

would soon be witnessed, and a foundation laid on which to rear the noblest structure.

The *qualifications* and *duties* of ministers have thus passed under review. We have seen what God expects, and what man has a right to expect, from those who are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. It is evident that, whom God calls, him he qualifies for his own work, and that the ambassador is dependent on the authority of his Master for his "sufficiency."

I shall conclude with two or three general deductions.

*The Christian Ministry is, to the world, one of the most important institutions in existence.* Talk of civil rights and of political governments! They bear no comparison in value with the ministers of the word. The objects contemplated by them, however noble and ennobling, sink into insignificance by the side of these weightier matters. The former relate to time, the latter to both time and eternity. Those are identified with man's temporal, these with his spiritual interests. Not that ministers are sufficient of themselves to accomplish, or even "to think any thing as of themselves", but they are put into this dignified office by the Great Ruler of the universe. He "*hath made them able ministers*". Although the *officers* are frail mortals, the *office* itself is worthy of Him who created it. In one particular it conspicuously differs from all worldly offices. In them we often find men who dignify their office; but no mortal ever made the office of minister *honourable*—though where ministers live as they ought, they are entitled to respect for the sake of their office.

But the mere honour of the office is a circumstance of no great moment. Its importance must be inferred from other facts.—Abolish it, and what a position the world would soon be in! Of what avail would men's civil rights be to them? Even with access to all the inferior means, aided by that inestimable gift, the Book of Revelation, a lack would be felt. And how few would study their Bible, without the powerful persuasion and valuable instruction of a gospel ministry! There is here a stimulus which can not be derived from any other source. Let me be distinctly understood. I do not say that no equivalent could be supplied by the Great Author of the Christian Ministry. I speak only of what we have. In this list the ministry of reconciliation ranks high. And from this fact two inferences may be drawn:

First, *ministers themselves should feel the responsibility which is attached to their office.* How circumspectly should they walk!—Nothing should be allowed to encroach upon their duties, or draw their minds off from Him by whom they are employed.

And in the second place, *the people who are ministered unto should attentively consider their own relation in this affair.* It is for them to embrace the gospel which is preached. If they reject