

The Christian Ministry

By Samuel Davies

By Samuel Davies, Hanover, Virginia, June 5, 1757; at the ordination of the Mr. John Martin, to the ministry of the gospel.

"This is a true saying, if any man desires the office of a bishop—he desires a good work." 1 Timothy 3:1

"If any man *desires* the office of a bishop." The word here rendered *DESIRE* is very strong and emphatic; and signifies to catch at—to reach after—to be carried away with eager desires. And this naturally leads me to say something of those *inward struggles and perplexities*— those eager desires and agonies of zeal, which honest souls generally feel before they enter into the ministry; and by which it pleases God to qualify them for it.

I have now nothing to do with those unhappy creatures, who desire and catch at the sacred office as a post of *honor, profit, or ease*; or, as the last shift for a *livelihood*, when other expedients have failed. Such deserve to be exposed in severer terms than I am disposed to use; and I cannot but tremble to think what *account* they will be able to give to the great Bishop of souls, and Judge of the universe.

But, as to those honest souls, who engage in it with proper motives and views, they are generally determined to it with reluctance, and after many hard conflicts. Some of them had the advantage of an early education, with a view to some other employment. But when it pleases God to rouse them out of their security, and bring them under the strong but agreeable constraints of the love of Christ—when their eyes are opened to see the dangerous situation of a slumbering world around them; and their hearts are fired with a loving zeal for the honor of God and Jesus Christ, and the salvation of their perishing fellow-sinners; then they begin to look about, and inquire, in what way they are most likely to promote these important interests. And as the ministry of the gospel appears to them the most promising expedient for this purpose—they devote their whole life, and all their accomplishments, to this humble and despised office, and give up all their other prospects, whatever tempting scenes of riches, grandeur, or ease, might lie open before them.

Others have been put to learning in their childhood by their parents, and by them have been intended for the church, in order to get a *living*; when neither party had a view to the sacred office from *just and honorable motives*—but considered it in the same light with other *trades*. Thus many commence as ministers of the

gospel, from the very same principles that others commence as lawyers, physicians, or merchants. But, when it pleases God to awaken the careless youth to a serious sense of true religion, and qualify him in reality for that office, which he presumptuously aimed at from sordid motives, or in complaisance to his parents; then, though the office he chooses is the same—yet the *principles* and *reasons* of his choice are very different: now they are sublime, unselfish, and divine.

Others have spent their early days equally thoughtless of God, and of the ministerial office. But when they are brought out of darkness into light, and fired with the love of God, and a benevolent zeal for the salvation of men—then they begin to languish and pine away with generous anxieties, how they may best promote the glory of God, and be of service to the immortal interests of mankind, in the world. And while they are thus perplexed, the agitations of their own thoughts, or perhaps the conversation of a friend, turns their minds to the sacred office.

"Oh that I might have the honor of employing my life, and all that I am and have, in recommending that dear Redeemer, who, I hope, has died for me, and had pity on this once perishing soul of mine. Oh! that it might be my happiness to contribute something towards promoting his cause in the world, and saving souls from death. Oh! if I should be but one soul, I would count it a sufficient reward for all the labors of my whole life!"

These are the noble motives that operate upon such a person to *desire* the office of a bishop. But alas! a *thousand discouragements* rise in his way. His being so far advanced in life, his lack of an early education, the difficulty of acquiring a *competency of learning* in his circumstances: these appear as insuperable obstructions in his way; and oblige him frequently to give up all hopes of accomplishing his desire. But when he has relinquished the desperate project, his uneasiness returns; his panting desires revive; and he can obtain *no rest*—until he is at length constrained to make the attempt, in the name of God, and leave the outcome to him. He hopes he shall either have his zealous desires gratified, in building up the church of God; or, at least, that he shall be approved in his generous, though unsuccessful endeavor, and hear it said to him, as it was to David, "You did well—that it was in your heart." 1 Kings 8:18.

But though this group of *discouragements* may be peculiar to such as devote themselves to the service of the church after that early part of life which is most favorable to a pastoral education, is unhappily lost; yet, there are other discouragements, which all meet with, more or less, who enter into this office with proper views.

