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"Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."
Psalm cxxii, 9.

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IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

God is unlike all other beings in the universe. All other intelligences and all created things are subject to change, and are constantly changing. But God is unchangeable. He is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever, without the least variableness or shadow of turning. Angels and the spirits of the just have the image of God, and are in some degree like him in holiness and happiness. But they are still mutable:—although they are confirmed and elect, and exalted above the power of sin and death; they are changeable: for they are no doubt advancing in knowledge and happiness—rising to higher degrees of perfection; and every accession to their knowledge or happiness is a change. Immutability therefore, as well as the perfection of his attributes, distinguishes God from all other beings in the universe. “His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts, for as the Heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts.”

That GOD IS IMMUTABLE, is a grand and important truth. An enlightened view of this attribute is indispensable to a knowledge of his perfections and government; and a knowledge of the character and government of God is the foundation of all true religion. The greatest mistakes in religion, both in sentiment and practice, among Christians and among Heathen, arise from erroneous or partial views of the character of God. This subject then, is an important one.

Before entering upon the discussion of it, it is proper for us to recollect, that in learning the character of God, in forming ideas of Him, the Bible, and the Bible alone, must be our guide; his Word and Spirit alone can direct us, for his nature and attributes are incomprehensible. They are too high to be attained by reason. They cannot be conceived by human understandings, or comprehended by finite minds. We are creatures of yesterday. We were, but a few days since, called into life, and opened our eyes for the first time on the works of God:—and we have, perhaps, exercised our reason very little, in inquiring about Him, and con-

country, and are also adapted to promote the interests of useful learning, a knowledge of those arts and sciences which in any way exalt or meliorate the condition of man.—I would not presume to dictate in what order or manner this subject should be taken up; but I throw out these hints merely to show on what topics I need light: and other readers, I find, are as desirous of information as I am. I hope therefore that you will make my request and inquiries known to those who are able and ready to answer them.

Yours, &c.

A LAYMAN.

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY ENTITLED TO SUPPORT.

A SERMON BY THE LATE REV. MATTHEW LYLE.

“Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”—1 *Corinthians* ix, 14.

In every well regulated society, different persons must pursue different occupations, and engage in different employments; either adopting the course suggested by their own inclination, or entering into responsible stations in compliance with the will of others, that they may promote the welfare of the community. That the blessings of civilized society may be enjoyed, civil government, under some form, must necessarily exist; laws must be enacted, and when necessary, executed, that crimes may be prevented or punished, that virtue may be encouraged and rewarded; and, however, the *forms* of government may differ, in regard to the liberty and security they ensure to the citizens, or subjects generally, in some things all kinds of civil government are similar. Laws must be made whether the government be monarchical or republican—and there is the same necessity for executing as for enacting laws. Now that laws may be made and executed, there must be different duties assigned to different individuals under every species of civil government. Some must have authority to make laws—others to execute them; and all must be bound to obey the laws which are enacted. The subject who obeys the laws, is entitled to the protection of the government, and every individual is entitled to a reward proportioned to the public benefits he is instrumental in procuring.—Now in assigning the emoluments of office to the different persons employed in making or in executing the laws, a principle seems to have been adopted which regards mental qualities as of much greater importance, and worthy of much more liberal remuneration, than mere bodily strength. As the duties to be performed by persons occupying public stations

generally require that unyielding integrity and strength of mind, which secure public confidence, so, in most cases, additional qualifications are demanded, which can only be obtained by the sacrifice of much time, and toil, and expense. Stations which demand these qualifications, ought to promise a reasonable compensation for the sacrifices which have been made by those who are invited to occupy them. To say, that they who promote the interests of the commonwealth are entitled to a reward proportioned to the benefits derived from them, is only saying in other terms that, *justice should take place*. Hence all men concur in the sentiment that they who enact wise laws for the purpose of restraining the lawless passions of men, and they who execute those laws, ought to be rewarded as public benefactors, although their efforts serve only to restrain, not to eradicate the evils that disturb the peace of society. Now if they who impose a *partial* restraint on the lawless passions of evil doers, and thus *diminish* the quantity of human woe, are justly reckoned public benefactors; if men could be found, furnished with the means necessary to effect a thorough reformation in society, and possessing a disposition to employ those means zealously and perseveringly, for the diffusion of virtue and happiness amongst their fellow-men, justice would certainly assign to this class of public benefactors, a reward graduated by the benefits procured from their agency, and the sacrifices necessarily made by them, in the promotion of the cause of virtue and happiness amongst men.

