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AN ARGUMENT,

DRAWN FROM SCRIPTURE,

TO PROVE THAT THE

MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL

OUGHT TO BE

ENTIRELY GRATUITOUS.

BY THE LATE

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The writer of the following pages was a minister among the Baptists for some time; he ever steadily declined receiving any payment whatever for preaching the Gospel, or for any of the ministrations of his pastoral duties. He lived in moderate competence, and died rich in faith. He excelled in classical literature, as his works prove, especially his translation of Job from the Hebrew, published under the title of "Job and his Times." May this small tract, one of the fruits of his abundant labours, re-issued at the present time, when the public mind is more open to candid inquiry than it was in his day, speak even louder than the consistent example which he manifested on this very important point of Christian doctrine.

The notes at p. 5, 9, 14, and 17 are added to the original work by the present Editor.

A N A R G U M E N T,

&c. &c.

WHEN any one inquires the reason why Clergymen are maintained at the public cost, by regular stipends, fixed salaries, or the like, the answer generally given to such inquiry is, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." And this answer is for the most part deemed sufficient; the more so, as these words are used by Jesus Christ himself, and by the Apostle Paul, not merely as a general principle, but in reference to this very subject. The inquirer is consequently silenced, and deems it his duty to ask no further. And since, for ages past, it has been assumed as a settled point that the Gospel Ministry ought to be so supported, and the custom has, therefore, been almost universal in what are called Christian States, it might seem presumptuous to question the propriety or legality of a practice which appears to have obtained the common consent of all men; besides, it looks invidious to deny or refuse temporal maintenance to the teachers of religion, as if they alone were to have no remuneration for their good offices, while all other labourers are allowed to deserve them. Those who question that right, therefore, are liable to the imputation of undervaluing spiritual instruction, or of not being willing to "render unto God the things that are God's," by hesitating to contribute to the support of a Gospel Ministry. But when, disregarding such imputations, we look further into the matter, we are led to consider whether this custom has any warrant from Scripture, arising out of the *example* of our Lord and his Apostles, or founded on the authority of their express *injunctions*, or whether they have expressly forbidden it. On these two things the whole question rests; for all will or should admit, that the matter can only be determined by reference to Scripture, and that mere human *usage* is no warrant for anything, however long that usage may have existed, or by whomsoever it may have been countenanced.

If we come then, with unbiassed minds, to examine the New Testament on this head, we very soon discover that there is no single example of a pecuniary remuneration, given or accepted, either by Jesus himself, or by any of his first followers or converts, for the preaching of the Gospel; that all which they accepted, or allowed, and all that their Great Master enjoined, was merely the necessary hospitality furnished to strangers, who, from benvolent motives, had left their proper home, or intermitted their usual employments, for the sake of communicating Divine Truth to those who were in utter ignorance of it. Though the Son of Man had not where to lay his head, and even wrought a miracle in order to pay the tribute-money,—such was the scantiness of his funds,—yet we never find him levying contributions from those among whom he sojourned, either for the instructions he gave, or for the miracles he performed. There was no *collection* made after the sermon on the Mount, after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, nor on any other occasion. Though he healed every disease and sickness among the people, we never hear of his receiving a fee; it is plain that he subsisted on casual hospitality,—nay, that he sometimes had not the accomodation of a bed, but spent the night in prayer in a solitary place.

When he sent out the twelve disciples, he commissioned them thus: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.” What next? If offered any remuneration, do not hesitate to accept it?—No! Freely ye have received, *freely give*; take nothing from the people;—these powers are bestowed on you, gratuitously, therefore exercise them gratuitously for the benefit of others. The disciples might then have said, In that case, we must lay in a stock of food and raiment, of money and the like, before setting out. No; even this was forbidden: “Provide neither gold, nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor yet staves.” He prohibits them from carrying with them any articles that might encumber, because they would be entitled to a supply, in the way of hospitality, from those on whom their labours would be bestowed; and he intends they should cast themselves, in this respect, on the providence of God. He then adds, “for the workman is worthy of his *meat* ;” or, as Luke has it, “of his *hire* :” that is, of his temporary maintenance, or the supply of his necessary wants, so long as he abode in that place. For the disciples were not Ministers of Parishes, or fixed Pastors, but mere Itinerants

or Missionaries, travelling from place to place, and remaining in one place only while there was a prospect of doing good, or a door open for usefulness, and who were to trust for their daily subsistence to the good offices of those among whom they might happen to labour; showing, by their disinterested conduct, that they were actuated by no mercenary views, and being able to say, as Paul afterwards did, "We seek not *yours*, but *you*,"—not your *property*, but your *welfare*.

The immediate connexion between the words, "The labourer is worthy of his *hire*," and the phrase, "*Eating and drinking* such things as they *give*," shows plainly the *nature* of that *hire* in primitive times; namely, the simple bestowment of hospitality during the time the Apostles remained in a district. And it is to this, no doubt, Paul refers in 1 Cor. ix. 14, where he says, "*Even so* bath the Lord [Jesus] ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should *live* by the Gospel."* From this it appears that our Lord ordained no *fixed* maintenance for his Apostles, or for the Christian ministry, either then or subsequently, in the shape of stipend, salary, tithes, dues, or the like. The wages he especially ordained are the same he mentions in John iv. 35, 36, if men would be content with them: "Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth *receiveth wages*, and gathereth fruit unto *life eternal*."

Our Lord gives the same commission, in substance, to the seventy disciples, and adds, "Go not from *house to house*." There is no mention made of money, pay, subscriptions, collections; they were to expect nothing, and ask nothing, but daily sustenance while in that district. That the churches should make provision for the support of ministers while travelling on religious services, is but just and reasonable, and agreeable to the tenor of Scripture; but when men are stationary *at home*, and can follow their usual occupations, there is no need that the churches should be burdened with maintaining them.

But it will be said, in reply, that all the original preachers of the Gospel were itinerants, and therefore the rule applies only to

* This passage is adduced by some to justify the tithe system under the Christian dispensation. But by the Mosaic law of tithes, the priests had *no inheritance*, and no other possession, and the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were also to live on the same provision. See Deut. xiv. 27—29; Num. xviii. 20, 24, xxvi. 62; Deut. x. 9, xviii. 1, 2; Jos. xiii. 14, 33, xiv. 3; Ezek. xlv. 28—31, xlv. 9; 1 Chron. vi. 56. Surely no argument for the tithe system, as it exists among those called Christian nations at the present day, can be based on these passages. See note, p. 14.

them; had any of them been stationary, a different rule would have been observed, similar to what is now practised in countries called Christian. Now it so happens that we have at least one instance where a minister was stationary for three years, and where elders were appointed no doubt from among themselves, residents in the place, who might superintend their spiritual concerns after the Apostle's departure. Yet how does Paul act on this occasion? He declares to the Church at Ephesus, and to their elders in particular, "Watch, and *remember* that, for the space of *three years*, I ceased not to warn every one, *night and day*, with tears. I have coveted no man's *silver*, or *gold*, or *apparel*; yea, ye yourselves *know* that *these hands* have ministered to my necessities, and *to them that were with me.*" This was *his own* practice; and, in reference to what he considered to be *their* duty, he adds, "I have shewed you all things, [or I have set you a pattern] how that, *so labouring*, ye ought to support the weak, [instead of exacting from them] and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to *give* than to *receive.*" Thus he plainly indicates, that they were not to look to the converts for a maintenance, but to their own industry and labour; and he quotes a saying of our Lord, in confirmation of his views. And though no Christian society will refuse help to their elders, when they need it, in consequence of sickness or other adverse circumstances, but will cheerfully supply their wants, and those of their families too; yet they will take care so to do, as not to preclude their elders' own industry, who are bound in this, as well as in other things, to set a practical example before the brethren, not to be "slothful in business," at the same time that they are "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

If it be asked how the Apostle managed to do all this, we are informed, in chap. 18 of the same book of Acts, that he did not consider it to be a degradation to a Christian minister to follow a *mechanical* employment; for when he came to Corinth, he went to Aquila and Priscilla, and, because he was of the same craft as they were, he abode with them and *wrought*, for by their occupation they were tent-makers. And yet the same mechanic reasoned in the Synagogue *every Sabbath*, and mightily persuaded both Jews and Greeks; so that while he *laboured* diligently for the instruction and salvation of others, he *laboured industriously* for his own and his companions' maintenance, that the gospel might be a matter of free cost to all. Josephus informs us that it was

customary for the most *learned* Rabbis to practise some trade, that they might sustain themselves, and not burden others; which burdening of others, and not the trade, was what they accounted a disgrace. Thus, Rabbi Joseph was a skinner; Rabbi Jochanan was a shoemaker; Rabbi Judah, a baker; Rabbi Meir, a scrivener; and of others it is said, their mothers set them to learn the weaver's trade.