They are deeply sensible of the difficulty of a faithful discharge of this office—of its solemn and tremendous consequences, both with regard to themselves, and their hearers—which made even the chief of the apostles to cry out, "and who is

sufficient for these things!" 2 Corinthians 2:16. They are deeply sensible of the various opposition they may expect from the world, who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, John 3:19. They are sensible especially of their lack of proper abilities to discharge, with honor and success, an office so difficult and so important.

These discouragements, which force them back—and the impulses of a generous zeal, which push them on—often throw them into a ferment, and agitate them with various passions; so that they can enjoy no ease in the thoughts either of *prosecuting* or *declining* the design.

Now they give it up in discouragement: but immediately they are seized with agonies of zeal, and resolve, in a dependence upon divine strength, to break through all discouragements, and make the *attempt*, at all hazards. Again, their fears arise, and strike them off from the design. Again, their zeal revives, and impels them to pursue it.

They can find no heart for any other pursuit. Or, if they fly to some other business, like Jonah to Tarshish, to *avoid* the mission, Providence appears against them, and raises some furious storm, that oversets all their schemes: until, at length, they are constrained to yield, and surrender themselves to God, to be used by him according to his pleasure.

If they had resolved with Jeremiah, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak in his name," they find like him, that the Word of God is in their heart, as a *burning fire shut up in their bones*, and they are weary with forbearing, and they cannot stay. Jeremiah 20:9. We find many of the great and godly men of antiquity in such a *struggle*, when God was about to send them upon a mission for him.

Moses forms a great many excuses—from his *own inability*: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Ex. 3:11; and from the *incredulity* of those to whom he was sent: "Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice:" Ex. 4:1; and from his *lack of qualifications* for the mission: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent: I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue," 5:10. And when all these excuses are removed, "Moses again pleaded, Lord, please! Send someone else" 5:13. As, if he had said, "employ anyone in this mission, rather than me!"

We repeatedly perceive the same *reluctance* in Jeremiah, "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child!" Jeremiah 1:6. And elsewhere, in a passage that has rather a harsh sound, according to our translation, Jeremiah 20:7; but should be rendered thus: "You have persuaded me, O Lord, and I was persuaded." That is, to undertake the prophetic office; "You are stronger than I, and have prevailed;" prevailed over all my *reluctance*. "But if I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed,

I cannot." Jeremiah 20:9

So Ezekiel tells us, that when he went to discharge his office, "I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD upon me," and he could not resist the *almighty impulse*. Ezekiel 3:14.

Thus, you see, with what *reluctance* those generally engage in the sacred office, who are justly sensible of its *importance* and *difficulty*, and of their own *weakness*. Men, whose choice is directed by their parents, or proceeds from the love of popular applause—from avarice, or some other low, selfish principle—may *rush* thoughtlessly into it; and in the presumptuous pride of self-confidence, imagine themselves equal to the undertaking.

But those *honest* souls, who know what they are going about, and what they themselves are, if they reach after this sacred office, it is with a *trembling* hand. They do indeed *desire* it, most ardently *desire* it—but it is when they are under the sweet constraints of the love of Christ, and the souls of men. This bears them away like a torrent, through all difficulties; and they would willingly hazard their lives in the attempt. But notwithstanding this ardor, their hearts frequently fail, and recoil; and, at such times, nothing but *necessity* could push them on.

Through such struggles as these, my friends in the gospel, have you entered into that office, which you are now painfully discharging. Your *desire* after it was indeed *ardent* and *inextinguishable*: but oh! what strong reluctance, what hard conflicts have you felt when you compared your own abilities with the work you had to do? And these discouragements have appeared to you perhaps, in so affecting a light, even since you have been invested with your office, that you would most willingly have resigned it. But "necessity is laid upon you; yes, woe unto you—if you preach not the gospel!" 1 Corinthians 9:16. Therefore, in a *humble dependence* upon divine assistance, you *resolve* to continue in it, whatever *discouragements* arise from a sense of your own imperfections, or from the unsuccessfulness of your labors in the world.

And at times you feel that God is with you, as a mighty one; and causes his pleasure to prosper in your hands; and renders your hardest labors—your highest delights. And then, oh then, you would not exchange your *pulpit* for a *throne*, nor envy kings—if you may be but ministers of the glorious gospel. Then "you magnify your office," Romans 11:13, and count it a very great grace, that you, who are so little among the saints, should be employed to *preach the unsearchable riches of Christ*. You find, indeed, that the office of a bishop is a good work—*good, pleasant, benevolent, divine*.

