by the session or church? And are you not in favor of expunging the chapter in our Form of Government that defines the office and duties of ruling elders, and have the chapter on ministers to answer for the combined office? And are you not anxious to have the idea of a call to the ministry eliminated from our system of polity? or applied equally to ministers and elders? and do you not think that the long course of study for the ministry should be given up, to secure a better equality? And would it not be wise, and hasten the equality and identity of the two offices, to do away with the theological seminaries and the Board of Education, and take the starch out of the young theologues who are being educated to lord it over the eldership? And do you not believe that the designation "ruling elders" should be no longer used in the Church, and have all called ministers? Any views you may express on any of these points would bear on the subject of the eligibility of the elders to the moderatorship, of which thus far you have said very little.

10. You make a very defective effort to get rid of the difficulty arising from the difference of functions and duties of the two offices. You are obliged to confess that consistency requires you to claim, as an elder, the right to preach and dispense ordination and the sacraments; and when asked why you do not go on and do what you claim you are ordained to do, all you have been able thus far to say is, that you are under the presbytery, as ministers are, and can only do what it prescribes. This is utterly erroneous, for the reason that the presbytery is under law and can not require you to do what you have no right to do. You are ordained and have your commission, and it is your duty to do your duty, and the presbytery will not restrain you, but it will say to you, if you do well, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

The presbytery can never advise or order you to do what is not in your ordination vows, which is the measure of your duty. The distinctive vow you have solemnly taken before God is in the following question and answer, viz.:

Question 4. Do you accept the office of ruling elder in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof? Answer, I do.

The duties are defined in the chapter on Ruling Elders to be "exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors and ministers." Now in order to see that the presbytery can not assign you the work of the ministry, outside of ruling elder, you have only to examine the vows that the presbytery imposes on ministers at their ordination. They are as follows, viz.:

Question 5. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son? Answer, I have.

6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity of the Church, whatever persecutions or opposition may arise unto you on that account. Answer, I do.

7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all personal and private duties, which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all relative duties and the public duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God has made you an overseer? Answer, I do.

8. Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation, agreeable to your declaration at accepting their call? And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them, as God shall give you strength? Answer, I do.

The duties of the minister are "to declare the will of God" and to "dispense the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ." Let me add one of the vows taken by the people—

Question 4. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the exercise of discipline? Answer, We do.

Now it does seem to me that when you engage in the work of obliterating the distinction between the office and order of the minister and ruling elder, you are opposing an ordinance of God; you are doing despite to the functions of the holy ministry; you are taking a course to array the eldership against the ministry, by charging that ministers are trying to keep elders under their feet; you are demanding that ministers stand back and not speak for elders; and you are exhorting elders to put on their war-paint and fight for their rights. In all this you are imperiling the peace and purity of the Church. You do not carry on your warfare by square conflict; but by skirmishing here and there, and by extempore attacks and diversions. You dare not show your consistency by going to your own session and saying to your pastor: "You and I are of the same order, and I have the same right to moderate the session that you have." Try on your doctrine and see what will come of it. If you were to do so, you would be rotated out of office at the first opportunity.

E. R. MONFORT.

XIV.

"Herald and Presbyter," December 29, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

DR. GRAY'S FOURTH AND LAST ARTICLE.

Dr. E. R. Monfort, Editor Herald and Presbyter:—

DEAR BROTHER:—You say "there was no compromise" made by the Westminster Assembly; that the word *proistemeus*—translated "rule"—does not contain the idea of presiding; that none of the "Old Testament people" presided over the visible Church of God. (I was wrong in naming Barak.) You deny that the sacramental Passover was committed to the elders. You say there never was an elder before Christ, whose rule was confined to spiritual things. You seek to break the connection between the Old Testament and the New—between the Passover and the Lord's Supper—between the local churches before Christ and the same churches thereafter; and seem disposed to deny that the Church of Christ existed before his coming. You deny that there is any superiority in rulership for one class over another in our church-courts. Fortunately for me, we address an intelligent audience. Pardon me for saying that when a debate is reduced to the dregs of such contradictions, and to such appeals against the overtures addressed to the supposed selfish and sinful jealousies of ministers, and to the supposed laziness and worldliness of elders, it has passed beyond the line of profitable controversy.

You speak contemptuously of the doctrine that God's divine call has been extended to every soul in his kingdom, as "spreading it out very thin," and as "subverting our system." I am glad, for the sake of my ministerial brethren, that none of them employed this dangerous language. How can my call to a less important work impair the honor of my pastor's call to a more important work? You ask me why, if I have the same call with my pastor, I do not preach? I do preach in a humble sort of way, but not in the pulpit. I am satisfied that I am not called to that method of preaching—first, because I have not the gifts; and, secondly, because the presbytery and the Church know it, and don't want me for that work. But we elders are called to *live* Christ, as well as to *teach* him. In the profoundest and in an awful sense, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

The adoption of the pending overtures, or of one embodying the principle, will certainly be realized. The signs of the reunion of our dissevered Church, North and South, grow more hopeful and bright every year and every month, and it is coming on apace. Does any one suppose that any considerable number of our people will insist on disfranchising the Southern elders? No man would have the hardihood to propose such a thing to the ministers and elders of the Southern Church. We shall, if this measure be defeated, be urged by our consciences, and by the united voice of Evangelical Christendom, to retrace our steps, and we will assuredly do so.

The progress of general education has given us a great number of highly-educated and able men in the eldership. Is it supposable that the anomaly of holding these men as an inferior and as a comparatively ignorant grade can last?

The honor which a true and self-reliant man does to himself by magnanimity, and by chivalrous justice and respect to his brethren, is a constant appeal to our ministry against the existing conditions.

The appeal to the worldliness and indifference of the elders, by telling them that the proposed amendment will raise the standard of qualifications for the eldership, may influence some who are worldly and careless, just as an appeal to a mean spirit of selfish jealousy may find here and there a sympathetic response from a minister, but may God forbid that there shall be many such. The elders know that the standard is already fixed. (Titus i. 5-9.) The only effect it will have will be to send them to their knees for more of God's Spirit and grace.

Three times, in his last article, Dr. Monfort directly refers to an ungodly spirit of jealousy, and twice indirectly to it—"constant jealousy," "constantly watching." "Most ministers would prefer independency or prelacy" to the "new equality." Rather than submit to the plain teachings of Christ and his apostles—teachings by precept, by practical exhibition, and by church organization—rather than renounce hierarchic pride, these men will go to Rome, or to one-man power independency! If it be true that this Satanic spirit is strong enough to dominate the Church, then it is true that our appeals for the sake of the meek and lowly Jesus will be in vain. But the accusation ought to be indignantly, as it can truthfully be, repelled by the ministers in every part of the land. I was compelled to recognize prelatival phrases, ideas, arguments and expressions in Dr. Monfort's articles: but this plain avowal of the God-dishonoring and man-enslaving spirit of the hierarchy astonishes me.

The permanent defeat of this measure would be a profound calamity to the Presbyterian Church, and to the cause of Christ in the world. For its speedy success we shall pray, as we pray "Thy kingdom come."

Our elders have been so repressed and misled in regard to their duties, and stripped of their responsibility, that the work which God ordained them to do is left undone; and already the Christian people of Chicago—mostly Presbyterians—have given the vast sum of \$250,000 to prepare undenominational, uncontrolled, irresponsible "lay-evangelists" to do the work which our elders ought to do, but do not do. And this is but the beginning. This quarter of a million will swell to millions; and our work will go into other and willing, though I fear eccentric and indiscreet, hands. Who is responsible for the paralysis of our vast army of twenty thousand elders? and for this immense loss of power?

Ten years ago, and in subsequent years, a great swarm of "lay-evangelists" uprose in the wake of the Moody revivals. They were, many of them, enthusiasts, without discreetness or knowledge. Some of them were men of bad morals; all of them were irresponsible. In this exigency some of our elders went out and preached and labored among the neglected. God blessed them, and set his seal to their work, and their work abides to this day. I then said to our people: "We have not less than ten thousand elders capable of doing this work. We have a vast force of men who are wise, discreet, capable, and who are subordinate and obedient to our church authorities. Call them to their duty, and stop these indiscreet enthusiasts who are afflicting the churches."

One pastor said to the writer of this, "I am weary and ready to die. I am worn out with work!" "Where are your helpers, the elders?" I asked. "I have begged, even implored, them to help me, but they will not." And so it was, and largely is, over the whole field—a silent, paralyzed army of men who have the vows of God upon them to labor in the office of the eldership. Why is this? Plainly because they were told, both by precept and by practical treatment, that they had no important duties or responsibilities. The ideal of the office was and is constantly degraded. Responsibility to God is set aside by the idea of responsibility to human constituents. They were told, as Dr. Monfort now tells them, that God never called them into the service—and that the chasm between them and those who represent Christ is practically infinite.