We are all apt to interpret the Scripture too much by our own habits and modes of thinking; and having been accustomed, for a long time past, to see clergymen regularly *bred* to the office, and maintained by the State, or by some patron, and others receiving a fixed pecuniary allowance from their hearers, we find it difficult to conceive of any other mode of acting, especially as only two societies have ever appeared in Christendom, who have adopted a different method, namely, the Society of Friends, or Quakers, and those excellent people the Waldenses and Albigenses, whose pastors were all either shepherds, farmers, or mechanics, who possessed no learned ministers, who lived in their secluded valleys, away from seats of learning, and from all the pomp of Roman or Italian literature;—yet when and where had Christianity nobler adherents,—when did Truth make a bolder stand against the united armies and persecutions of the Pope, the King of France, and the Duke of Savoy,—or a more consistent opposition to error, even unto blood,—than these worthy persons did against the superstitions prevalent in their age? Would a hireling ministry or mercenary priesthood have stood the test so fully? And, as to the Quakers, where has the Queen of Great Britain more peaceable, virtuous, and industrious subjects, or a people more distinguished for benevolence, or more ready for every good work, than they are? yet they possess no salaried ministers,—their spiritual ministrations are entirely gratuitous.

It is lamentably true, that preachers as well as laymen are too generally disposed to shun the reproach of the Cross; they wish to be regarded as occupying a more elevated station in society: they have been bred at colleges or academies; they plume themselves on their acquirements, which after all are often scanty enough; they are prone to imagine, and the laity are ready to believe, that religion would be degraded and brought into disrepute, were its ministers engaged in secular business, and were consequently unable to compose their discourses, from want of sufficient leisure, in a thoroughly methodical form, and to deliver them with suitable accuracy of expression. The latent principle

or motive of all which, is the same which led ancient Israel to say, "Make us a king to judge us, like the other nations."

But there is a chapter in the New Testament, which explains the Apostle Paul's sentiments on this subject more at large. It is in the 9th chap. of 1st Cor., where he says, "Have we not power to eat and to drink?"* plainly referring to the rites of hospitality, to which he conceived himself justly entitled, "who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges?" Men are subsisted in war by those who employ them; and he who employed the Apostles in their warfare, or ministry, was God, who would, therefore, open the hearts of some to receive them, and to furnish them with things needful for the body, while thus engaged. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?"—but he adds, "*Nevertheless, we have not used this power, but suffer all things* [that is, all privations—why?] *lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ,*"—lest people should imagine we make preaching a pretence for gain. "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things, [the priests under the Old Testament,] live [or are maintained] by the things of the temple? and they who wait at the altar, [the sacrificial priests or attendants,] are partakers with the altar? *Even so* hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel; [that is, they who proclaim the truth in heathen countries, should receive hospitality from their converts.] *But I have used none of these things;* neither have I written these things, *that it should be so done unto me;* for it were better for me *to die,* than that any man should make my glorying void. For if I do this thing willingly, [that is, freely or gratuitously,] I have a reward. What is my reward then?—Verily, that when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ *without charge,* [observe, without charge,] that I abuse not my power in the Gospel. For though I be free from all men, [that is, independent of all,] yet have I made myself *servant* to all, *that I might gain the more.* And this I do *for the Gospel's sake,* [such was his noble motive,] that I might be partaker thereof with you."

So that here there is no claim for remuneration, beyond that of simple hospitality while among strangers, and even that claim is waived, that the Gospel might be a free bestowment, a matter without cost to all,—Paul generously preferring to labour at his

* It was a law among the Jews, not to receive alms of the Gentiles.—LOCKE, in Note to verse 1.

tent-making, rather than be burdensome to any, lest they might impute to him mercenary motives.

In 2 Cor. ch. 11, he pursues the same train of reasoning, thus: "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God *freely* [that is, gratuitously]? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, [that is, contributions,—not for himself, mark,] *to do you service*. And when I was present, and was *in want*, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me, the brethren from Macedonia supplied, and *in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself*." There is no doubt that Paul was at times so much occupied with preaching, that he left himself little leisure for his own employment, by which he generally maintained himself. On such occasions he was much straitened in his circumstances, and would have been more so, had not his immediate necessities been relieved by the Christians in other places, who heard of his wants, and contributed to supply them. And hence, among the sufferings he underwent, as recorded in the same chapter, we find mention made of "labour and toil, hunger and thirst, fastings often, cold and nakedness;" sufferings which modern ministers, and even modern missionaries, more rarely encounter.

He adds, "But what I do, [viz. in this respect,] that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them who desire occasion, that wherein they boast they may be found even as we." From which, and from verse 20th, where these men are described, it would appear that there were some *false teachers* then at Corinth, who professed to take nothing for their preaching, and *boasted of their disinterestedness*; and yet, on other pretences, they received presents from their disciples in private,—nay, even *extorted* them. To discountenance all such, Paul declares, that he had never taken anything, nor would he take anything, either in public or in private, from the Corinthians, on any account whatever.*

* It is a mark of "false apostles, deceitful workers, *transforming* themselves into the apostles of Christ," thus to bring the Churches of Christ into bondage, "to *devour*" them, to *take* of them, to exalt themselves, and to use compulsory and contemptuous measures for enforcing the resistant, or shaming and beguiling the weak, superstitious and ignorant, into obedience to their mandates, into confession of their dogmas, and the pecuniary support of their ecclesiastical order. "And no marvel, for," &c. See 2 Cor. xi. 13, 20, 14, 15. See how the Apostle himself used this "*power*," ver. 27; Acts iii. 6; xx. 33, 34, 35. Observe also the condition and character required of tithe receivers under the legal dispensation; Ezek. xlv. 28; xlv. 9.

In like manner he addresses the Thessalonians, Ep. 1, ch. 2 : "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail ; for labouring *night* and day, *because we would not be chargeable unto any of you*, we preached unto you the Gospel of God." That Paul sometimes preached in the *night time*, appears from his conduct at Troas, where he continued his discourse till break of day ; Acts xx. 11. Sometimes also he wrought during the night for his maintenance, that he might have more leisure through the day to preach the Gospel, as may be gathered from this passage, and from 2 Thess. iii. 8. "Neither did we eat any man's bread *for nought*, but wrought with labour and travail *night* and day, *that we might not be chargeable to any of you* ; not because we have not power, [that is, to claim hospitality,] but *to make ourselves an example to you to follow us.*" Indeed, the first converts were generally of the poorer sort, and were not able to contribute much to the Apostle's support, even if he had depended upon them.—Yet their poverty proved no barrier to his zeal. Had the Apostle been a mercenary man, he would have addressed himself to the few rich men amongst them, from whom he might expect to receive something. On the contrary, he disdained human remuneration, though his sufferings in the cause were sometimes very severe. For in 1 Cor. iv. 11, he says, "Even to the present hour we both *hunger*, and *thirst*, and are *naked*, and are *buffeted*, and have *no certain dwelling-place*, and labour, *working with our own hands* ; being reviled, we bless : being persecuted, we suffer it." His practice was in conformity to his Master's words, who mentions it as one of the signs of his mission, "*To the poor* is the Gospel preached."