The evils arising from human depravity, which have in every age employed the wisdom of the wise, and the efforts of the benevolent, in devising and executing plans for their removal; and which have, in spite of all human laws, continued to degrade and destroy the human family, have not been disregarded by the Supreme Ruler of the universe. We are assured that he has no delight in the death of a sinner; that his wisdom has been employed in devising a plan for the cancelling of human guilt—for the restoration of rebellious men to the favor and image of their Maker; and for the entire removal of all those evils which human laws have so long, in vain, attempted to restrain. The word of God unfolds this wonderful device. He whose laws men had broken, and *He* only, could afford any satisfactory information in regard to the possibility of forgiveness, or respecting the terms on which his rebellious creatures might venture to hope for the enjoyment of his forfeited favor. That mankind may be informed of the divine purpose respecting their salvation, God hath appoint-

ed that his word shall be preached, to every creature ; for by "the foolishness of preaching he saves believers ;" and "the Lord hath ordained that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel."

We approach the discussion of this unpopular subject, in compliance with the request of the Presbytery ; this we state merely for the information of this audience, and not as an apology. It would be injurious to you to entertain a suspicion, that you would not willingly hear any duty which is enjoined in the sacred volume, explained and enforced ; it would be degrading to us to shun a declaration of the counsel of God, to secure the approbation or favor of man. We beseech you then to hear patiently what may be advanced from the *Holy Scriptures* and from *reason* in support of the claim of those who preach the gospel.

The Apostle Paul, as we discover in the passage connected with our text, considered the practice under the levitical law, as authority in the case now before us. "Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple ; and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar. Now though the types and ceremonies of the ancient dispensation, have long ago answered their intended purpose and passed away ; though there are no longer priests, nor oblations, an altar, a temple, nor sacrifices, God has yet a visible church in the world, in which the gospel ordinances are to be administered ; christian discipline maintained ; his word preached, and prayer and praise offered up to him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In these services, the ministers of the gospel are to be as exclusively and fully occupied, as were the priests of old, in the services of the temple. These circumstances naturally suggest the propriety of the regulation mentioned in the text, which, when read with the context, shews, that the Lord hath ordained that provision should be made for the support of those who preach the gospel, such as was made under the ancient dispensation for those who ministered at the altar. What that provision was, it will not be difficult to ascertain, so far as may be necessary on the present occasion. A twelfth part of the population had assigned to them, a tenth part of the produce of the land, with certain cities and their suburbs, besides a part of the offerings of the Lord. With this provision the ministers of the sanctuary were exempt from anxious cares respecting their temporal subsistence, and at the same time not exalted above their brethren so as to excite pride, or tempt them to neglect the duties of their spiritual calling. Thus, they that preach

the gospel should live by the gospel. We plead not the cause of *sinecures*. Our text cannot be wrested to support their claim. No! "If any man will not work, let him not eat," whether he be an officer in the church, or a private member. Nor do we entertain the opinion that the interests of the church, or of the clergy themselves, would be advanced by making the latter *rich*. We entertain a partiality for the opinion of the church to which we belong, on this, as well as on other subjects. A part of the form of a Call which is to be presented to a minister of our denomination by the people over whom he is about to exercise the pastoral office, is in these words, "That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we promise you," &c. The congregation that adopts this formula, must consider themselves obligated to keep their pastor free from worldly cares and avocations.— Let this be done, and we ask for nothing more.

That the Lord Jesus Christ intended that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel, is manifest, from the instructions which he gave to the first heralds of the cross. He who said, and it was done; who commanded and it stood fast; He who by a single volition could obtain, from the bottom of the sea, the sum demanded of him as a tribute to the government, could with equal ease and in a similar way have supported the messengers of his grace. But instead of recurring to miracles to supply their wants, he told them that "*the laborer was worthy of his reward*;" and that they might place their entire dependence for support on the justice and liberality of those amongst whom they should be called to labor, he commanded them to "take neither purse nor scrip for their journey, nor two coats apiece; when they entered into a town or city, they were only to ascertain who amongst its inhabitants was worthy to receive them, and there to remain, eating and drinking such things as should be set before them." And who will suppose that the host of an apostle was not amply remunerated for his hospitality, by the society of such a guest? As he that invited himself to the house and to the table of Zacheus, carried his reward with him, the reward of salvation; so his ministers, though *earthen* vessels have often conveyed the treasures of divine grace, to the souls and to the families of those who have opened their doors for their reception. But the example of the Apostle Paul seems to be regarded by some, with more favor than the doctrine of the text. No sooner is the subject of a minister's salary introduced, than the recollection is revived, that Paul "preached the gospel to the Corinthians *freely*."