But still it is a WORK. So the apostle calls it in my text, "The office of a bishop a good *work*." If a man desires the office of a bishop from right principles, he desires—not a secular *dignity*—not a good *wage*—not a post of *honor* or *profit*—not an *easy idle* life—but he desires a *work*; a *good work* indeed it is—but still it

is a *work*.

It may properly be called a work, if we consider the DUTIES of the office, which require the utmost *assiduity*, and some of which are peculiarly *painful* and *laborious*. It is the minister's concern, in common with other Christians: to work out his own salvation; to struggle with temptation; to be always in arms to bear down the insurrections of sin in his heart; and to discharge all the ordinary duties of the Christian life—towards God, his neighbor, and himself. This work is as *necessary*, as *important*, as *difficult* to him—as to his hearers. And I appeal to such of you as have ever engaged in it, whether this alone is not extremely difficult and laborious. It is, indeed, *noble* and *delightful*; but still it is *laborious*.

But besides this, there is a great, an arduous and laborious work peculiar to the minister of the gospel, which not only is sufficient to exhaust all his *time* and *abilities*—but which requires *daily supplies of strength* from above to enable him to perform it!

To employ his hours at home, not in idleness, or worldly pursuits—but in *study* and *devotion*, that his *head* and *heart* may be furnished for the discharge of his office—to *preach the Word*, instant in season and out of season, with that vigorous exertion, and those agonies of zeal, which exhaust the spirits, and throw the whole frame into such a ferment as hardly any other labor can produce—to *visit the sick*, and to *teach* his people in general, and from house to house, in the more social and familiar forms of private instruction—to do all this, not as a trifling thing, or a matter of formality—but with zeal, fidelity, prudence, and incessant application, as the main business of life; deeply solicitous about the important, consequences; to do this with *fortitude* and *perseverance*, in spite of all the *discouragements* of unsuccessfulness and the various forms of *opposition* that may arise from earth and hell—to abide *steady* and unshaken under the strong gales of *popular applause*, and the storms of *persecution*— to bless, when reviled; to forbear, when persecuted; to entreat, when defamed; to be abased as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things; (1 Corinthians 4:12, 13,) to give no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things to approve himself as the minister of God: (2 Corinthians 6:3, 4;) to *preach* Christianity outside of the pulpit, by his *example* as well as in it, by his discourses; and to make his life a *constant sermon*; this, this, my friends, is the WORK a minister of the gospel!

"And who is *sufficient* for these things?" Is not this a work that would require the *strength of an angel*? And yet this work must be done—done habitually, honestly, conscientiously, by us frail mortals who sustain this office; or else we shall be condemned as *slothful* and *wicked* servants!

This thought must forever sink our spirits—were it not that Christ is our *strength* and *life*. Yes, my dear fellow-laborers, such *weaklings* as ourselves may spring up, and *lay hold of his strength*; and we can do all things through Christ

strengthening us. (Phil. 4:13.)

Thus you have experienced in hours of dejection; and unless the Lord had been your help—your souls, before now, would have dwelt in silence. (Psalm 44:17.) Hence, you may see the reason why the Lord has appointed, that they who *preach* the gospel should *live* by it: it is because, that *time*, those abilities, and those labors, which others lay out in providing for themselves and their dependents, must be laid out by them in serving others, by a faithful discharge of their office. If they thus devote themselves to the duties of their function—then it is but just and reasonable that those for whom they labor, should provide for their subsistence while they are serving them.

But if those who *style* themselves ministers, do not allow their office to restrain them from secular pursuits; if they only employ an hour or two once a week; in short, if, notwithstanding their office, they have the same opportunities with other people, to provide themselves a living—then I see no reason why they should be *supported* at the public charge—supported at the public charge—to serve themselves! They are a kind of *pensioners* and *drones* in society! "The *laborer* is worthy of his hire;" (Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18,) but the *loiterer* deserves none!