Their treatment in our church courts I need not describe again. The result was to dispossess the elders of all sense of responsibility for the extension of Christ's kingdom—to paralyze, as I have said, a mighty and invincible army—to leave our Church, which, had it employed its elders as the apostolic church did, would have swept over this land with irresistible power, as the first Christian elders did over

Western Asia and Europe—to leave this mighty power far in the rear of those churches which, without the true apostolic organization, employed the apostolic methods (note 4).

It was not because it is unfraternal, and even unmanly, to treat our capable, devout, consecrated and energetic elders as an inferior—and a very inferior—grade in the courts of God's house. It was not because disfranchisement involves a loss of self-respect, nor because it is as discreditable to the one class as to the other, and to the Church itself—not for these reasons that this controversy was precipitated anew upon the Church ten years ago. It was because the repudiation of God's divine plan was working infinite harm to his Church. It was because thoughtful ministers and elders in every part of the Church saw that a return to the divine instructions would make the Presbyterians the most powerful organization for good in the world.

It is for this reason that I have insisted upon the consideration of the fundamental principles of the office of the eldership. What we are trying to do in this whole movement is to bring the Church, the ministry and the eldership to a full realization of the fact that those who are called to the office of the eldership will be held to answer to God for the exercise of a ministerial office, and that they must work while it is day. "Decline the office"—not if they have God's love in their hearts; but if they have not they ought to decline it. They have no right in a divine office to which God has not called them. Moses said: "I have not the qualifications"—and yet behold what a work God did with him! He who longs for the good of his fellow-men and for the salvation of their souls, and who earnestly desires that God may employ him as his servant, and lead him to do his will, that man, when elected by the people, has God's internal and external call to the eldership. Let him go forward in God's strength, preparing himself as best he may for the general duty and for such new duty as arises, and God will put his seal upon his efforts in a way that will fill him with joy and thanksgiving.

What will be the effect upon the ministry? It will be glorious—no less word will express it. Here is the Third Church in Chicago—over two thousand members. Dr. Kittredge knew, and everybody knew, that it was the inspiring of the elders and others in the church to work that gave that grand result. There are thousands of places in this country in which, if the elders felt their responsibility as ministers of Christ, they would build up organizations to the point of self-support that would enable them to maintain a minister in comfort. "Jealousy!" Are not the pastors now, everywhere, longing for help from those elders which they can not get? Would not every pastor rejoice to have a session that would come to him for advice and counsel in work? and then go out and work as opportunities offered, with a heart full of love for God and his Church?

We care nothing about the honors. For my part I would not care if not an elder-moderator were elected in any Assembly for twenty years to come, except the very few that would be necessary for the vindication of the principle. That which we ask, and all that we ask, is an object-lesson that shall impress the churches, that when they are electing elders they are speaking for Christ in calling a man to the most sacred and responsible of all offices, and that shall impress the elder with a solemn sense of his high calling of God. All that we ask is, that elders shall not be told in the most impressive way that they are not the presbyters of the New Testament, but an inferior caste, and as free from responsibility as they are low in station. The revival of the primitive Christian principles will, of course, lay burdens on the elders. They will feel the need of greater consecration, of a more fervid spirit of prayer, and they will feel very deeply their unworthiness and weakness; but God will be with them, and they will soon be filled with confidence and joy—and their pastors will garner their sheaves.

I may say that I foresaw what was coming from the inception of the "lay-evangelistic" movement, and did my best to arouse the elders. I even anticipated this great undenominational, lay-evangelist theological seminary. But believing in the divine polity, I urged that every pastor should be the theological professor, and his study the seminary, for the preparation of our eldership for the work which they were called to do. But what was the use? with the practice and precedents teaching the elders that they were not Scripture elders, and not even called of God—that the office represents and is only responsible to the people—to fallible and

erring, sinful people—not to Christ. What should or what does any man care for such a responsibility? Absolutely nothing. “If they don’t like me, let them elect somebody else.” That is the thought.

There will be no miraculous uprising of the great army, but it will begin to arise. We propose to put into the hands of our ministers a hold and a leverage upon the consciences of their elders which will enable them, in Christ’s name, kindly to compel them to work for the extension of Christ’s kingdom. The lions in the path are optical illusions. The ministers will find their elders more consecrated and zealous. The elders will find the anticipated toil to be sweet. “My yoke is easy and my burden is light,” says Christ. No service will be required of them of which they are not capable. Should spiritual pride spring up in any elder’s heart, he will find that Presbyterianism is a system of law and order, and that he will be compelled to submit to and obey the authority—the session and the presbyteries—which God has set up for the government of his Church.

Our country to be saved. Our home missionaries starving. Fields full of promise, unseeded. Twenty thousand of God’s elders practically idle. Ten thousand of them men of superior education and talents, fitted and ready for evangelistic work. The other ten thousand capable of doing most valuable ministry. All of them self-supporting. If these men are led to perform their duties as elders, and that duty be shown to them, they will build up churches capable of supporting five thousand more trained Presbyterian ministers in the next ten years. He who fights against this movement is fighting against God.

Brethren of the ministry, we appeal to you to put an end to this dreadful error of repressing and depressing the office of the eldership. Do not, as you love Christ’s cause, longer make pariahs of them in the courts of God’s house. But, with all the force of your minds and hearts, impress their great responsibility upon them. As spiritual laborers, by God’s appointment, we will perform whatever ministry we can perform, however humble—be it only to “go out into the highways and hedgeways and compel them to come in.”

Brethren, we are not ambitious. God forbid that a man of us should think of any honor but the honor of Christ. It is true, and it is right that it should be true, that with the spirit of American Christian freemen, with our Bibles in our hands, with the nature of our high calling plain to our eyes, we hold the honor of our office in sacred regard, and we know that whatever tends to discredit it is not of God, but of evil. May God lead the Presbyterian Church to call promptly into the field of battle this great reserve of twenty thousand chosen and commissioned soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ (note 5).

WM. C. GRAY.

XV.

“Herald and Presbyter,” December 29, 1886.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor of the Interior:—

DEAR BROTHER.—You have adjourned our discussion by placing at the head of your article, “Dr. Gray’s Fourth and Last Article.” I regret this, for the reason that I had more to say. I have not given all I desired on the second proposition, which is by far the most important part of the discussion. I have written an article, but it is not what I desire for closing the discussion. Your reply, however, does not deal with my argument, but consists chiefly of lamentations over the paralysis of our twenty thousand elders, who are repressed by the ministry, misled in regard to their duties, and stripped of their responsibility; and of exhortation to all concerned to make the elders more efficient. I heartily unite in the exhortation, but not in the lamentation.

1. The eldership of our Church is not, and never has been, paralyzed. It was never more active and efficient than now, and there never was more confidence, harmony and co-operation between ministers and elders. The *Interior* is the headquarters of all the discord that exists. Its trumpet has been constantly sounding the charge that the ministers are chargeable with “degrading the eldership.” It is the duty of theological professors and pastors to expound and enforce the duties of

ruling elders, and it has ever been done to mutual edification, and the same is true in the fifty Presbyterian denominations of the Presbyterian Alliance.

2. You have failed to prove that the adoption of the overture will stimulate elders to any duty in their own churches, or correct the abuses in lay evangelism to which you refer, or do any good to any person or any interest.

3. I must ask our readers to inform themselves as to my views on the connection of the Old and New Testament Church, the Passover and Lord's Supper, not from the series of brief statements in your opening paragraph, but from my own articles. They will thereby see that I am not correctly represented. The doctrine and spirit of our Church are well expressed by Dr. Chas. Hodge, when he says:

The influence of the clergy is not to be increased by their acting as laymen, nor that of laymen by their acting as clergymen. The value of the office of the ruling elder we hold to be inestimable; but it depends upon his being a ruling elder, with rights, duties and privileges distinct from those of the ministry; on his being, in the ordinary sense of the word, a layman and not a clergyman.

These are my views of the relations, interest and duties of the offices of the ministry and eldership. I feel my obligations, and am not willing to be regarded as a minister. I do not believe I could "open the General Assembly with an appropriate address." My testimony is, that ministers hold the elders in high esteem, and do not restrain them in duty, but rather stimulate them. I am sure I have all the honor I deserve, and all the responsibility I can carry. The same is true of elders generally. Their office is scriptural, and its honor and responsibility are evenly balanced and inseparable. So far from being paralyzed, they are the equals of any body of church officers on the globe. I rejoice, however, in anything calculated to add to their usefulness, but there is no proof that the adoption of the overtures would do this. You think our discussion "has passed beyond the line of profitable controversy." I think it has grown more and more profitable every week, and I would have been glad to have given one more article on the question of expediency and another summing up the debate. E. R. MONFORT.

Dr. Gray sends me the following reply to my article of last week, which, he says, will appear in the *Interior* of this week:

REPLY.

