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“I saw another messenger flying through the midst of heaven, having everlasting good news to proclaim to the inhabitants of the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people; saying with a loud voice—Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgments is come; and worship him who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and the fountains of water” (John.)



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THE LAW OF CHRIST RESPECTING THE SUPPORT OF THE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL;

WITH SCRIPTURAL RULES FOR PASTORS AND TEACHERS IN HIS CHURCH.

[The Essay which we now reprint, as worthy a place in our pages, has been written by one who signs himself "A Poor Brother," but who has evidently examined the subject in all its bearings, with a disposition to receive the truth, and nothing but the truth. Though not seeing evidence for the truth of all that is stated, we commend it to the attention of our readers.] Ed.

OUR Lord, towards the close of His ministry, instructed His disciples into the nature of His future kingdom. He directed them in the discharge of their duties to Him, and in carrying out His great design, in travelling and proclaiming His word, to provide a *purse* to sustain them in their journeys in foreign lands; a *scrip* for food necessary on their passage; and a sword, as the means of self-support, self-preservation, and self-defence,* (Luke xxii. 35-36.) From this instruction Paul declared it a law, that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel: (1 Cor. ix. 14.) He supported this equitable law, by the natural reward of the husbandman; the labouring ox; and of the soldier warfare: (2 Tim. ii. 4.)

When this apostle in his travels reached *Miletus*, he sent to *Ephesus* for the resident or presiding Elders, or Bishops, (these names of office are used in the Scriptures to express the same class of persons) of the Christian church in that city. His previous and present addresses included all the council of God, and commands of Christ (Acts xx. 27,) relative to the Elders and their duties in the new community.

* The true design of the "sword" spoken of in the passage referred to, is, as appears to us, not comprehended by the writer. The Lord said unto his disciples, "When I sent you forth as lambs among wolves, without purse, or scrip, or shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, nothing." But now, said he, "He that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one, &c. And they said unto him; Lord, behold here are two swords. And Jesus said unto them, it is enough." Yes, indeed, two swords were enough, not for the twelve, nor for the purpose of self-defence, but to show, notwithstanding the invariable character of the Saviour's teaching, the uncorrected disposition of at least two of his disciples. So Judas took one sword, and Peter the other; and with them, the use of such swords ought for ever to have ceased in the kingdom of Christ (2 Cor. x. 8-6.)—Ed.

In closing his important charge, he alludes to his labours among them saying: *He had worked with his own hands for his daily bread*: stating at the same time, as a law for them—*That it was their duty, as resident Elders, or Overseers, so to labour as he had done, that they might have the means of supporting the poor, the weak, or needy brethren among them*: (Acts xx. 34-35.)

These laws appear to be in conflict. *The preacher is to live of the gospel*; the Elders, or resident ministers at Ephesus, were required, as part of the council of God, to *work with their hands for their livelihood, and to help to support the infirm in the church*.

The word we render *preach*, in a scriptural sense, imports strictly a public address, or proclamation, such as is made to unconverted men. It is to announce good tidings as a public crier: (Jonah iii. 3rd.) "The word *Εὐαγγελίζομενοι*, is never applied to any other, than to preachers by function:"—*Lightfoot in Townsend's Harm*, (Acts viii. 1.)—*Parkhurst*. Proclaimers of the gospel to the unconverted, *Preachers, Missionaries, Evangelists, or Itinerants*, were distinct from *Teachers, Elders, or Overseers*. *Preaching* is a general proclamation: (Pro. viii. 1-4.) The word *teach* means, familiar instruction to professed disciples or scholars; it is the work of a schoolmaster (Luke xi. 1;) and is applied to particular persons: (John viii. 28.) These meanings occur in the words of Christ: (Mat. xxviii. 19-20.) Here the disciples are commanded to *preach* to all nations, but to *teach* those who became disciples. By neglecting the different imports of these words, mistakes have ensued, and a perversion of the order of Christ.

OBSERVATION I.—The commission of our Lord in Luke xxii. 35-36, Mat. xxviii. 19-20, fully authorized all disciples to proclaim, or preach HIM to all men, as the Messiah and Saviour of all

who trust in Him and obey Him. For their travels they were to furnish themselves, or the deputizing churches were to supply them with needful provisions. These travelling brethren were to receive nothing from their heathen hearers: (3 John 7.) Those employed in services in Pagan countries, were to be honourably and comfortably sustained in their work, as a *soldier during warfare, and as an ox while at labour*. "Next to the apostles were the Evangelists." *Εὐαγγελιστῶν* originally denoted nothing else than the whole announcement of the salvation granted through Christ to men: * * * "The itinerant, or evangelist, had his wants as a missionary relieved"—*Neander*. When the warfare was over, the ox freed from his labour, or the itinerant preacher finished his mission, each retires to his natural home and employ. The servants of Christ never thought of burdening the church, if well, when their mission ended. They naturally returned to their avocation and labour, to procure legitimate support: (Acts xiv. 26-28.) If enfeebled, the servant received support from the funds of the church. The soldier of that day had no retiring pension, but returned to work or beg.

