

If by the former, the brother they have met to ordain is already an elder, from the church has already elected him. If by virtue of the latter, then we demand their apostolic genealogy; for the same necessity now asserted to exist, of having validly ordained bishops to ordain a bishop, must have existed at every ordination up to the Apostles.

Apostolic succession of hands is unproved and unproveable; and of no account if it were proved. Equally vain and empty must be the dependent theory of officers' presence being indispensable to ordain an officer. It must often have happened that a church came together to instal or ordain its *first* elder. And if it never happened, the unused right would be just as good as ever. The grand principle yet remains, that a church may do for itself all things necessary for its own complete organization; or, in the words of the first English "Declaration," (1658,) "Every particular society of visible professors, agreeing to walk together in the faith and order of the gospel, is a complete church, and has full power within itself to elect and ordain all church officers, to exclude all offenders, and to do all other acts relating to the edification and well-being of the church."

When an ordination to eldership seems to be done by the church at large, (by elders from various churches,) it is easy to fall into the fallacy that the ordained has some sort of general office-power too. If *their* office-power in anywise extends beyond their own particular churches, why may not *his*? And, still holding the principle that inside the great domain of the church universal, there are no other lines than the limits of the individual churches, it is easy to think that if these lines are overstepped, (in an ordination under the authority of a council or presbytery,) there is an office-power conferred co-extensive with the church universal. But if there is no such virtue, and no such right,—if this matter of ordination remains intact with each individual church, as much as the power of managing its own finances, why is it, that in this matter alone, one individual church seeks to impinge upon any other, in its free action of constituting officers for itself, and giving them a *status* that cannot be impugned. If we elect officers for ourselves, all the churches will recognize them as such, and respect them. But if we presume to elect officers for the church at large, it is not to be wondered at, if we are at times mortified at the turn events may take. The power of a representative cannot be greater than that of his constituents. And if a man's office-power (I desire carefully to distinguish between this and preaching, and in many other ways serving the churches,) depends on the action of one individual church, it cannot be a hardship that his election and ordination by that individual church has not the same relation to every other church that it has to his own. When he resigns that office, he lays down all the office-power the church gave him, and becomes again the simple preacher of the gospel which any other christian may be. But his membership, his eldership and office-power, ended in one church, may be begun *de novo* in another.

[Once more it falls to our lot to put in a *caveat* against the High-Church Independency of our esteemed contributor. To us the above article seems to be haunted too much by the ideas of "office," "status," and "power," in reference to the ministry of the Gospel; while the New Testament speaks of it rather as a "work." Again, the writer says but little of a Divine "call" to be "separated unto the Gospel;" a call preceding and independent of that of the church, and which the church has simply to ascertain and recognise. Such a call is a different thing from the general commission