When Paul says, in 1 Cor. ix. 4, "Have we not power to eat and to drink?"—what *sort of power* did he mean? Not surely a *compulsory* power : not a power to excommunicate and anathematize those who would not satisfy his hunger or fill his pocket. No ; it was a mere *moral* power ; in other words, he had a fair title, or a reasonable claim, as he was labouring for their eternal welfare, to receive at least temporary relief from them.

When he comes to enumerate the qualifications of a Bishop or Christian Pastor,—for there were no Diocesan Bishops in the first century, nor for a long time after,—one of them is, "*not greedy of filthy lucre,*" 1 Tim. iii. 3 ; and the same is repeated in the Epistle to Titus, when treating of the same office, ch. i. 7. And it is mentioned as a character of the *false preachers*, that they taught things which they ought not, *for filthy lucre's sake*, that is, for the sordid purpose of drawing money from their

disciples. At the same time, it is but candid to notice, that some translators have rendered the former phrase, as applied to Bishops, "not making gain by base methods," that is, not following any *disreputable occupations*, which might bring disgrace upon the Christian ministry. Admitting this, for the moment, to be a correct version, what does it imply but that the Primitive Pastors followed *some occupation*, and maintained themselves *by their own labour*, rather than be burdensome to the Churches of Christ?

John also, in his Epistle to Gaius, commends him for assisting the brethren and strangers, who, by the description given of them, must have been Preachers or Missionaries, "because that *for his name's sake* they went forth, *taking nothing from the Gentiles;*" that is, they received nothing on the score of maintenance, that their preaching might be the more acceptable.

Peter, in his 2nd Epistle, ii. 3, speaking of *false teachers*, says: "And *through covetousness* shall they with feigned words *make merchandise* of you; following the ways of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." Of whom also Jude speaks, verse 11th: "They ran *greedily* after the error of Balaam for *reward.*" It is no doubt of the same persons that Paul makes mention, in 1 Tim. vi. 5, where he speaks of "perverse disputings of men of *corrupt* minds, and destitute of the truth, who suppose that *gain* is godliness; from such *withdraw thyself*. But godliness with *contentment* is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and, having *food and raiment*, let us be *therewith content*. For the *love of money* is the *root of all evil,*" &c. Such is Paul's estimate of what is needful for a Minister.

What is the spirit of covetousness in the Christian Church, but an imitation of the conduct of Judas, who said, "*What will ye give me?*" It is to such, in all probability, that Paul alludes, when he says, Acts xx. 29, "For I know this, that after my departure grievous *wolves* shall enter in among you, *not sparing the flock.*" And such will always be found, until the whole scheme of pastoral maintenance is altered, and Ministers become willing, like this blessed Apostle, to teach gratuitously, out of pure love to the Gospel, to Christ, and to souls.

The covetous spirit, which betrays its master, came in with the *Apostasy*, for there was much less of it in the early ages; yet none of the first preachers of the Gospel, that we hear of, died of want. In the days of Constantine, if not before, a new order

of things arose:—Ministers being then patronised by the Emperor, and furnished with plentiful revenues, ceased to depend either on their own industry or on the voluntary contributions of their flocks; and thus, that which was intended for the Church's permanence and stability, became a ready source of its corruption. From that moment, the Pastors, caressed by the Emperor, invited to the Court, and placed in a condition far above want, necessarily imbibed a worldly spirit, and seemed to forget the humbling maxims and self-denying pattern of their lowly Master, who took upon him the form of a *servant*, consented to be *despised* and rejected of men, and who chose his immediate attendants from the meanest ranks of life, evidently purposing to cast a shade over all the glitter and show of a vain world, and to throw contempt on the things which blinded men are most apt to esteem: enjoining on his followers to study who should be *lowest*, and to make their riches consist in treasures in heaven, rather than in wealth and grandeur upon earth. Their inheritance was poverty; their patrimony was persecution; their pride lay in self-denial, and their highest honour in taking up the Cross. The *world* was crucified to them, and they to the world. How different the case of some modern Bishops, whose revenues in one year probably exceed all that Christ and his Apostles possessed during their whole lifetime; who stipulate, under various pretences, for all the dues they can exact from others, and who debase themselves not merely to require, but to demand, and to compel by civil penalties, receiving money for every office, even the smallest, they perform under the name of Religion.

The disinterested conduct of the Apostles was not without a precedent, even in Old Testament times. For of Abraham it is recorded, that he showed a noble spirit, in coveting nothing for himself of the spoils obtained in battle. "I have lifted up my hand," says he, [that is, I have sworn,] "unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, *I have made Abram rich.*"—Gen. xiv. 22. But Paul exhibited a still nobler spirit, in that he neither asked nor would take any salary from the Ephesian Church, to maintain himself and his companions, for his weighty labours in preaching the Gospel among them for three years together; otherwise the Ephesians might have said, Paul has been very laborious, it is true, but he has been well paid for it. It is freely acknowledged, however, that from

the Church at Philippi he did accept contributions, as plainly appears from his Epistle to them, ch. iv. 15, where he says, "*No Church communicated with me as to giving and receiving, but ye only; for while I was in Thessalonica, ye sent twice to supply my necessities, not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account,*" that is, at the day of judgment. So that this contribution was a matter of free-will on their part,—*not an exaction, but a charitable donation* to relieve the Apostle *under the pressure of actual want*, that he might preach the Gospel to the Church at Thessalonica, without being burdensome to them:—*their circumstances being at that time more indigent than those of their neighbours.* (See also 2 Cor. xi. 9, for a similar instance.)

Another example from the Old Testament is that of Moses, who protested that, though the leader of Israel, and acting for their benefit on all occasions, he lived amongst them without the least appearance of covetousness. Num. xvi. 15 :—"*And Moses said unto the Lord, I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them,*"—that is, by exactions of any kind.

Similar language is used by the prophet Samuel, in his appeal to the people for his integrity; yet a truer patriot or more useful man was not in Israel. 1 Sam. xii. 3 :—"*Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.*"

And of the same excellent man it is said, that he had two sons, who did not resemble their father :—"*his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.*" And it was in consequence of their evil conduct that the Israelites rejected God, and said, "*Now make us a king to judge us, like all the nations;*" that is, they copied the manner of the Gentiles, who, because they were not subject to God, chose earthly kings to reign over them; and we know the consequences both to them and to Israel. If it be said, that Samuel was a judge in Israel, as well as a prophet, or minister of religion, still it is true that as a judge he received no salary, he took no reward,

he accepted no bribes. Judgment is no more to be *sold* than truth; nor are good offices to a nation or people to be performed for *hire*. His reward lay in the consciousness of the good he did, and in the approbation of God.

In like manner it is recorded of Eli's sons (1 Sam. ii.), that their greediness in demanding a greater share of the sacrifices than properly belonged to them, became the occasion of very great scandal, so that "men *abhorred* the offering of the Lord;" that is, their covetous conduct brought religion itself into disrepute: and the result was, that these two men were slain, and God permitted his own ark to be taken by the Philistines, as a punishment upon his people.

We read also (2 Kings, v.) that when Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was cured by Elisha of his leprosy, he gratefully said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now, therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing [that is, accept a present] from thy servant." But Elisha had no notion of receiving money or goods for that which *cost him nothing*; for the miraculous cure was from God. And he said, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, *I will receive none.*" And Naaman *urged* him to take it, *but he refused*. Gehazi, his servant, who was differently minded from his master, afterwards clandestinely asked and received a gift from Naaman, in his master's name; but he received at the same time a retribution from the Divine hand for his covetousness. "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever. And he went out from his [master's] presence, a leper as white as snow."*

Nehemiah also, though appointed governor in the land of Judah, for twelve years showed an example of generosity and disinterestedness; though the former governors were chargeable to

* The preachers of the Gospel are *prophets* rather than priests in the old sense of the term (to offer sacrifices, &c.) 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 29, 30, 31; xi. 4, 5. They should imitate the despised and wandering preachers of Israel, who called men from idolatry, pride, covetousness, slothfulness, and crime, rather than the Levites, whose sacrificial ordinances, with all that appertains to that dispensation of outward ceremonies, is now ceased, and Christ himself is our only High Priest, and our oblation—the one sacrifice, the everliving Mediator, the eternal centre of all true dedication, worship, and praise. But even if our modern "priests," as they choose to call themselves, do prefer to copy the Levitical law as to maintenance, let them copy it *literally*—let them renounce all inheritance of land or patrimony, and share with the fatherless, the widow, the stranger (the outcast pauper), the tithes of *the increase*.

the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver, "yet," says he, "*so did not I, because of the fear of God. Think upon me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.*" (Ch. v. 15, 19.)

