

P O L I T Y
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES:

BEING

A N E X P O S U R E

OF THE SPURIOUS ORIGIN OF METHODIST EPISCOPACY:—THE TYRANNICAL NATURE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH:—THE UNJUST AND DANGEROUS CONTROL OF CHURCH PROPERTY BY THE CLERGY OF THAT SECT:—THE SUPERIOR PROVISION MADE FOR THEIR TEMPORAL SUPPORT:—THE MODE OF RAISING THEIR SUPPLIES:—THE MORAL MACHINERY OF METHODISM, ITS RELIGIOUS CHARACTER, FRUITS, &c. &c.

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BY REV G. W. MUSGRAVE,

Bishop of the Third Presbyterian Church of Baltimore.  
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“The opinion that it is dangerous to oppose fanaticism, lest we hinder the work of God, is most unfounded.”—*Dr. Alexander*, page 301.

“Well, as they *insist* upon it, *they shall have it*:”—“and if, in exhibiting the proof, any damage should be done to those who have so pertinaciously insisted upon its exhibition, on *them*—not on me—must rest the responsibility.”—*The Author*, pp. 17 and 18.

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# THE POLITY

OF THE

## METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

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### INTRODUCTION.

FOR many years, and without the slightest provocation, “The General Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” under the care and control of the General Conference, have been issuing hostile and offensive publications against the Presbyterian Church—assailing not only her doctrines, but endeavouring to destroy the character and influence of her ministry and people. In addition to the extensive circulation of these tracts, incessant efforts have been made, both from the pulpit and from house to house, to misrepresent the Presbyterian church, and to prejudice the community against us. Yea, even the members of our flocks have been tampered with, and various dishonourable means employed to seduce them from the church of their fathers. All this was patiently borne, from an extreme reluctance to have any controversy with our neighbours; until one of their controversial tracts, on the subject of election, was left, on a sabbath morning, at my private residence! This I could not but consider as a personal insult, and as an impudent challenge to a defence of the doctrine as held by our church.

Accordingly, on the same day, I informed my people of what had taken place, and announced my determination to commence, on the following sabbath, an exposition and vin-

dication of our belief on the subject of the Divine decrees. On that day, and the sabbath succeeding, the two lectures were delivered, which, at the request of the congregation, have since been published.\* In those lectures, I confined myself, almost exclusively, to a *defence* of the doctrine as held by the Presbyterian Church, and barely alluded to, what we consider, the errors of the Methodist Episcopal Church; referring, in a note, for proof and fuller information, to a work entitled “The Difficulties of Arminian Methodism.”

Exception, however, was taken to one or two expressions, contained in the lectures, on the subjects of clerical control of church property, and ministerial support, by a writer in the “Clipper,” and the charges implied flatly denied—without naming the author to whom I had referred in proof. Still desirous of avoiding an offensive controversy with that denomination, I replied through the same channel; and having furnished the public with the reference which he had omitted, I was disposed to leave the whole matter to their examination and decision. His first card, and my answer, were as follow:

“ TO THE EDITORS OF THE BALTIMORE CLIPPER.

“ *Gentlemen*—In a pamphlet, entitled a ‘Brief Exposition and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Divine Decrees.’ &c., by Rev. G. W. Musgrave, Bishop of the Third Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, I have noticed the following passage in reference to Methodism. ‘The government and discipline of that sect are anti-republican and tyrannical—the entire control of all church property by their clergy, is both

\* An edition of these lectures has been more recently issued at Philadelphia, by “The Presbyterian Board of Publication;” and copies may be had, in this city, at the store of the Presbyterian Tract Society.

unjust to the people who contribute the funds, and dangerous in its tendency to public liberty.' (Page 38.)

“ My object in calling attention to this passage, is to correct an error which seems unaccountably to prevail, about the control of Methodist church property. You will perhaps be surprised to learn that the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church do not own a church or a parsonage in the United States—and that the acknowledged pastor of a Methodist Church cannot take up a collection in it, or even invite any other than a Methodist preacher to preach in it, without the assent of the trustees. You will also be surprised to learn, that the Methodist Churches in this city belong to a corporation consisting of all the male members above the age of twenty-one years. The preachers have no control over the current funds of the church. The means of ministerial support are raised by weekly contributions in class meetings. These are received by the leaders, who are all laymen, and by them paid over to the stewards, who are laymen. When a preacher is sent by the bishop to a particular station, he is met by a committee of laymen appointed by laymen, who inquire into the probable wants of his family, and fix the amount of his salary. The preacher has no right to stipulate for compensation. He must take what is offered him; and should the stewards not be able to pay what they promised, (which unfortunately often happens,) by an express article of the discipline, it is provided that the church shall not be accountable for the deficiency, as in case of debt.

