

## CIRCULAR LETTER,

To the Churches of the Grand River Association (North) convened with the Church of Drumbo, June 22nd, and 23rd, 1860. By the Rev. Anthony Scott, of Paris.

DEAR BRETHREN,—

We propose in this Circular Letter to call your attention to the dignity of the Ministerial Office. The only apology we have to offer for calling your attention to this subject at this time is our deep and growing conviction of its importance, its intimate connection with our advancement as a Denomination and what is far greater than denominational prosperity the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. We are quite sure you will agree with us in saying, that as a general rule the character of our churches will be determined by the character of our ministers. If our ministers are of a high order intellectually, morally, and spiritually, our churches will partake of the same character, and vice versa. No one will deny but that the ministry is a potent instrument for good or for evil, in accelerating or retarding the cause of Christ among men. We have no desire to elevate the Ministerial Office for the mere sake of the distinction to be gained for its members. This has been done too often already. Notions of false dignity are as common as they are pernicious. If we are at all desirous for distinction we should seek to be distinguished for our devotedness to Christ, our spirituality of mind, our purity of heart, and our consistency of conduct. If this be our aim (though we may feel ourselves to be very humble) we shall stand high in the estimation both of God and man. The minister is to be an example to the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him the overseer, and it is all important that he should duly ponder and sincerely consider the exhortation of the Apostle, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves." With Paul we should be deeply solicitous in every movement through life to magnify our office.

If there be dignity in our profession it is right that it should be known in order that we may endeavor to sustain it as we should, and that others may be led to appreciate it as they should. The fact that it is right for us to consider this subject becomes more striking when we reflect upon the evil that is likely to arise from its neglect. The man who is insensible to the dignity of his own position will invariably act accordingly and thus bring disgrace at once upon himself and his profession. No man can act up to the claims of his calling unless he knows what those claims are. How important then that we should clearly understand the claims of our calling. A right conception of the vast importance of the Christian Ministry is essential to any great revival of religion. The true minister of Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed instrument of grace, the ambassador of reconciliation, the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, the steward of the mysteries of God, the watchman upon the walls of Zion, the herald of God's message, the leader of God's army, and the shepherd of Christ's flock. When an individual is appointed by a dignified body to represent its interests or wishes, his office partakes of the dignity of the body that constituted it. The Gospel Ministry is appointed by God to represent his interests, his wishes, to make known his will, to preach his word. The Office of the Ministry is stamped with the dignity of the Eternal himself. He is the representative of no mean and obscure province in some remote corner of the earth. He is the representative of a world, yea of an eternal world. The ambassador of the skies holds his commission from no crowned

head which will one day be crowned with the glory of the Monarch of the universe. Beginning and without end. The earthly monarch who represents Jehovah will be finally doing wonders. The potentate is esteemed and appointed him, what is the King of kings in position as far superior in powers and potentate.

And while we hold the mercy of the Lord in our hearts, known to others, and entrusted to him, we Office of the Ministry less do we believe in calling for a mess of professed ministers of the ministry in the hand it has done much not but at the judgment high-handed impiety. To acquire it have disloyalty to Christ, any other calling may do this and meet God cunning and our to called us to preach he do so; then we are uncharacter can release released from it when calling us by his grace the honor of being la world. Into what sin ministers of his Gospel what seraph has he men, to men alone is loved the world the believeth in him should men alone that this brethren, to be humble

And if the ministry agree with us in saying know their for their and are over you in the sake," is the injunction, and he that re Saviour. It is the duty respectfully, attentively divinely appointed the God who sent the minister so far as he to the voice of God, them to repentance, spoken to them from earth from God.