

truth which calls for exhibition and defence, in opposition to the converse dogma of popery. It is therefore devoutly to be wished, that the whole protestant community of Canada would unite in giving forth a testimony, in support of this great protestant principle; both in its main substance, and in its more prominent details. This might easily be accomplished were a few leading protestants in one of our large towns, to form themselves into a committee, for communicating with leading parties of the various evangelical denominations throughout the province, in order to incite them to action. The vigorous carrying out of such a proposal as this, would certainly be one legitimate way in which a banner might be displayed because of the truth.

Nor is it defensive measures alone that are called for. The peacefully aggressive progress of the Gospel requires to be more zealously promoted, not only by a vigorous support being given to the agencies already in the field, such as the French Canadian Missionary Society—but by the employment of additional means for disseminating a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. And it is humbly submitted that the press might be employed to a greater extent than at present, in diffusing the light of Divine Truth; and though it might be difficult of accomplishment, it certainly would be useful, to have a periodical established for the special purpose of exhibiting the truth in opposition to popish error. Surely the Protestantism of Canada has sufficient strength to sustain such a publication. But in the meantime as there are two very able periodicals of this kind published in Scotland: *The Balvack* in Edinburgh, and the *Scottish Protestant* in Glasgow, it would be well, if steps could be taken, to have one of them introduced and circulated extensively throughout the province. The Protestantism of the country requires to be awakened, as well as the darkness of popery to be dispelled; and these are, at least, legitimate means for accomplishing the important objects.

3rdly, However necessary and dutiful it may be, for protestants actively to bestir themselves, and gird on their armour, in the way of organizing means, both for the defence and propagation of the truth, they must remember the solemn declaration—“Not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord”—and that for the attainment of the ends, which, by the light of scripture, we account desirable, God wills that: “He should be enquired of, to do it for us.” The present aspect of affairs in Canada seems, therefore, to call the people of God to earnest prayer. To work, and not pray is needless—to pray, and not work is hopeless—God’s blessing on the means employed is the crowning point of success. Let every true protestant—every lover of the freedom wherewith Christ makes free—listen to the call, and under an enlightened concern for the welfare of the country, and with a heart melted with compassion for the souls of those who are perishing under the reign of error, for lack of knowledge, cry mightily unto God, to “arise and plead his own cause,” and make known his “saving health”—and there is ample encouragement, from the word of God, to continue in prayer, in this matter. We are warranted and encouraged to pray for the success, of whatever means are employed, agreeably to God’s will for the defence and propagation of the truth. And here we are possessed of a weapon which popery cannot wield. Can it be for a moment imagined that the holy and righteous God will listen to prayer in behalf of a system, which He has characterized in his word as “the mystery of iniquity,”—as opposing and exalting itself against Him—and which he has threatened to “destroy by the breath of His mouth?” Certainly not. Prayer, if offered in behalf of such a system, must be truly “heating the air.” Protestants take courage—continue instant in prayer—God may in his wisdom see meet, for the chastisement of his people, or to try them as gold is

tried—to permit popery to spread—to speak great swelling words, and ever to be drunk with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; but so soon as his “iniquity is full,” He will pour out upon her the vials of the fierceness of his wrath. If you, then, be steadfast in principle, and zealous in duty, in the day of trial, you shall come forth purified, and so “have an entrance ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

I am, dear sir,

Yours, &c.

ROBERT BRYDON.

Aberloak, C.W.

July 12, 1853.

ON THE ELDERSHIP.

From Lectures addressed to a Congregation.

NO. IV. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EFFICIENT DISCHARGE OF THE DUTIES OF THE ELDERSHIP.

1. He who would rule well, must be *decidedly pious*. Piety is an essential pre-requisite—a piety beyond the shadow of suspicion—the genuine metal coined in the mint of heaven, and bearing so legibly the stamp of the King, as to be distinguishable from every counterfeit, and known and real of all men.

