

authority they can plead, is the law or usage of their respective churches. The Divine authority of that title is very questionable, which involves practices so grossly unscriptural. To suppose that the scriptures require such maintenance, without pointing out the mode of its obtainment, is extremely absurd. We question the Divine origin of a right, requiring such miserable human expedients to support it; a right, restrained within no defined limits wherever it has been recognised; a right, sanctioning, in almost every instance, all that avarice can obtain, or misguided generosity grant. None should admit as Divine, without careful examination, a claim so undefined in its limits, so fostering to the covetousness of the carnal heart, so liable to be turned to an instrument of oppression, and so opposed, in its general application and tendency, to the nature and design of the religion of Jesus. To concede this assumption to the advocates of Establishments—the very assumption which rendered them first necessary—is to concede, not only what is not true, but to furnish them with the only argument which they have used with any degree of success in the present controversy. The antecedent question, of the RIGHT to maintenance, falls to be discussed, before resorting to human expedients to obtain it. We deem it premature for men to “bite and devour one another” respecting how and by whom a stipend is to be paid, till once it is proved that a stipend is necessary. That such maintenance is unscriptural, unnecessary, and injurious to the best interests of religion, we trust to make evident to every unprejudiced mind: and, the more effectually to expose this fallacy in its progressive stages, we proceed to prove, that the popular practice of making classical learning a requisite qualification for preaching the gospel, and discharging pastoral duties, devolving the whole edification of a church upon a single pastor, relieving church members from contributing to its public teaching, devoting pastors wholly to their office, and maintaining them in respectability, at the church’s expense, is diametrically opposed to the precepts enjoined, and the practice exemplified, in the New Testament.

Before examining the scripture proofs, it may be necessary to make a few preliminary remarks to illustrate and establish the authority and binding obligation of those precepts, and that example which we mean to admit as proof, and maintain to be binding on this subject.

When Christ Jesus had finished the redemption work of his people, he commissioned his Apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them. (Math. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15.) To bear up their minds under the trials of this undertaking, and, as a guarantee of success to them in the execution thereof, he graciously vouchsafed his presence to be always with them, even unto the end of the world. To fit them for this important work, they were Divinely qualified upon the day of Pentecost, with such an abundant portion of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, as enabled them to preach the gospel in all the necessary languages, and guide them *infallibly* into all truth. (Acts ii. 1, 14. Luke xxiv. 49.) Thus, divinely *commissioned* and divinely *qualified* for the important work of establishing Messiah’s kingdom, and introducing the Christian dispensation, they went forth every where preaching the