

Hence patience, that moral jewel, is one of the sweet and suitable qualities of a brother to be selected as an overseer.—Patience, let it be observed, is not the entire absence of the workings of anger, for anger has its place and may be usefully employed, to the honor of religion and the glory of religion's Lord; but Paul, who knew whereof he affirmed, happily describes the man of patience when he says that he is "Not soon angry." True, patience among elders is scarcely a modern virtue. With what telegraphic speed do some elders now-a-days become angry. Too smart to be patient, they frequently seize a logical or theological club and knock a brother down before either mercy or judgment has time to say a word or offer a reason! All such officials ought to be cashiered and sent to the feet of Jesus to learn lessons of meekness preparatory to learning patience.

And no one can respect a member of the church as an overseer who is greedy of gain—a small, penurious, nut-souled person who fears that his shadow is too large for him as he walks in broad daylight. We can never associate what is Saviour-like with such a man, and had the gospel creed said to us, 'Love your elders who are close-fisted, greedy, and meagre-souled,' an injunction would have been given which no man on earth could practically honor. The ambition and penuriousness which induce a man to love lucre, will operate in a multiplicity of ways to unfit him for the oversight of the Lord's people; for, in the first place, when any one loves riches, every other desire is subordinate to the desire to amass wealth—hence there will not be sufficient interest in the mind of such a man to attend to the things of the Great Master; but again, he will never afford the requisite time to gather up the rich treasures of the Bible to distribute among the flock; and, more than all, ten chances to one if he will not produce the impression throughout the community that he makes his profession and his office minister to his purse—thus bringing a fearful reproach upon the divine cause. Hence the Holy Spirit, speaking by Paul, has directed that one negative and one positive trait of character shall be found in the overseer, most effectually preventing the results above named. What say you Paul? The apostle replies, 'I direct that the brother chosen to be an overseer shall be known as a man "Not greedy of gain," and also known to be *hospitable*.'

But Paul—what do you mean?—do you mean that a man who is an overseer shall not be known to cheat or steal? 'I mean no such thing,' Paul responds; "you know the favor of our Lord, who, though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be