“ On the other hand, if a preacher be sent to a station, and the stewards, sustained by the membership, refuse to make any provision for him, he has no means of obtaining a cent.

“ The only church property controlled by the clergy, besides an inconsiderable fund in Philadelphia, is the book es-



tablishment in New York. This establishment is a *benevolent one*, being instituted with a view to the assistance of the worn-out preachers, and the widows and orphans of such as die in the ministry. To this end, with the exception of so much as is required for the salaries of the bishops, the profits of the concern are devoted; and when you learn that these profits are divided between thirty-three Annual Conferences, and by them subdivided for the relief of necessitous cases, you will, I trust, dismiss any apprehension that the liberties of the country are in danger from this source.

“With regard to the Rev. Mr. Musgrave’s opinion of Methodism or Methodists, I have nothing to say. I believe that he is entirely honest both in the entertainment and avowal of his sentiments upon this subject. Mr. Musgrave is an able, pious and useful man; and I would be sorry, even by a defence of what is as dear to me as my own life, to draw him into a controversy which would divert him from the nobler work of an evangelist. I prefer to wait until a better acquaintance with the people he thinks so badly of shall correct the erroneous opinions he has hastily formed about them.

“As to the error which I have taken the liberty to correct, I have no doubt that Mr. Musgrave has fallen into it by placing too much confidence in the statements of a writer, whose book is entirely unworthy a place in a clergyman’s library.”

“A METHODIST.”

*July 29th, 1842.*

“TO THE EDITORS OF THE CLIPPER.

“*Gentlemen*:—A friend has called my attention to an article, published in your paper of Friday last, and signed ‘A Methodist.’

“If the respected writer had *named the author* to whom I referred in support of the statements to which he takes exception, so that the public might be able to examine the official and documentary proofs upon which they rest, I should not have thought it necessary to reply. But as he has not done this, and as many who may read his article may not read the pamphlet, I judge it expedient to state, through your columns, that *the proof* of what I had briefly alluded to in my lectures, can be seen in a work entitled ‘The Difficulties of Arminian Methodism,’ letters 7th and 8th—and which can be had at the bookstore of Owen & Son’s, Market street, a few doors east of Gay street. The respectability of that author, and the credibility of his work are not to be destroyed by a dash of the pen, especially when recommended by such men as the venerable Drs. Alexander and Elliott;—and besides, his statements are substantiated by the ‘Book of Discipline,’ and other authorities, which are decisive.

“I sincerely reciprocate the respectful and kind feelings of ‘A Methodist;’ and if *all* of that sect would manifest the same charitable feelings towards Presbyterians, and desist from their unprovoked assaults upon our church, we should have no occasion to say any thing, in self-defence, that could wound their feelings, or interrupt our mutual intercourse and Christian fellowship.”

“G.W. MUSGRAVE.”

*August 1.*

Contrary to my expectation and wishes, the writer published a second article in the Clipper, thus:

“TO THE EDITORS OF THE CLIPPER.

“The Rev. Mr. Musgrave’s card is very unsatisfactory. In the common walks of life, nothing justifies a man in hold-

ing up another to public odium, unless the accuser has taken all possible pains to acquaint himself with the facts in question, and is prepared to sustain the accusation by the facts. If such caution be required in the ordinary affairs of life, it cannot be dispensed with when a clergyman avails himself of the authority of the sacred desk to arraign a large number of respectable people before the bar of public opinion as enemies of the commonwealth. Mr. Musgrave has volunteered to accuse the Methodist Episcopal Church of certain things, the very mention of which, is calculated to create distrust and hatred towards the preachers and people of that denomination, and when opportunity is given him to sustain his charges, it will not do to refer to another man, and cast the responsibility upon him. We do not choose to take Mr. Annan as Mr. Musgrave's substitute. By endorsing the assertions of Mr. Annan, Mr. Musgrave has deliberately made himself responsible for the truth of them. It is with us to choose with whom the issue shall be made, and we choose the endorser rather than the drawer, for the reason that Mr. Musgrave's is by far the more respectable and influential name.

“There are various reasons why no man who values his own respectability ought to put himself into an antagonist position to Mr. Annan or his book. To all who know anything about the economy of Methodism, the following extract from the ‘Difficulties’ will be sufficient warrant for this opinion. ‘Preachers pass the revenue laws—preachers collect the tax—preachers meet in secret conclave and divide the spoil—in other words, fix the amount of their own salary, and allow themselves the sums, they in their wisdom, may consider lawfully due for their important services—but no eye or hand of a layman must presume to interfere in these transactions.’ (Page 297.)

