

ordination, in what does the superiority of a bishop consist? We answer, it consists in a superiority of office, and not in order. By divine appointment the laymen of the church are all equal—all a common brotherhood; and yet some of those laymen are, by the church, elevated above their brethren by being placed in official positions. Their office gives them authority to perform acts which their brethren, who are equal with them by divine appointment, have no right to perform, yet whoever reproaches this as a despotic power? Does not the organization of every christian denomination acknowledge this to be a necessity, in providing for officers of the church, to be chosen from among the laymen? Indeed, this is a necessity as a measure to prevent that state of confusion which would arise from every person transacting the business of the church as should appear best to themselves. And nothing but strict adherence to the constituted authorities of the church, as vested in her several officers, can save us from a state of perfect anarchy. The same practice is common to all christian churches with regard to the ministry. In every denomination, ministers are appointed to offices which give them powers above those enjoyed by their brethren; and whoever thought the mere fact of their being so appointed, constituted a despotism? So far from this, all have acquiesced in the practice. Even the Primitive and New Connection Churches have fallen into the practice of elevating some of their ministers to offices which give them power above those of their brethren. In the apostolic age, all presbyters were wont to ordain at their own discretion, as may be gathered from many circumstances recorded in the New Testament. Paul admonishes Timothy, "to lay hands on no man," which clearly shows that the exercise of the powers of ordination, which were conferred on Timothy by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, were discretionary with him. The injudicious exercise of these discretionary powers was the cause of great confusion in