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ing Ox, and not suffer him to eat of the Corn he treadeth out: he also argues from the reasonable expectation of all Labourers in worldly affairs, that he that Ploweth should Plow in hope, and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. It seemed unreasonable to a wise Apostle, that other Labourers should have at least a probable Assurance of a Reward, and the Ministers of Christ none: I doubt you would find it an hard thing to carry on your worldly designs cheerfully, if you did not know where to have your next meal, when you are hungry; and you must consider the Ministers of Christ are Men, as well as you: *Their flesh is not of Brass; neither is their strength, the strength of Stones.* And they may upon the account of their Work, justly look for a certainty of Wages, as well as other Work-men, and yet trust the Providence of God nevertheless. A Labouring Man may justly expect Wages for his Labour, and yet he must and ought to trust the Providence of God, to carry him thro' it, and bless him in it: Thus the Ministers of Christ; for the Apostle argues from the one to the other.

3dly, The Apostle calls a Minister's Maintenance, *Wages*; and therefore this is the sense of it, that it should be a comfortable Provision for themselves, and Families, according to that degree of Living, which the Honourable Work they are employed in, requires, and deserves. *I robbed other Churches, taking Wages of them, to do you service, 2 Cor. 11. 8.* Not that the Apostle was guilty of Sacrilege, but he speaks the Thoughts of Covetous Professors, who look upon it, to be little better than Robbery, for a Minister to demand Wages for his Work; Or he calls it Robbery, because he took more of other Churches than came to their share to give him, to spare the *Corinthians*: He calls it Wages, now Wages is given in a way of Justice, not in a way of Mercy; a Minister's Maintenance is no Alms: When Men pay their Servants Wages, they don't look upon it as an Alms; and I suppose, every honest Man, would think it his Duty, to pay his Servants and Workmen Wages, where-  
by

by they and theirs might live by their Industry; though the Laws of the Land did not compel them to do so; yet certainly the Law of God would oblige them in this Case: *Wo unto him that buildeth his House by unrighteousness, and his Chambers by wrong, that useth his Neighbour's Service without Wages, and giveth him not for his Work, Jer. 22. 13.*

Atkly, The Apostle enjoyns it as a Duty to the Professors of Religion, in general, *Gal. 6. 6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that Teacheth, in all good things.* He don't say, 'let him that is a Church-member; or let him that is Converted; or that knows himself to be Converted, (for Men must be taught before they be Converted) Communicate to him that Teacheth; but let him that is taught in the Word Communicate: his being Taught lays him under an Obligation. Nor he don't say, Let him that is Rich, and can of his Abundance well spare something, Communicate to him that Teacheth; as if Men should serve every Body first; and then if they can well spare any thing, give that to Christ; But he in all things must have the pre-eminence. It is a lamentable thing to consider, that some who constantly enjoy a Man's Labours, should never remember the Labourer; or if they do, 'tis in such a lean Proportion, that they themselves are ashamed of it. I have seen some seemingly affected under a Sermon, that would scarce have thrown a Crust of mouldy Bread to the Preacher.

I come in the next place, to answer some Objections against this Ordinance of Christ.

The 1st Objection, Christ Commanded his Disciples saying, *Freely ye have received, freely give, Math. 10. 8.*

*Answer.* It was their Duty to preach freely, that is, with a free and willing Mind; and it was the People's Duty to recompense their Labours freely, and willingly; which yet was so inconsiderable and unproportionable a Reward, that notwithstanding this, they might be said to bestow their pains freely. *If we have*