Last week I enumerated six statements of facts, which, I think, I had proved to the satisfaction of our readers, which Dr. Monfort contradicted without giving his reasons for so doing. I submitted them to the intelligence of our readers. In order to make sure that I was not mistaken about the status of Buchanan and Bruce, respectively moderators of the Scotch Assembly and the English General Synod (they have no "assembly"), I wrote to the editor of the *Witness* and to Dr. J. Munro Gibson for confirmation. The facts are as I stated them. Neither were ordained ministers; both were ordained elders; both were elected as elders to the respective moderatorships. The election of Buchanan is another fact showing what the Westminster Assembly Presbyterians thought of the elders. It was "expedient" at that time, as they say, to elect ministers, because elders were not then men of education, as they are now, except in exceptional cases. I would be fully satisfied should our Church elect an elder-moderator, like Collingwood Bruce, as a precedent. It is especially inexcusable to contradict me in regard to Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell, and say that they were arguing with avowed prelatists, not with Presbyterians, about the eldership. I never said that "elders have the same right with ministers to preach, dispense baptism and the Lord's Supper." In the article which he was reviewing, and which was under his eye when he wrote, I very clearly, and at length, set forth views which defy such a perversion. The last paragraph of the Doctor's article is simply preposterous. I submit the whole without further remarks. WM. C. GRAY.

1. In answer to this paragraph I will say that our information as to Dr. Collingwood Bruce was not from private letters, but from historical records, and from the law of the English Presbyterian Church, which says that "the moderator must be an ordained minister" of the gospel; and I would remind Dr. Gray that George Buchanan presided as moderator three-quarters of a century before the sittings of the Westminster Assembly, and therefore his election could not show what the Westminster Presbyterians thought of the elders.

2. Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell were arguing the question of offices in the Church, and did so in view of independency on the one hand and prelacy on the other. Dr. Thornwell uses the terms "genus and species," and Dr. Breckinridge, "order and class." I do not object to any of these terms. They show that the difference of function and duty between ministers of the gospel and ruling elders is a reality, and is expressed by each of them. Our Form of Government does not use the terms genus and species, nor order and class, but only the term office, and

says there are three offices. There is nothing in the extracts from Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell to show that both species or classes are or ought to be eligible to the moderatorship in our church-judicatories. Dr. Breckinridge holds, and Dr. Thornwell formally indorses him, that ministers and elders differ in functions and duties, and that the difference is indicated by ordination. He says in the same chapter from which Dr. Gray quoted (page 652), in summing up his argument :

These presbyters, elders, are all of one order, all equal in dignity, rank and authority as Rulers; but that order is divided into two classes, of which one labor in word and doctrine, and are stewards of the mysteries of God, in which additional functions all this class (ministers, are also of equal rank, authority and dignity, one with another; the class to which each particular presbyter belongs being determined by vocation and ordination.

This is Dr. Breckinridge, and Dr. Thornwell indorses him *ex animo*. He says in his review of Dr. Breckinridge's book, when considering this very chapter from which Dr. Gray quotes:

"That all government is by councils; that these councils are representative and deliberative; that *jure divino* they are all presbyteries, and, as presbyteries, composed exclusively of presbyters; that presbyters, though one in order and the right to rule, are subdivided into two classes—these points are ably, scripturally, unanswerably established in the work before us."

3. Dr. Gray said in the *Interior* of October 2, 1886: "It would be scripturally lawful for us to exercise any ministerial function, and we would not hesitate to do it in circumstances where the glory of God and the consolation and edification of his people seemed to require it."

Is it not clearly implied in this quotation that Dr. Gray claims the right to preach, dispense baptism and the Lord's Supper, and any other function belonging to the ministry?

E. R. MONFORT.

XVI.

"Herald and Presbyter," January 5, 1887.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

CARD FROM DR. GRAY.

Dr. E. R. Monfort, My Dear Sir:—

I fear that your readers will misunderstand the first paragraph of your last. Before I had written my "fourth" and concluding article, you write to me privately, asking me when I wished to conclude, and saying that if I chose not to reply to the article of which you inclosed proof, you would consider the debate closed. As I had then said nothing directly on the second proposition, I could not fully comply with the suggestion, but I threw aside my materials summarized, without replying to a half dozen of your contradictions of my statements, and concluded as briefly as possible. I have been sensitive about inflicting a debate on our and your readers after it might be tiresome to them, and as you seemed to have the same feeling, I sacrificed my preparations and ended my part of it.

Fraternally,

WM. C. GRAY.

REPLY.

My Dear Dr. Gray:—

In my private letter of December 20, inclosing a two-column article, I did call your attention to your prediction that the debate need not occupy six weeks, and asked you what about closing, and knowing your zeal in disputation, and remembering how you enjoy burying your opponents "five miles deep," I playfully said that if you printed my two-column article without reply, it would end the debate. Of course it would. I am sorry I did not make the pleasantry plainer. My letter, however, which you entirely misinterpret, could not have influenced you to close, as it did not reach you until Wednesday, and your article entitled "Dr. Gray's Fourth and Last Article" was written and in print and sent to me on Monday, and was in my hands on Tuesday morning at nine o'clock, the day before you received my letter, as you will see by examining postmarks and dates. Your article was in print and a copy sent to me before my letter was written. The difficulty, however, is not serious, as fortunately we are agreed in one important particular. We both want to go on. You have more material and so have I. Now, therefore, suppose you work up your reserve material of which you speak, for it would be a serious misfortune to have what you have gathered lost in the dusty pigeon-holes or the capacious waste-basket of the *Interior* office. I have another article in type, prepared nearly two weeks ago, and as we both want to go on, and that you may have both articles before you, I print it herewith. You can reprint it in the *Interior* and

reply to both at once. After your reply to me and my reply to you, it is probable that we can close the debate.

E. R. MONFORT.

Dr. Gray, in publishing the above in the *Interior*, made the following comment :

Dr. Monfort's letter was mislaid, or went into the waste. My recollection of the matter is as I gave it, and if it was worth while, I would give what appears to me to be confirmatory circumstances—but the matter is of no importance (note 6).

XVII.

"Herald and Presbyterian," January 19, 1887.

ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

ONLY THIS AND NOTHING MORE.

Dr. E. R. Monfort, Editor Herald and Presbyterian:—

DEAR BROTHER:—I am woefully afraid that our readers are bored with this elder-moderator debate—but as my Cincinnati friend insists that he was only indulging in a pleasantry in suggesting a close, I beg indulgence for one more article, and I also beg the favor of a reading of it. I have not paid attention to Dr. Monfort's constant contradictions—leaving them for the reader to mark and pass upon—preferring to employ my opportunity to lay the truth of Scripture and of justice and of honorable dealing before the readers of the *Herald and Presbyterian*. Let me now notice a few of the Doctor's contradictions and absurdities.

He cites Dr. Hodge's opinions against the elders. I can cite a minister of national fame, of unquestionable orthodoxy and piety—Dr. Dabney, of South Carolina—who is still denouncing the act of "robbing us of our lawful bondmen." Caste never relinquishes its claims so long as they will hold.

Dr. Monfort has seemed to regard it as his duty to contradict any historical fact I referred to. He admits that "Prelacy was strongest at first" in the Westminster Assembly, but affirms that "there was no compromise." Every minister and other reader of ecclesiastical history knows that Dr. Monfort here denies an absolute historical fact; and every person of ordinary intelligence knows that such a work could not have been performed by men of conflicting views without compromising.

The attempt to discredit the precedents of Elder-moderators Buchanan and Bruce is in the same partisan spirit. There they stand, *facts*. "The law of the Church is against it." If so, the law is a dead letter. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church are denied any weight as interpreters of the "Form of Government," because they split off from us. Dr. Monfort is therefore an infallible interpreter of law, because he is in our Church, and the two thousand more or less Cumberland ministers are legal addle-heads! The overtures relieve an elder-moderator of strictly ministerial duties, and yet the Pan Presbyterian Council elder-moderators are no precedent. The last Assembly passing the overtures almost unanimously, and the forty more or less—of presbyteries who have elected elder-moderators count for nothing against Dr. Monfort's *obiter dicta*. The question, "What shall we do in the approaching reunion with our disfranchised elders?" he does not answer. He can not, one would imagine, have the impudence to demand the disfranchisement of the Southern elders. And yet, if, as he has said, the ministers for whom he speaks will go to Rome or to Brownism, rather than submit to an elder-moderator; then, of course, they would split the Church, and defeat reunion rather than recognize the elders.

Dr. Monfort does not hesitate to put his ready contradiction against a shelf-full of Greek lexicons. I said that "*proistemenus*"—rule, "elders who rule well," from which the Methodist presiding elder, means to preside—to be set over. "No," says Dr. Monfort, "the idea of moderatorship is not in the word." The word is defined in Thayer's Greek Lexicon, "to be over, to superintend, to preside over;" in Robinson's Greek Lexicon, "to be over, to preside, to rule;" in Liddell and Scott's, "to set before or in front, to manage, regulate, govern" (note 7).

If he quibbles on the word "moderator," I refer to Webster.

