

Paul wrote to him, was at Ephesus, with a Church that had Elders. These certainly exercised power and authority in that Church, of which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers.— But it is plain, that when Timothy was in this very Church, and among these Elders, he exercised a power and authority superior to theirs. Paul writes to Timothy, and not to the Elders of this Church, concerning the ordering of all its affairs. Nor does he enjoin Timothy to tell the Elders of this Church to do such and such things, but he commands Timothy himself to do them by the power vested in him.

If any doubt can remain with respect to this, it vanishes by the manner in which he is to treat these very Elders. He is not only to charge them to be sound in the faith, but accusations may be brought to Timothy against them, and he is to decide without the intervention of others, except in having the accusations substantiated by two or three witnesses; and if he finds them faulty, he is to rebuke them before the whole Church, that the other Elders may be afraid of committing similar offences. 1 Tim. v. 19, 20.

Indeed it is so palpably evident, that they Timothy and Titus held an extraordinary office, and performed an extraordinary work, that it would appear superfluous thus to refute an opposite opinion, were it not that opinions of this kind are too readily received. But the absurdity of it would soon appear, were any man to take it upon him and pretend to do their work. Let him go from Church to Church, and ordain Elders singly and alone. Let him inquire *authoritatively*, where he suspects some Elders and Preachers in certain Churches are not sound in faith. Finding them, as he judges, erroneous, let him rebuke them before all. Let him say, in the Churches that are not complete, that he is come with authority to set all things in order. Let him assert, in those that are complete, that he comes with power to settle their differences, to rebuke their offending Elders, that the other Elders may learn not to offend. In one word, let him attempt to do the work of Timothy and Titus, and it is presumed, that even those who are fondest of bestowing dignity on preachers, would, with one voice, rebel, and ask him who gave him this authority. If he could not say, and make it good, that he received it from the Apostles, by producing the commission of an Evangelist, it is taken for granted, that all the Churches of Christ would justly disclaim him.

It was necessary to say this much of extraordinary offices in an essay professedly treating of the Elder's office. Much confusion of ideas has existed in blending these offices together; at least in endeavoring to borrow so much authority from the offices of Apostles and Evangelists, as to give greater sanctity and reverence to Elders. With every one rightly informed, the attempt has been ridiculous; with all others, such usurped autho-