God, by Isaiah the prophet, thus reproves the watchmen, that is, the teachers of Israel, in that day. Ch. lvi.: "Yea, they are *greedy dogs*, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, *every one for his gain, from his quarter.*" (See also Malachi, i. 10.)

Ezekiel also reproves the shepherds of Israel (ch. xxxiv. 2, 3), saying, "Woe to the shepherds of Israel, *that do feed themselves: should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock.*"

When we return to the New Testament, we find a voluntary poverty characterising our Lord and his primitive followers; we see Jesus performing a miracle, to enable him to pay the tribute-money; we see Peter and John acknowledging their indigence, and saying, "Silver and gold have we none." (Acts iii. 6.) And when Simon Magus reckoned the heavenly gift so vile a thing, that it might be purchased with money, and offered an earthly price for a holy and miraculous power,—the Apostles, poor as they were, spurn the base proposal, and reply, with just indignation, "Thy money perish with thee."

When Paul quotes the words of the Lord Jesus, formerly referred to, he either alludes to some apophthegm of his, handed down by tradition, or he means that such a saying may be gathered from the general scope of his doctrine and example: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving is a sign of abundance; receiving, of want:—giving is a mark of liberality; receiving, of covetousness:—giving entitles to a reward from God, who loves a cheerful giver; but receiving has no merit, and has already got its reward in the gift bestowed.

It is remarked of Jerome, that, on his departure from Rome, he said to some of his slanderers, "Let them tell what they ever found in me, otherwise than became a Christian; *whose money did I get? did I not despise gifts, either great or small? did any man's money sound in my hand?*" Why should not teachers among Christians earn their living too, when they can, by their labour: or, if God has already blessed them with a competence, why should they burden the churches, and set an evil example,

by taking salaries, when their circumstances enable them to preach the truth gratuitously?

It will be said, that if ministers depended in any shape on the voluntary contributions of their hearers, their subsistence would be a very uncertain one;—to this it is replied, that it would be no way uncertain, more than other human things are, if it depended on their *own industry* in a regular and lawful occupation. But, even supposing it to depend on the other, it is well known, and historically ascertained, that in ancient times the very contrary was experienced: the people brought more than their pastors needed; they did not always bring money, it is true, but they brought produce of various kinds, more than sufficed for subsistence and comfort. And after Constantine and others had foolishly endowed the Church with lands and other property,—the donations of the people falling off in consequence,—it was generally remarked that they had much better go back to their former custom; for they were better supplied, and more regularly too, by the spontaneous offerings of the people, than by the allotments made for them by the State. And if poor curates now, provided they were faithful and zealous men, were dependent on the benevolence of the people, they would in all probability fare better than when left, as they are, to the scanty pittance allowed by *their employers*. In modern times, we see the same principle in operation, not indeed so visibly in some instances, owing to the intermixture of the world and the Church; but let any one look at the number of ministers, supported under the system of the Methodists, without any assistance from the State, and the number of Chapels they have built all over the country, without Parliamentary aid; let them look at the support given by six millions and a half of Irish Catholics to their Priesthood; the places of worship erected by the different classes of Dissenters, and the decent and often liberal maintenance furnished to their preachers, all derived from voluntary contributions; let them look at the Missions, Schools, Academies, and benevolent Institutions, supported entirely by them; and then say if there is any reason for distrust. Let them look across the Atlantic to the North American States, where vast bodies of different religious denominations abound, where no Ecclesiastical Establishment exists, and where the Statute, originally framed by Congress, and applied to secure a payment from every man for the support of *some* Christian Ministry, is now falling into actual desuetude, in consequence of its being found to be unnecessary. It was the

x1936. 2 1/2 millions.

same in our Lord's time, and may be expected to be the same to the end. "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, *lacked ye anything*? And they said, *Nothing*."

At any rate, there is no warrant in Scripture for exacting maintenance for the Clergy, by having recourse to the civil law, and enforcing penalties on those who contribute not. Everything under the Gospel is free: all compulsion is forbidden. If men will not give to Christ out of gratitude, or to his Ministers from respect to his injunction, the mandate of a civil magistrate must not be called in. When the Philippians sent once and again to Paul's necessity, it was a matter purely spontaneous,—there was no dragooning. But has the civil magistrate no right to compel payments of this nature? *None whatever*; he has no right of interference with men at all, *in anything pertaining to the conscience*. He can only punish for offences committed against *civil society*; that is his province: the other is an invasion of God's prerogative. To resist here, therefore, is no rebellion. We must obey God rather than man. If we unjustly or ungratefully refuse to contribute our aid to the Ministry of the Gospel, by supplying, according to our ability, the temporal wants of his Ministers, God will punish us: but man cannot, or ought not. It is purely a matter of conscience, with which the civil magistrate has no concern; and, whenever he attempts to interfere, he is guilty of tyranny and injustice, whatever his own motives may be.

But if our modern Clergy will insist that the *labourer* is worthy of his *hire*,—that is, that they are entitled to their salaries,—let it be remarked, that the word rendered "hire" signifies *wages for work done*, and consequently wages *according to work done*. And therefore the great bulk of them, being paid in proportion to the work they do, would have very little to receive. There is the *labour* of reading the Liturgy, of composing, or compiling, and reading a sermon,—and that is all. For as to surplice duties, as they are called, they are remunerated by surplice fees: the Clergy rarely work for nothing,—sacred offices are too valuable to be performed without recompence; every office has its *price*, fixed or discretionary.* How otherwise could they be repaid for the expense of a college education, and for the benefit society derives from their example and prayers?

In opposition to these reasonings and quotations, it has been

* See Isaiah, iv. 1; Malachi, i. 10; Amos, vi. 1—6; Ezekiel, xxxiv. 2; John, x. 5, 10, 12; Acts xx. 29. The attention of the candid reader is particularly called to these passages of the inspired oracles of Truth.

observed, that the Apostle Paul, in Galat. vi. 6, enjoins: "Let him that is *taught in the word* communicate to him that teacheth *in all good things.*" But this injunction does not necessarily imply the allowing of a *fixed maintenance* to teachers, nor can it, without a forced construction, be made to mean so. It merely requires the *taught* to make the proper returns of gratitude to those who are their instructors, by abounding towards them in all the instances of friendship, assistance, and hospitality; on this ground, that benefits conferred deserve suitable returns. "However," as Chandler observes, "it is nowhere written or commanded that we ought to communicate our good things to men who *never instruct us at all*, or who instruct us only *at second-hand* by their deputies and curates." Neither is there anything said here of *the divine right of tithes*; that was a doctrine much later than the times of the Apostles. The truth is, that whatever was at any time given, in the way of supplying the necessities of a Christian teacher,—necessities arising through the failure of his usual occupations, or from sickness, persecution, journeys, or the like,—the assistance appears to have been merely *temporary* or *occasional*, and to have been derived from the voluntary contributions of the Christian people, who had no regular funds, still less houses, lands, or other property, set apart for the maintenance of their religious teachers. They were poor themselves; and to have spoken to them of tithes and oblations, surplice dues, and first fruits and Easter offerings, would have only tended to disgust them with the new religion, as a mere plan of maintaining certain persons in idleness, and of enriching one class at the expense of another.