Dr. Monfort says there never was an elder before Christ whose rule was confined to spiritual things! Under Egypt, Philistia, Syria, Babylon and Rome, the Hebrew elders had no shadow of a civic rule—none when Christ came, and yet they ruled

and taught. Thus Dr. Monfort goes right along contradicting the plainest facts with the regularity and solemnity of a katydid. A badger in a barrel can do that, and with equal sense and reasonableness. "The synagogue was not a divine institution," he says, "but only a wise expedient to preserve what was Jewish." The sanctuaries of the Church of God in which his law was read, his word preached, and his praise sung, were only human expedients to preserve what was Jewish! Of course, then, the local churches of God now are only human expedients to preserve what is English, Irish or Dutch—as the case may be! If so good an authority as the apostle James would not meet with a contradiction or an irrelevant remark, I would quote him to show that the synagogue did not even lose its distinctive name, much less its bench of elders, when it became a Christian church. James calls the Christian churches "synagogues" (James ii. 2) (note 8).

I was disposed to say that the most ridiculous contradiction in the lot (but they are all of the same character) is, that elders are now equal to ministers in rulership in our church courts. Look at the Minutes and begin anywhere—1871-2-3-4, on to 1886; the moderators and all the executive officers are ministers in every one of them. The chairmanships and the majorities of all the committees in the hands of the ministers, except mileage and finance—two slavish jobs, which ought to be paid for. (The committees on records have a minister-chairman and usually one elder.) There is not a scrap of legislation, or of proceeding of any kind, that is not in the hands of the ministers by chairmanships and majorities—Home Missions, Foreign Missions, all the boards, all bills, overtures, elections, everything. There have been a few rare exceptions to this—just enough to show that this contumelious and contemptible humiliation of the elders has no justification in law or in any necessity. There are very few Americans so ignorant as not to know that this system of parliamentary discrimination wipes out the eldership as a potential part of the Assembly. No man with knowledge and truthfulness will deny it. No man with a shadow of a sense of either justice or shame will attempt to justify it. The fact that the objections invented and trumped up against the elder-moderatorship have no merit in them is absolutely *proved* by the fact that the elders are rigorously excluded from the chairmanships of important committees. This shows that this tyrannical proscription is *not* based on the reasons alleged, which were not made to fit chairmanships.

But let me proceed with these bundles of blunders called arguments. The good Doctor says: "I knew my reference to a 'call to the ministry' would puzzle you" [me]. Right for once; I did not know which it had in it the most of, sin or of folly.

I knew my reference to a "call to the ministry" would puzzle you. You have practically denied that there is such a thing as a call to the ministry, by spreading it out equally and very thin alike over ministers, elders and private members.

Put that against I Cor. xii. 3-11. Every gift and call of God is here stated, placed on an equality of authority and attributed to the "self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will."

And see how it annihilates the statement that the elders do not represent God, but only the people:

And God [not man, remember,] *has set* some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.—I Cor. xii. 28.

"Governments;" if that means elders, it must mean both ministers and elders, as both govern. But this lets us slide into the "Form of Government," nearly the whole of which we have had to print in giving place to Dr. Monfort's articles. The proof-texts everywhere recognize the ruling elders as New Testament presbyters—"elders who rule well," "them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord," "they watch for your souls as they that must give account." We must construe the subordinate to agree with the supreme standard, not ridiculously the reverse. Then, having shown that there was but one order of presbyters in the New Testament, we are forced to place the same construction on the "Form of Government."

He even contradicts me when I quote verbatim his own words. Dr. Humphrey had said that no system of church government or polity can claim to be *jure divino*. Monfort indorsed that and said: "The *jure divino* covers doctrine, not church

polity." When I taxed him with it, he sung out: "Didn't; I said: 'In all its details.'"

But I piled up authorities till my space was exhausted, to prove, as Neander, the great church historian, says, that the idea of superior and inferior presbyters, different orders, is "altogether inadmissible."

That the name *episcopoi*, or bishop, was altogether synonymous with that of presbyter, is clearly evident from those passages of Scripture where both are used interchangeably. . . . Even were the name bishop originally nothing more than a distinctive title of president of this church-senate, of a *primus inter pares* (first among equals), yet even in this case such an interchange would be altogether inadmissible.—*Neander's General History, Vol. I., p. 256.*

And not a Presbyterian theological professor or other non-prelatical scholar in America or Europe can be quoted to the contrary. Monfort's two-order idea is laughed at in Lane Seminary, within a few hundred yards of his house. That is not the way the prelacy parties get rid of the elders. They simply deny that Presbyterian elders are in any sense New Testament presbyters. But perhaps Dr. Monfort thinks he can overturn the unanimous verdict of scholarship on this subject by *eisegeting* two orders into the New Testament text itself. Let us see him try his hand at it. Here is the apostle James:

Is any sick among you? let him send for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.—James v. 14.

The apostle must have had some spite at that man or order with "higher authority," if there were any such being; he does not even condescend to notice him.

And from Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.—Acts xx. 17.

And in his tender interview with them he said:

Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers: to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Wonder what the "higher-authority" man at Ephesus, if there were one, had done, that Paul sat down on him in silent contempt? Why didn't he write to him: "*Dear Bro. Philo*, come to Miletus and bring your elders with you"?

Observe that the commission given by Paul to the Ephesian elders was precisely that given by Christ to Peter: "Feed my sheep;" "Feed the Church of God." Peter gives the same commission to elders generally, saying: "Feed the flock of God." There is no possibility of overthrowing my position on these texts; and, as I have said, no scholar of repute in the world has ever attempted it. The Romanist or Anglican would promptly answer me: "All true, but your Presbyterian elders are not true elders; you are not in the apostolic succession." The Presbyterian prelatist, if he have any sense of his position, says the same—that our elders are not of the order whom Peter and Paul were addressing; are not scriptural elders, but are a human after-thought expedient—not *jure divino*, but *jure humano*—*jure-tom-dick-and-harry-o!*

Acts xv.: The meeting of the presbyters of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem—why, that supposed superior personage did not even put in for the moderatorship! He would have been there sure, if he had yet materialized, and had thought that Barnabas would give him a good send-off for that office in his paper.

Acts xi. 30: The Greeks sent supplies to the elders for the famine-stricken. Another slight to the elder-bosser—if there were one.

1 Timothy v. 1: "Rebuke not one elder, but entreat him as a brother." Was not that rather hard on the superior order—not even to be permitted to abuse their subordinates, if they had any!

No, sir. The devil of the hierarchy had not then appeared in the Church—nor for near an hundred years afterward. The elders were not even yet differentiated by their work so as to be designated as ruling and preaching elders.

Of course Dr. Monfort can explain how it happens that there is not a syllable nor an inference in favor of his two orders in the New Testament. He will send us another edition of the Form of Government to print! or a section of Princeton ex-cathedra dogmatism!—but he will not find a Princetonian who will indorse his ridiculous notion. They have some pride of scholarship down there under their silken gowns.

But one more of Dr. Monfort's badger-in-a-barrel contradictions. Some months ago Elder Lowrie sent me a copy of the *Presbyterian*, December 9, 1843, containing Dr. Breckinridge's magnificent argument for the official equality of elders with

ministers, delivered before the Synod at Baltimore on the laying-on-of-hands question. This led me to look up his "collected writings," where I found the same statements that were made in his address. I also knew that Dr. Thornwell had annihilated Dr. Hodge's position, which is only saved from prelacy by a denial of true-presbyter office to the elders,—so I looked him up and quoted from both the principles applied to the eldership question. Of course Dr. Monfort had to contradict me. There was not any sense in the contradiction, because facts and principles do not change by being applied to different questions, and it made no difference for what purpose Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell had used them, provided they were true. It is evident that Dr. Monfort knew no more about the facts when he twice contradicted me, and said that the question was "prelacy on the one hand and independency on the other"—knew no more about the facts than a badger-in-a-barrel—or he would not have put his own father, Dr. J. G. Monfort, among the "prelatists" (note 9). The latter, a few years ago, attacking me on the elder-moderator question, referred to the movement led by Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell, and said:

We had a sharp debate, twenty years ago, as to whether elders should lay on hands in the ordination of ministers. It was settled in the negative. The question as to the propriety of elders being moderators contains about one-tenth of the old elder question, and it will not require a tenth of the time to dispose of it.

And now his blundering son rises up and calls his old father a "prelatist!"

And so good-by, Elias! Long life, prosperity, peace, earthly happiness and heavenly joy be yours.

WM. C. GRAY.

XVIII.

"Herald and Presbyterian," January 19, 1886.

THE ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

Dr. W. C. Gray, Editor of the Interior:—

DEAR BROTHER:—The title of your article, "Only This and Nothing More," indicates that you are still anxious to close the debate. I am sorry for this, but more sorry to read your announcement that you have "condensed into one solid little treatise" your argument on the elder-moderator question, taken partly from the debate and partly not, which you propose to circulate. You can not have forgotten that when you visited us, and we concluded our arrangements for the debate, you proposed that we publish the discussion in pamphlet form, and you would unite with us in payment of the expense. You were then hopeful that, although elders, we would be able to produce arguments worthy of being read and preserved. This suited me then, and suits me better now, as the discussion is closing. I suppose I could also condense a statement of my views "in one solid little treatise," as I have been urged to do, and sell it or give it away, but it would better aid the views I hold, to print and circulate the whole discussion, and that, I suppose, is what will have to be done, if there is a call for it (note 10).

