

the person possessed of the knowledge of the New Testament, to say that he was moved by the Holy Spirit, or specially called by its operations and sent by God to preach.

Besides this, there is another fact to which we would advert, viz, that when there is a voluntary association of any number of disciples of Christ, met in any one place to attend to the duties and privileges of a church, should they call any one of their own number, who possesses the qualifications belonging to the bishop or overseer, laid down by the Holy Spirit in the written word; and should they appoint him to office, as the Holy Spirit has taught them in the same written word—then it may be said to such a person, "Take heed to yourself and to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer." But this bishop, of whom we have now spoken, is neither priest, ambassador, minister of religion, clergyman, nor a reverend divine; but simply one that has the oversight of one voluntary society, who, when he leaves that society, has no other office in any other in consequence of his being an officer in that. His discharge of the work of a bishop is limited by, and confined to, the particular congregation which appointed him to office. If he should travel abroad and visit another congregation, even of the same views with that of which he was or is bishop, he is then no bishop; he is then in the capacity of an unofficial disciple.

To suppose the contrary is to constitute different orders of men, or to divide the church into the common classes of clergy and laity, than which nothing is more essentially opposite to the genius and spirit of christianity. We have seen some bishops, ignorant of the nature of the office, acting very much out of character, placing themselves in the bishop's office, in a church which they might occasionally visit, and assuming to act officially in an assembly over which they had no bishopric. They acted as absurdly and as unconstitutionally as the president of the United States would do, if, when on a visit to London, he should enter the English parliament and place himself on the throne, either *solus*, or in conjunction with his majesty George IV. and that, forsooth, because he is, or was president of the United States. But of this more afterwards. In the meantime, we conclude that one of those means used to exalt the clergy to dominion over the faith, over the consciences, and over the persons of men, by teaching the people to consider them as specially called and moved by the Holy Spirit, and sent to assume the office of ambassadors of Christ, or ministers of the Christian religion, is a scheme unwarranted by God, founded on pride, ignorance, ambition, and impiety; and, as such, ought to be opposed and exposed by all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.