

brethren in the Lord, must resemble his in this particular.— Their gifts for government must be the open, tender, patient, wise, prudent, and authoritative care which a loving parent exercises towards his children. And if a man does not discover these qualities in the management of his own house, how shall he govern the church of God ? * * *

Before concluding these remarks on the qualifications for the Elder's office, it is necessary to observe, that although none is fit for it, altogether destitute of any of them, yet that it is seldom found that any one possesses them all in the same degree.— Some possess one or more of them eminently, and are not destitute of the rest, although not conspicuous for them in any great degree: others excel in those very qualifications for which these are not conspicuous, while they are not altogether deficient in the other qualities. That a person does not possess them all in an equal degree is no reason for rejecting him; it only discovers the necessity of having others joined with him in office, who may excel in those qualifications for which he is by no means remarkable.

It is also worthy of notice that Churches may labour under great ignorance of the qualifications proper for their edification, by an improper comparison of their state with that of other Churches. * * *

It is obvious, at first sight, that such are the different situations of the Churches of Christ, that a man might be an able and useful Elder in one Church, that could scarcely occupy that office with any propriety in another. And this, it is presumed, will ever be the case, so long as there is such a disparity of improvement between one Church and another. I mean improvement chiefly in literature and civilized life. * * *

And here it is worthy of deep attention, that whenever Christ gathers together a Church, he will amply bestow on that Church, within itself, all those gifts proper for its own edification, and the diffusion of the knowledge of salvation in the place which that Church occupies, if attention be paid to the mutual exercise of all the gifts in it for edification. If this remark be founded in truth, as the author firmly believes it is, then, instead of Churches grasping at men of the first talents, if they have any hope of obtaining them, their manifest duty is to look up to Jesus, who has ascended on high to give gifts to men, that they themselves may come behind in no gift proper for their own edification, or the diffusion of the truth in the place which he has assigned them. * * *

In judging, then, of the qualifications fit for the Elders office, let it be carefully noticed, that *each* Church of Christ is to judge of qualifications proper, not for *another* Church, but for *itself*. If this be well attended to, and if it be a fact that Jesus bestows on *every* Church of his, by a due attention to the exercise of gifts for mutual edification, every qualification necessary for