

bearers of the Church, on the one hand, and of private Christians, on the other, in connection with this important matter.

I. *The Divine Ordination in the support of a Gospel Ministry.* And in reference to this point, what language could be more explicit or more peremptory than the language before us. Here it is expressly declared that they who dedicate their time and their gifts to the preaching of the Gospel, should obtain their livelihood from their labours. Here professing Christians are not left at liberty to choose whether they shall maintain their own Minister or not, for God has himself, by a positive ordination, settled the matter. But the words of our text form the conclusion of a beautiful and consecutive argument employed by the Apostle in support of his position, and it may not be unprofitable that we advert to the leading features of that argument. It has already been noticed that Paul, in order to remove any ground of offence against his Ministry, worked with his own hands to obtain a livelihood. But whilst he did this, he took proper care to tell the Church at Corinth his reasons for adopting this course—what his own liberty and their duty in the matter, “Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?” And having thus introduced his subject, he makes his first appeal to the light of nature, “Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” The work of the Minister is here designated a warfare; and just as the soldiers who go forth to battle have a right and title to be maintained by those who enlisted them, so have the Ministers of the Gospel in waging their warfare. And the same reasoning holds good when we farther regard Ministers as husbandmen and as Shepherds.—Having thus shown the reasonableness of the maintenance of Ministers, by those amongst whom they labour, his next appeal is to the law of God “Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law also the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for Oxen?”—As if he had said, Doth God take more care for Oxen than he doth for ministers or men? He doth take care for Oxen. Then, verily, upon every principle of justice, may it be argued, that He taketh greater care of men, especially such as He employeth in his more immediate service. But the Apostle proceeds in the same strain—“Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.” And what is the import of this passage? Its import plainly is, that as he who ploweth for another, ploweth

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