2. You still claim that prelatists diluted our Form of Government. I have shown this to be an error. In making the charge, you assert that our Book is unscriptural, and this has been your burden throughout. You even made light of my scriptural argument in its favor, and of my claim that the meaning of the terms minister and ruling elder in the overtures we were discussing and in the Form of Government must be the same, and you paid no attention to my application of the proposition. You have treated our Book as of no authority, and you twit me now for making you "reprint nearly the whole of it," while I have not quoted four of its fifty-six pages.

3. Your scriptural argument has proved a failure. There was really no call for a scriptural argument, as Dr. R. W. Patterson shows. It was taken for granted by the Assembly, in sending down the overture, that our system is biblical. It was because you defied Dr. Ritchie, Dr. Patterson and the editors of this paper to produce an argument from the Bible, that I sent you the propositions to discuss the matter in the two papers, being also myself an elder. Under pressure from you, I presented a Bible argument. I showed that Old Testament elders were not teachers; that Christ on earth, as prophet, priest and king and the antitype of Jewish

prophets, priests and rulers, claimed all power in heaven and earth, appointed his apostles with all power as his representatives and witnesses, and that they appointed their successors to the ministry, and that the New Testament Church is in its offices what they made it. To this you do not reply, but content yourself by asserting that all elders from Abraham to Christ, Jewish and outside, were teachers and preachers, and the only semblance of proof you give is that, under the influence of a miracle (Num. xi 25), the seventy elders prophesied, which no commentator explains as making them preachers, but only inspiring them with hope and zeal and courage for their work as rulers. You have spoken of Jewish elder-moderators, but have failed to show that any of them ever presided over a deliberate body, much less a spiritual court. You claim that the root of the term elder means preside. Then every elder presides all the time. You again quote several passages of Scripture, but fail to show that they have any relevancy. Your quotation (1 Cor. xii. 28) to show that ministers and elders are gifts of the same Spirit does not prove that they are the same gifts. The context makes the gifts, the offices and the duties diverse. You give incorrectly (1 Tim. v. 1), "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father," and say, "Was not this hard on the superior order, not to be able to abuse their subordinates?" I answer, No. For elders, although of a different order, are not subordinates. This passage is Paul's advice to a young minister. It certainly indicates two orders, and advises respectful treatment of one order by the other, as is common in our Church. You speak of the presbytery of Jerusalem (Acts xv.), where "the superior personages did not even put in for the moderatorship." In a presbytery composed of apostles and elders, the apostles are the ministers, and so when "the disciples" (not the Greeks, as you say), sent their contributions to the elders in Judea, there is no reason to suppose they slighted any "elder bosses." Very few of the churches in Judea had ministers, and if they had, their ministers were elders. This also explains why James said, "Send for the elders of the Church," and why Paul told the elders of Ephesus "to feed the Church of God." Whether they had or had not a pastor, they were bishops. I fully agree with Neander that elders and overseers (bishops) are used interchangeably, whether applied to preaching elders or ruling elders. The sheep of God's pasture need not only preaching and the sacraments, but the nurture, counsel, admonition, reproof, rebuke and censure, which elders are ordained to furnish. The advice of Paul was good for Peter and every preaching and ruling elder. I see nothing in all your Bible references to show that elders were ministers or moderators, or to justify you in calling our ministers "elder bosses," or charging that "the devil of the hierarchy is in our Church." Your violent dealing will come down upon your own head. Ministers and elders opposing you are only claiming that their offices, duties, functions and ordination are not the same. Your treatment of ministers is uncalled for and revolutionary.

4. I must again answer, and more fully, your misstatement of the views of Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell. What you quote from Dr. Breckinridge, which was emphatically indorsed by Dr. Thornwell, in extracts from both, quoted by me, was written in favor of the parity of the ministry and against prelacy, but not in favor of identity of the ministry and ruling eldership. He makes ministers and elders of one order as Rulers, using a big R. Dr. Breckinridge says:

These presbyters, elders, are all of one order, all equal in dignity, rank and authority as Rulers; but that order is divided into two classes, of which one labor in word and doctrine, and are stewards of the mysteries of God, in which additional functions all this class (ministers) are also of equal rank, authority and dignity, one with another; the class to which each particular presbyter belong being determined by vocation and ordination.

All agree that in *rulership* the order, class, rank, are the same, for order, Webster says, means class. Dr. Breckinridge might as well have said they are the same class but of different orders. He certainly makes the offices different, as does our Form of Government, and he distinguishes them by vocation and ordination. Your quibbling over the word order, which means something derived from ordination, and happens to be used by prelatists to express disparity of the ministry, is darkening counsel by words. It matters not whether the difference in office, function and duty is expressed by order, or class, or rank, or sort. The difference is real and important. You deny it, and make the offices one, and on their identity alone base your argument for the overtures. It is true that Drs. Breckinridge and Thornwell were in favor of elders laying on hands in the ordination of ministers; not on the

ground, however, of sameness of office, but on the ground that the ordination of a minister is the act of presbytery *as a unit*. The majority, however, held that the ordination of a minister is an administrative or executive and ministerial act, and that the office of the ministry is *a unit*, and that ministerial functions can only be conferred and transferred by those who possess them. If the majority were right, much less can an elder preside and make the prayer of ordination of a minister. The views of the majority were well expressed in the Assembly of 1843 by Chancellor Johns, one of the most eminent elders and jurists of the country. He says:

The Constitution of our Church confers upon its officers three kinds of powers—legislative, judicial and ministerial. The ruling elders are clothed by the Constitution with the first two—legislative and judicial—and carry with them nothing else, place them where you may. Look at your elder in the lower court—the church session. He sits there as a legislator and a judge. But the moment you have to execute the sentence which is passed in the court, it devolves on your minister as the executive. Trace the elder to the presbytery or synod; there he appears as the representative of the church, but only with legislative and judicial powers. It is clear that the moment you decide that ordination is a ministerial or executive act, that moment you decide that it must be performed by those possessing ministerial or executive authority. The execution of the acts necessarily devolves on the competent parts of the body. Unless you make an elder a minister at once, I never can admit that he can perform an act belonging to the ministerial office. This distinction unlocks the whole difficulty. On this principle the presbytery gives the right hand of fellowship “to take part of this ministry with us.” But ruling elders are not in the ministry, and therefore even this act does not belong to them.

5. You say of me, “He cites Dr. [Charles] Hodge against the elders.” I do not. I cite him against you, and in favor of the elders. The elders never had a better friend, or one more appreciative of the character and work of the eldership, or one whose teachings on the subject are held by more ministers. You refer to what Dr. Hodge taught as at par with the spirit of a Southern minister of high standing, who you say “is still denouncing the act of robbing us of our bondmen. Caste never relinquishes its claims so long as they will hold.” You ought to know that Dr. Hodge never taught nor acted as if ruling elders were bondmen, nor ever manifested the spirit of caste. In this, and this sort of invective, in which you have often indulged, you have weakened your cause very seriously. Not one Princetonian in a score will vote for your overture, and the pupils of Dr. Shedd, who indorses Dr. Hodge with emphasis, will fail you in the same degree. In denouncing Dr. Hodge, you open the door for me to quote, as I do at some length, from his writings on the laying on of hands by ruling elders in the ordination of ministers, in which he was sustained by an almost unanimous vote of the Old and New School Assemblies, and their decisions have been acquiesced in ever since, and are declared to have always been the doctrine of our Church and of all Reformed churches. That discussion settled the elder-moderator question; for if elders can not lay on hands as members of presbytery in the ordination of ministers, much less can they as moderators make the prayer of ordination and confer ministerial functions, or do anything as moderators requiring ministerial powers or authority. Incidentally, also, these extracts sustain my use of the terms clergy and laity, the word order, my denial of the degradation of elders by ministers, my charge that your views must lead to independency or prelacy, and my claim that ministerial ordination is not the same with that of ruling elders. Now read Dr. Hodge, whose little finger was thicker than your loins or mine. Here is what he says:

By teaching that elders and ministers are of the same order, it merges into one office what our Constitution and the word of God declare to be distinct.

To affirm that both classes of offices are in the same sense representative, is to destroy the peculiar distinctive character and value of the eldership.

A man that is ordained a ruling elder does not become a presbyter, so as not to need ordination by a presbytery when he becomes a minister.

This new doctrine, if we may learn anything from history, must either, in virtue of its making elders, bishops and ministers, and yet setting the pastor up as their official superior, issue in prelacy; or, in virtue of making both ministers and elders in the same sense presbyters and representatives of the people, issue in congregational independency.

How can identity of office be proved if it is not established by common designations and titles, by common duties, by common characteristics and qualifications and by a common ordination?

The same argument on which so much stress is laid would prove that the elder might be the moderator of any of our church judicatories, and consequently open the session with a sermon. The book says a member shall preach. Elders are members, therefore elders may preach.

