

266. What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastors.

Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. *Gal. 6, 6.*

Christ said to His apostles: "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." Do you honor your pastor for Christ's sake, whose servant he is? Do you bear in mind that the called ministers of Christ deal with you by His divine command? Do you respect the office in the man and treat him accordingly? The apostle says: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine."

Furthermore, the ministers of Christ are to be regarded as the stewards of the mysteries of God. Does it look as though you considered your pastor a steward of the mysteries of God if for months you do not come to church to hear him proclaim the counsel of God unto your salvation and if you will let him run after you and urge you to partake of the Lord's Supper. Is it not rather an insult to your pastor to act as if you did not care for his sermons and personal admonition; and, worse than that, is the neglect of God's Word and Sacrament not an open contempt of God? Respect the ministerial office as you should; heed the Word of God, which says: "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you."

Finally, the Lord has said through his holy apostle that "they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." The pastor is to be kept free from bodily care; for the Scripture says: "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The pastor is to have a salary in accordance with the means of the congregation; for Luke 10, 7 the Lord says: "Eat and drink such things as they give; for the laborer is worthy of his hire." Indeed, their salaries should enable them to make provision also for the future.

Prayer.

Grant, O God, that all hearers of Thy Word may receive it from the mouths of their ministers not only with due attention, reverence, and meekness, but at all times also yield their hearts to Thee in such quietness and meekness as will permit the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work of faith in them, true faith, which is not dead, but rich in deed. of Christian charity and good works. Let them also see their duty to provide for their pastors and teachers when they are sick and aged. Amen.

Bring your loving gifts to Jesus,
Willing let them be.
Once for you His life He offered
Died on Calvary.
Turn not from His gentle pleading.
Though your store be small;
From His great and wondrous bounty
God provides your all.

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