“ It would be hard to find in any apocryphal writing more untruths in so few lines. To have been able thus to economize words in such a profusion of misstatements, argues a natural ability for misconception, and an amount of experience in slander, which is as curious as it is rare. It would be as wise to controvert Baron Munchausen as Rev. Mr. Annan.

“ But Mr. Musgrave appeals to the ‘Discipline.’ It is much to be regretted that he did not quote the passages which he has so egregiously misinterpreted, for I cannot find any that could be easily misunderstood.

“ The Discipline certainly does *not* sustain Mr. Musgrave. It distinctly recognizes that all contributions for the support of the gospel shall be *voluntary*—no man is *taxed*. Some give much, many give a little, and many more give nothing; every man doing as he sees fit—the Discipline merely ‘ recommends,’ that collections be taken up for this purpose. Again, the Discipline directs the money to be paid, not to the preacher, but to certain laymen, called stewards—who are responsible, not to the preacher, but to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, essentially a lay body, ‘ which shall have power to dismiss or change them at pleasure.’

“ With regard to the salary of the preacher, the amount allowed for their house, furniture, and table expenses, if they have families, or for their board, if they have not, is estimated by a committee of laymen, as I before stated. The only amount named by the Discipline, in connexion with a preacher’s support, is, that each preacher shall be allowed annually 100 dollars, if single; and 200 if married; together with an allowance of 16 dollars for every child under seven, and 24 for all between the age of seven and fourteen years. This regulation is obligatory upon one side only. It prevents the preachers from receiving more, but does not re-

quire the people to pay so much. The necessity for naming a sum, arises from this, that all the overplus of funds raised by one circuit may go to lessen the deficiency of another—of course, there must be some standard by which this overplus and deficiency may be regulated. Again, unless there was some nominal allowance of this kind, the funds raised to eke out deficiencies could not be fairly distributed, as it would be impossible to make an equitable dividend to claimants. There must be an *allowance* before *deficiency* can be made apparent. (Sec. III. and IV.)

“As to the church property, the Discipline recommends a deed of settlement, (page 161) in which the property is conveyed to trustees ‘for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal church.’ The only right reserved to the preachers, is the right to preach in the church when regularly appointed to do so. Less than this could not secure the property for the use of the members of the church, as otherwise the trustees might shut out the Methodist preachers and give up the church to our friend Mr. Musgrave, or somebody else, who might preach very disagreeable doctrines.

“The preacher has the power of nominating trustees in case of vacancy. This has been said to give him control over them. If so, the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, *controls* the judiciary of this country, as he nominates the judges of the supreme court. The security of the judiciary is, that the judges are not responsible to or removable by the president. And so with us, the stewards and trustees are neither responsible to nor removable by the preacher. In fact, but few of our churches are held under this deed of settlement. In this city the trustees fill their own vacancies, and in most of the eastern conferences the trustees are elected by the membership.

“ The Methodists of this city now wait for whatever evidence Mr. Musgrave may adduce in substantiation of his charges. He must make good his assertions, or frankly acknowledge his mistake, unless he would abide under the imputation of ‘bearing false witness against his neighbour.’”

*August 3.*

“ A METHODIST.”

In reply to the above, I issued the following:—

“ A CARD.

“ Since my return to the city, I have seen the second article, signed ‘ A Methodist.’ I had hoped that the reference which I gave, in reply to the first article, would have been sufficient, as I did not wish to be forced into an offensive controversy with that denomination. It appears, however, that my card was ‘ very unsatisfactory,’ and that the Methodists are ‘ waiting’ for the proof of what I had briefly alluded to in my recent lectures.

“ Well, as they *insist* upon it, *they shall have it*. I will not, however, confine myself to the single points excepted to by ‘ A Methodist,’ but shall take the liberty of discussing the general subject of the government and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and as soon as my pastoral and other engagements will allow, I will publish, in pamphlet form, the results of my examination.\* In the mean time, I may be permitted to say, that I am fully convinced

\*In consequence of previous engagements, a considerable period elapsed before I could find time to devote to this work. I then prepared a short pamphlet, agreeably to my original intention; but, on further reflection, and at the instance of some, for whom I have the highest respect, I resolved to publish a more full and extended exposure of the whole subject. This will account for the *delay* in the publication, as well as for the *form* in which it appears.

of the truth of all that I have stated, notwithstanding what has been written by 'A Methodist,' and will, in due time, exhibit the proof to the satisfaction of the public."