You see, my brother, what it is you are now to *engage* in. You have *desired* the office of a minister of the gospel; and after many struggles and disappointments, the object of your desire appears now within your reach. But remember, it is not a post of *honor*, *profit*, or *ease*—that you are about to be advanced to; but it is a WORK. You are now entering upon a life of painful labor, fatigue, and mortification. Now you have nothing to do but to work for your Lord and Master: to work, not merely for an hour or two once a week—but every day, in every week, and through your whole life. If you enter into your closet—it must be to pray. If you enter your study—it must be to think what you shall say to recommend your Master, not *yourself*; and to save the souls who hear you. If you enter into the pulpit—it must be not to "preach *yourself*—but *Christ* Jesus the Lord;" (2 Corinthians 4:5,) not to set yourself off as a *fine speaker*, a great scholar, or a profound reasoner—but to preach Christ crucified—and the humble, unpopular doctrines of Jesus of Galilee; and to beseech men, in his stead, to be reconciled to God; to warn every man, and teach every man, that you may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus! (Col. 1:28.)

If you go into the world, and mingle in conversation, it must be to *drop a word for Christ*; and let mankind see, that you *live*, as well as *talk*—like a Christian. If you *travel* about from place to place, among needy churches—it must be to diffuse the vital savor of your Master's name, and not your own. If you settle, and undertake a particular charge, it must be to watch for souls, as one who must give account; (Hebrews 13:17,) and industriously to plant and water that *spot* which is laid out for you in the Lord's vineyard.

Here, my friend, here is your *work!* And while you survey it, I doubt not but you

are ready to renew the exclamation, "*Who is sufficient for these things!*" (2 Corinthians 2:16.) This work will leave no *blanks* in your *time*—but is sufficient to employ it well. It will leave none of your abilities idle—but requires the utmost exertion of every one of them. It is the work of your *Sundays*, and of your *weekdays*—the work of your retirement, and your social hours—the work of soul and body—of the head and heart—the work of life and death! It is a laborious, anxious, uninterrupted work. But, blessed be God! it is, after all, a *good* work.

It is a *good* work, whether you consider:
for *WHOM* you work;
WITH whom you work;
and for *WHAT* you work.

1. For **WHOM** do you work?

The ministers of the gospel work for GOD, who is carrying on the grand scheme of salvation in our world. His immediate service is the peculiar business of their lives. Their office calls them to minister at his altar, while others are called even in duty to mind the labors and pursuits of this world. Of them it may be said, in a peculiar degree, what holds true of Christians in common in a lower sense: "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live—we live to the Lord; and if we die—we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die—we belong to the Lord." Romans 14:7, 8.

Now, who would not work for that God who made them, who gives them all their blessings, and who alone can make them happy through an immortal duration? Who would not work for so good, so excellent, so munificent a master? Oh! how *good* a work is this!

Ministers also work for JESUS CHRIST. It was he who originally gave them their commission; it was he who assigned them their work; it is he who is interested in their success. It is his work they are engaged in: the great work of saving sinners, in which he himself worked for thirty-three painful, laborious years; and to promote which, he suffered all the agonies of crucifixion. And blessed Jesus! who would not work for you! for you—who worked and suffered so much for us! Oh! while we feel the *constraints of your love*—who can forbear crying out with Isaiah, "Here am I—send me!" Isaiah 6:8. Send me to the ends of the earth; send me among savage barbarians; send me through fire and water; send me where you will—if it is only for you! Here, Lord, I go! I would undertake the hardest work—if only it is for you! For oh! what work can be so good, so grateful, so pleasant!

Again, the ministers of the gospel work for the SOULS of MEN. To do good to mankind, is the great purpose of their office. It is their business to serve the best interests of others, to endeavor to make men wise and godly, and consequently

happy, in time and eternity; to make them useful members of society in this world; and prepared as heirs of the inheritance of the saints in light. In short, to refine and advance human nature to the highest possible degree of moral excellence, glory and happiness.

Is not this the most *noble* and *beneficent* office in all the world? And how good, how pleasing, and how delightful must it be, in this view—to a benevolent soul! It is an office the most friendly society, and the happiness of the world in general. And if some ministers have often proved *firebrands* in society, and *disturbers* of the peace of mankind—it has not been owing to the nature, design, and tendency of their office—but to their being carried headlong by their own avarice or ambition, or some other sordid lust—to abuse it to purposes directly contrary to those for which it was intended and adapted!

Every minister of the gospel ought to have a benevolent, generous spirit, and be the friend of human nature, from noble and unselfish views: otherwise, his *disposition* and his *office* appear a shocking contrariety to each other. But when they agree, he is a *public blessing* to the world, and an immortal blessing to the souls of men. Thus, you see, this office is a good work, if we consider *for WHOM* the work is done.