But had Paul considered it improper, for those who preach the gospel to live by their office, would he have taken wages of other churches, to enable him for particular reasons, to preach the gospel to the Corinthians freely? That Paul labored under no conscientious scruples of this kind, is evident from his own words addressed to the Corinthians at the very time they were enjoying his gratuitous labors, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, it is a *light* matter if we shall reap your carnal things." The compensation given by the churches to those whose spiritual labors they enjoyed, however ample that compensation might be, was in the estimation of the Apostle a *small matter*, in comparison with the unsearchable riches of Christ, of which christians are made partakers, through the instrumentality of the gospel of Christ preached among them.

Do you discover any thing praiseworthy in the proceedings of the Corinthian church, in reference to the ministrations of St Paul amongst them? Is their example worthy of imitation? Is it of good report that a church enjoying a portion of wealth, not inferior, perhaps, to that possessed by any neighboring society, compelled a minister who was manifestly commissioned from heaven, to labor with his own hands, or to rely on the charity of others for his daily bread; while he preached the gospel to them with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? Is it from this part of the sacred records, that encouragement is taken, to exclaim against ministers of the gospel who derive a support from the people to whom they preach? Such exclamations are not more contrary to the principles of justice and humanity, than they are to the spirit and meaning of this portion of the word of God. To indulge a disposition to reproach and vilify a gospel minister, who receives from the people of his charge, any pecuniary compensation for his labors, is not a new, nor a very uncommon occurrence. Christians are scarcely permitted to do what they please with their own property; to give to the man who serves them in the gospel, that compensation which they judge him entitled to, and for which they consider themselves amply remunerated by his labors, for their good and for the good of their families.

The fact, that God has instituted a Gospel Ministry would seem to be a sufficient corroboration of the doctrine we have advanced. Has he called men to officiate as ministers of his gospel? Has he precluded them from all other occupations and pursuits, by which a livelihood might be obtained? They must then either derive a support from his extraordinary in-

terference to preserve their garments unimpaired, and to give them bread from heaven; or they must receive a support from those for whom they labor; for it cannot be supposed that God intended that all ministers of the gospel should beg or starve. What would be thought of a government, which would select men to fill an office of the highest responsibility, and require of them the performance of duties demanding their whole time and their best energies, not only without making any compensation for their services, or provision for their support, but actually prohibiting them from receiving a support when offered to them? A case of this sort has never occurred under the most cruel despotism; and shall it be deemed possible under the government of God?

Apostate man must expect indeed to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; but while he labors, he may cherish the hope that his labors shall not be in vain. Under the operation of a kind providence, the necessities of life are attained by men of every rank, and of every occupation, provided they prosecute the business of their calling with diligence. And is the sacred office the only lawful calling in which men are to labor without bread? Has God left his messengers of mercy to beg or perish, while men of every other description live by their labors? This cannot be believed; we must therefore believe that he "hath ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

The appointments of heaven are always equitable, and in most cases there is no difficulty found in justifying the ways of God, to reasonable men. We are apprehensive of no difficulty in the case under discussion. We address ourselves to Presbyterians, and remark that the qualifications required by the Presbyterian Church, of those whom she acknowledges as her spiritual guides and instructors, make it necessary that about ten years of their youth should be spent in the pursuit of literary, scientific, and theological attainments. During this period, a young man might, by the labor of his hands, lay a foundation for future independence; but a candidate for the gospel ministry, instead of adding to his funds, generally spends the last cent of his patrimony, and finds this insufficient to carry him through his preparatory studies. At length, however, his preparatory studies have been completed; you hear him preach; and from the evidence he gives of his piety and aptness to teach you call him to be your pastor. In your estimation of his salary, will you pay no regard to the sacrifices he has made, in preparing himself for the services which you expect from him? you see his classmates, who confessed

him to be their equal, perhaps, their superior in literary acquirements, one at the Bar, another in the Senate, receiving from their fellow-citizens the tribute of applause due to their talents and patriotism, and a salary sufficient to reimburse all their previous expenditures, and to place them and their families in affluent circumstances during life. All agree that this is as it should be. No murmur is heard from any reflecting citizen respecting the emoluments of office bestowed on those who serve the commonwealth. But when equal talents are devoted to the spiritual interests of mankind, talents acquired with equal toil and at the expense of equal sacrifices, how different is the general sentiment in reference to the *reward to be bestowed*? How others may attempt to account for this fact, we know not; to us it appears a very singular occurrence, unless we admit, that the health of the body, civil liberty, and the security of their property, are considered by men generally as objects of much greater importance, than those which pertain to the salvation of the soul. Under the influence of this opinion, it cannot be thought strange that men are disposed to give to their family physician, or to their advocate in a civil court, ten times the amount of what they reluctantly surrender, to their spiritual guide and instructor.