In teaching their *disciples*, the apostles *never allude to the support of resident teachers*. Paul, during his long stay among the Corinthians, though he needed, never instructed them in any such duty: (Acts xviii. 3-11.) Agreeably to the divine law, (Acts xx. 35) while *residing* at Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, &c., he laboured for his bread: (1 Cor. iv. 1-2,) which rule regulated him in every place: (Acts xviii. 3, 1 Cor. iv. 17, 2 Cor. xii. 18, 2 Thes. iii. 7-10.) The Corinthians learned nothing of Paul about a paid resident ministry, and consequently they never contributed to his support while labouring among them (Acts xviii. 11.) When false teachers came among them and received pay, Paul terms the acknowledgment *devouring of them, taking of them*, and condemns the whole (2 Cor. xi. 20.) The church at Corinth was a parent institute to the churches raised in the provinces of Greece and Macedonia. The city stood on an isthmus of the same name, uniting the two kingdoms of Achia and Macedonia; it was well situated for missionary purposes. About five years after, Paul charges the

Corinthians with neglect in not contributing to his necessary wants. Not while a resident minister among them, but while he was present in their provinces and proclaiming the good tidings to the heathen in Macedonia (Phil. iv. 15.) Thus Paul received support from churches at a distance, (whose contributions should have been directed nearer home; but sending them to Corinth was a robbery of the nearer districts) while labouring as a missionary in the neighbourhood of Corinth.

The apostle informed the Corinthians, *it was their duty* to support itinerant preachers (1 Cor. ix. 7.) The omission at first was not from poverty or penuriousness, since Paul commends their cheerful liberality, so soon as the needy condition of the brethren was made known (2 Cor. viii. 6-8.) The apostle could have received support from the brethren with perfect propriety as an evangelist, but the Corinthians were ignorant of this duty, and Paul, both as a resident and itinerant, studiously kept his indigence from his brethren.

II.—However varied the names of offices filled by the first servants of our Lord may be, in the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, they are in the commission of Christ, called *preachers* and *teachers* (Mat. xxviii. 19-20.) These two classes of servants are named by Paul to Timothy, as requisite to manage all spiritual affairs in the house of God. No more are specified or required as teachers by the Holy Spirit.

III.—It does not follow, because we have in the Epistles many names of office, that one person was appointed to each office. The same person could, and did, fill different offices in the church, and would during his discharge of certain duties, from the ductility of the Greek language, be called by his official name. Paul was an *Apostle*, a *Preacher*, *Teacher*, *Elder*, *Presbyter*, &c., but when the specified duty appointed by the church was done, the official name was dropped.

IV.—The parent church, or apostolic institute, *knew nothing of a distinct order of priesthood*. The orders or classes of clergy and laity were known to Jews, Pagans, and Druids. Among the followers of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, such distinction is *forbidden*. No *Pope*, no *King*, no *Rabbi*, *Master*, *Father*, *Doctor*, *Reverend*, or *Head*, was

ever to be admitted into the church of Christ. All Gentile distinction of names, foppery of garb and dress, with worldly honour, is most positively prohibited by the Lord (Mat. xxiii. 8-11, xx. 25-26, James iii. 1.) *Beza in loco.* Pagan orders, distinctions, honours, and rewards, came into the professing community with stipendiary ministers, under the patronage of Constantine. If all Pagan orders and customs were laid aside among Nonconformists, the primitive and beautiful simplicity of the gospel, the order and brotherhood of God's house, would be reinstated in the churches bearing the Saviour's name. First ways would follow first principles. If the order of priesthood were set aside, *the believing brethren would study the Scriptures for themselves*—would derive their knowledge from the pure fountain; they would have the word dwell in them richly; and would be able and eligible to admonish one another, and exhort one another, as commanded by all inspired writers (Col. iii. 16, Heb. iii. 13, x. 35.)

V.—All the brethren in the primitive churches possessed useful gifts (Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) The fraternity were required to exercise their spiritual gifts *for the edification of the body, THE CHURCH* (1 Cor. xiv. 31-39, xii. 26-29.) And further, so to exercise them, *FOR THE PERFECTING THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, for the edification of the body of Christ unto the edifying itself in love* (Eph. iv. 12-29.) All the brethren in the church were privileged speakers, prophets, exhorters, teachers, &c., or in the modern sense of the word *preachers*. Under this view of the word, each preacher would be equally entitled to pecuniary support, *if preachers of the gospel are to live*, or be supported by the hearers *of the gospel*. If, then, all the male members were ministerial brethren in the primitive churches, (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) who supplied the funds for the payment or support of this body of preaching brethren? The rule of Paul (1 Cor. ix. 14) cannot be *a positive law* for the support of all employed in the ministry. It would require the females to support all the male teachers! It was not practicable in those churches formed by the apostles, where all were employed in the church. All ministers cannot be preachers in a scriptural sense of the

word. A payment of all ministers would have created a strong incentive to grasp at the office, as was seen afterwards, and would have raised a formidable objection to Christianity among Pagan criminators. But no such accusation is on record. It is an historical fact, that the ministers of the churches were men who worked for their bread; they were men of no learning (*Dr. Haweis' Christ Church—Gibbon—Nander.*) All the members were eligible to speak in the church, and to attend the ordinances (*Tertullian.*) Heathen writers have recorded the trades of Christian teachers; and Gibbon has dilated on their inspiration, their declamations, and their ignorance. By these foolish things, in the world's estimation, the Lord vanquished the Pagan idols, and overcame their long-cherished superstitions.