2. Let us next consider WITH whom the ministers of the gospel work.

And we shall see how good their employment is. They are workers together with GOD, 2 Corinthians 6:1, engaged in carrying on the same gracious design which lay so near his heart from eternity; for the execution of which, he sent his Son into the world; has appointed various means of grace, under the various dispensations of religion, during the space of some six thousand years; and manages all the events of time, by his all-ruling providence.

They are also co-workers with JESUS CHRIST. They are promoting the same cause, for which he became man; for which he *lived* the life of a servant, and *died* the death of a malefactor and a slave. Jesus, their Lord and Master, condescended to be their predecessor in office, and to become the preacher of his own gospel. They are engaged, though in an humbler sphere, in that work, which HE is now carrying on, since his return to his native heaven.

And whenever the pleasure of the Lord prospers in their hands, *he actually works with them, and is the author of all their successes!* He sends his Spirit to convince the world, by their means—of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, John 16:8, and to make his gospel *powerful* for the salvation of those that hear it. Oh! were it not for his working—all the little true religion which is in the world would immediately expire; and the united efforts of all the ministers upon earth, would not be able to preserve one spark of it alive.

They may also be called fellow-workers with the HOLY SPIRIT, whose great office it is to sanctify depraved creatures, and prepare them for the refined happiness of heaven. While they are speaking to the *ear*—He speaks to the *heart*, and causes men to *feel*, as well as to hear, the gospel of salvation.

They also act in concert with ANGELS; for what are these glorious creatures but "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1:14.

An angel once condescended to call a *minister* of the gospel his *fellow-servant*. "I am your fellow-servant" said the angel to John, (the fellow-servant) "of your friends who have the testimony of Jesus!" Revelation 19:10. And when these servants of an *humbler* order have finished their painful ministration on earth, they shall join their fellow-servants of a higher class in the court of heaven, and perhaps, share in the much more exalted forms of angelic ministration. This seems implied in that text where the angel of the Lord protests to Joshua the high priest, saying, "Thus says the Lord Almighty: If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here." Zech. 3:5-7. And who are those who were standing there? You are told, "The angel of the Lord stood there." Among these, therefore, Joshua had places given him to walk, as the companion and fellow-servant of angels!

Ministers also are engaged in that work, in which the APOSTLES went before them. In this good cause, they traveled over sea and land, they labored, they spent their lives, and at last gloriously departed. Yes, my fellow-laborers, they felt the generous toils, and braved the heroic dangers of your office—long before you. In this good cause, thousands of MARTYRS have shed their blood! And thousands of ministers, in various ages, and in various countries, have spent their strength, their life, their all.

In short, ALL the godly people who ever have been, who now are, or ever shall be upon earth—concur in the same good work with you, according to their respective characters. To make men wise, holy, and happy, is their united effort—the object they have in view in their prayers, in their instructions, in their lives, and in all their endeavors.

All HOLY beings, in the whole compass of the vast universe, befriend your design—and none are against it but fallen spirits on the *earth* and in *hell*. And must not this be a good work in which such a glorious company concur? and oh! who would not work in such *company*—with God, with Christ, with the Holy Spirit, with angels, with apostles, with martyrs, with all godly men upon the face of the earth? Who would be so shocking a singularity as not to join with this assembly in the work. Or who can question its goodness, since such a holy assembly joins in it?

The office of a bishop will farther appear a good work, if it is considered WHAT it is, that ministers work for. They do not indeed work for a *reward* upon the footing of personal merit; but they hope for it on the plan of the gospel, through Jesus Christ. In this view, they are like Moses, "He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because *he was looking ahead to his reward.*" Hebrews 11:26. God will not forget their *honest*, though *feeble*, and frequently *unsuccessful* labors in his own work. "Those who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever!" Daniel 12:3.

If a cup of cold water, given to the lowest disciple of Christ, shall not be unrewarded, then what rich rewards must be prepared for those who employ all their time, all their abilities, all their life—in the most important, benevolent, and laborious services for his church which he has purchased with his own blood! *Crowns* of distinguished brightness, and *thrones* of superior dignity are reserved for them! And in proportion to their labors here—will be their glory and felicity in the world to come.