The legitimate conclusion from these premises is, not only that there is no such scriptural office as that of ruling elder, but that it should be abolished; * * * or that the church session must be invested with the power of ordaining ministers of the gospel.

While Presbyterians have ever contended for presbyterial ordination, they have always contended for ministerial ordination, and that no case of lay ordination or of an ordination in which

ruling elders participated has been produced, or, as it is believed, can be produced in the history of any Presbyterian Church.

The only satisfactory or constitutional ground for the participation of the elders in the ordination of ministers, that can be, is that they hold the same office, that they take part in the same ministry; or, in short, that elders are ministers.

Are not the ordinations by the ecclesiastical councils in New England valid? although such councils are not presbyteries within the definitions of our book? An affirmative is the only answer that can be given to these questions, consequently ordination is a ministerial act. It is performed by ministers as such, and not merely as members of presbytery.

The complaint that the eldership are undervalued and denied their influence in the Church, is one of the most unfounded that can be made. As far as we have observed, it is always the case that, other things being equal, the influence of elders in our public bodies is greater than that of ministers. And what is much to their credit, they have sense enough to see and acknowledge it. These complaints of their being undervalued are almost always from ministers; and are to elders themselves matters of surprise, and sometimes of amusement. The true influence of any set of men depends, in a great measure, on their acting in their appropriate sphere.

The influence of the clergy is not to be increased by their acting as laymen, nor that of laymen by their acting as clergymen. The value of the office of the ruling elder we hold to be inestimable; but it depends upon his being a ruling elder, with rights, duties and privileges distinct from those of the ministry; on his being in the ordinary sense of the word, a layman and not a clergyman.

6. In all your charges touching the degradation of the elders by ministers, your chief lamentation is that elders are always put at the tails of committees. This is not always so; but when it is so, is there any explanation, mitigation or justification of it? Let us see:

(1.) In our presbytery there are fifty-one churches and fifty-one sessional records to be examined. As our law requires a minister to be moderator of the session, and it is not yet proposed to change the law, so the same reasons for the law apply to the chairmanship of the committee to pass upon the records.

(2.) We have about a dozen committees to conduct examinations in presbyteries of candidates for the ministry and report on their trials. The examinations and trials include call to the ministry, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, arts and sciences, theology, natural and revealed, ecclesiastical history, the sacraments, church government, Latin exegesis, a lecture and a popular sermon. Can any one doubt that ministers who have passed through all these trials are most suitable to lead in such service, and that the man in the moderator's chair should be one most suitable to preside and decide as to what questions are proper or not, and see that all is done in order. When you as chairman examine candidates for the ministry in theology, church history or church government, "may I be there to see" and hear and inwardly digest.

(3.) Then we have other committees—judicial, polity, pastoral letter and narrative—where, for the same reasons, it is quite proper for a minister to be chairman; while there are other committees of which elders are often chairmen. In the matter of committees there is no ministerial despotism, and the charges made amount to demanding of ministers that they abdicate all service that implies functions and duties that do not belong to ruling elders. This is very embarrassing to ministers, and should be rebuked by all considerate elders who hold the ministry in proper esteem. I can not see how an elder can be jealous of the ministry in regard to anything under discussion, unless he holds with you that an elder is a minister, which is a serious error, leading to independency or to prelacy, and the destruction of presbytery, which avoids both extremes.

7. While the Presbyterian Church insists upon three distinct offices of our system, and then three distinct ordinations, and then three distinct definitions of functions and duty, every facility and inducement are held out in favor of lay labor and instruction. In all our churches, so far as I know, our elders and others are in the habit of speaking in the prayer-meeting. In the church to which I belong elders and some others have often been asked by the pastor to prepare to speak on certain subjects, and I doubt not this is common. Our book recommends worship in vacant churches, and elders are mentioned as the proper persons to conduct the services. In mission chapels and churches the chief workers are elders and other laymen. Many churches have distinct meetings under the guidance of elders. In our Sabbath-school institutes laymen generally preside and speak. Meetings for worship, work and instruction among women are approved and encouraged. Mr. Moody and his laborers are encouraged by our ministers; and our ministers, elders and others work with them. Young men's Christian associations are popular with us. What more can be done than is done to stimulate elders? Ministers can not tell them that they are ordained ministers, and ought to do ministerial work. There

is no such paralysis of the elders as you vociferate so often; but there would be if the Church should decide and declare that elders and ministers are of the same "sort" and have the same duties. Paul's cry would be heard from every elder, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

8. I have passed some things in your article with slight comment, which should be subjected to adverse criticism, such as "legal addle-heads," "disfranchised elders," "tyrannical proscription," "contumelious and contemptible humiliation of elders," "jure tom-dick-and-harry O," "elder bosses," "the devil of the hierarchy," "Princeton ex-cathedra dogmatisms," "katydid" and "badger in the barrel"—the last applied to me three times. I have collected all these from your last; and I doubt not every one of these terms or phrases impressed our readers unfavorably and as a sign of weakness. I collect them from this article alone, and present them as evidence that you have exhausted your logic and have no other resource. Suppose you should at some time be made moderator and I should be a delegate and should use such terms. I am very sure you would call me to order. In this discussion we have been addressing ten times as many ministers and elders as attend any General Assembly, and a hundredfold more of other sober and sensible Presbyterians. In such a presence, and on a subject involving the order and interests of the Church, our speech ought to "be with grace seasoned with salt," which is always becoming an editor of a religious paper or an elder of the Church.

9. It is very a small matter, but I may as well say that your statement about Lane Seminary needs verification. If you refer to the professors, I know that three of them are opposed to the overtures, and it is understood all are. "And Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not."

10. The thought has been constantly coming up to me, "What has anything in your article to do with the adoption of the overtures?" You have raised many side issues which are irrelevant, and I have felt called upon to answer because you were wrong in your reasoning, and my silence might be construed as a concession. In my article, several weeks ago, I gave eighteen reasons why the overtures should not be adopted. You have not answered one, and have scarcely even referred to any of them. Now as this debate draws to a close, I am strengthened in my belief that ours is the true scriptural Form of Government. The apostles composed the first presbytery. They ordained the first ministers and sent them out as missionaries (Acts xiii. 3; also 1 Tim. i. 14). These ministers thus ordained established churches and ordained elders in every church (Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5), and the ordination of the elders was by ministers only. This is the practice in our Church to-day. The presbytery ordains ministers, and ministers ordain elders. Ministers must, as Timothy was told to do, pursue a course of reading; must study to show themselves workmen approved of God, rightly dividing the word of truth. This preparation is necessary to fit them for responsibilities which do not rest upon elders. The bearing of this upon the elder-moderator question I have fully shown, and you have entirely failed to answer (note 11).

E. R. MONFORT.

ADDENDA.

As Dr. Gray has published a pamphlet made up chiefly of what he furnished in the discussion and partly of new matter, I add a few notes, supplementing and making more full and clear some of the points in the discussion. I indicate the page of the pamphlet on which such points were before discussed, either by Dr. Gray or myself.

E. R. M.

NOTES.

1 (see page 9).—Ruling elder is the distinctive term in our Form of Government—in Chapter III., which gives the offices of the church; in Chapter V., in the title of the chapter and in the definition of the office; in Chapter IX., defining the session; in Chapter X., giving the members of it; and in Chapter XII., providing for the election of ruling elders. Sometimes in other chapters they are called elders; but the distinctive name is ruling elder, and this is the name in the overtures before the Church.

2 (p. 23).—There is no need of the adoption of the second overture, even from the standpoint of the friends of elder-moderatorship. The first overture opens the door to elect a moderator in the Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly. The second overture, prepared and offered by Dr. McLeod, provides only for an elder-moderator of the General Assembly. If there is any need of it, there should be two other overtures, one to allow our elders to moderate presbyteries, and another the synods. Many friends of the first overture will vote against the second, for the reason that it is both defective and unnecessary.

3 (p. 27).—It is the custom in many of the Presbyterian churches abroad to allow congregations to choose resident ministers, who are not pastors, to serve as ruling elders; and when this is done, they are enrolled in presbyteries and higher courts as ruling elders. Rev. Dr. Calderwood was, in the last Presbyterian Alliance at Philadelphia, enrolled as a ruling elder; but in this respect, the custom and law in our Church are different. When such ministers act as ruling elders, they retain all their rights and functions, and may properly be made moderators in the session and in every other judicatory.

4 (p. 32).—The worst part of this elder-moderator crusade is the oft-repeated charge that ministers are “tyrannically oppressing the eldership;” “dispossessing them of all sense of responsibility for the extension of Christ’s kingdom;” “paralyzing a mighty and invincible army;” “constantly telling them they have no important responsibilities.” If the charge were true, that our elders were paralyzed by such oppressions, no reason is offered to prove that eligibility to the moderator’s chair would produce a change for the better. For more than three centuries the custom has been the same, and now Dr. Gray has found out that eligibility to the moderator’s chair will speedily remove a palsy that has existed for a third of a millennium. No other remedy is proposed for the supposed evil; no proof is offered, either in theory or experiment. Dr. Gray seems to have fallen in love with the Ephesian logic or tactics: Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is elder-moderatorship!