VI.—The apostles, in establishing the divine order of the churches of Christ, set apart in each church *A PLURALITY OF ELDERS* (Acts xiv. 23.) This proceeding was a rule or model for all after brethren in raising institutes for the Lord. Titus (i. 5) was enjoined to follow this order. This double ministry received its appointment from the Lord. He invariably sent forth His servants in pairs (Mark vi. 7, Luke x. 1.) His apostles and churches followed His order, and in their deputations to distant communities, always sent two brethren (Acts xiii. 2, xiv. 12, xv. 39-40.) The plural Eldership in every church, and the *two witnesses* of Christ, appear to distinguish the Saviour's cause through the gospel period (Rev. xi. 1-4.) But these elders, or resident teachers, in each church, could not be supported out of the funds of a society composed chiefly of the poor. The enlargement of the community depended chiefly on the labours of the Evangelists. The support of these laborers during their travels, the wants of the sick, the widows, the poor, the aids to the persecuted, or brethren in prison or captivity, would exhaust the funds of the church, without paying a number of resident Elders. Missionaries must have been sustained, but resident teachers worked, *as a rule*, with their own hands for their own support.

VII.—The contributions made weekly by the churches, were not designed for ministers, but for *general purposes*.

The church at Corinth, with others, were required to raise a weekly fund for the saints. Out of this fund all needy saints, ministers, widows, and the afflicted saints would be equally supplied. The apostles, evangelists, missionaries, itinerants, and deputations, would be supported out of the funds, during their mission duties in the cause of Christ. Elders, or resident teachers, *had no preference to relief* above their needy brethren. The great objects of the fund were to relieve the indigent of the church (Gal. ii. 10,) and supply the wants of active laborers in the field (Acts iv. 35, ii. 45, vi. 1.) An equality of earthly comforts was to distinguish the members in the church of Christ (2 Cor. viii. 13-15,) as was seen in the Lord's provision for Israel in the wilderness. The divine, beautiful, and care-proof benevolence of our Heavenly Friend, cannot be realized by the poor, where the funds are devoted to a paid eldership. The modern order has involved the teachers of the gospel in the rebuke of the Lord to the priests and prophets of old (Mic. iii. 11, Hos. iv. 8, Eze. xxxiv. 8-10, Isaiah x. 2, Jer. xii. 10.)

The poor believing brethren in the first churches, operatives, mechanics, &c., knew that they had no prospect of support, but from daily labor. In several churches, there were *resident* teachers, disposed to neglect their daily manual labour for the instruction of others (1 Tim. i. 7, vi. 3-5-8, 2 Tim. ii. 17, iii. 6.) These officious and lucre-loving teachers, under covert of instructing disciples, claimed the benevolence of the church (Tit. i. 11, 2 Cor. xi. 20.) The motive and conduct are alike condemned. To correct this state of things in all the churches, and among all the brethren, teachers, and members (for the injunction is given in reference to all) Paul commands all believers, says *Augustin*, to provide things honest in the sight of all men (Rom. xii. 17, 2 Cor. viii. 21.) *If any man* (teacher or member) *provide not for his own * * he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an Infidel* (1 Tim. v. 8.) *Let our* (teaching) *brethren also learn to profess honest trades* (Tit. iii. 14.)—*Marg.* (Only teachers would require such a behest.) *That ye do your own business, to work with your own hands as we commanded you* (Thes.

1 iv. 11, ii. 9, Acts xx. 35.) *If any man* (teacher or member) *will not work, neither shall he eat the bread of the church* (2 Thes. iii. 10-12.)

These injunctions were laid before the apostolic churches, when no separate order of ministers existed, and they are of equal force upon every brother without distinction. These commands have a direct reference to ministers, as explained by Augustin of Hippo.

VIII. — The Lord himself set the example of preaching to the poor *free of charge*, which proceeding he gave as one proof of his divine mission, and of the scriptural character of his ministry (Mat. xi. 5.) It was Paul's glory to follow the divine example, and not make the gospel chargeable to his auditory (1 Cor. ix. 18.) He enjoins all believers and teachers to follow him, as he followed Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1,) which was binding (2 Thes. iii. 9,) supported as it is with a positive law (Acts xx. 35.) In the places where he resided, *He ate no man's bread for naught* (2 Thes. iii. 7-10.) The same line of conduct was pursued by *Sylvanus, Timothy, Barnabas, Silas, Titus*, and regulated *Peter* and *John*. Ye elders, bishops, or teachers, *take the oversight of the flock, but not for filthy lucre* (1 Peter v. 14, 3 John 7.)

The conduct of Paul and the other servants of the Lord, proves the injunction in 1 Cor. ix. 14 to be *not* a positive law for churches towards their elders, or the first servants of Christ would not have so studiously violated it by manual employment. The apostles, their fellow laborers, and perhaps their successors, were supported by the work of their hands, and partly by the contributions of the faithful when in need. This policy continued for centuries. The funds of the church of Rome in 250, supplied the wants of *fifteen hundred indigent persons* (Gibbon, c. xv.) This was before protection or provision was made by the state. With such poverty among members, the oppressive wants among the indigent, a paid ministry was out of the question (*Dr. Henri's* Eng. B. i. c. 3, *Dr. Hawies' Ch. His.*, Neander i. 275.)