*some*

sown unto you spiritual things, Is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 1 Cor. 9. 11. And it appears plainly, that it was the Duty of the People to whom they Preached, to receive and entertain them, because our Lord Jesus told them, that whosoever should not receive them, nor hear their words, that is, not embrace their Doctrine, and entertain their Persons, when they went out of that House or City, they should shake off the Dust of their Feet, for a Testimony against them, verse 14. Luke 9. 5. Indeed we have a sect of Professors amongst us, who pretend to preach freely, and do all freely; and from hence they take liberty to bespatter the faithful Ministers of Christ, calling them hirelings, and followers of Balaam for reward; when 'tis evident they themselves take Rewards, and large ones too, though they deserve none, and that appears thus; It is well known that they are Itinerant, or Travelling Preachers, many of them; Now supposing they be gone from their Habitations two or three Months together, and have nothing but their Labour to live by, and maintain their Families by, how can their Families subsist, if they take no Reward for their Labour? Either they must receive a Recompence some way or other; or else their Families must be kept by Miracles; or else they must be all rich men that go about that work, and then they look more like the fat Merchants of Antichrist than the poor Ministers of Jesus Christ, For not many Noble are called, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Revel. 18. 19. It is no shame for a Minister of Christ to take a Reward for his Work; because it is an Ordinance of God; Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 14. Yet it is a very commendable thing, for one that is enriched with this World's Goods, to preach freely, to a poor Congregation; it is an act of Charity, and no doubt but it is the Duty of such an one, if he be called to it. Paul tells us more than once, that he took a Reward for Preaching; though he spared some Churches for some special Reasons, yet he took a supply from others;

others; For that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied, 2 Cor. 11. 9.

The II<sup>d</sup> Objection. Paul wrought with his hands to supply his Necessities, and he exhorted the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, to do so too, Acts 20. 34, 35.

Answer.. This was the peculiar Case of Paul and Barnabas, and it was not practised by the other Apostles, as appears by 1 Cor. 9. 5, 6. Or I only, and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Is it not lawful for us to forbear Working, and require a Maintenance from them, for whom we labour? The other Apostles, the Brethren of the Lord, and Cephas, forbear working, and we have the same Power, only, considering some Circumstances, we will not use it in all Churches: It was lawful for him to marry; Have we not power to lead about a Sister, a Wife, verse 5. Yet because of the present distress, he thought it good for him, and others not to marry, if they could honestly abstain from Marriage, 1 Cor. 7. 26. because the Churches were under Persecution and great Troubles, and Necessities; but we can't from hence Conclude that Marriage is unlawful, or Ministers Maintenance unnecessary. But the chief Reason why the Apostle Paul did sometimes refuse to take a Reward for his Labours, was because he would stop the Mouths of false Ministers, that were crept into some Churches; and therefore he Laboured with his hands, to hinder them from boasting against him; for they pretended (as some do now) to do all freely, and exclaimed highly against those that took a Reward for their Labour; and this is the reason he gives himself, 2 Cor. 11. 9. And in all things I have kept my self from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep my self; Why? That I may cut off occasion, from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we; For such are false Apostles, &c. verse 12, 13. But the Apostle reckons it amongst his hard Afflictions, that he was forced to Labour with his hands, to get his Bread, 1 Cor. 4. 11, 12. For, saith he, we both hunger, and thirst, and labour, work-  
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ing with our own hands, &c. This was one of his Miseries, and one Man's Misery can't be another Man's rule; besides it was then a time of Persecution to the Churches of Christ, and the Saints could not enjoy what was their own, as many do now. When Christ called his Disciples to Preach, he did not call them to, but from their wordly Employments; *Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men; and straightway they forsook their Nets, and followed him, Mark 1. 17, 18.* The work of the Ministry is a great work, and a hard work, there is new matter to provide for every Sermon, a great variety of Truths to be insisted on, in the Bible; much Meditation and deep Study required about the Mysterious points of Divinity; Family-work; Closet-work; the Sick to visit; the stragling to reduce; the obstinate to perswade, and all these to be done with Judgment, and deliberation; and therefore the Ministers of the Gospel are commanded, *to give attendance to reading; to meditate upon these things, and give themselves wholly to them, that their profiting may appear to all, 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15,* and without extraordinary Gifts (which no modest Man durst now pretend to) they can't expect to profit much without the Practise of those things; I know some pretend to do all, without previous study, and I believe them; but 'tis but a little they do at one time more than at another; they don't declare the whole Counsel of God to the people; yet I know respect must be had to Mens Years, Gifts, Opportunities, and Encouragements; and when we have taken all the pains we can, we must say, we are imperfect; and who is sufficient for these things? Besides, worldly business is a snare to those that have dealings therein, considering the persons they must deal with; and Ministers (whose Lives should be most unspotted) had need be freed (as much as possible) from all Temptations.

The III<sup>d</sup> *Objection.* The Rich must Maintain the Gospel, we are not able.