We should not be much surprised in observing occurrences of this nature amongst *those who are without*; but, within the church, we may certainly look for better things. Look into the Church then, the Presbyterian Church, and see how its members remunerate their ministers. Having solemnly pledged themselves to preserve them free from worldly cares and avocations, how do they redeem that pledge? Not unfrequently, one would be tempted to suppose, either that the oracles of God had not been consulted at all on this subject, or if consulted, that their meaning had been entirely mistaken.—How many ministers of the gospel are there within the limits of this Presbytery, who live *free from worldly* cares and avocations? Perhaps we should rather ask, How many must actually starve, did they depend implicitly on their stipulated salary, for subsistence? Will one, two, or three hundred dollars, supply a minister of the gospel, with a growing family, with all the necessities of life; and preserve him from anxiety respecting the comfort of those who are dear to him as his own life; and for whose temporal comfort he must either provide, or be considered *worse than an infidel*? Would you have supposed, after all the clamor that has been raised against the Presbyterian clergy, on account of their enormous salaries, that one of the most popular of that body has labored for about

thirty years as the pastor of a numerous congregation, receiving for the support of a numerous family the sum of *one hundred dollars per annum*? Other cases might be easily adduced, to show that many of our congregations have yet to learn that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Moreover, *the delay attending the collection of their salaries, and the uncertainty when they will be received,* make it necessary, that the Pastors of many of your congregations, should look out in time, for some more certain means of support. Hence it has happened that many of your ministers have been the *schoolmasters* of their neighborhoods.

This is an employment, honorable, and useful, intimately connected with the best interests of the rising generation; an office, never to be conferred on weak or wicked men. But he who can suppose that the duties of a pastor, and those of an instructor of youth in languages and science, can at the same time, be faithfully discharged by an individual, has certainly thought but little on those subjects. No faithful preacher, or successful instructor of youth, can be in any danger of adopting such an opinion. Can that man "give himself *wholly* to the work of the ministry," who is necessarily confined five days in the week to the laborious employment of instructing children? Shall he be expected to bring from his treasures things new, as well as old for the edification of a congregation, whose avocations scarcely leave him time enough to select a text? Can the families included in a district, say, ten miles square, be annually visited, the children catechised—marriages solemnised—funeral rites performed—proper attention paid to the sick and the afflicted, and the semi-annual meetings of the judicatories of the church be punctually attended; while ten months of the year are to be spent in a school? It is impossible. The man who is both schoolmaster and pastor, must neglect his school or his congregation, or in attempting to fulfil his engagements to both, both will have just cause of complaint.

Whilst your ministers are thus compelled to resort to employments unconnected with the pastoral office, and to endure the perplexities inseparable from such employments; or to contract debts, depending on a salary which has been promised, but perhaps will never be paid; they generally struggle with their embarrassments in silence and unpitied. The demands of their people are not diminished either in regard to the quantity of their pastoral labors, or the character of their public discourses. He who has not had time to select a text, until the morning of the day, on which he is expected to preach,

is required to shew in the pulpit that he is a workman who need not to be ashamed, prepared to contend earnestly and successfully for the faith—to convince gainsayers—to comfort the feeble-minded, and, in a word, to give to every hearer his portion in due season. Your preachers fail to meet these expectations. They retire from the pulpit to their closets, grieved that their efforts are so inefficient in so good a cause, and can only say in their own behalf, in the presence of Him who searches the heart, that they would do more for his honor, and for the good of souls, if the parsimony or the avarice of their people would permit them to devote themselves exclusively to the work of the ministry.

You will readily perceive, that the preachers are not the only sufferers in the case. Their hearers suffer, in a different way, it is true, but not less severely; for as one has well observed “no sufferings are more severe than those which are produced by the reaction of our own sins.” Miracles have ceased. Men are not now qualified by plenary inspiration, to declare the counsel of God. On the contrary, his ministers have it in charge to “attend to reading and meditation; to give themselves wholly to these things that their profiting may appear to all.” Would you have a preacher, therefore, “able rightly to divide the word of truth, a workman not needing to be ashamed,” you must permit him to pursue the course, prescribed by the highest authority, in making his preparations for the services of the sanctuary; and as *reading* is an important part of that course, he must be able, occasionally, after defraying other necessary expenses, to buy a book to read.