Another text is that in 1 Tim. v. 17. "Let the elders who rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who *labour* in the word and doctrine." Here a distinction has been attempted to be introduced, as if two different offices were meant, namely, the office of those who *rule well*, and the office of those who *labour in word and doctrine*; but the term *especially* is not meant to imply a different office, but to distinguish amongst those who hold the same office,—that is, the pastoral, such as apply themselves to the most *laborious* part of it, namely, public teaching. Again, it has been affirmed that, as all pastors are entitled to a *fixed maintenance*, these laborious pastors had a claim to *double* maintenance, for so they choose to render the word "honour;" and there is no doubt that the term is sometimes employed in that sense. Now, though it is rather a

presumption than a certainty, that "honour" here means *maintenance*, yet admitting for the time the notion to be a correct one, the term "double" can only signify a *larger share* than the others; in short, it is *indefinite*, and must remain so, unless we can fix with confidence what *single honour* amounted to, which it is not easy to do. But, waiving the question of *amount*, we can with more confidence state what was the *kind* of maintenance or honour here enjoined, namely, such as was customary in other churches, where those who propagated the truth of the Gospel received what assistance *their wants* required from the voluntary contributions of their brethren, so long as their labours in this service rendered their own exertions for a subsistence impracticable or difficult. If there were men who were able, and were actually employed, by sound doctrine, both in exhorting and convincing gainsayers, their engagements in that way must have occasionally interfered with the pursuit of their usual occupations, and so have exposed them to the hazard of actual want, if not relieved by their brethren in the faith. It is more important to observe, that here, as in other places, elders are spoken of in the *plural* number, intimating that there were more than one in a church; and if the modern system of *stipends* or *salaries* had then obtained, the primitive churches would have been burdened indeed, having at least three pastors to support, and their families with them: for pastors were not then forbidden to marry, as in after times in the Church of Rome. And if the *elders* had a regular fixed maintenance out of the church funds, or, in other words, out of the people's pockets, why should not the *deacons* also, whose time we know was, and necessarily must have been, considerably occupied in administering to the wants of the poor, and providing for the widows, &c.? yet the Apostles nowhere mention or assert *their* right of maintenance. Besides, a fixed salary, drawn from a poor people, would hardly have been denoted by the Apostle by the word *τιμη*, *honour*; for there would have been no honour in thus receiving a *fixed* remuneration for services, which Christian zeal, and love to the Gospel, could at that time alone prompt men to perform.

It is said, if Ministers were employed in secular business, they would have no leisure to watch over the flock, and that their whole time should be dedicated to this service. To this we reply, the heathen converts in Paul's day must have required a more constant and vigilant superintendence than professing Christians do now, in a settled condition, with the Bible in their hands, and

with every opportunity of spiritual improvement that is needful. Yet, whatever these ancient converts required, we find that Paul had leisure *to work at his employment, and to maintain himself*. And, indeed, it would argue very strangely of Christian communities at any time, if their pastors could never be easy without a *daily* inspection of their conduct, to see if they walked in the truth. And how do these men act, who claim most time for such purposes? In many parishes they never visit the people at all; and where, either in the Established Church or among the Dissenters, the custom of pastoral visits is kept up, they are generally short visits at long intervals,—where a little time is spent in conversation, a few words of prayer are offered up, and then they withdraw. Besides, were there a plurality of elders in every church, as it appears from Scripture there ought to be, the office of visitation, however diligently performed, might be easily accomplished, without suspending the secular occupation injuriously.

It may be said by some, that worldly business secularizes the mind, and unfits it for spiritual duties. This is the very pretence on which Monks and Ascetics in every age have withdrawn from all employment, and shut themselves up in convents and the like, leading a lazy, unprofitable life, on the ground of being wholly devoted to religious meditation. No principle, therefore, can be more dangerous. But, if business secularize the mind,—which after all will not be the case with watchful Christians,—we ask, Has idleness no snares? Is there no temptation incident to a state of too much leisure? Has the history of convents been that of unsullied and uninterrupted purity? Have the intrigues of an ambitious Priesthood not arisen from their possessing more time than they can make a good use of?—What compositions are more spiritual than David's Psalms? yet they were written not by a Monk, but by a King, whose regal cares must have been numerous enough. But, even allowing that much of a Minister's leisure might happen to be employed in private study, does not study unsocialize a man, and fill his mind too often with vain conceits and theological vapours, unfitting him for those more active and sympathizing duties which he occasionally owes to the members of his flock? If a man be really spiritual, he will set the Lord always before him, whether engaged in business or not; a secular employment, if lawful, has no more tendency to lead the mind away from God, than some of those studies have, in which Ministers are apt to engage, as connected with their ministerial duties.

But it will next be affirmed that, in this case, the Churches must be content with unlearned Pastors. Perhaps so: but there is a great difference between being *unlearned* and being *ignorant*. A man may be unacquainted with Greek and Latin, and yet may be mighty in the Scriptures: and the Bible being everywhere translated into the Vulgar tongue, the knowledge of ancient languages may very well be dispensed with in a Pastor, though the possession of it is no doubt desirable. Neither eloquence nor learning is set down among the indispensable qualifications of the Scripture Bishop; he may be "apt to teach" without these: and in primitive times there was no Oxford or Cambridge, no universities or academies, to which Ministers might resort for instruction; yet, as all will allow, the Gospel flourished in greater purity and activity then, than it does at this present. Nor did miraculous gifts supersede the necessity of common endowments:—these were vouchsafed as *evidences* to confirm the truth of Christianity, not as modes of *instruction*; and they appear to have been early withdrawn. But, after all, what is the Theology taught in modern schools, that is represented as being needful to the Christian Ministry? Is it not either very *scanty*, or very *systematic*,—that is, formed on human systems, or very *scholastic*, or very *erroneous*? Is it not, in general, a heterogeneous compound of the doctrine of the schools,—of the conceits of the Fathers,—of the formularies of modern divinity,—of a mechanical and barren logic,—or else limited to the range prescribed by the Thirty-nine Articles, beyond which, whatever Scripture may say, no student dares to go? In short, it is not the pure, simple, affectionate, and heart-warming doctrine of the Bible. Sermons composed on such models more resemble the Moral Contemplations of Marcus Antoninus and the Stoic Philosophers, or the refinements of Platonism, than anything Christian. Even Socrates was more practical, and came home more to human feelings than such Preachers generally do. They dole out a few doctrinal distinctions, intermingled with some moral or metaphysical discussions, which have little or no tendency to touch the conscience, to affect the heart, or to regulate the life.

To depreciate true learning, or to undervalue a competent knowledge of the original languages in which the Scriptures are written, will never be attempted by any who understand their utility. But even this has its own province, and may be rated too highly. The Bible in most translations is plain enough, and

requires *enforcement* rather than *interpretation*; and the many helps for explaining it where needful, that may now be had in our own English tongue, render such learning less important. Real conversions to God are generally found to take place under the ministry of those who make good use of Scripture, in the way of application to the conscience, more than under such as are great adepts in mere verbal criticism. When Jesus spoke of the proofs of his own mission, one of them was, "To the *poor* the Gospel is preached;" thereby intimating the simplicity of his doctrine, and its adaptation to the circumstances of the meanest of mankind. Illiterate men, with the Scriptures in their hands, need no other *means* of salvation. When the Apostles first circulated the Scriptures among the ancient Churches, we do not find that they sent either an expositor or a commentary along with them. The difficulties attending the illustration of Scripture have been much magnified, as if intended to attach more consequence to the ministerial office.