*August 10.*

"G. W. MUSGRAVE."

Having thus given a brief sketch of the circumstances under which I have been forced, contrary to my inclination, to this painful task, I will now proceed to redeem the pledge which was thus extorted from me: and after having done this, the public may judge, whether my reluctance to enter upon it has proceeded from any want of confidence in my ability to substantiate the facts to which I had only briefly alluded in my lectures, or from a sincere desire to avoid all unnecessary exposure of the errors and faults of a Christian denomination. Even in this compulsory performance, it is my purpose to say no more than is, in my judgment, indispensable, to protect myself against the public threat of dishonor and falsehood!—and if, in exhibiting the proof, any damage should be done to those who have so pertinaciously insisted upon its exhibition, on *them*, not on me, must rest the responsibility.

Before I proceed, however, the reader will indulge me with a few remarks.

The author of the work entitled "The Difficulties of Arminian Methodism," has been spoken of, by "A Methodist," with the greatest contempt, and his book denounced as unworthy of credit. This is a very easy and convenient method of getting rid of testimony which is too conclusive to be disproved! and if every party accused were allowed thus to decide upon the character and credibility of witnesses brought to testify against them, their acquittal would indeed be certain and triumphant! But whatever may be the peculiarities of "*medical* jurisprudence," it is believed that, in

every *other* department of law and justice, the court, or jury,—and not the accused,—determine the competency and credibility of witnesses: and in this case, the public,—and not “A Methodist,”—must decide. In referring to the Rev. Mr. Annan’s work, I was not so immodest as to insist upon the sufficiency of *my* endorsement, against the protest of so distinguished a personage as —— ———, alias “A Methodist;” —but I did venture to think that, notwithstanding *his* opinion, the recommendation of such men as the venerable Drs. Alexander and Elliott, would be regarded by the public as ample security for the respectability and credibility of the witness. The truth is, such an expression of contempt, by “A Methodist,” of the character and work of a gentleman so recommended, could only excite a smile, were it not so disgustingly unbecoming and reprehensible. I desire to excuse, as far as possible—for no doubt the able work of Mr. Annan has greatly disturbed their equanimity and self-complacency—but such expressions of contempt of the character of a minister of the gospel, who has been convicted of no crime, is highly offensive, and deserves to be gravely and pointedly rebuked. But while I have felt it to be due to an absent gentleman to say thus much in vindication of his reputation—and now re-affirm that I have the utmost confidence in the truth of the general statements contained in his book—I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I am *not* dependent upon his testimony for the proof of what I referred to in my lectures.—They can be fully established by other writers, and by authorities entirely independent, as will presently appear.

The attempt of “A Methodist” to represent me as *the aggressor* is futile. The truth is, I had repeatedly heard of the gross and vulgar caricatures of the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church by one and another of the Methodist clergy,



and had often been informed of the misrepresentations which had been privately made by many members of that sect with a view to disaffect the people of my charge against my ministry and the denomination to which they are attached, and yet, until the tract to which I have previously referred had been left at my private dwelling, I had never, in the whole course of my pastoral life, preached a single controversial discourse on the doctrine of Divine decrees. And the lectures which I then delivered were almost exclusively *defensive*, and contain only a few brief allusions to the polity, &c., of the Methodist Episcopal Church. How justly might I therefore *retort* on many of the preachers and members of that sect, who have been engaged for years, both in public and in private—from the pulpit and the press—and from house to house, in endeavouring not only to render our sentiments abhorrent, but to make even our persons and character odious? What a pity that those who seem to be so sensitive, when the slightest allusion is made to *their* doctrines and polity, and that, too, under circumstances so provoking—should appear to have so little regard for the reputation and feelings of others, quite as “respectable,” if not as numerous as themselves; and that they should, in their violent and unprovoked attacks upon their neighbours, remain apparently so insensible to their own responsibilities!

