

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

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1. Unto the *call* of any person unto this office of a pastor in the church there are certain *qualifications* previously required in him, disposing and making him fit for that office. The outward call is an act of the church, as we shall show immediately; but therein is required an obediential acting of him also who is called. Neither of these can be regular, neither can the church act according to rule and order, nor the person called act in such a due obedience, unless there are in him some previous indications of the mind of God, designing the person to be called by such qualifications as may render him meet and able for the discharge of his office and work; for ordinary vocation is not a collation of gracious spiritual abilities, suiting and making men meet for the pastoral office, but it is the communication of right and power for the regular use and exercise of gifts and abilities received antecedently unto that call, unto the edification of the church, wherein the office itself doth consist. And if we would know what these qualifications and endowments are, for the substance of them, we may learn them in their great example and pattern, our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ, being the good Shepherd, whose the sheep are, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, the chief Shepherd, did design, in the undertaking and exercise of his pastoral office, to give a type and example unto all those who are to be called unto the same office under him; and if there be not a conformity unto him herein, no man can assure his own conscience or the church of God that he is or can be lawfully called unto this office.

The qualifications of Christ unto, and the gracious qualities of his mind and soul in, the discharge of his pastoral office, may be referred unto five heads:—

(1.) That *furniture with spiritual gifts and abilities* by the communication of the Holy Ghost unto him in an unmeasurable fulness, whereby he was fitted for the discharge of his office. This is expressed with respect unto his undertaking of it, Isa. xi. 2, 3, lxi. 1–3; Luke iv. 14. Herein was he “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,” Heb. i. 9. But this unction of the Spirit is, in a certain measure, required in all who are called, or to be called, unto the pastoral office, Eph. iv. 7. That there are spiritual powers, gifts, and abilities, required unto the gospel ministry, I have at large declared in another treatise, as also what they are; and where there are none of those spiritual abilities which are necessary unto the edification of the church in the administration of gospel ordinances, as in prayer, preaching, and the like, no outward call or order can constitute any man an evangelical pastor. As unto particular persons, I will not contend as unto an absolute nullity in the office by reason of their deficiency in spiritual gifts, unless it be gross, and such as renders them utterly useless unto the edification of the church. I only say,