It will be said, that if the *gratuitous* preaching of the Gospel were adopted, religion would be retarded in its progress.—*Worldly* religion no doubt would; and, for a time, true religion might seem to be at a stand, in the transition state from one system to the other. But if the free proclamation of the truth be a divine injunction it is impious to suppose that God would abandon his own arrangements, and suffer the Gospel to fall into desuetude, because there were no *hired* labourers in the vineyard. On the contrary, were such men silent, the very stones would cry out. After a shorter or longer interval, we might look with confidence for a revival of genuine Christianity, *unfettered* by human dogmas, *unoppressed* by human influence, no longer dependent on filthy lucre, nor debased by the interference of the rich and powerful, but free as the air we breathe, pure as the blue vault of heaven, professed by men who saw that truth was no longer bought and sold, and that money was no necessary element in the constitution of Christian Churches. The Preachers might be few at first; but as soon as the mercenary spirit of former days had evaporated, many holy, sincere, and zealous persons would arise, anxious to propagate the doctrine of Christ, and to infuse a new fervour into the minds of his disciples, so that Paul's complaint would cease to be heard,—“All men seek *their own*, not the things of Jesus Christ.”

But it will be inquired, If such be the doctrine of Scripture respecting Ministers' maintenance, what was the practice of the

Churches in the times immediately succeeding the Apostolic age? Was it in conformity to this view? In answer to this, we collect from the scanty remains of Christian antiquity thus much,—that the revenue of the Church arose entirely from the *voluntary oblations* of the people; that these were made at first weekly, and afterwards monthly; that part of these oblations went to defray the necessary expenses of public worship, and part for the relief of the poor. That these oblations consisted not of money merely, but of fruits, fowls, and animals; that no man was *compelled* to give, but it was thought disgraceful not to give at *some time*; that there was no *stated* sum or amount,—every thing was left to the feelings of the worshippers. Of the weekly contributions there is undeniable evidence in a well-known passage in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 16, ver. 1, &c.; but let it be observed, that this contribution was not made for Paul himself, or for the benefit of any Apostle or Elder, but for the relief of the *poor brethren* at Jerusalem. "Now, concerning the collection for the *saints*, as I have given orders to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the *first day of the week*, let every one of you *lay by him* in store, as God hath prospered him, that there may be no collections when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality to Jerusalem." Here the collection is to be made on the Christian Sabbath, the day of assembly for divine worship; it was to be made in proportion to the *prosperity* of the preceding week, and it was to be *sent to the poor brethren* at Jerusalem.—These three circumstances of *time*, *amount*, and *application*, deserve special notice.

In Constantine's time, lands were allotted to the Church by the well-meant but mistaken munificence of that Emperor; the Church, however, in many instances, disdainful to possess immoveable property, sold these lands, and divided the proceeds. After allowance was given to persons to bequeath what they pleased to the use of the Church, its standing revenues became greatly augmented, and a spirit of covetousness gradually crept in. Originally *nothing* was demanded or expected for the performance of any church rite, and all gratuities to Ministers were *forbidden*. As soon as lands and possessions were added to the Church, *from that moment* the zeal of the people declined, their voluntary oblations were diminished, and so the Church came to be *worse* provided for, *under the notion* of its growing richer.

In reference to the support of the Ministry, hear the words

of Tertullian in his Apology: "The Presidents amongst us [that is, the Elders or Bishops, for the New Testament and the early ages knew nothing of the *Diocesan* Bishop] are men of *age* [not striplings] and approved piety, who have obtained this office, *not by money*, but by character; *for nothing sacred is to be had for money*. Our treasury is not filled with dishonourable gain, as the price of a purchased religion; every one puts a little to the common stock, commonly *once a month*, or *when he pleases*, and only on condition that he is both *willing and able*, for there is no compulsion upon any; *all here is a free-will offering*; and these collections are deposited in a common bank *for charitable uses*,—not for the support of merry meetings, for drinking and gormandizing, but for *feeding the poor*, for *burying the dead*, for *providing for orphans*, for *relieving old people worn out in the service of the saints*, or *those who have suffered by shipwreck*," &c.

Though laws were made in some places to forbid or restrain the Clergy from following any secular trade or calling, lest it should interfere with divine service; yet in other places laws were made enjoining upon them *to provide themselves with food and raiment by some honest trade or husbandry*, without hindering the duties of their office in the Church; and, to encourage this, they were exempted from the Lustral tax, which was exacted of all other tradesmen; and that for three reasons:

That they might not be *burdensome to the Church*;

That they might have something to bestow upon the indigent;

And that they might set the laity an example of industry and diligence in their callings.

And many eminent Ministers of the ancient Church did so; among others, Zeno, Pastor and Bishop of Maiuma, in Palestine, who lived to be a hundred years old, who constantly attended divine service, morning and evening, all that time, and yet found leisure to work at the trade of a linen weaver, by which he not only subsisted himself, but relieved others, though he lived in a society that was wealthy. Also Spiridion, Bishop of Trimithus in Cyprus, one of the most eminent in the Council of Nice, having been a shepherd before he was a Bishop, continued to employ himself in that calling, out of his great humility, all his life. Other instances may be found in Church history.

And it is well known that, both in the Church of England and among Dissenters, many Clergymen employ themselves as school-masters, as private tutors, and some even as land-agents, factors, stewards, and the like. That many also find time to act as

Magistrates and Justices of the Peace, is matter of notoriety. Nay more, the Bishops are sometimes Professors in the Universities, and give regular courses of lectures there. In the Kirk of Scotland, the same things, in numerous instances, are openly practised. Whether the motive in all these cases be a wish to be useful, or a desire to add to their importance and emolument, we have no right to inquire.

We anticipate the reply that will be made to these remarks,—viz., that if Clergymen engage in secular callings, they will leave little time for the composition of sermons, and their preaching will consequently soon exhibit marks of haste, carelessness, and inferiority. This leads us naturally to consider, whether, in modern times, preaching, as a part of the ministerial function, has not had an undue importance attached to it? In the first place, preaching is no part of worship; and a Christian assembly may meet, perform their acts of devotion, and return home without a sermon, and yet without any real defect in duty. The sermon is a mere appendage to the Divine service,—an address not to God, but to man,—a matter of human composition, not of divine inspiration,—too often the mere production of the head, not the effusion of the heart. Modern sermons noway resemble ancient preaching. The preaching of the Apostles and Evangelists was a *proclamation* of the *facts* and truths of the Gospel, to men who had *never previously heard* of them, to heathen audiences, to men who did not and could not at that time possess the Scriptures; the Old Testament being confined to the Jews, the New Testament being not then written.—The Preachers remained in such places a year, or sometimes two years, until the doctrine had taken root, and then they enjoined the new converts to associate for religious purposes, *to choose Elders or Pastors from among themselves*, and to apply their spiritual knowledge to practical purposes. Having done this, they departed to another quarter.

But now, and for a long time past, in countries called Christian, the case is altered. There are no new *facts* to promulgate, nor any new *doctrines* to disclose; the age of miraculous powers is gone by, the canon of Scripture is closed, the Bible is translated, circulated, read, known; and hence, the necessity for primitive preaching, except in countries still Pagan, has entirely ceased. What is the duty, then, that remains? Simply this: That the Ministers, where there are such, and the private brethren, where there are no Ministers, should do, what every Christian brother *ought* to be capable of doing, namely, exhort the others to be

steadfast in the faith which they have received, to follow the pattern which their Lord has left them, and to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. And this not in tedious or formal harangues, logically constructed, with their various divisions or subdivisions, their *firstly, secondly, and thirdly*; but in a brief and simple address, "warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires." Who does not know the difference between a cold, scholastic, theological, argument, and a faithful appeal to the conscience, dictated by zeal for the truth? And who will say, that a college or academical education is needful as a preparative for such exercises? If it be a preparative, it is not one to improve, but to spoil them.