The quotation from the work of Mr. Annan, in connexion with the regret expressed by “A Methodist,” that I had not cited the passages from the Discipline, which prove the statements of Mr. Annan, is about as *candid* as his attempt to represent me as having been the unprovoked assailant of the Methodist Church. Where, had I “appealed to the Discipline” in proof of the particular statements and expressions contained in that quotation? Besides, did he verily believe, that Mr. Annan used the word “tax” in the sense

in which he represents him as having employed it? Or was he ignorant of the fact, that, at the time Mr. Annan wrote, the sessions of the General Conference (which is composed of clergymen exclusively,) were secret, and that it has only been within a few years past that any laymen are permitted to be present as spectators? But after all his affected contempt of the credibility of Mr. Annan, and his regret that I had not cited the Discipline in proof of the statements contained in that quotation, the very next sentence of Mr. Annan, reads thus:—"In proof of these statements, we refer to the Discipline, (pp. 167—172.)" !!! It is almost incredible, but it is even so, as any one may see, by referring to Mr. Annan's work, p. 297. Now, how are we to account for this? How could any one thus stop short with a quotation, and express his regret that no reference had been given, when in fact, the reference was before his eyes in the very next sentence to that which he has quoted!—And not only so, but in the same breath to denounce a minister of the gospel as unworthy of credit—yea, as an unparalleled falsifyer and slanderer !!! Nor is this the only instance, I am sorry to say, in that short article, in which a quotation is abruptly terminated:—there is another, the remainder of which, had it been given, would have proven the very contrary of what the part was produced to establish! This latter instance I shall have occasion to expose when treating of the subject to which it refers, and shall therefore, for the present, pass it by.

Besides these, there are several things contained in the articles of "A Methodist," on which I should animadvert, if it were my intention to enter upon a *personal* controversy. But I have no such design. I will not, therefore, take any further notice of him; and shall only advert to what he has stated, when such advertence would serve to elucidate the

subjects on which I propose to write. His public demand for the proof of what I had alluded to in my lectures, has indeed been the *occasion* of my writing; but I shall use the occasion, not merely for the purpose of furnishing the evidence called for, but also for the purpose of discussing the whole subject—so far at least, as it shall appear to me to be desirable.

It may be proper also to remark, that it is not my intention in the exposure which I shall make of the errors and evils of Methodism, to disparage what is really true and good in that system. I cheerfully admit that there is much in it that is excellent; and as far as it is so, it has my cordial commendation and hearty good wishes. But that there is likewise much, very much that is false and evil, I am fully persuaded—and many of these errors and evils I shall freely expose. Nor is it my intention to involve *all* the clergy and members of that sect in many of the things on which I shall feel it to be my duty to animadvert. I have no doubt but that many of them disapprove of much of the spirit and conduct of others connected with them; and they should not therefore be held responsible for what they do not themselves sanction or practice. I have no doubt but that there are many truly pious and useful men, both among their clergy and laity; and I protest, in advance, against being considered as including *such* in some of the strictures which I shall make upon that denomination in general. I have no desire to deal in indiscriminate censure, and shall endeavour, in the progress of the discussion, duly to qualify my reflections; but if, in any case, I should inadvertently omit such qualification, I beg the reader to recollect the admissions and acknowledgments just made, and to supply the omission himself.

As to the spirit and manner of the performance, I will only say, that I shall endeavour to avoid all bitterness and

undue severity of language:—But this shall not prevent me from writing with that freedom and plainness which the due exposure of such errors and evils require. Some expressions of the witnesses whom I shall cite, I could wish had been a little more gentle; but I must not be regarded as approving of any thing that is unduly severe in the language of their testimony. I shall cite them in proof of certain facts, and to show what their opinions are in reference to certain matters; and, of course, I shall be obliged to let them speak in their own words, for which they alone should be considered as responsible. And it may not be amiss to add, as some men appear to have singular notions of the kind and degree of responsibility involved in a reference to an author in support of specified and general propositions, that in the extended quotations which I shall make from other writers, I hold myself responsible only for the truth of the positions, in the support of which, they are avowedly made, and for the intelligence and respectability of the writers themselves. Of some of the facts stated by them, I can have no personal knowledge, and their opinions on the subjects of which they treat, must rest upon their individual authority. All that any reasonable man can require, is, that the witnesses produced, shall be gentlemen of intelligence and probity, and entitled to the confidence of the reader. Some of them are well known, and have been highly distinguished—most of their statements are corroborated by official and documentary references—and those which rest upon their own observation or authority, the reader will receive with as much deference as, in his judgment, they are fairly entitled to.

The paragraph contained in my lectures, page 38, to which exception has been taken, is as follows:—“With regard to the GOVERNMENT and DISCIPLINE of those who have

so violently and wantonly assailed our church, it would be easy to show,—that the origin of *Methodist* EPISCOPACY is perfectly ludicrous;—that the *government and discipline* of that sect are ANTI-REPUBLICAN and TYRANNICAL;—that *the entire control of all church property* BY THEIR CLERGY, amounting, as it does, to hundreds of thousands of dollars, and annually increasing, is both UNJUST TO THE PEOPLE who contribute the funds, and DANGEROUS IN ITS TENDENCY TO PUBLIC LIBERTY;—and that, notwithstanding their ungenerous and invidious comparisons, they are, *indirectly, but substantially and really* BETTER PROVIDED FOR, AS TO TEMPORALITIES, than the clergy of other Christian denominations.”

