

## DR. BURNS' SYNOD SERMON.

*Preached at the opening of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, at Pictou, on Tuesday Evening, 14th October, 1884, by the Rev. R. F. Burns, D. D., Retiring Moderator.*

1 Cor. ix., 14. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

## FATHERS AND BROTHERS, —

I have been influenced in the selection of this text by the prominence given during the past year of our Church's history to the subject of Ministerial Support, and the place it is likely to occupy in the proceedings of the present Synod.

First, let me speak briefly of a Standing Ministry. "They which preach the gospel." There is a sense in which every Christian is a priest unto God and expected to engage in His reasonable service. Every listener even, to the Word is expected to turn round and beckon to others. "Let him that heareth say, Come." Far from forbidding such personal and private voluntary efforts to do good—we would say with Moses, of Eldad and Medad, the two young men who prophesied in the camp without leave, and against whom a complaint was lodged. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" We would say with Christ respecting the two who were also complained of, as casting out devils—though following not with them—"Forbid them not!"

But while "this honor have all the saints," still true is it that the Lord hath set in His Church "Evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the ministry"—not for a limited period—as if it closed instead of commenced with His Ascension—but "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man." No man taketh this honor into himself but he that was called of God as was Aaron.

To His commissioned servants Jehovah says:—"Thou shalt bear the word at my mouth and warn them from me." "Go preach the preaching that I bid thee." "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "We are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The ministry is in the very heart of the great commission—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth—Go ye therefore and teach all nations and the appended proviso reveals the perpetuity of

the institution—"Lo I am with you alway" (or all days) "even unto the end of the world." "How shall men believe on Him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent. Hence we are instructed to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest." Hence the appropriate address of Cornelius and his fellow worshippers. "Now therefore we are all here before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. To one of his ancient ministers the Lord said—"I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak all that I commanded him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name I will require it of him." What a solemn responsibility! How awe-inspiring the thought to speaker and hearer—"He that despiseth you despiseth me take heed then how and what you hear for it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (not by the preaching of foolishness) to save them that believe."

In the Apostolical Epistles too, a Standing Ministry is fully recognized. The distinction between the rulers and the duties enjoined on pastors clearly show this. They are required to be workmen needing not to be ashamed to feed the flock of God; to take heed to themselves and to all the flock, to give themselves wholly to their work that their profiting may appear unto all. The people are required to obey them in holy things, and to submit themselves, yea to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake."

With this brief introductory reference to a Standing Ministry, let us proceed to our main point, the argument of the Apostle in this passage for the suitable support of that ministry, "that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

The example of Paul has been taken advantage of, and is still, as an argument against paying ministers. He wrought with his own hands and took no salary and why should not they? But his case was clearly exceptional. So far from desiring or designing that it be followed as a general rule, he invariably sets himself to show, as in the passage before us, that he was at perfect liberty to claim the temporal support of those among whom he labored, but perferred foregoing it for special reasons. Thus at Thessalonica he wrought at the trade, in which according to the goodly usage of Jew-