Let us look into the practice of the early Churches upon this subject. In Justin Martyr's time, when the Christians met on the Lord's day, he says, "The writings of the Apostles and Prophets were read, as far as time would allow, [meaning that they were sometimes disturbed by their enemies,] and, when the reading was done, the president made a discourse to instruct the people, and *animate them to the practice of such lovely precepts*, [evidently referring to the passage read,] at the conclusion of which we rise up and pray, &c." From which we learn, that the sermons in those days were nothing else but a brief exhortation to the people to obey the doctrines contained in the passages they had just heard; and this is the more credible, inasmuch as we are informed elsewhere, that there were often *two or three* such discourses at one meeting,—which could not have been the case, had they resembled the sermons of our times. Tertullian mentions the practice in his day, to this effect: "We meet for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and take such lessons out of them as suit the condition of the times, to confirm our faith, by warning us what we are to expect, or by recalling to mind the predictions already fulfilled. Besides the bare reading, we preach and press the duties of the Gospel, with all the power and argument we are able, &c." This agrees very much with Justin. But from Sozomen we learn, that so little had sermons been considered indispensable, that for a long time there were *none* in the Church of Rome, either by the Bishop or by any other. And though Pope Leo, in whose time Sozomen lived, was an exception, yet afterwards, for no less than five hundred years, preaching was entirely discontinued, till Pius Quintus revived the practice.

The ancient sermons were all *extempore*, and arose out of the

occasion; so that to sit for several hours in a study, in order to *prepare*, as it is called, for Sunday, was a practice wholly unknown in those days. The Pastors had something else to do, and much premeditation would have destroyed the effect of their discourses. They were also very *short*; for some of them which are still extant might be decently delivered in eight or ten minutes, and therefore there was no time for discussing difficult points, and for dragging a man's whole creed into one sermon. Chrysostom, himself a most eloquent Preacher, rebukes some who thought Divine service useless if it was not accompanied with a sermon. His arguments are extremely good, but too long for this place. He considers the objection as arising from a mere love of *novelty*; the Scriptures being the *same*, and the prayers in substance the *same*, while the sermon appeared to be *new*. It is the very same feeling that actuates many in the present day, who go to public worship, not to praise God, or to pray to him, or to hear the Scriptures read, but to listen to the sermon, which indeed by such is thought the main part of duty.

If Churches themselves would be content with the devotional parts of worship, and the solemn, deliberate reading of the Holy Oracles, submitting their consciences to the authority of God's word, without waiting and hankering for man's exposition of it, it is probable they would make far greater and surer progress in Divine Truth. But no; they must have fine orations, flowery discourses, anecdotes, declamations, appeals to the passions rather than to the understanding; anything, in short, to suit itching ears, and a craving for novelty. They are afraid the conscience might be awakened too much: it would be too awful to come into close contact with the holy law of God,—it would too much disturb their carnal security, and lead to painful self-examination.

The existence of a plurality of Pastors in the primitive Church has been already adverted to, and is abundantly evident from the New Testament. The reasons for such arrangement are not difficult to conjecture. Different men have different gifts, applicable to the circumstances of different classes of disciples. A Pastor may be occasionally sick, or absent, or otherwise incapacitated for a time: the Church might suffer from his absence, in point of order, discipline, or the like, did not his duty at such times devolve upon his co-pastors. Persecution, journeys, labours, might in ancient times often produce such occurrence, yet the Churches found no lack of service: some were more qualified to rule and to exercise discipline, others to admonish and exhort;

some were more tender and affectionate, others were more unbending and firm. The Churches enjoyed the benefit of all these qualifications. But in our times there is only *one* Pastor. In the National Church this person employs his own delegate to assist him in his duties, to supply in his absence, or to enable him to hold a *plurality of livings*. But he is no co-pastor in the Scripture sense of the term. In the Dissenting Societies they deem it quite enough to *maintain* one; and that one is content to be alone, as reaping thus the *whole* of the emolument, and having none to *interfere* in the prosecution of his office. So long as learning is thought *essential* to a Minister, and that he must be entirely supported by the Church, (two ideas which generally go together,) so long will the Dissenting as well as National Churches have only one Pastor, however weak their arguments in favour of the practice may be.

But in the Apostolic Churches there seems to have been no difficulty in having a plurality of elders, *on the score of expense*, yet they were not *richer* than our Churches are, neither were they more *numerous*. Where lies the secret?—It lies in this: that the pastors everywhere, like those at Ephesus, were taught to *labour* for their own support.

Were this the case, another result would follow, and that result a beneficial one. The Churches would no longer choose pastors *from a distance*,—men previously unknown to them, educated at the universities or academies, *bred* to the ministry as a means of *subsistence*, having perhaps a scantling of learning, and some talent for public speaking, but wanting in not a few of Paul's qualifications for the bishop's office. They would choose them *from among themselves*, and thus avoid the many bad consequences attending upon a different mode of election, the intrigues, the perplexities, the schisms, which too often occur when the appointment of a Pastor takes place.

As the Churches at present render themselves dependent on the contributions of worldly hearers,—that is, of persons who are not *members* of the Society,—being unable of themselves to support a ministry, without the pecuniary aid of those who attend, but who do not *join* them; hence they think themselves obliged to consult the taste of such persons in their choice of a Pastor; and therefore he must be a good scholar, a ready speaker, fluent in language, polite in address, conciliatory in deportment, and the like. How otherwise are they to pay their expenses, say they; how are they to discharge the interest or principal of the chapel

debt, the salary of the minister, &c.,—to say nothing of provision for the poor, who are very much lost sight of in these arrangements; hence the anxiety about pew-rents, frequent collections, voluntary donations, annual or monthly subscriptions, and all the other apparatus for getting money, as if the whole were a burdensome or trading concern,—a mercantile speculation, rather than the free-cost ministry of Christ's Gospel. Some will tell you that chapels thrive best when they are in debt,—a strange doctrine if applied to private individuals: but sedate and thoughtful persons are deterred from joining with such societies, for fear of sharing in the incumbrances; and trustees are kept in anxiety and jeopardy, and sometimes individuals are ruined by becoming security for the money. From this arises the disgraceful system of men who call themselves *Independent* ministers, traversing the country in its length and breadth, on journeys of *mendicity*,—journeys undertaken by conscientious men, oftentimes under great depression of spirits, as being ashamed of their errand, going from door to door, to their own degradation; acknowledging that they “began to build without counting the cost,”—the very practice condemned in the Gospel,—and thus robbing people, on religious pretences, of that money which might have been far better employed in educating the poor, or in translating and circulating the Scriptures at home and abroad. True Christianity is completely dishonoured by proceedings like these, which the Apostles and first Christians would have spurned at. They met in their upper rooms till they could afford others from *their own funds*; not seeking publicity or handsome buildings, knowing that religion gains nothing by external show.

Seeing all these things, men are accustomed to view the ministry as a *trade*, by means of which ministers may maintain themselves and their families. Consequently, such educate their children for it, and, having trained them, look out for suitable situations in the Church, some living or benefice, or some humble Curacy in the National Establishment, or some vacant Chapel among the Dissenters, where a decent income may be obtained. If, from any cause, they leave one Church, they immediately seek after another. They even advertise for them in periodical publications, offering themselves to the people in the character of *Evangelical* preachers, who are at present without a charge, and willing to accept of an office where there is a *prospect of usefulness*:—by this last phrase, meaning where the population is considerable, and, consequently, some hopes of emolument. Poor places are shunned; but

endowed chapels are particularly sought after, because there they have at least some certainty of a subsistence. What is all this but a state of dishonourable dependence? Such men might have made good ploughmen, good mechanics or artizans; but they have taken up a *genteel* calling in preference to manual labour; they are styled Reverend, and treated as gentlemen; they say grace at feasts, and have seats at table above mere laymen: their duties consisting in preaching two or three sermons weekly, and in now and then visiting their people, and praying with them. Can it be denied that they are thus laid under a temptation to suit their doctrine, and their manners too, to the taste of their hearers and supporters, to avoid all that might offend them, and to resist every change and innovation, even though the change were an improvement? Thus, they are induced to move within the narrow circle of a certain theological system; they dare not walk forth into the open field of Scripture, for fear of meeting with truths, the discussion of which might startle their hearers, and lead them into hazardous inquiries. Hence, the rich hearer, though not a member, and the wealthy deacon, are either courted or connived at, and their opinion particularly relied on; for there exist many things, in a spirit of conformity to the world, which such pastors dare not reprove. In this respect, the clergyman of the Established Church has a decided advantage over the dissenting minister; the former is the *Independent*, inasmuch as he derives his living from his patron, who is seldom a resident, or seldom attends; while the latter, if he preaches unpalatable doctrine, if he loses the good-will of the deacon, or forfeits the favour of the people, hazards his dismissal from the place; for they have only to *stop the supplies*, and the pastor must evacuate the pulpit.