Why the proof of the statements contained in the foregoing paragraph should have been so pertinaciously insisted on, it is difficult to say—unless the gentle and *deprecatory* style of my first card should have made the impression, that no taunt, however provoking—no threat, however insulting, could induce me to enter into a public discussion. It is true that I have never before allowed myself to be turned aside from my pastoral work to engage in an offensive controversy with any sect; and I would gladly have been excused, as I virtually begged to be, in the present instance. And I felt the greater reluctance to enter upon this task, because the government and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been discussed, not many years since, in this city, to a very considerable extent, and with much ability, by the Methodist Reformers;—and because most of the material facts in the case, had been, by them, and other writers, presented to the public. However, as no alternative was left me but to republish the proof, or submit to the imputation of falsehood and slander, I could not but determine to reproduce the challenged evidence. But, notwithstanding, there

will be some advantages in the present work:—The subject will be again brought to the notice of the community, and the testimony which is now scattered through various publications, will be brought together, and made more accessible to the generality of readers. Besides, the *Reformers* confined their examination chiefly to those principles of the government and discipline of their church which militated against their rights as local preachers, and left untouched many other matters connected with “practical Methodism,” which are highly interesting and important.—On these latter subjects, I have collected what I thought valuable in the writings of others—which will, in my judgment, greatly add to the interest and utility of the whole.

With these prefatory remarks, I will now proceed to offer the required proof upon each of the topics embraced in the paragraph above, quoted from my lectures, and in the order in which they are stated: and having done this, I shall add a chapter or two, as I have already intimated, on some other matters connected with the system of Methodism, which I trust will not be either “unsatisfactory” or unprofitable to the reader.



## CHAPTER I.

### METHODIST EPISCOPACY.

Its dubious origin,—in all probability “surreptitiously” introduced.—If understood in the *prelatical* sense, it is utterly spurious and invalid,—if not regarded as prelatical, the manner in which it is spoken of is supremely ridiculous.—The application of “Bishop” Coke to Bishop White for re-ordination.—The validity of the *Presbyterial* ordination of Methodist preachers.—The admissions of Bishop White relative to the validity of Presbyterial ordinations.—According to the Scriptures there is but one permanent order of ministers in the church of Christ.

THE origin of Methodist Episcopacy is thus stated in “The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” chapter I., section 1, viz:—“The preachers and members of our society in general, being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the Church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the Christian sacraments, as several of the clergy had forsaken their churches, requested the late Rev. *John Wesley* to take such measures, in his wisdom and prudence, as would afford them suitable relief in their distress.

“In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who, under God, had been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth, by the means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America; and for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three regularly ordained clergy: but preferring the Episcopal mode of church government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by the imposi-



tion of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz., *Thomas Coke*, doctor of civil law, late of Jesus College, in the University of Oxford, and a presbyter of the Church of England, for the episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart *Francis Asbury*, then general assistant of the Methodist Society in America, for the same episcopal office; he, the said *Francis Asbury*, being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which, the said *Francis Asbury* was solemnly set apart for the said episcopal office by prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the said *Thomas Coke*, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the General Conference, held at Baltimore, did unanimously receive the said *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* as their bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination.”\*

As the origin of Methodist Episcopacy is thus officially ascribed to the preference of the Rev. John Wesley for the episcopal mode of church government, and he is represented as having ordained Dr. Coke a bishop, &c., it is a matter of interest with Methodists, whether Mr. Wesley *ever did* what is thus attributed to him? Certainly, as their episcopal form of government is thus made to rest—not on scripture, nor even expediency—but on the authority of their “venerable friend,” it is proper that the proof of his having preferred such a form of government, and of his having actually ordained Dr. Coke a bishop, should be produced.

The Rev. Alexander McCaine, who was for more than thirty years a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, declares in his “History and Mystery of Methodist Episco-

\* The edition of the Discipline used by me in this work is that of 1842—in cases where different editions are referred to, by others, the reader shall be apprized of it.

pany," page 8, that, "after searching for it for thirty-five years, we are no nearer the discovery now than we were when we commenced the search. No such 'counsel' is given by Mr. Wesley in his letter to Dr. Coke, nor in that which he addressed to 'Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America.' So far from this 'counsel' being contained in those official papers, the term '*episcopal*' is not to be found in either of them. Nor is there any expression, coming from Mr. Wesley's pen, which we have ever seen, in those papers, or elsewhere, that would justify us in saying, he 'recommended' the episcopal form of church government to the Methodist societies in the United States."