5 (p. 33).—Dr. Gray closes his article on page 33 with a prayer, that God may lead the Presbyterian Church to call her twenty thousand elders into the field of battle. That is precisely where they are; and they are, to-day, better soldiers—braver, more faithful, and having more success—than ever before for three hundred years. A humble, active, working elder can not say amen to such a prayer; and when such elders hear the charge that ministers are guilty of degrading them and repressing their zeal, they feel themselves falsely characterized. They love and trust their pastors, and look to them for guidance and sympathy; moreover, when they are described as inert and depressed and repressed, they feel that the ministry is not only falsely charged, but that they are injured without deserving it. The great majority repudiate the leadership of Dr. Gray, and declare their preference for the sympathy and counsel and guidance of their pastors, and the learned and excellent men in our theological seminaries who are appointed as teachers of the doctrines, duties and functions of the office they hold.

6 (p. 36).—Dr. Gray dismissed my claim, that he adjourned the discussion by calling his article (p. 33) “Dr. Gray’s Fourth and Last Article,” by saying, “The matter is of no importance.” To me it was important, that he acknowledge my statement to be correct or disprove it. I have the evidence that what I said (p. 35) was correct in every particular, not only from Dr. Gray’s letters to me, but also from mine, which he says “was mislaid or went into the waste.” It is quite needless to show that Dr. Gray was tired of the discussion then, and after I asked to resume it. He gave, as his reason for the first adjournment that he had grown sensitive lest the debate had become tiresome to his and our readers; and in the second adjournment, in his last article, under the caption, “Only This and Nothing More,” he began by saying, “I am woefully afraid that our readers are bored with this elder-moderator debate.” I had no such fear. In the thousands of letters received at our office, only one person complained, and not less than a hundred expressed their pleasure. But as to Dr. Gray’s fear, it is to be noted that, during the week of the interval of the discussion, he gave nearly four and one-half columns to the same subject, and over three-fourths of it from his own pen; so it was plain that I was the one he feared was boring and tiring his readers, or himself. Since the final adjournment, the *Interior* is heavily laden with the same freight.

7 (p. 36).—Dr. Gray’s exegesis of (1 Tim. v. 17) *proestotes* will provoke many a smile. He says that “rule well” means preside well—that preside or moderate is of the essence of the elder’s office. If so, the passage would be properly rendered: Let the moderators that preside well be counted worthy of double honor, especially the preacher elder-moderators. Well may Dr. John Robinson say: “Poor *Proisemi!* Into what a box have you fallen!” Ruling is only exercising authority over the ruled, whether chosen by them for this purpose or so doing by force. Moderating is only directing the *mode* of proceeding in a body of equals. The elders’ rule is joint with the session over the congregation, and in higher courts over the churches represented. The idea of moderating or presiding over his equals is not in the term elder or the term ruling. I doubt whether such exegetical assumption was ever before in print.

8 (p. 37).—Dr. Gray claims that because in the new translation of the Scriptures (James ii. 2) synagogue is given as synonymous with assembly, therefore the synagogue did not lose its distinctive name, which is, therefore, perpetuated; and, by consequence, the synagogue of the Jews and its elders are perpetuated in the Christian Church—a Jewish and Christian elder being the same. Synagogue in derivation is Greek, and means brought together; assembly is Latin, French or Danish, and means being together; congregation is Latin, and means herding together; convention is Latin, and means coming together; association is Latin, and means joined together. Any of these words would be a proper rendering of the word *synagoge*. This word, however, is not a distinctive New Testament term; but, rather, church (*ekklesia*) is such, which means called out or called together. The term church is consistent with the constant designation of Christians as *the called*. There is, therefore, no light to be found in James ii. 2 to show the identity of the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church, much less to prove that elders are preachers and needing eligibility to the moderators’hip in order to get rid of *vis inertia*.

9 (p. 39).—The allusion to Dr. J. G. Monfort, and the allegation that I have “put my own father among the prelatists,” is very hard to understand. I take it to mean, that because Dr. J. G. Monfort and Dr. R. J. Breckinridge differed years ago on the question of the right of elders to lay on hands in the ordination of ministers, and because I said in the discussion that the quotation by Dr. Gray from Dr. Breckinridge’s theology had reference to the question of the parity of the ministry as against prelaey, and no reference to the parity or disparity of the ministry and eldership, therefore I make Dr. J. G. Monfort a prelatist. By no means. I proved by quotations from Dr. Breckinridge, indorsed by Dr. Thornwell, that the quotations of Dr. Gray had reference to parity of the ministry, and that Dr. B. in the same context held that ministers and elders were of different classes, “distinguished by vocation and ordination.” Dr. Gray made no quotation from Dr. B. that had reference to the controversy concerning the right of elders to lay on hands in the ordination of ministers, and consequently nothing bearing on the present overtures. Dr. B. and Dr. J. G. M. agree that ministers and elders are one “as Rulers” and of two classes, because ministers are not only rulers, but laborers in word and doctrine. Neither of them is a prelatist, and I have not said anything to justify the assumption.

10 (p. 39).—As to the publication of the debate, as it occurred, I have stated the case according to the facts. I believe the interest and effect of the reading of the whole discussion will be greater, than if I had issued “one little, solid treatise,” giving the substance of my arguments. What I have written, has been largely with reference and in answer to something by Dr. Gray. He is known to be the champion of elder-moderatorship, and to have been busy in the work for ten years. He is supposed to fully understand his subject, and to be able to vanquish all opposers of his cause. If he has failed, the reader, who may not have given much attention to the subject, will naturally conclude that Dr. Gray is in error. As I feel that I have conducted the discussion “with thoroughness and fairness,” as my friends whose names are on the cover think, I am glad to have all new readers see the whole discussion as it took place, hoping they may come to the same conclusion. As the subject is new, in the form it is before the Church, the discussion, as a whole, may be helpful, and it will be suggestive to those who may be inclined to pursue it further. I have tried to do my part soberly and with fairness, and have, as I believe, abstained from everything, in spirit and style, unbecoming the importance and sacredness of the interests under discussion.

11 (p. 43).—I will add to the views of the paragraph by which I closed the debate, a fuller and better statement of the Scripture basis of the offices of ministers and ruling elders, from the pen of Rev. Dr. R. W. Patterson. I do so for the reason that Dr. Patterson was defied by the *Interior*, along with Dr. Ritchie and the *Herald and Presbyterian*, to produce Bible proof of our positions. Dr. Patterson declined at first, because the overtures of the Assembly do not involve a Bible argument. He has, however, given the *Interior* his views as to the teaching of the Scriptures, in regard to the ministry and eldership, as follows:

“I will state in a word what I believe, after many years of inquiry and reflection as well as reading. With Neander, Rothe, Giesler, King, of Scotland, and Coleman, of America, I do not believe that the local elders or bishops in particular churches were ex-officio ministers of the word, although they exercised supervision of the spiritual interests of the several churches, which were at first generally without settled ministers. And, therefore, the local elders, or bishops, of whom there were several in each church, were required to be didactic men, fitted to give instruction, though never spoken of as possessing or exercising the functions of preaching or ordaining. I can not believe that there were several ministers of the word, or ambassadors of Christ, appointed over each church, when even now it is difficult to find one suitable minister for every church. At the same time I believe that there was in apostolic times a class of official men who were at that period chiefly occupied in preaching the gospel, organizing churches and ordaining officers in them, as well as ordaining others to exercise like functions; and that these official men exercised the functions of preaching, ordaining and administering the ordinances; also, that these men were ex-officio supervisors of the spiritual interests

of the churches at large, and at first generally traveled from place to place in the performance of their work, like the early ministers in our Western States and Territories. These official men, I believe, were called sometimes ministers of Christ, sometimes evangelists, or ministers of the gospel, sometimes ambassadors of Christ, and sometimes laborers in word and doctrine. I believe that the apostles were also ministers of Christ, exercising the functions both of eye-witnesses for Christ and ministers of the gospel, while their assistants, such as Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, exercised only the functions of the ministry, and the same of their successors. I believe that, when one of these ministers was settled as a pastor in a particular church he became the presiding elder or bishop of that church, and one of its rulers by virtue of his pastorate, but that he still retained his general relation to other churches; and by virtue of that relation he might be called an elder, as Peter and John called themselves; the term "elder" being generic, and therefore applicable to any minister, as well as to local officers in particular churches; while the term "bishop" was restricted to a local officer, and was interchangeable with the term "elder" so far as the local ruler was concerned, but not interchangeable with the term "elder" as applied to apostles and preachers of the word. I believe that a minister was such without regard to any pastoral relation, while the local elder, or bishop, ceased to be an officer in the church if he changed his residence from the particular church over which he was appointed to another place, just as the mayor of Chicago loses his mayoralty if he removes to Detroit. I believe that the presbytery by which Timothy was ordained was not composed merely of the bishops of a particular church, but of ministers, including Paul. With these explanations, I now answer your questions. I believe there was but one class of ministers of Christ, or preachers of the word, in apostolic times, and that the local elders, or bishops, in particular churches were not, as such, appointed to act as ministers of the gospel. These things I say, while still holding that this question was not submitted to the presbyteries by the General Assembly, which did not propose any change in our book with respect to the two classes of officers defined in Chapters IV. and V."