In serving their divine Master and the souls of men—they are also serving themselves; and in promoting the interests of others—they most effectually promote their own. Thus, their duty and interest—the interest of mankind and their own—are wisely and graciously united, and mutually promote each other. And thus it appears, their laborious and painful work is good—good in itself, good for the *world*, and good for *themselves*.

To sum up the whole—whatever contempt the ministerial office has lain under; however much it has been disgraced, and rendered useless, and even injurious, by the *unworthy conduct* of such as have thrust themselves into it, from base and mercenary views; yet, it is in itself, and in its natural tendency, the most *noble*, *benevolent*, and *useful* office in the world!

To be the minister of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords—is a greater *honor* than to be the most illustrious monarch upon earth! To save *souls* from death, is a more heroic *exploit*—than to rescue enslaved *nations* from oppression and ruin! To make a multitude of wretched, perishing souls—rich with the unsearchable treasures of Christ—is a more generous charity—than to clothe the naked, or feed the hungry! To refine depraved men, and improve into a fitness for the exalted employments and enjoyments of heaven—is a higher pitch of patriotism, than to *civilize* barbarous nations, by introducing the arts and sciences, and a good form of government among them! To negotiate a *peace* between God and man, and prevent the terrible consequences of the unnatural, unequal war, which has so long been waged between them—is a more benevolent and important service than to negotiate a peace between contending nations—to stop the current of human blood, and heal the deadly wounds of war!

Let those, therefore, who are called to this blessed work, join with Paul, and thank the Lord Jesus Christ, who has enabled them, for "that He counted them

faithful, putting them into the ministry!" 1 Timothy 1:12. Let them "magnify their office," not by assuming airs of superiority, or by making ostentatious claims to powers that they have nothing to do with—but by rejoicing more in it, than in crowns and thrones—by acting up to their noble character; and by so exercising it, as to render it an extensive blessing to the world. This will be the best expedient to keep themselves and their office above contempt, and to gain the approbation of both God and man.

But when we reflect upon the *dignity*, the *importance*, the *difficulty*, and the grand *consequences* of this noble office—it will render us who sustain it, peculiarly sensible of *our constant need of supplies of Divine grace*, to enable us to faithfully discharge it. Alas! we know nothing of ourselves, if we imagine we are equal to it. Paul, with all his apostolic abilities, humbly acknowledges, "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant." 2 Corinthians 3:5, 6.

"Who is Paul," says he, "and who is Apollos—but ministers by whom you believed—even as the Lord gave to every man?" Observe, their success was just as the Lord gave to every man. "Neither is he who plants anything, neither he who waters; but God who gives the increase." He is all in all. 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. "If I labored more abundantly than others," says he, "it was not I—but the grace of God which was with me!" 1 Corinthians 15:10.

Thus, my friends, it befits us to be always *dependent* upon Divine grace. It befits us to be often *on the knee at the throne of mercy*, petitioning for divine *help* and *success*. And if we are, in any measure, blessed with either, we should arrogate nothing to ourselves—but *ascribe all the glory to him*, who condescends to distribute gifts to men, and to crown these gifts with his Divine blessing.

Hence, also, my friends of the LAITY, you may see how much ministers need the assistance of your *prayers*. Even the great Paul did not disdain to ask the prayers of common Christians—but repeats his request over and over. And I, from much more urgent necessity, as the mouth of these my friends—beg this charity of you for both myself and them. Surely, you cannot deny it, especially as yourselves will reap the advantage in the outcome; for whatever ministerial abilities God may bestow upon us, in answer to your prayers—they are to be employed for your service. And it is our being so poorly qualified to serve you, which extorts this request from us, and is the cause of many a weeping, bitter hour to us.

You must, also, hence see, that it is your concern to work with ministers of the gospel in promoting the benevolent and important ends of their office. Endeavor so to attend upon their ministrations, as that you yourselves may be *saved* by them. And endeavor by your life and example, and all methods in your power—to make them useful to others.

Oh! let us all, *ministers* and *people*, form a *noble confederacy* against the kingdom of darkness, and make a vigorous attack upon it, with our united forces! Let us all enlist volunteers—as *good soldiers*, under Jesus; and in our post, whether high or low—do all we can to promote his kingdom! Amen

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