Mr. McCaine further states in his preface, that, previous to the publication of his History, he addressed a letter of inquiry to each of the Methodist bishops, "but from neither of them, has he received one word in reply. Failing to obtain information from this quarter, he addressed a letter to each of six of the oldest preachers in the connexion, men who were in the General Conference of 1784. And from the answers he has received from them, collated with other documents, he is fully established in the opinion that there never was a document, letter or paper received from Mr. Wesley, in which he recommended the episcopal mode of church government, to the American Methodists."

This opinion of the unauthorized use of Mr. Wesley's name in the introduction of the Methodist episcopacy, is greatly strengthened by the fact, that the letter of Mr. Wesley, upon which the account contained in their Book of Discipline of the origin of their episcopacy is founded, contains no such warrant. In that letter, Mr. Wesley says,— "I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury, to be joint *superintendents*, over our brethren in North America." This letter is published *in extenso* in Mr. Mc-

Caine's "History and Mystery," pp. 12 and 13,—and also, in Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," pp. 91—3; and if any one will compare it with the statement published in the Book of Discipline, they will see how great a disagreement there is between them. After placing both these documents before his readers, Mr. McCaine thus writes,—“The one was written by somebody, we know not by whom, for it has no name affixed to it, and has found its way into our Book of Discipline. The other was written by Mr. Wesley, himself, and bears his signature. The former was written several years after the adoption of the present form of government, which event took place in 1784; and it speaks of Mr. Wesley as ‘the *late* Rev. John Wesley,’ who died in 1791. The latter is dated ‘Bristol, Sept. 10, 1784,’ and is given (we repeat it) as the sole authority for our episcopal mode of church government. Between the former and the latter, there is manifestly a great disagreement. In the former, the term, ‘episcopal’ occurs six times, and the word ‘bishops’ once. In the latter, neither ‘episcopal’ nor ‘bishop,’ in their application to our church, is to be found at all. We are at a loss to conceive, how it could have been said, that ‘Mr. Wesley recommended the episcopal mode of church government,’ when there is not, in this letter, a single word recommendatory of it, from beginning to end.”—*History and Mystery*, p. 13.

Not only is there no evidence in the letter of Mr. Wesley, appointing Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury “joint superintendents,” that he recommended the episcopal mode of church government, or intended to invest them with “the episcopal office,” but there is very strong and decisive proof that he utterly disapproved and severely reprehended the episcopal assumption of those gentlemen. What could be more conclusive than the following letter, addressed to Mr. Asbury, after his assumption of the title of bishop?

“ *London, Sept. 20th, 1788.*

“ There is, indeed, a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans, and the relation wherein I stand to *all* the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore, I naturally care for you all, in a manner no other person can do. Therefore, I, in a measure, provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide, were it not for me—were it not, that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

“ But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be *little*, you study to be *great*; I *creep*, you *strut* along. I found a *school*, you a *college*. Nay, and call it after your own names! O, beware! Do not seek to be *something*! Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all.

“ One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call *me* a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a *bishop*! For my sake, for God’s sake, for Christ’s sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

“ Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart, and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely

I am your affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN WESLEY.”\*

\* Wesley’s Works, vol. VII., pp. 187 and 8, New York Ed., 1835.

Such language would seem to be too explicit and emphatic, to admit of any false construction; and yet, the Rev. Dr. John Emory, late one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in his "Defence of Our Fathers," sect. IX., attempts to evade its force, by alleging, that "it was to the *term* 'bishop' solely that he objected," and not to the office!! But such an explanation is utterly inadmissible, except at the expense of Mr. Wesley's character. For, if he did not object to the *thing*, and only to the *name*, such severe and vehement language is worse than ridiculous—it is profane!

But if Mr. Wesley did not recommend the episcopal mode of church government, it may be inquired, how was that form of government introduced among his followers in this country? A satisfactory answer to this inquiry would be very difficult, if not impossible, without impeaching the motives and conduct of its original founders. Mr. McCaine and others do not hesitate to affirm, from their elaborate examination of the early history of Methodist episcopacy, that it was introduced "*surreptitiously*"—by unlawful and dishonourable means. Certain it is, that the whole subject is to a great extent, involved in "mystery"—and that the reasons assigned, at different times, by the General Conference, for the formation of their Episcopal Church, are not the same—their general minutes not only differing on this subject from the Book of Discipline—but different editions of the Book of Discipline itself differing from each other!—See *McCaine's History*, pp. 18 and 19.