The rewards or stipends received by false teachers, were declared to be making merchandize of the saints (2 Peter ii. 13.) It was devouring their

property; it was taking away their substance (2 Cor. xi. 20.)—*Doddridge*. False teachers were distinguished by this artifice (Titus i. 11.) Men of this forbidden course make godliness a gain (1 Tim. vi. 5.) As of old, they make a pecuniary advantage of the cause of God (Zec. xi. 5,) taking a reward for every spiritual service, (Mic. iii. 11, Mal. i. 10,) while the real servants of God would be contented with food and raiment (1 Tim. vi. 6-8, Heb. xiii. 5, Phil. iv. 11-12.)

Paul energetically commands Timothy to flee from the temptation (1 Tim. vi. 10-11.) He declared to the Gentiles that men of mercenary minds would make their way into the church as wolves, and would devour the flock (Acts xx. 28.) To prevent which evil, and guard the community against avaricious teachers, he commands the elders to be men of industrious habits, to work with their own hands, and sustain the needy.

The commercial system of paid elders in churches is anti-christian, whether it be practiced among Papists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Nonconformists. The fruits are seen, as equally vicious in all parties, in inequality of *places, pensions, powers, &c.* It leads to worldly distinction and greatness. It extinguishes vital godliness, as in the churches of Rome, Greece, Germany, and expiring England.

IX.—History supports this view of the order of the first Christian churches. There was NO SEPARATE ORDER OF THE CLERGY, nor of episcopacy, or the rule of diocesan bishops, in the first ages of Christianity. All were equal and independent.

“All Christians, originally, in virtue of their universal priesthood, were capable of performing sacred services” (*Neander*, His. i. 97-274.) Independency and equality formed the basis of the internal constitution of the church. The natural abilities of each were poured forth in the assembly of the faithful (*Gibbon*, c. xv.)

When the ministers of religion assembled at ELVIRA, Spain, (A.D. 305) they were very poor. They had no support but from trade or charity. The officers had no way of obtaining bread but by traffic, visiting provinces as pedlars, or keeping a stall at a fair. In the course of trade their characters

were often reproached. The meeting of ministers at Elvira discouraged those trading visits, and requested ministers to send their sons and servants, to do their business for them (*Fleury*, Ecc. Hist. v. i. b. 9. § 14.)

For nearly three centuries the churches remained independent. They were served by ministers who managed a trade for a livelihood. They were men destitute of classical and literal attainments. By these plain, honest men, Christianity was successfully carried through the Roman empire. By these humble instruments, for such God chooses to employ, the Pagan superstition was overthrown. Through this triumphant period the churches and missionaries were maintained by the voluntary contributions of the brethren (*Gibbon—Neander*.)

X.—After CONSTANTINE had been instructed in the Christian polity of *Hosius* of Carlova, and had subjugated Italy, A.D. 313, he paid great respect to *Milchiades*, the elder of the church of Rome. The ministers of the Roman church party, became the object of his veneration (*Un. Hist.*) By rescript to the proconsul, *Anulius*, of Africa, April, 313, Constantine proposed to restore all the property to the catholic church, which had been confiscated on account of religion, in the late persecution. He also proposed to FREE ALL ministers in the Romish persuasion from trade or secular employment, that each might devote himself entirely to the spiritual services of the Lord. To encourage clerks, (as they were called) *i. e.* ministers, to devote their time to God, the Emperor sent to his officers in Africa £20,000, to be given to ministers for their support. He further ordered any additional sum to be paid out of his exchequer for the same object (*Un. Hist. Gibbon, Fleury*.) It is said, that *Hosius* planned the distribution. About six hundred pounds were allowed to a bishop, as a yearly stipend, besides an exemption from the toils, taxes, troubles, and trials of other citizens. All property by way of gifts or legacies, to the church or clergy, was secured by edict for spiritual uses. Here was a temptation to poor men, tradesmen, leather-sellers, travelling brokers, cobblers, and pedlars; men, many of whom the world was not worthy. Their calling was no disgrace

to them, it was their honour and their Lord's appointment. God makes choice of such to confound and abase the self-inflated. The policy and aim of modern writers, have been to dignify these ministers with great titles, before they left the sawpit, the loom, the lapstone, their packs, or their trade stalls. Yes, they are said to be *bishops*, by modern bishops, to cover their own usurpations and self-inflated pomp. They were bishop of the lapstone, and bishop huckster, &c., but nothing above these callings.