If, what we sometimes hear, were indeed true, viz: that *our candidates for the Gospel Ministry are sent to College that they may learn to preach*; and if, after they had once become masters of that art, no further study or labor were necessary to qualify them for the discharge of all pastoral duties; as their labors and expenditures, on that supposition, would be much less than they are now found to be; reason would say that their salary ought to be, in proportion diminished. Our opinion in this case would be similar to that which we would entertain respecting men whose preaching costs them nothing. The only plausible claim which they can make for compensation must rest on the labor which they have sustained in the delivery of their unpremeditated discourses, and in travelling to the places where they have been delivered. If justice were invited to adjust the claims between such preachers and their hearers, it would probably decide, that the hearers, having suffered most, ought to be first rewarded.

We have already solicited your attention to the condition of your pastors in regard to their temporal support; we now invite you to reflect for a moment on the spiritual condition of the people within the limits of this Presbytery. How many congregations can be named in which the word of God is preached every Sabbath day, and an assiduous attention paid, by the pastor, to family visiting, to the catechising of children, and to all the other methods of religious instruction, which we think are conducive to the edification and spiritual prosperity of the churches? Few, very few of our congregations, are thus favored, and the consequences are such as might have been anticipated. Erroneous opinions prevail to an alarming extent, even amongst the visible members of the church, of whom many yet need to be informed what are the first principles of the doctrine of Christ: and as the general sentiment is concerned "*who will may preach, and what they will.*" Persons who have adopted no fixed principles on the subject of religion, and who are not disposed to the exercise of caution in discriminating between the precious and the vile, are easily satisfied; such is the character of parents too generally; and our youth cannot be expected to surpass their parents generally, in attention to their spiritual interests.—Unchecked, either by precept or example, they grow up in ignorance of religion, and if, through the mercy of God, some of them are unexpectedly brought to consider their ways, and to ask with solicitude what they must do to be saved; their case is calculated to excite the deepest commiseration. Conscious of their ignorance, they apply for instruction to those within their reach, whom they have been taught to regard as spiritual guides; one says, Lo! here; and another, Lo! there; so discordant are the opinions expressed, and so contradictory the statements given them, that instead of removing their doubts and perplexities, the remedies applied tend only to aggravate the disease. Hence some have sought for relief from the terrors of an awakened conscience, in scepticism; others have taken refuge in that scheme of religion which appears best calculated to foster the pride of man, most congenial to his inclinations; to those sentiments which are the natural product of depraved human nature, and consequently desire no self-denial in their indulgence. Now the only sure remedy for these evils, is religious instruction, commencing at an early period, and regularly afforded through the successive stages of life. This sentiment we are willing to submit to the test of actual experiment. Select any congregation that has been blest with the labors of a faithful minister of the gospel

whose circumstances have permitted him to give himself, wholly, to the discharge of pastoral duties; compare the people of his charge, with an equal number in any other part of the state, where gospel privileges have not been statedly enjoyed; and what will be the result of such a comparison? The conviction will be produced, that human depravity in every visible form, which it assumes, is discountenanced and checked; and virtue and human happiness promoted, in exact proportion to the means employed for those purposes; and that the faithful preaching of the gospel, with the other means which a minister of the gospel is expected to employ, are made effectual to convince, to reform, and to save sinners; and by their indirect influence, to raise the standard of morals, to restrain the lawless passions, and to diminish the number and the enormity of criminal actions. Our politicians, aware of the truth of these remarks, hesitate not to say, that our republican government owes its existence to the virtue and intelligence, but especially to the virtue of the citizens. In this opinion we heartily concur with them, but in reference to the best means to be employed, for the promotion of virtue and happiness amongst men, we should probably be, not quite so unanimous. They can threaten those who break the laws with fines and forfeitures; they can point to the prison or the penitentiary house; but is there nothing further necessary? is every man to be deemed a good citizen, and sufficiently virtuous, who escapes the penalties of human laws? Are there no villains undetected? No secret crimes committed? Is the property of every citizen entirely safe, unguarded, and unlocked? Is his person every where safe from assault, and his reputation never assailed by the tongue of the slanderer? Nay, are there not a thousand crimes perpetrated daily, in defiance of all human laws, which are ruinous to their perpetrators, destructive of public tranquility, unfit to be named, and in proportion to the extent of their prevalence, sapping the very foundation of the free and happy government of our favored country? And O! name it not in Gath; are not the very men who are authorised to enact our laws, with those who are entrusted with their execution, sometimes found amongst the first to set the penalties of the laws at defiance, while they live in disobedience to their precepts? And are these the persons who proclaim, that the virtue of the citizens is the pillar of our safety, and that if this should totter the whole edifice must sink in ruin? While we subscribe to their doctrine we are astonished at their inconsistency, and despair of learning from them any salutary lesson either respecting the

nature of virtue, or the best means of promoting it. Whilst Legislators and Philosophers are consulted in vain,

“ The Pulpit

Must stand acknowledged while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support and ornament of virtue's cause.”