*Answer.* *The Poor have the Gospel, Matth. 11. 5. and they that have it must maintain it, or else it will not be maintained in the World: Who is poorer than the*  
Widow

Widow, mention'd *Mark 12.42*? *She threw in two Mites, which make a Farthing*; she threw in no more, because she had no more, *she cast in all that she had, verse 44.* Are you not able to pay your own Servants Wages? Then why not able to pay Christ's Servants, who serve your Souls, which should be more precious to you than your Bodies? Are not some able to give a Child a Portion, who will not give a Minister a piece of Bread?

The IVth *Objection.* You have no Law to force us, we may do what we please.

*Answer.* The Ministers of Christ desire none upon this account. It would be a great dishonour to the Spiritual Power of Jesus Christ, to use Carnal Weapons to support his Ministers in the work of their Calling: We have no Law to force you; but Jesus Christ hath a Law to make you sweetly willing. The Apostles and Primitive Christians had no Law to force the People, as appears by *2 Cor. 10. 4. For the Weapons of our Warfare, are not carnal, but mighty through God.* And after that, during the first Three hundred years after Christ, there was no Law to provide a Maintenance, for a Christian Ministry; yet there was such a Ministry, throughout the Ten Persecutions, or else there had been no Saints to be Persecuted. In the first Ages of the Gospel, the Ministers were maintained by the Free and Voluntary Contributions of their Hearers, as that Learned Historian *Dr. Cave* observes, in his *Primitive Christianity*, Page 257. There he tells us, [*That they provided a liberal Maintenance for them, parting at first with their own Estates, to supply the uses of the Church, and after that, making no less large than frequent Contributions; the Piety of Christians daily adding to their Liberality.*] But afterwards the Bishops of Rome, having partly by Flattery, and partly by Force, wrung much of the Civil Power out of the hands of the Rulers of the Nations, they established Laws and Statutes, for the Maintaining of their *Babel*; because the Power and Spirit of the Lord was departed from their Ministry, that it could not support it self by its workings upon the Consciences of Men; the true Church

Church being gone into the Wilderness, that is, into a solitary State and Condition, according to Divine Prophecy, *Revel. 12. 6.* hiding her self, what she could, from the Corruptions and Tyranny of Antichrist, the visible Antichristian Church, was termed *Ichabod*, no glory, the Spirit of the Lord was departed; and because she had no fire from Heaven, she (like *Aarons Sons*) made use of strange Fire, which the Lord had not commanded; and maintained that by Humane Law, which ought to have been maintained by Divine Love, persecuting the Faithful Members of Christ; which is a certain mark of a false Church; for that Religion can't be good, that needs any Instruments of Violence to uphold it: The Apostles used no Swrd, but the Word to bring Men to Christ; they compelled men, not by force of Arms, but by force of Arguments, which is a sweet Compulsion.

**The Vth Objection.** We have done something already.

**Answer.** But have you done according to your Ability? Could you not have done more? Have you not done more to please your selves, in some other Cases? Let Conscience speak; are you not able to double what you have done? Remember, *that he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully, 2 Cor. 9. 6.* The more you sow, the more you shall reap; the more you give to the Word, the more you shall get by it. Those that are kind to the Interest of Christ seldom lose any thing by it, in this World; and if you should, I hope you durst trust Jesus Christ till you die; the Saints shall have a reward of all their kindnesses then; *And God will bless the house of Obed-Edom, because the Ark resteth there, 2 Sam. 6. 12.* Some think to gain by their niggardliness, but they put their gains into a Bag with holes; You have a notable Text to this purpose in *Haggai 1. 9.* *Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it: Why? saith the Lord of Hosts; Because of mine House that is waste, and ye run every Man unto his own house.* And just so it is with many in our day; they can  
build



build for themselves, and their Children, but will not lay out a Penny for God; they warm themselves in their Cield Houses, and leave the Ministers of Christ to starve with cold; they do a little perhaps for Fashion sake; but not the half of what they could: But hear what God saith to such; *Cursed be the deceiver, which bath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. Mal. 1. 14. And if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? As if he should say, you can't put off your Governours, as you put off me, ver. 8.*

The VIth *Objection*. We are willing to do something as it comes into our minds, or as we are stirred up to it, but we are not willing to engage to do any thing constantly.