Here is the fountain of evil and the spring-head of THE MAN OF SIN. The clerks or ministers became now a distinct class, and a stipendiary order of men. They rose into bishops, archbishops, and state agents; under the shadow of law they could enforce their authority. The support promised to every self-devoting man, awakened much activity, and multitudes became teachers and preachers, that were ill qualified for the vocation. From the proposed advantages, thousands rushed into the catholic church. Perhaps, says Gibbon, these mercenary teachers exceeded in numbers the legions of the empire. For the support of *these schools of self-consecrated men*, in the new clergy, the citizens were bound down with taxes and double duties, arising from the relief of the spiritual order from any secular toil, tax, or office. The evil soon became apparent, and the burdened citizens complained so loudly as to awaken imperial attention. The edict of immunities was repealed, and a fixed number of bishops stipended. For the Eastern and Western Empires, *eighteen hundred bishops* were to supply the moral wants of the Roman world: (Id.) The change was serious, *Gregory Nazianzen* pathetically laments, that heaven, by the discord of bishops, was turned into chaos, yea, into hell itself: (Id.)

XI.—For a time the empire was divided by the laws of six sovereigns, and uncertainty existed as to the future. The death of the tolerant Emperor would, perhaps, annul all present advantages. Ministers could not see the wisdom of depending wholly on edicts; especially when the first promised boon had been recalled and limited to 1800 officers. Teachers transferred their business to their sons or servants, and so secured themselves against adverse

measures. When the empire became united under Constantine, this Emperor, under the advice of Hosius, called a meeting of ministers at NICE, 19th Ju. 325. Many of the clerks (ministers) that attended, were very shabbily clothed. They could not have obeyed, had not the Emperor met their poverty, by sending money and means for their transit (*Fluery*.) In this assembly, Constantine became the bishop and head of all the churches (*Priestly*.) The transfer of the professing community to an earthly head and sovereign, was a direct infringement of the prerogative of Christ. The might and power thus engaged for the church, are in opposition to the word (Zec. iv. 6.) This combined force, instead of furthering the institute of Jesus, has directed all its machinations for its annihilation. If ever Satan had a combination of powers on earth, where his councillors united, (called *the Gates of Hell*) to obstruct the truth, and devise methods for the ruin of the cause of Christ, those places and councils have been STATE CHURCHES. The professing Roman church underwent at this time an external change, and in a little time after, an internal and radical change in all its elements. Ministers experienced from the fickleness of Emperors, and the rage of religious rivals, that they who depended on temporal callings made a wise choice, as the alternate edicts of Catholic and Arian sovereigns, with the Pagan laws of Julian, rendered the spiritual claims and support of teachers more uncertain than any worldly advocations.

XII.—The spiritual gifts possessed by the first and succeeding disciples, qualified the whole church to be a spiritual priesthood (Rom. xii. 1, 1 Peter ii. 9.) "We find among the brethren," says *Neander*, "no individual distinguished among the rest, who presided as *primus inter pares*," (first among his equals.) "The members, as prophets, without distinction of age, or sex, or abilities, poured forth the effusions of the Spirit in the assembly of the faithful (*Gibbon*.) By this foolishness of preaching and teaching, God subdued the empire of darkness and silenced the Pagan oracles. The change effected by human policy has healed the Pagan wound, and restored the kingdom to Satan. It has a

literary efficient pretorian agency, with GATES endowed and guarded, which has obstructed freedom, and is antagonistic to the reign of grace and truth.

The first communities enjoyed independent and self-sustaining means for existence, enlargement, and continuance. The Emperor, under Hosius—Balak advised by Balaam—(Rev. ii. 14) proposed a union of all subjects, and Constantine became the head and patron of this *Baal peor-Israel* community. The sovereign was *Pontifex Maximus* of the Pagan altar; *Bishop* of the imperial church; and *King* of the Roman world. Hence his triple crown. Here spiritual fornication was committed, and a stumbling block was placed before God's Israel. Many fell into Hosius's plan of uniting the Pagan inhabitants with the professing community. The church became carnal and worldly, as *Cæsar's* church, with a Cæsar as head and lawgiver, whose providence was to rule its future affairs.

XIII.—When Constantine ordered the restoration of confiscated property to the churches in communion with the Roman community, the Donatists, a large body of dissidents in Africa, not supposing the emperor had any preference for parties, sought the recovery of their lost churches and cemeteries. A previous dispute with the Carthaginian minister had been unfavourably represented to the sovereign, and the Donatists, to right themselves with their monarch, sent a memorial to Constantine. In answer, they were informed, the terms of future liberty and peace were, conformity and worship with the Romans. To the everlasting honour of the Donatists, they refused all terms of conformity: *Neander*. By this nonconformity truth remained unfettered, the ordinances unsophisticated, worship unmannaced, and the churches were preserved in their allegiance to Christ: CLAUDE'S Def. of the Ref. These people were never defiled with women (Rev. xiv. 4.) The people called *Donatists* and *Manicheans*, with their successors, have been the witnesses for God through the exact period of 1260 years: see ELIOTT'S *Horæ Apocal.* v. ii. p. 539, &c. *Art. Paulikians*.

XIV.—Let us review a few of those evils which have arisen from the change

in the church, occasioned by a paid clergy.

1. How seriously have all professing communities departed from the *divine model* recorded by inspired men in the New Testament.

2. The paid clergy have assumed all authority to direct the mind in all spiritual affairs. They hold, as did the Scribes and Pharisees, the key of knowledge, and engross the greater share of the devotional engagements in the house of God.