In consequence of this scheme of things, also, we find societies in large towns, upon the popular principle, actually coveting the pastors of minor places, if possessed of good preaching talents, and basely inviting them to desert their present post, by the offer of a larger salary—a temptation which, though not invariably successful, is too often so—and to which they try to reconcile their conscience, by saying that the other is a *larger sphere of usefulness*, that they will have more opportunity to do good, and the like; not recollecting that *usefulness* depends, not on a denser population or a wider field, but on the disposition, capacity, and endowments—none of which are likely to be increased by a larger salary, a greater round of visiting, a more frequent contact with the world, and similar circumstances. Everything of this kind is

a real snare, a mere delusion, by which many a well-intentioned man has become corrupted and entangled, and has lost the useful character he possessed before. It is in this way that, in large towns and cities, and in the metropolis, we generally find what are called *talented* preachers, who are bought, or brought thither by the lure of large stipends; the hearers in these places being numerous and wealthy, the chapels spacious, and everything placed on the footing of a *mercantile* Christianity. And, thus, mere country places, and rural districts, are thinly sown with men of talent, though, perhaps, sometimes rich in men of piety and self-denial.

Many preachers, on reading these remarks, will be apt to exclaim, "What, would you rob me of the little pittance I have for myself and for my family, in serving the flock of Christ?" Far from it: I would rather increase that pittance, and put it on a better and more secure foundation. It is distressing to think how many worthy men, with their wives and children, are maintained on an income of forty pounds a year, and yet devote their whole time to the ministry; while clerks in a counting-house, and mechanics, in many instances, are allowed two or three times as much. Such things, in a Christian land, ought not so to be. But what is the reason? Not the want of diligence in the pastor, nor the want of consideration or compassion in the people, who are not *able* to give more, however willing they may be; but the whole is the effect of an unscriptural system, which first invites men to undertake the office on pecuniary grounds, and then stints them. The pastor makes his bargain—the people stipulate that they shall do their best to contribute to his maintenance; the one is comparatively impoverished, yet the other complains of being burdened: discontent and separation are the consequence, or else the poor man stays still, and is starved. Had he betaken himself to a lawful occupation, and maintained his family by personal industry, he might still have assisted the Church, and the Church might have assisted him, in cases where the fluctuations of trade affected him, or where seasons of scarcity, attacks of sickness, necessary journeys, hospitality to strangers, charity to the poor, or the like, infringed upon his ordinary means of support, and rendered assistance a duty. Aids like these, the fruit of Christian good-will, and bestowed in the spirit of grateful attachment, differ widely in their nature from the quarter's salary of a stipended pastor. It is through such men that Christianity comes to be viewed as connected with pecuniary contracts, with domestic pri-

vations, with personal dependence, with a murmuring people, with straitened ability for benevolent purposes (so that the pastor may *preach* generosity, but he cannot *exemplify* it), and with other evils. Thus, the yoke of Christ is no longer easy, because worldly customs have made it burdensome.

What do all the present and many of the past evils that afflict unhappy Ireland arise from—the tumults of the people, and the difficulties of legislating for them—but from a stipendiary clergy? A hierarchy is supported at the expense of a famished people. A religious monopoly is imposed on a whole nation, of whom a majority of seven to one are of an entirely different creed. Tithes and fees of every kind are wrung from a reluctant population, and the clergyman, the representative of the Prince of Peace, is to be seen with the tithe-proctor and the dragoons at his back. Such sights were never dreamed of in the days of Peter and Paul. Were a bystander asked, “What is the shortest mode of removing these heart-burnings, on the part of a paternal government?” he would probably answer “Either *pay all* or *PAY NONE.*” The *Regium Donum* to the Presbyterians, and the wealth of the Establishment bestowed on the Clergy, are only so many instances of legislative partiality, while the Irish priesthood have but a scanty pittance.

As to the plan pursued by the Methodists, whatever good as a religious body they may have effected, and no one denies that they have effected some, the whole fabric of Methodism is so unlike the simplicity of the Gospel, which recognizes no such framework anywhere, and the paying of preachers' salaries out of a Conference fund, leaving the people no choice of their own ministers, but making both preachers and people dependent on a junto of assuming men, resembles so little the organization of the primitive church, that we can only wonder the system should have been so long submitted to. But Conferences, as well as Convocations, will some day find their own level.

The spirit of covetousness in National Churches has led men sadly to forget what was due to the dignity of the Christian ministry; due in point of forbearance towards others, whose sentiments differed from theirs, and due to common humanity and good neighbourhood. In all ages, the practice of persecution has no doubt been more or less instigated by men's *withdrawing their support* from antichristian pastors and antichristian churches. That this was one cause of the dreadful cruelties practised on the Waldenses is more than probable. Men, like Demetrius the

shrine-maker, only collect a mob when their craft is in danger. That many in our own country, and in modern times, have suffered from the same cause, is but too certain. Witness the severities inflicted upon the Quakers, at the first appearance of these harmless people, and in every period since; *the clergy making use of every penalty which the law allows, rather than give up a single farthing* of their claims, year after year. It was not merely the broad-brimmed hat, the "thee and thou," nor any such peculiarities,—for these were the general fashion of those times,—but it was the assuming to themselves *the right of private judgment* in matters pertaining to the conscience, the refusing to swell the formal audiences of a servile and hireling clergy, and, above all, the conscientious withholding of their claims for *revenue*, that subjected this innocent people to the ire of a mortified priesthood. To this day, their conduct in this matter entitles them to the respect of every religious community; and though I do not say I agree with every article of their creed, their ecclesiastical order approaches far nearer to the spirit, if not to the model of the New Testament, than that of any other denomination of Christians. None but themselves can tell the amount of their sufferings (an amount supposed to be above a million sterling) on account of a faithful adherence to their principles; nor would the amount be believed, if it were not authenticated by their annual documents. Though many Dissenters are privately of the same mind with the Quakers, in regard to a compulsory exaction of clerical emoluments, yet it is a melancholy fact, that they have not had the courage to act in conformity; but the terrors of a restraint have operated more powerfully than the convictions of conscience.

Thus the Church of England defiles herself annually with filthy lucre, obtained by force from those who cannot conscientiously attend her ministrations. And if we look at the Episcopal Church of Ireland, wringing thousands of pounds per annum from the surrounding Catholics, the heart sickens at sight of such abominations, carried on under the mask and pretence of religion. No wonder if Popery should increase in that ill-fated land, when Protestantism appears to owe its existence solely to the funds extorted from a burdened people, whose creed is at complete variance with theirs, and whose ministers, if not borne up by the power of the State, and by a standing army, would possess little other power or influence arising from their own ecclesiastical character. Individual examples may be found of

men who do not in all respects come under this censure, but not enough to affect its general justice. While Christianity keeps calling out, "Truth, Truth," the Hierarchy drowns the cry by exclaiming "Money, Money."

How long this state of things is to last, depends on no king, on no ministers of state, on no political party, on no clamorous demagogue. It depends, under God, on the good sense, the genuine piety, the sober remonstrance, and the firm determination of the people themselves, who may at any time refuse to identify themselves with so monstrous a system, and by withdrawing their countenance and adherence from a mercenary priesthood, will oblige them to look out elsewhere for funds and followers. Religion has been long sufficiently disgraced by being mixed up with worldly power and influence. It is time she should appear in her native beauty and simplicity, armed with the panoply of Truth alone, conferring favours, but claiming none; seeking men's reverence rather than their revenues; and expecting to be received on the ground of impartial conviction, not on the score of parliamentary enactment. A religion founded on any statutes, except those of the New Testament, is a baseless fabric, which, if not overturned by the hand of violence, must soon totter to its own fall.