So sung one of the sweetest of the British Bards ; and his sentiments are not less true, because clothed in the dress of poetry. It is not the province of human wisdom to devise, nor of limited power to execute a plan adequate to the removal of human depravity, and to the restoration of man to the forfeited favor of his Creator. He who knew the nature and wide extent of our moral disease, has manifested his unsearchable wisdom, in devising an all-sufficient remedy, and has ordained that a preached gospel shall be the principle and most effectual means of its application, “ When in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased him by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed.” To the believer the gospel is the power of God and the wisdom of God to salvation, and at the same time it is instrumental in bringing the sinner to the exercise of that faith whereby he obtains a personal interest in all its promised blessings. If then virtue is the basis of all our civil institutions ; the cement of society—the *one thing needful* to the perpetuity of human happiness under every form of civil government, *but especially in a Republic* ; it will follow, that every man who is a friend to his country, if he be well informed on this subject, will encourage and promote the preaching of the gospel, as far as his ability and influence will admit. He will not view the herald of salvation, in the light of a *Pauper*, who might present a claim on his charity amongst other indigent men, but as the messenger of God, as one entitled to his highest esteem, for his work's sake, and to such a portion of the necessities and comforts of life, as may preserve him from anxious care, and permit him to devote himself wholly to the business of his holy calling : to the noble employment of saving souls, by the means which the Saviour of the world has instituted. Shall the lowest officer employed by your government receive a reward for his services ? Shall your door-keeper live by his office ? Are you forbidden “ to muzzle your ox that treadeth out your corn ?” And shall the man who comes in his Master's name, and with his message of mercy to hush a jaring world to peace ; shall he not live by his office ? Is it enough to say to him who announces glad tidings of joy to all people, “ Be thou warmed and filled ?”

You shudder at the idea of persecution: and the perusal of the historic page which is stained with the blood of the martyrs, fills you with horror. You can scarcely think it credible that men could degenerate into such monsters of cruelty, as many of the ancient enemies of the church, and especially of the clergy, are said to have been. The tribute of merited respect will be rendered to all who sympathize with suffering humanity. The difference, however between ancient persecutors of the church of God, and many of the present day who abhor the name of persecutors, is, perhaps not quite so great as some would suppose. Formerly, the opposers of religion strove to free the world of its influence by fire and sword. Its ministers were spoiled of their goods, their bodies were mutilated and confined in loathsome dungeons, or consumed by fire. The world is now more enlightened and more humane: they are permitted to die a natural death. Ancient martyrs took joyfully the spoiling their goods; and their sufferings though severe were generally of short duration: by a refinement in cruelty, some who were considered *ringleaders* in heresy, were doomed to linger out a miserable life, that their tortures might be prolonged: but generally the fire or the axe gave them speedy relief from their anguish, and as speedy an admittance into the joy of the Lord. Were it not for the precious assurance that God will be with his servants always until the end of the world, did they rely on the charity, not to say the justice, of those amongst whom they labor; actual persecution would not much increase their sufferings, in the prospect of poverty and want, and contracted usefulness through life.

The treatment received by the ministers of Jesus Christ, whether friendly or the reverse, is considered by him as his own personal concernment; and as such, will be rewarded or punished in the day of retribution. A cup of water given to a disciple will then receive its reward. And did he not say to his disciples, "He that rejecteth you, rejecteth me, and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me?" And again, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me?" This language must mean something; be persuaded to learn its import before the arrival of that period, when, it is feared, too many of the preachers of the gospel will be constrained to point to the inadequate support received from their hearers, as the reason why they shall be found to have done so little, in so good a cause.

It certainly cannot be thought unreasonable to request every hearer of the gospel, to ask himself whether he has

done all that he could reasonably have been expected to do, for the support of an institution, whose object is, to promote virtue and peace and good will among men in this world, and to prepare them for happiness, perfect and eternal, in the world to come.

