

head which will one day be laid low in the dust of death; from no government which time will at last destroy. He receives it directly from the Monarch of the universe whose kingdom is from everlasting without beginning and without end. If it is esteemed an honor to represent an earthly monarch whose breath is in his nostrils, what honor is it to represent Jehovah who is excellent in working, fearful in praises, continually doing wonders? If he who holds his commission from an earthly potentate is esteemed in proportion to the dignity of the authority that appointed him, what honor shall we accord to him who holds his commission from the King of kings and the Lord of lords? We must assign him a position as far superior to any other on earth as God is superior to earthly powers and potentates.

And while we hold it to be the duty of every man who has obtained mercy of the Lord in the forgiveness of his sins, to make that blessed fact known to others, and by every means in his power improve the talents entrusted to him, we as firmly hold that no man has a right to take the Office of the Ministry upon himself unless God has called him to it. Much less do we believe that any man thus called has the right to leave his calling for a mess of pottage. It is this kind of conduct on the part of the professed ministers of Christ, that has tended in no small degree to lower the ministry in the estimation of unconverted men, while on the other hand it has done much to retard the progress of our churches. We doubt not but at the judgment day many will have to give an account of this high-handed impiety. We envy not the wealth of those men who in order to acquire it have abandoned their calling, thus proclaiming their disloyalty to Christ, and leading men to conclude that the ministry like any other calling may be assumed or resigned at pleasure. Rather than do this and meet God's fiery indignation, let our right hand forget its cunning and our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth. If God has called us to preach his Gospel and endowed us with a measure of ability to do so, then we are under obligation to preach and nothing of a mercenary character can release us from our obligations. Nor should we seek to be released from it when we consider the honor which Christ has put upon us, calling us by his grace, putting us into the ministry. Think brethren of the honor of being laborers together with God in the work of saving a lost world. Into what sublime companionship has the Almighty brought the ministers of his Gospel? What angel enjoys this God-like distinction? To what seraph has he granted this privilege? We answer to no one. To men, to men *alone* is the nobler task assigned, to proclaim "that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." It is upon men alone that this transcendent dignity is conferred. It becomes us brethren, to be humble and yet to be dignified.

And if the ministry is invested with such dignity, we are sure you will agree with us in saying, it is incumbent upon all men to remember it, and know them for their work's sake. "Know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord and esteem them very highly for their work's sake," is the injunction of the Apostle. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me," said the Saviour. It is the duty of every man to listen to the ministers of Christ respectfully, attentively, and prayerfully, bearing in mind that they are divinely appointed messengers, and that whosoever neglects them neglects the God who sent them. All men should remember that the voice of the minister so far as he speaks the truth of God's word to them is equivalent to the voice of God, and that when he faithfully instructs them, or calls them to repentance, faith and obedience, it is as though God himself had spoken to them from heaven. The messenger is a man, but the message is from God.

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