

exercising discipline, watching for souls as they that must give account, praying for the sick, admonishing, warning, comforting and supporting. The faithful discharge of these duties would necessarily bring them into contact with every person belonging to a congregation, whether old or young. If the Church requires and is entitled to such care, and consequently cannot be expected to prosper without it, it is perfectly clear that no one man, whatever may be his strength and gifts, is competent to exercise it.

Perhaps there is a disposition at the present day to depreciate oversight and to exalt preaching. There may be sometimes too much preaching—not of course to the destitute or to the heathen, but—to Christian congregations. Were there more careful oversight, good impressions might be more fully utilized, spiritual life and sympathy might be promoted and diffused, and the whole congregation might be consolidated and edified in love. Thus a higher spiritual culture would conduce to both the internal and external edification of the church. To require our *elders* to preach is unreasonable and unscriptural; besides it is not to exalt but to abolish their office. What is urgently demanded is more spiritual care and oversight. Were our *elders* to endeavour earnestly to exercise this, they would find the work most delightful and also its own reward; our congregations would be revived and edified; pastors would have their hands strengthened and their hearts encouraged, and they would have leisure to give attendance to reading and meditation on divine things, and to give themselves wholly to them that their profiting might appear to all.

NOTE.—In the foregoing paper, to avoid repetition, the verb "to teach" is used instead of "to preach and teach," or "labour in word and doctrine."

PRESBYTERIAN LITERATURE FOR CANADA.

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Christian Literature has ever proved itself an effective instrument in promoting the interests of truth and godliness. By the writings as well as by the living voice of His servants, inspired and uninspired, God has been pleased to establish, extend, and perpetuate His Church. Paul speaks of it as his chief work to preach the Gospel, but his writings have been more widely and permanently influential than his living voice. In his own time his letters were felt, even by his enemies, to be "weighty and powerful," and since his day they have instructed millions who could not see or hear him. Whatever good may have resulted from the preaching of such men as Justin Martyr, and Augustine, these Christian fathers have rendered incalculably greater service by their written defences and expositions of the truth. The letters, tracts, and pamphlets which Luther wrote, and which he refused to retract at Worms, were as powerful as his living voice in rousing and reforming the Church. Calvin's Institutes, Commentaries, and other writings have undoubtedly proved, in his own, and later times, the mightiest weapons he wielded for the truth of God.