In prosecuting an inquiry of this nature, keeping in view what it must have cost your pastor to acquire the qualifications necessary in the station in which you have placed him; and what his circumstances must be, that he may fully discharge his pastoral duties: it must be recollected, that his circumstances should enable him to satisfy other claims, besides those growing out of his pastoral relation.

A preacher, according to the scriptures, must be "*given to hospitality.*" His circumstances therefore should be such as would permit the exercise of hospitality, without inconvenience to himself, or his family. He ought to have something to spare for the comfortable accommodation of friends, or of strangers, who may be induced either by business or friendship to call at his habitation.

Further in all charitable designs, especially such as have a bearing on the interests of the church of Jesus Christ, ministers of the gospel are expected to set an example of liberality. If your pastor possess the spirit of his station, he will cordially advocate the numerous benevolent institutions lately brought into operation, which are the honor of the present age. Shall he aid those institutions in *word only*? Would you have him to say, to the missionary; I pray for your success, and hope that you will receive food and raiment? To the Bible Society may you prosper in your efforts to circulate the volume of inspiration, the words of eternal life, through every region where sinners dwell; and after the expression of those ardent wishes must he incur the suspicion of insincerity by adding, "I am sorry that I can only give you my good wishes, as an evidence of my concern for your success? How must a faithful minister of the gospel feel, whose circumstances, not only prevent him from affording any efficient aid to institutions devoted to the glory of God, and the good of mankind; but will certainly induce many to enroll his name in the catalogue of those "who say and do not?" Shall your pastor, to whom you promise all reasonable "support and encouragement," be placed in circumstances so humiliating, when the contribution of a few cents from each member of his congregation, would probably free him from pecuniary embarrassment; and induce him to regard with redoubled zeal, the interests of a people, so careful to guard his reputation, and advance his comfort?

But when we contend that "they who are taught in the word, should contribute to him that teacheth, in all good things, we are sometimes reminded, that "wealth is a dangerous thing to the clergy, and that the most zealous and successful laborers in the Lord's vineyard, have been generally found amongst those, who were the least encumbered with the riches of this world." We are fully apprized of the truth of these assertions, and hope, that when we say, that they who preach the gospel should *live* by the gospel, we shall not be thought advocates for what is either unreasonable or dangerous.

Wealth has indeed proved to be prejudicial to the clergy in many instances; and many others besides clergymen, who "would be rich, have fallen into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." But when we say that preachers should live, we do not say that they should be *rich*. What we desire, is an exemption from worldly cares and avocations. And is property so dangerous to a preacher, that you are afraid to trust him with that portion to which he has a claim founded on scripture and reason? Are you afraid to trust your pastor with the possession of what belongs to him? Would you rather disobey the command of God, than pay a just debt, lest the man, to whom it is to be paid, should make an imprudent use of the sum received. This is a singular species of benevolence. Nay, if you have so little confidence in the prudence and integrity of your pastor; if you dare not give him what is due to him, and what he must have, to enable him to serve you; if you cannot retain him in your service, without oppressing him, and injuring your own souls, dismiss him immediately; he may possibly find elsewhere a people who will neither be afraid, nor unwilling, to afford him a reasonable compensation for his pastoral labors.

In matters of *charity*, it is proper to anticipate the consequences which will probably result from our charitable donations; and to inquire, what use, will probably be made of the sum charitably given; and to limit or enlarge that sum, as the prospect may be favorable or the reverse: but considerations of this kind, are not admissible in the payment of our just debts. We cancel our bond when the day of payment arrives, even when we have every reason to apprehend that the sum advanced will encourage the extravagance or intemperance of the man to whom it is paid; and probably be instrumental to his ruin. This is his concern; it is ours to comply with our engagements.

But why is it, that ministers of the gospel are thought to be in greater danger from the possession of the comforts of life, than other men? Is it because they have been so generally accustomed to poverty, that, it is feared a sudden elevation to circumstances of ease and plenty, would render them vain. Let an experiment then be made with all necessary caution? Add to their income a little—and again a little, as they shall be found able to *bear* kind treatment. Commencing with a salary of one or two hundred dollars, you may rise several grades before you will rival the annual income of the bishop of Durham. Give your pastor a sufficient support, and then if he profusely waste what you have given him; or if, having received *the fleece*, he neglects to feed the flock; you may justly bring an accusation against him, and without much trouble have him dismissed from his pastoral charge, to make room for a better man.