*Answer*. That's strange, that they that love to do good should not love to do it constantly, when the Apostle says, *Be not weary in well doing, Gal. 6. 6, 9. for in due Season we shall reap if we faint not.* And whereas you speak of being stirr'd up to it; If a Believer never does his Duty, till he can find a willingness in his whole man, he must never do it so long as he is in this world; his flesh will lust against the Spirit, in every good Action; and surely a good man don't owe sin so much service, as to wait upon it. Will you tell your Servants, that they shall have no Wages, 'till you be stirred up to it? Or will you tell your Children that they shall have no Bread, till you have a divine impulse to give them some? If you make the Law of God your Rule, you must make it your Motive. Would you not take it ill, if upon your request to a Minister of the Gospel, to Preach to you, he should tell you, he would come and preach if he think of it; or if he hath some immediate impulle upon him to come; or if he can well spare the time: I suppose such an one would be look'd upon as a careless Preacher; and if so, they may be look'd upon as careless Hearers; who when they are desired to do their Duty, in contributing to their Ministers Necessities, will speak after the same manner.

I come in the last place, to give Professors some directions how to Act in maintaining the Ministry of the Gospel.

And

And First, They ought to enquire into the Wants of their Ministers, that they may know the better how to contribute to their Necessities; they must not deal by them, as they do by their Dogs, throw them a bone, and leave them to live or die in the use of it; neither must they put them off with a few fair Words, and barren Complements; for God will not be mocked; but they ought to deal by them, as *Onesiphorus* did by *Paul*, *He sought him out diligently, that he might refresh him, and Minister to his wants,* 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17.

Secondly, They should consider their Ministers various Circumstances, that as his Necessities are greater, so their Contributions towards him should be greater; some have thought ten Shillings a Week sufficient Wages for a Minister; but suppose he hath Ten Persons in his Family, that is, a Shilling a Week for each Person; let a third part of this be deducted out, for House-Rent; Cloathing, Firing, and other Charges, then there remains but eight Pence a week for each Person; would you allow a Minister but Eight Pence a Week, and yet will scarce board a Plowman under Three Shillings? If a Man could live upon dry Meal, he could scarce live at this Rate; *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the Daughters of the uncircumcised Triumph,* 2 Sam. 1. 20.

Thirdly, The Professors of Religion, ought to be sparing and thrifty, for the sake of the Gospel; if some that make a Profession of Religion, would drink less, and pray more, they might have something to spare for the Gospel: Professors should survey themselves, and their Families, and consider, whether there be nothing in their common Expences, nothing in their House-keeping, nothing in their Rayment, that might be spared for the Gospel; some bring more upon their backs into the House of God, in one day, than they give to it in Seven Years; and spend more upon Carnal Relations, in Feasting and banquetting, in a few days, than they give to the Ministry in some Years; but how such will give a good account of their Stewardship, I know not, and they care not. Pride and Finery are the Mothers  
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of Covetousness; and Covetousness is the Murderer of Charity, and Justice too: Therefore the Holy Ghost exhorts godly Women, to avoid wearing of broided hair, gold, pearls, or costly array, because he knew that would eat up their Liberality, and good Works, 1 Tim. 2 9, 10.

Fourthly, Professors should exhort one another daily to this Work, and to this end, employ some Person that are best qualified with spiritual Reason and holy Boldness, to make it their Business to go from one to another, to stir them up to their Duty, and convince them of their sin in neglecting it, Heb. 10. 25. and desire that things may be done with equality; that the Rich may bring precious Stones, and the poor Goats Hair, and then the Tabernacle will be built, as Exod. 35, 26, 27. Otherwise some must do beyond their Power, while others give not a Fiftieth part of their Revenues; and after all these things be done, they cannot afford their Minister a Competent Maintenance, they ought to be the Assistance of other Churches of Christ, which are able to help them; If that can't be granted, they ought to release their Minister, and discharge him from his Work and Office amongst them, recommending him to some other place, that God in the way of his Providence may call him to; for it would be unjust in them to keep their Minister, to starve him, and unnatural in him to neglect himself and Family, if he may elsewhere provide for them.

And to conclude, I perswade my self, that no true Christian will be offended at what I have done; for either he is poor, and cannot, and then the Will is accepted; or else he hath done to the utmost of his Ability, and that is all is required; or else he hath been negligent of his Duty, and then he will be of good advice, from him who is a Servant in the Work of the Gospel.

FINIS.