I append to this Incid statement of Dr. Patterson, extracts from an article in the *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, from the pen of Rev. J. Aspinwall Hodge, D.D., of Hartford, Conn., who is the author of a standard work on the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, issued by our Board of Publication. Dr. H. says:

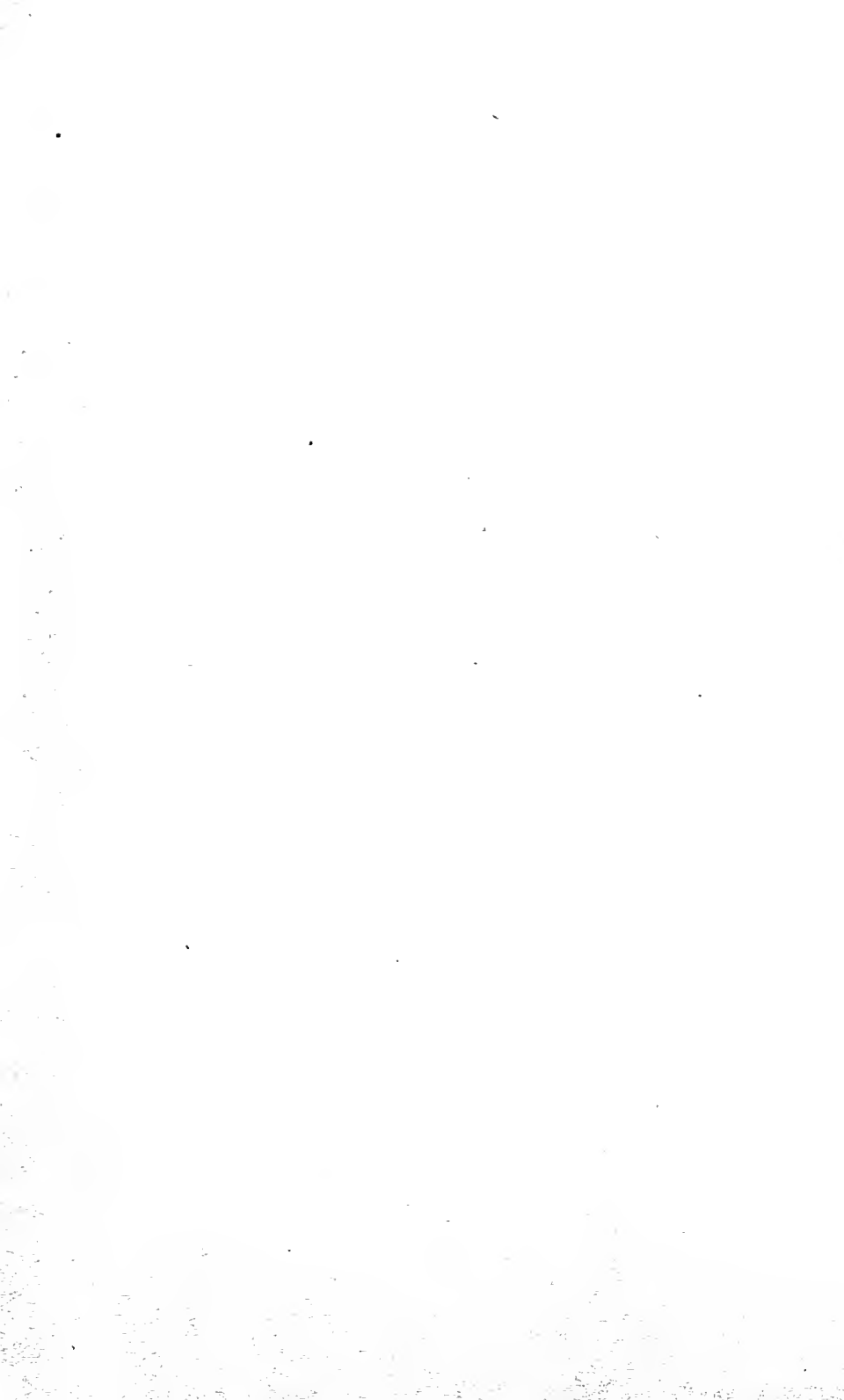
"The eldership, which has been permanent in the Church under both dispensations, requires no new honor, and can receive no dignity by the assumption of responsibilities which do not by right belong to it. The overtures propose a radical change in our Constitution, which, of necessity, involves some of the important principles of our polity. * * * It can not be denied that the proposed change is an innovation. The framers of our Constitution did not intend that the ruling elders should be eligible to the moderator's chair in any of our judicatories. * * * The courts, from the lowest to the highest, are composed of two distinct sets of officers, ministers and ruling elders, and their mutual relations are specified. Ministers are the 'first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness.' They are the 'bishops,' the leaders, the supervisors of every other officer and of all church operations. Before ordination, they are, therefore, required to endure a prescribed training, and to pass an examination, not only as to their ability to teach, but also 'as to knowledge of the Constitution, the rules and principles of government and discipline of the church.' Their ordination vows include the 'promise to be zealous and faithful in *maintaining* the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church.' The ruling elders are not to be leaders, and, therefore, no such training, examination or vow is required. They are chosen for another purpose—'of exercising government and discipline, *in conjunction with pastors or ministers.*' * * * West Point and Annapolis are necessary to furnish leaders for the army and navy, but the under-officers who are to labor in conjunction with them, and under their direction, are not required to attend those schools. * * * It is therefore necessary, as our Book requires, that those who preside over these judicatories shall be well trained in the truth and operations of the kingdom of God, and in that 'system of laws' which Christ has ordained.

"The Form of Government further emphasizes the distinction between the mem-

bers of the judicatories by requiring of moderators certain ministerial acts, which the ruling elders have no right to perform. Some of these are prescribed, as the opening of the sessions with a sermon and the closing with the apostolic benediction. And others are involved in the functions of the judicatory of which the moderator is the representative and organ, the execution of discipline, the licensing of candidates, the ordination of ministers, the charging and welcoming those thus ordained, etc., in all of which the ruling elder, because of the nature of his office, can not be the mouthpiece or hand of the judicatory. * * * It would be certainly very improper and humiliating that the presiding officer should be required to leave the chair whenever the higher duties are to be performed, and, indeed, whenever anything is done by the body characteristic of it as an ecclesiastical court.

“It would seem that this movement is made, not because there is a lack of qualified ministers, nor because the elders are seeking the moderatorship—indeed, there are very few who would consent, under any circumstances, to be nominated for the position were it made lawful—but because some ministers desire a recognition of a certain theory of the eldership. It may be well, therefore, to examine briefly what is a ruling elder, according to our Form of Government. ‘The pastoral office is the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills this office hath, in the Scriptures, obtained different names expressive of his various duties,’ all of which indicate his relation to the church as the ambassador and agent of Christ. But ‘ruling elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers. This office has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments, and of those who rule well but do not labor in word and doctrine.’ The two offices are distinct. Elders are not ministers. The fact that Paul proves that he was an apostle, and called himself a minister and a deacon, does not imply that deacons are apostles, nor that ruling elders are ministers. The higher may include the lower, but the reverse is not true. Elders are the people, representatively, to act for them and in their name. This is their true dignity and glory. * * * They are chosen by the people to represent them in all the church courts. In the Session, they represent the communicants and the baptized members; in the Presbytery and Synod, they are delegates from the several congregations to represent them; in the General Assembly they are commissioners, but do not lose their distinctive character—they come, with an equal number of ministers, to preserve, in this highest court, the presence and co-operation of the people in all the work and decisions of the Church. We are not Congregationalists—holding that all church-power is vested in the people. The elders can exercise government and discipline only ‘in conjunction with pastors or ministers.’ In the Session they, however numerous, can do nothing without the minister, except in great emergencies and for routine business. In the higher courts, the General Assembly has decided that their absence, though much to be regretted, can not prevent the transaction of business.

* * * “In ordination they are classed with deacons, and not with ministers. The latter must be set apart by the Presbytery, and in the act of ordination the elders can take no part. Ministers are members of Presbytery, are subject to that body, and over them the Session has no control. Ruling elders are to be ordained by one minister, they continue communicants of the particular church and responsible to the Session. Should any seek the higher office, he must be trained for it, examined by the Presbytery and ordained by that body. This is not a depreciation of the eldership, but the exhibition of its real importance, responsibility and glory. To take this from them, or to ignore it, their chief characteristic, is to remove their peculiar honor, to destroy their usefulness, to take away the reason for their existence and to change the significance and character of our judicatories. * * * And to permit an elder to moderate the higher judicatories, while regarded as incapable to do this in the lowest—according to the overtures—is the perfection of absurdity.”



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