*either sex.*

**an elder**] or it may be,  
a presbyter, as we are sometimes obliged  
to render the word. The reference to an  
office was called in question as early as  
Chrysostom : “Does he mean the office ?  
I think not, but he is speaking of every  
oldman.” This indeed is evident from the  
quadruple specification in these verses:  
older men—elder women: younger men—younger women.

**the younger men**] Understand, *exhort.* Thus the prohibition, **rebuke not sharply,** applies to all,  
all being included in the command, *to  
exhort,* which is the other and adopted  
alternative. **as brethren**] as on an  
equality with them, not lording it over  
them.

**as sisters**] i.e. in all chastity.  
The rule of Jerome is simple: “All the  
young women and virgins of Christ do  
thou either equally avoid, or equally love.”

**3—16.**] *Directions concerning widows.*  
This whole passage is somewhat difficult,  
and has been very variously understood.  
The differences will be seen below.

**3. take into consideration**] literally,  
**honour:** but how? Is *“honour”* to be  
interpreted generally, *‘honour’* merely,  
or with reference to the context? The  
best guide to an answer will be what  
follows. If the command be merely to  
hold them in honour, why should the  
destitute be held in more honour than  
those who had families? The command  
to *honour* *widows* would surely apply to  
all alike. But seeing that it *does not* apply  
to all alike, we must necessarily limit its  
general meaning to that particular in which  
the one would be honoured, and the other  
not. Thus without giving or seeking for an  
unusual meaning to the word, we may fairly  
interpret it of this particular kind of honour, viz. being inscribed on the Church’s  
*list* or *roll* (ver. 9), as a-fit object of charitable sustenance. That such a roll existed  
in the very earliest days of the church,  
we know from Acts vi. 1: from Ignatius,  
  
Justin Martyr, and Eusebius.

**that are widows indeed**] Compare **ver. 16**below,**—those who are really in a widowed** (destitute) **state,** as contrasted  
with those described ver. 4. But then the  
enquiry has been made, Is this *being* a  
*widow indeed* to be defined by mere external circumstances, or not rather by the  
religious character, described below, ver. 5?  
Or are we to bind (as Chrysostom and  
others do) the two together? In a certain  
sense I believe we must thus unite them.  
The Apostle commands, ‘ Honour (by placing  
on the list) those who are widows indeed ;’  
for it is these especially, they who are destitute of earthly friends, who are most likely  
to carry out the true religious duties of a  
widow. Thus, without the two qualifications being actually united, the former is insisted on as ordinarily ensuring the latter.

**4.**] The case of the *widow* who is  
not a *widow indeed,* having earthly relations answerable for her support.

**grandchildren**] not as A. V., ‘*nephews;*?’  
at least, not in its present sense: at the  
time when our version was made, the word  
seems to have borne the meaning of *grandchildren*.

**let these learn**] What is  
*the subject?* Who are to learn? (1)  
The ancient Commentators mostly understand the *widows,* implied in the words  
*“if any widow”* above. (2) But some of  
the ancients took the *children* or *grandchildren* as the subject.

**first**]  
Either, *‘first of all duties,’* which seems  
supported by ver. 8 below; or *first,*  
before applying to the church for sustenance. These meanings will apply to both the above alternatives: whether we understand the subject to be the Widows, or the  
*children and grandchildren.*

**to shew piety to their own family**] On hypothesis  
**(1),***—to behave piously towards, i.e. to  
rule religiously* their own household. This  
seems somewhat to force the meaning of  
the verb, see below; while the sense of