An Elder should be eminent for personal holiness, consecration to the cross, and devotional habits. He should be pre-eminently a man of prayer. This is essential to being a man of piety. That man’s religion is vain, who enters not regularly into his closet, and who has no altar reared in the bosom of his family, whence the incense of the morning and evening sacrifice ascends. He should be distinguished by *spirituality* in thought and feeling. He should have all his delight in the society and services of the saints—the excellent ones of the earth. Religious topics should constitute the staple of his conversation. The Cross of Calvary should alone form the basis of his hope and the fountain of his comfort; the throne of the Eternal his most prized resting place, and the centre of his choicest affections. Sense of duty should be his directing principle; the glory of God, the pole-star, ever beaming in his eye. It is thus that an Elder is rendered not merely eligible for office, but is thoroughly furnished for the performance of its duties. It is self-evident that no one, be his abilities what they may, can succeed in any profession or trade, whose heart is not in it, and whose mind does not grasp the kind of business it involves. No more can he be successful in the office of the Eldership, whose mind is not filled with the light of Heaven—whose heart is not warmed with the love of Christ. “Lovest thou me,” is the question proposed to every office-bearer in the Church, before the commission is given to feed the lambs and the sheep. If this be wanting, there is a deficiency for which the possession of mere general intelligence, outward respectability, mental refinement, and unexceptionable morality, can never compensate. If this “one thing” be lacking, a dead weight is imposed on the energies of the soul—a drag on the wheels of Christian effort.

2. He who would “rule well” in the Church, ought to be *scripturally orthodox in his creed*.

An opinion is current amongst a certain class in the present day, that *sincerity* is to be regarded as the standard of rectitude, and *conscience* as the supreme guide in the path of duty. If a man be sincere in what he believes, and acts conscientiously, what right or reason have you to find fault with him? Mark the precise bearing of this popular and plausible form of latitudinarianism. It sanctions the delusions of the devotees of Brahma and Mahomet, and of all the erroneous sects and systems that ever existed. It sets the stamp of approval on the furious Saul, when he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and on many who, in-

flamed with his zeal, verily thought that they ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. It supposes truth to be not a solid reality, but an airy abstraction. It is directly opposed to the moral that was in Christ, and to the statements of his immediate followers. They clearly recognized the existence of truth, and anticipated the up-raising of error. A broad, and a well-defined line of demarcation, was drawn between the two.

It therefore becomes every one, especially every Elder, to “buy the truth and sell it not”—to contend earnestly for the faith as delivered to the saints—to hold fast the form of sound words—to deal in sound speech that cannot be condemned—to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good—“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

An Elder who is not decided in his religious views—who hals between two opinions—may do incalculable evil in a congregation. In our own Church there is a “form of sound words”—a code of doctrine to which Elders are expected to conform. The fundamental principles of the Bible are systematically arranged, and embodied in a well known volume, to which they publicly proclaim their allegiance. It therefore behoves those who occupy, or aspire to the office of Elder, to examine carefully, whether or not these things are so, and to be able to give to every one that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in them. They must feed the flock of God not with the husks of heresy, but with the wholesome manna of knowledge and sound understanding. There should be not the “instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, but the sound speech which cannot be condemned.” They should so take heed to the flock, as that the assault of grievous wolves may be repelled, and a man who is an heretic be rejected.

3. He who ruleth in the Church of God, should possess an *extensive knowledge of the Bible, human nature, and his own heart*.

Though it be not requisite for an Elder to be able to describe the circle of the sciences, and to possess all mysteries and all knowledge, nevertheless, a certain measure of acquaintance with books, as well as men and things, is of great consequence. In so far as it is compatible with proper attention to their own immediate duties, Elders should aim at gaining the character of intelligent, studious, thoughtful, well informed men—men who give attention to reading—to instruction—to doctrine. Of the works of Baxter, Bunyan, Boston, and other popular authors, whose very names are household words, they should be ashamed to plead ignorance.

There is one Book which concerns every other, with whose precious contents it becomes Elders to be deeply versed. With uniring assiduity, unabating interest, and reverential awe, they should “search the Scriptures”—not satisfied with a cursory glance, or a mechanical passing through the page of “the letter,” but endeavoring to drink in “the spirit,” and to have it dwelling richly in the soul, in all knowledge and spiritual understanding.

It is by giving attendance to reading, to instruction, to doctrine, that their profiting will appear unto all. It is by knowing the Holy Scriptures that the *will of God* may be perfect, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.

He ought to be well acquainted with *human nature in general*. Fact, prudence, sagacity, shrewdness, and practical wisdom, are specially needed by an Elder. There are some who have a softness and simplicity about them, verging on silliness, which makes them powerless for good. They have not caucity sufficient to manage their own affairs, and are consequently entirely incapacitated for taking charge of the Church of God. There are others who are hasty and headstrong. They will not listen to reason, or be regulated by the dictates of prudence and pro-