

“Reverend” Ministers?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“Holy and Reverend is His Name” (Psalm 111:9).

We cannot lay down the pen without asking why so many brethren still retain the title of Reverend. It seems rather odd to us that a man should print upon his visiting card the fact that he is a reverend person. Why does he not occasionally vary the term, and call himself estimable, amiable, talented or beloved? Would this seem odd? Is there any valid objection to such a use of adjectives after the fashion is once set by employing the word “reverend”?

If a man were to assume the title of Reverend for the first time in history it would look ridiculous, if not presumptuous or profane. Why do we not, like members of secret orders and others, go in for Worthy Masterships and Past Grands, and the like? I hope that we can reply that we do not care for such honors, and are content to leave them to men of the world, or to the use of those who think they can do some good thereby. It may be said that the title of Reverend is only one of courtesy, but then so was the title Rabbi among the Jews, yet the disciples were not to be called Rabbi. It is, at any rate, a suspicious circumstance that among mankind no class of persons should so commonly describe themselves by a pretentious title as the professed ministers of the lowly Jesus. Its main use seems to be the pestilent one of keeping up the unscriptural distinction of clergy and laity.

This may be a trifle, many no doubt so regard it; why, then, are they not prepared to abstain from it? The less value of the epithet the less reason for continuing the use of it.

We wonder when men first sought out this invention, and from whose original mind did the original sin emanate. We suspect that he lived in the Roman Row of Vanity Fair, although John Bunyan does not mention him. One thing is pretty certain, he did not flourish in the days of the Rev. Paul, or the Rev. Apollos, or the Rev. Cephas.

“Fragments of Popery Among Nonconformists”
The Sword and The Trowel, 1874, pp. 269-270

It should be noted that Spurgeon himself used the title “Reverend” in his earlier years, but later removed it. A look at the **Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit** set will reveal that after 1864 the title “Rev.” never appears before his name again. This certainly speaks of a growth in understanding.

Taken from the *Bible Student's Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed)

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Study Shelf, PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
1-800-784-6010 / www.StudyShelf.com

B I B L E S T U D E N T ' S P R E S S [™]
W i n d b e r , P e n n s y l v a n i a