3. The transfer of the whole duties to a paid servant has made those duties onerous to him, or occasioned additional stipendiaries to be created, a course which burdens the hearers with heavy imposts; or the services are declined and the sanctuary closed part of the day. All the duties of the first churches were divided among the brethren. This arrangement was successful, to destroy Pagan influence. Why should not God's appointments and order be equally as efficient now?

4. The bond of union in Christian communities, instead of being *love of the truth*, and *the order of God's house*, is too often an attachment to a presiding minister. This favorite can mould the sentiments and practices of the church to his wishes without effectual opposition. The questions which arise are too readily, under such circumstances, treated as questions affecting *him*, instead of questions as relating to the word and will of God. By a little management, his power becomes almost absolute. The question of his livelihood often swallows up all other objects and considerations, as if the cause were preserved merely for the minister's comfort or support. If he is resolved to treat the pulpit as his freehold for life! (which, when he has made the pulpit his sole dependence, he is strongly tempted to do) the church may languish, the proclamation of the gospel may be greatly impeded, without awakening solicitude, if the ruler can secure his own interest. On the other hand, if wealthy, or influential men unreasonably or unjustly withhold his salary, the church may, at a time of its greatest need, be deprived of his authority, and he who should guide, is cast out, or made a slave. When time has withered friendship, talents become familiar, or some opponent appears, the cause

suffers, and divisions ensue. No calamity of this nature could occur in the model churches.

5. The spiritual gifts possessed by renewed and enlightened men, have been discouraged and crushed by the monopolizing clergy: so that the commands of inspired men to mutual exhortation have no place in modern churches (Heb. iii. 13-25, Col. iii. 16.) The churches are not now missionary stations for the diffusion of the truth through the localities, to enlighten a neighbourhood, or evangelize a province (Mat. xxviii. 19.)

6. The incentives which existed in the first churches to the study of the word of Christ, are lost, to a great extent, and the neglect of the sacred volume is evident. Ignorance of the divine mind on almost all matters of importance has resulted from having ONE TEACHER. The creed of the teacher is to a very great extent the creed of the hearers, and the opinions of the clergy regulate society, and satisfy the consciences of men. The members of the first churches having to take part in the services, studied the word, in order to form scriptural views of doctrine, practice, discipline, and order.

7. The talents bestowed on brethren for the edification of the churches at large, are now secured to one, by a high retaining fee for his popular gifts. These gifts should be exercised among all the churches by his itinerant services. But talented men receive a call to a fixed station at a high rate of wages, and the little interests are left to pine or die. Such policy and selfishness were unknown to the servants of Christ. Thus the comforts and advantages of such *ministers* are great, compared with those of other brethren. Superfluities even to riches have waited on superior endowments, while a plain dress or sackcloth with homely dwelling, mark the less distinguished of the Lord's servants. Yet these ministers can tell Infidels and worldly men that they are the followers of Christ, and imitators of his life. Dissenting ministers are guilty in this respect as the established church. As to equality of comforts and sympathy, the Lord's words and provisions for His members are obsolete rules. The payment of one minister consumes the vineyard of the Lord (2 Cor. viii. 14, Isa. iii. 14, Jer. xii. 10.)

8. The funds of the saints, for the support of the indigent, of widows, the sick, prisoners, and missionaries, (*Neander* i. 257) have been sinfully diverted from the scriptural purpose and assignment. The support of the clergy has too often demanded and engrossed the whole. How many small interests are distressed to make up a limited pittance for a teacher. How little sympathy do great town teachers show to village ministers. How many causes, at this moment, are withering and dwindling into obscurity, from inability to keep a teacher. Custom has so completely blinded the people, (the pride of state churches having given the model) that where a teacher cannot be supported, the cause is allowed to die. If members of churches understood the order of Christ, *they would meet* and exhort one another to edification and comfort.

The payment of the clergy has been a most serious stumbling block for Jews and Pagans, Sceptics and Infidels. The heavy charges of pew-rents, to raise funds for stipendiary teachers, have, to a great extent, shut out the poor from the house of the Lord. At first the gospel was preached to the poor, but the case is so reversed now, that those only who *can pay* have a place in the sanctuary. The gracious intentions of Jesus towards the poor, are thwarted and perverted by a money system (Jer. vi. 13.)

9. A society formed on the divine plan of deriving instruction from the united gifts of its members, sets aside the temptation of ministers to covet filthy lucre, and make a profit of the gifts bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, in every spiritual service. The money system causes ministers to depend on the approbation of their wealthy hearers. There is a great deal of trimming or suppressing certain truths, lest offence be given, and pecuniary losses sustained. Unfaithfulness, to a great extent, will be apparent in the final day. The jealousy, hesitancy, and refusals of ministers of large churches and congregations, to dismiss members into localities to form the *nuclei* of other interests, is a sad proof of the influence of money on spiritual men; it is a natural fruit of the commercial plan, and directly opposed to apostolic practice. The plan laid down by Christ is divine, and in perfect ac-

cordance with the benevolence of its Author. Free love originated the plan ; free love completed redemption. Free grace proclaims salvation to all men, and they are to receive it without money, and without price. But here is a contravening arrangement : *few rents and quarterly collections* bar the gospel to thousands. Man *takes* the blessings which Christ announced *free*. It is very strange that believers should be required to pay so heavily for lessons which they may, by application, acquire without cost, *from THE BOOK in their possession.*

10. The death of a teacher often throws the church into uncertainty, confusion, and divisions. The ordinances are interrupted or suspended. A plurality of resident Elders, as ordained by our Lord, secures the order, the doctrines, the place and worship of the church from interruption by such events. The senior Elder is suited to the aged, and can counsel all ; the junior Elder is for labor, and is a companion for the young. Paul and Timothy give a model provision to all churches.

