

were indeed a work proper for their office, an ease to the minister, and would prevent much noise and offence that is raised when charges to make payment are given, either at their own instance, or in name of their assignees or factors. 8 They may be employed to provide the elements, to carry them, and serve the communicants at the Lord's table

The circumstances of our church in Canada still more imperatively require the service of such office-bearers. All the funds necessary for the building and repair of churches are drawn by direct and voluntary contribution from the people. To bring these under the best order and security—to equalize the burden—to prevent contention—to preserve regularity both in the receipts and expenditure would require a court of deacons in each congregation, whose character must bear some resemblance to that prescribed by the apostle—men full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost.

It may be asked—and is not the present system of trusteeship quite sufficient for this end? Let it be granted that in many cases the affairs of a congregation are as well managed by trustees as they could be by the same men bearing the name, and formally invested with the office of deacon. Still we think it “unwarrantable” to discontinue any office in the church of divine institution, or even to lay aside the name by which it has been designated. But farther there are many evils incident to the present method of trusteeship which prevails among our congregations, which might be avoided by an adherence to the primitive institution. For it often happens that individuals are chosen trustees who are very loosely connected with the church, who are not communicants, and who from the immorality of their conduct could not consistently with a pure discipline be admitted to sealing ordinances. Nay,

we have known persons chosen to be trustees without their knowledge or consent; and even against their known wish, and when the electors had no reason to presume that the individuals so elected would ever give the slightest attention to their duties. Now were we to return to the primitive method of entrusting all the temporal affairs of the church to persons chosen by its members, and solemnly ordained to their office by the minister and elders, these evils and irregularities might in a great measure be avoided. The very name, associated as it is with the scripture history, would suggest to the electors the character most suitable to the office; and the solemn ordination of the persons chosen in the face of the congregation, with the vows and engagements therewith connected, would tend to secure a conscientious discharge of his duty on the part of the officer, and a becoming deference to his office on the part of the people. The occasion moreover both of the election and ordination would afford very suitable opportunities to the pastor for admonition respecting those prudential affairs of the congregation which if not discreetly managed must soon involve it in strife and dissolution. And it might be hoped that the remembrances of those scenes would moderate that spirit of secularity which too often enters into and debases the church in her temporal transactions.

This reform would go far to correct another evil which has sometimes manifested itself not obscurely—namely, a degree of opposition between the trustees of a church, and its spiritual rulers. From the want of a proper understanding, it has occasionally happened, that these two classes of office-bearers have regarded each other somewhat in the light of rival antagonist powers, instead of coadjutors in the same cause.