

that it could not subsist without them. Protestants have shaken off, in many respects, the yoke of Rome; but in so far as we keep up these distinctions of a worldly nature between Pastors and people, we entertain sentiments which have given being and support to the man of sin.

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To bring forward the most that the Scriptures say of the offices of the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, and endeavor to apply it to the Elder's office, looks very like an antichristian attempt. If we wish to know *what those offices are*, we must content ourselves with the account found in the word of God concerning each, that we may know our station and duty in the Church of Christ, and fulfil it. *To apply to Elders what is said of Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists*, while it is impossible that they can fulfil the duties belonging to these offices, can only excite pride.

The stated office of Elder certainly differs very much from the extraordinary offices in the first Churches. These extraordinary offices have ceased with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have no directions given us in the Scriptures to make choice of persons to occupy these offices. While they existed, they were wholly under the immediate superintendance and direction of Jesus by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He called them to their office, prescribed their duties, and gave them fitness, in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, for their work; and they were known to others by the miraculous signs which followed them. For any to pretend to share with them in their offices, without adducing the same signs, is surely absurd. But the qualifications, office, and authority of Elders, which Jesus intended to exist in his Church to the end of time, are clearly marked in the Scriptures; and if we can distinguish these, for our direction, from the extraordinary qualifications, offices, and authority of Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, we shall rightly use the labors of these extraordinary characters, without endeavoring to share their authority.

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I. The Apostles held the first place among the extraordinary characters in the Church of Christ. Their qualifications, commission, and work, are altogether peculiar to themselves; and it is impossible that they could have any to succeed them.—The following things were essential to their office:—

1st. That they had seen Jesus, and conversed with him, especially after his resurrection. They were witnesses of his resurrection. Acts i. 22. It was necessary to support his claim to the Apostolical office, that Paul could say, "And last of all He was seen of me also, as one born out of due time." 1 Cor. xv. 8. "Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" chap. ix. 1.