11. The burden of the duties of a minister who has three services for one class of people, has occasioned the closing of worship on Sabbath afternoons. This policy has led many to be enamored by those pleasures and pursuits, which have alienated them from religious privileges altogether. The plural eldership would have prevented the suspended worship of the Lord's house.

12. The system of iniquity which rose with the clergy, has grown with the growth of its head and members, and is still sustained by them. Though the whole system is condemned by God, yet there is no returning to the primitive order of a church, while a separate class of men usurp the affairs of God's house. Every reformer, from *Privatus* to A. Campbell, has found the stipendiary order of men an opposing phalanx to *that order of the church*, instituted by Christ.

13. The conformity of all the churches to the wisdom of this world, has left them open to the attack of their enemies. Opposition from an antagonist shews their weakness and vulnerability. Sufferings from the profession of Christianity would scatter many communities to the wind. The educated ministers, though paid to defend the

truth, could not stand before a subtle adversary, which has been seen of late. The enemy has too much room to assert, "The education and sentiments of ministers of this day, do not allow them to meet infidels in open dispute" (*Views of, &c.*)

XV.—Constantine gave what stability he could to the church of Cæsar. The different views held by his sons, by Julian, Gratian, Valens, and others, made the situation and *payment* of ministers precarious. Ministers were still forced to procure a livelihood by manual employment. On 8th November, 398, at the Council of Carthage, 204 bishops, *so called*, declared, (Canons 51-53) "That all clerks and ministers, that are able to work, shall learn trades, and get their living ; that is, sufficient food and raiment, either by trade or tillage, however skilful they may be in the word of God, without prejudice to their function." Augustin wrote on the same subject, showing that the apostles meant, the teachers were to labour for their bread (*Fleury*, b. xx. § 33.)

The unsettled state of an empire, as of Rome, for years after Constantine, unsettles a state church, and throws all into confusion. In Britain, on the invasion of the Danes, 850, the monks and clergy lost all their property. Those who escaped with their lives sought refuge among tradesmen. Teachers here lived on the contributions of the people, and society improved. But this was followed by the increase of spiritual locusts. The clergy became a burden to the citizens, and Edgar commanded the clergy to learn a trade, or practice some mechanical art, and to teach apprentices, who were designed for the priesthood, their business. Though the clergy swarmed, yet the people worshipped trees, stones, fountains, &c. We see how uncertain Cæsar's church is, by Henry the Eighth's acts, and the sufferings inflicted by the king's measures. All through the reformation, from Henry to the revolution, the clergy were in a most disreputable state. Worship was often suspended through the nation. Religion was scarcely known. A few men of low character were appointed by the state to each county (*Burnet, Neal, Macaulay.*) It is only within this *settled* age, that *clergymen* could be seen ; and only

since liberal pay has been secured, that the advantages of a hierarchy could be asserted. A single turn of affairs as to a sovereign; or one vote in parliament, can take all the gilt from the state weathercock.

XVI.—The revivers and restorers of the undefiled religion of (270) the gospel, as *Mani*, *Novatian*, the *Donatists*, and *Paulikians* of Armenia, (these good men, who perpetuated the order and truth of the gospel for ages, were called *ACEPHALA*, Headless, from having no usurping officers); all these made the church itself a SPIRITUAL (1200) PRIESTHOOD. The Albigenses and Waldenses were charged (1315) with encouraging laymen to preach. The Lollards in their first efforts in England declared, that Christ's kingdom would never thrive nor be well settled, till the ecclesiastics were stripped of their temporalities. They denied episcopacy, and allowed every one to exhort or be a priest (*Collier.*) They supported themselves by manual labour, and contributed to the maintenance of the sick among (1380) them (*Id.*) The people, in common with Wickliffe, declared "every believer to be a priest in God's service," and said, "that every one was authorized to preach the word without human authority or license, or ordination." John Huss, asserted "that all the clergy (1400) must be quite taken away, ere the church of Christ can have (1530) any true reformation." Tyndal denied the order of the clergy, and maintained that all Christians were priests. "The Waldensian (1540) and Anabaptist churches," Bullinger states, "held the views that every Christian was a teacher, that ministers who did not labour were ministers of the belly" (*Germ. Anab.*) The two witnesses or witnessing churches of Jesus Christ, ceased about this time, and a one-man ministry was introduced. "The first Anabaptist doctors were, almost all, heads and leaders of separate sects" (*Mosheim's History.*) (1580) Robert Brown did not consider the clergy a distinct order, and therefore all the brethren of the first Independents, were allowed to prophesy as ordered in the Scriptures (*Neal.*) Mr. Robinson (1600) the first Independent teacher, like Brown, held that all the brethren were equal, and had a scriptural right to

teach and exhort the congregation (*Neal.*)

The Anabaptist, Waldensian, and early churches, had a plurality of elders, who were equal in station and freedom to exhort. No clergy, as a separate order was allowed. Mr. J. Smith, a seceding clergyman, united with the Independents in Holland. He separated from this society and became a teacher, and formed a Baptist church (1605) at Ley. He was sole or settled teacher of these people. This was a departure from the Scripture model, and the custom of early churches. It was the first instance on record of a single teacher ruling a dissenting congregation, says W. Jones (Lect. ii. 422-560.) In this instance, an educated clergyman brought the Baptists to conform to the established church order.