But there are found, even amongst the ministers of the gospel, a few who are in affluent circumstances. What course is to be taken in reference to them? Some reply unhesitatingly, *they ought to receive nothing*. But how will they reconcile this sentiment with the decisions of the word of God? Will they venture to add a clause to our text to prevent its application to preachers in comfortable circumstances? Shall we read, *Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel; unless they can live in some other way?* Must we affirm that the laborer is worthy of his reward, and ought to receive it, *only* when it is found that he cannot live without it? If any man thus reply against God; to God let him answer it.

In giving alms to the poor, their necessities may be regarded as the measure of your bounty; but the claim of your pastor is of a different class. He asks for *justice*, not charity. He has a right to expect that his services will be justly appreciated, and remunerated according to the principles by which men of every other class are regulated in serving one another. When your family-physician presents his bill; you do not tell him, that if he were not rich, the amount should be paid; but as he can live without it, you can not bring yourself to believe that he ought to receive it. The Lawyer that pleads your cause; the mechanic whom you have employed, the hireling who cultivates your fields, are rewarded for their labors, whether they are rich or poor, and why should the man *who serves* you in the gospel be expected to serve you gratuitously? Is it, because he is the only person whose claims are not expected to be prosecuted before a court of equity? We should

be sorry to find a minister of the gospel seeking a redress of pecuniary wrongs in this way; but if Jesus Christ will judge the world according to the word which he has spoken; and if his word assures us that it is his will that men should be saved through the instrumentality of his word, preached to them, by men of like passions with themselves; and that they who are thus taught should contribute to those who teach, in all good things, what will become of the person who disregards all this information?—Who rejects the offers of salvation himself, and contributes to the ruin of others by withholding his just proportion of those means, without which the gospel cannot be preached—sinners saved—nor the kingdom of Jesus Christ advanced in the world? Be assured, that they who neither enter into this kingdom themselves, nor contribute their aid to bring other aliens into it, shall not receive the reward of faithful servants in the day of retribution. “They who know their master’s will and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

MY BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY.—

If I suspected that the desire of gain had been your principle inducement to undertake the sacred office, I should despair of being able to suggest any thing for your comfort or encouragement.

Of all men, *they* are to be considered the most despicable, who, are led by mercenary motives to preach an unknown Saviour; who enter into the priest’s office for a piece of bread. You counted the cost at the commencement of your career; and to this hour, “no strange thing has happened to you.” “You have been as unknown and yet well known, as dying, and behold you live; as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” We hazard nothing therefore, when we say before this congregation, that you are now more firmly resolved, than at any former period, to spend and to be spent, in the cause of Jesus Christ—to continue steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor shall not be in vain. Brethren! The signs of the times speak some encouragement. Theological Seminaries are springing up and multiplying in our country in quick succession: young men of piety and promising talents are hastening to those schools of the prophets, where, in addition to their theological attainments, many of them become fired with an ardent zeal to publish the tidings of salvation to the destitute throughout the world. From the

liberality with which many of those Seminaries have been endowed; and the liberal patronage extended to young men who needed aid; we are led to acknowledge the hand of God in these dispensations of his providence. And may we not conclude that He is not training this host of zealous preachers for nought? That the hand that feeds and clothes them while they are pursuing their preparatory studies, will direct them to the scenes of their future labors, and open the hearts and hands of those to whom they shall labor, to administer liberally to their support and comfort? May we not hope, that the waste places of our land, will in due time be enclosed and cultivated? that the desert shall bud and blossom as the rose, and every solitary place be made glad. Yes! we will indulge this hope. Many are now running to and fro; knowledge is increasing, and God in the dispensations of his providence appears to be preparing the way for the general diffusion of revealed truth. Means are now in operation evidently suited to usher in the blissful period, foretold by holy men of God, who were moved by the spirit of prophecy, and who hailed with rapturous delight, the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ. May the Lord hasten it in his time! And should we not live to witness the full triumphs of the Prince of peace, may we live as those who wait for his approach when called for; may we be found watching, and may his voice bid us welcome to the place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. AMEN.

DUTIES OF ELDERS.

Messrs Editors,—In pursuing the labors to which I am called, I have been made acquainted with several Elders of the Presbyterian Church, who, from the circumstances in which they were placed, could know but little about its government and discipline. They had lived, from their infancy, in neighborhoods, where, till recently, there was no church. They had enjoyed few, or perhaps no opportunities of being acquainted with what we term *Presbyterianism*. At length a missionary came to their immediate neighborhood and preached the gospel, and the Lord gave that gospel power over the hearts of a few, who were converted, collected together and organized into a church of Christ. A session was appointed, to whose hands the government of this church was committed.—A worthy member and elder in a church, collected in this way, in one of the former waste places in Vir.