(1643.) The confession of the Baptists maintained it to be the privilege of the brethren to exercise their gifts among the faithful (*Neal.*)

XVII.—How very much have modern churches departed, both from the scriptural order and practice of these primitive churches which bore the heat of persecution. The sooner the brethren understand this scriptural order of the church of Christ, return to it, and exercise their privileges and gifts, the better; for it is becoming evident that poverty or penuriousness will either drive them to the Bible and to exhortation, or that the feeble interests will sink.

XVIII.—The root of the evil now prevalent, was pointed out by Paul (1 Tim. vi. 10.) The mystery was at work in the Apostles' days (2 Thes. ii. 7.) The embryo of the man of sin was perceived and condemned (Acts viii. 18.) This evil was brought forth and matured by the clergy, the spiritual merchants of the interests and souls of men (Rev. xviii. 11-17.) The clerics of each kingdom have imbibed the spirit, and copied the order of the parent institute. Nonconformists, who profess to be guided by the word of God, as A PERFECT RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, have followed the bad example, and the whole community is carried away with the *medieval* custom. They also borrow state reasons to justify their conformity.

There are those in this land who fear the Lord, and who are desirous of seeing the tabernacle of David once more

set up, to the honour of David's Lord (Acts xv. 16.) All such brethren strive and pray for their privileges: a *free costless gospel to the poor*, and the wide spread of truth by the preachers and teachers of the Lord Jesus, agreeably to the benevolent provision of the Redeemer. Settled ministers over churches could not be wholly supported in the infancy of those early churches, "as the new sect of Christians was almost entirely composed of the dregs of the populace, of peasants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves," &c. Such were not in circum-

stances to pay teachers, and we know of no law to require it now. As the churches rose and grew, under the co-instruction and mutual exhortation system, why should the scriptural plan be abandoned? The chief part of our *pecuniary resources* should, as in apostolic days, be given to sustain *home and foreign missionary operations*, and relieve the wants of the distressed.

READER, IF THOU REGARDST THE AUTHORITY OF GOD (Jo. viii. 47, x. 27, 1 Jo. iv. 6,) ENDEAVOUR TO RESTORE THE CHURCH TO ITS PRIMITIVE CHARACTER.
A. P. BROTHER.

THE AMERICAN BIBLE UNION.

THE Annual Meeting, as our readers have been already informed, was held on the 7th and 8th of October. As the proceedings occupy the entire number of the *Bible Union Quarterly* for November, consisting of thirty-two octavo pages, we can only find space for a brief summary of the proceedings.

After the appointment of the various committees, the President delivered his address, at the close of which the Secretary read the Report of the Board.

"The history of the Bible Union," commences this elaborate document, "may be aptly compared to an extended journey. It has its rough places and its smooth, its hills and its valleys, its dreary scenes and its pleasant prospects. There are conspicuous landmarks on the way, elevated spots wherethe Union may with propriety erect its Ebenezers, and inscribe upon them 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.' Such a position has the Union reached, in the formation of its Final Committee; and here may we take our stand, and, as from a lofty mount, look back upon all the way by which the Lord hath led us, and look forward with a brighter hope and a clearer sky to the ultimate accomplishment of the great objects for which we are toiling."

The Report then proceeds to supply a historical sketch of the origin of the enterprise, the organization of the Union, and the extent of the field occupied. The uniform principle of revision adopted by the Union, is to require of translators and revisers the exact meaning of the inspired original, no views of expediency being allowed to withstand or

influence the perfect and invariable operation of this principle—a principle which raises the Bible Union infinitely above all sectarianism, and allies it directly with God's eternal truth.

Established Phraseology Retained.—Regard is paid to the merit of existing versions, and where one is commonly received, as is the case with the English, its phraseology is to be retained, unless a more exact expression of the meaning of the original, or the existing state of the language, requires it to be changed.

Revision Justified.—No one who loves the Bible because it is a transcript of the mind of God, would desire more deference to be paid to the mere work of men. The English version, like every other made since the time of the Apostles, is the result of human skill and learning. Commentators of all denominations have exposed its errors, and no valid reason can be adduced why these should be allowed to disfigure the book which we wish to see used in our families, and its phraseology to become familiar as household words.

The Greek Text, as published by Bagster and Son, of London, in 1851, with known errors corrected, has been adopted as the basis of revision of the New Testament. The Union has defined as a test of known errors, "the general consent of critical editors for the last hundred years." Here are reasonable safeguards erected on both sides of the pathway. The Romish policy of adopting a certain edition as infallible, is avoided; and alterations suggested by a partial examination of manuscripts,