The following interesting sketch of the origin of Methodist episcopacy, may serve to throw some light upon the "mystery" in which it is involved:—It is taken from Dr. "Jennings's Exposition," &c., pp. 122—128.

“ We learn from the general minutes, that the first Methodist conference in America, was held in Philadelphia, in the year 1773. The minute says, this conference consisted of ten travelling preachers. A careful examination of the subject, has convinced us that six only, and these all Englishmen, were the acting members of the conference; Thomas Rankin, George Shadford, John King, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, and Robert Williams. Lee’s History says, this conference consisted of six or seven travelling preachers. The apparent uncertainty, about six or seven, grew out of the fact, that the name of Robert Strawbridge, an Irishman, and successful local preacher, of Pipe Creek, Frederick county, Maryland, is placed on the minute, as if one of their body. In the minute of 1774, his name is not found. In the year 1775, he appears to have been stationed in his own county. After that date, his name is no more to be seen. With Mr. Lee, therefore, we doubt the propriety of reckoning more than six. The remaining three, William Waters, Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yearly, were young men, received that year on trial, and admitted into the connexion the following year. The six English preachers, with Robert Strawbridge, the local preacher, including the three young men, make up the account of ten, as constituting the conference. Before this conference of six or seven British subjects, three great questions were proposed and answered;—answered, it would seem, by the six Englishmen. It would have been useless for Mr. Strawbridge to have objected to their views: and it is not probable that any one of the three young men, just received on trial, was prepared to look forward to ultimate consequences, or to make objections to the resolutions of those, from whom they were ready to receive instruction.

“The first question was, ‘ought not the authority of Mr. Wesley, and that conference, to extend to the *preachers* and *people* in America, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland?’\* In course, the English preachers answered, yes. And the remaining four thought of no other answer.

“The societies at that time amounted to eleven hundred and sixty. But they had no part in the transaction. The six, or seven, or ten preachers determined for them and all others who might afterwards be disposed to unite with them, that the whole of them should be subject to ‘the authority of Mr. Wesley, and that conference.’

“The second great question proposed, was: ‘ought not the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, as contained in the minutes, to be the **SOLE RULE OF OUR CONDUCT**, who labour in the connexion with Mr. Wesley, in America?’ To this question, they all answered, ‘yes.’ Reformers think, the word of God ought to have been the **SOLE RULE OF THEIR CONDUCT**, and not ‘the commandments of men.’ By this first question and answer, they had ‘*assumed*’ the prerogative, to subject all the American preachers and people, who had associated as Methodists, and all who might be inclined to unite with them, to ‘the authority of Mr. Wesley, and that conference.’ By the second question and answer, they ‘*assumed*’ the high prerogative of prescribing to all American Methodist preachers the ‘**SOLE RULE OF THEIR CONDUCT.**’

“The third great question, which was proposed as being inferable from the two preceding, evinces their *despotic* character and design, and reads as follows, viz: ‘If so, does it not follow, that if any preachers deviate from the minutes, we can have no fellowship with them till they change their

\*“This was the first formal assumption of these high prerogatives.”

conduct?' To this again, they answered, 'yes.' Now, to place these proceedings in their proper light, let it be recollected, that the Methodist societies under the authority of Mr. Wesley, in England, &c., did not constitute a church, separate and distinct from the established Church of England; they were generally made up of members of the church. Mr. Wesley was a regularly ordained presbyter of the national establishment. It was, therefore, a very large '*assumption*' of authority in the case of Mr. Wesley, himself, in Great Britain, to require the submission of a people, under the pastoral care of other ministers. But when these six Englishmen crossed the Atlantic, assembled themselves in Philadelphia, and placing themselves under the ban of Mr. Wesley's authority in England, asserted their intention to rule over all the Methodist preachers and societies then existing, or that might ever afterwards have an existence in America;—this was 'framing a church government, it was shaping a code and making ecclesiastical laws, according to their own model,' sure enough. Our brother Walker's view is correct.

"The authority of this first conference, commenced as above stated, and the dictatorial attitude which these six Englishmen then assumed, was so continued and made efficient in the training and management of the young preachers, raised up in America, and in the formation and drilling of the societies through their instrumentality, that within the term of little more than twelve years, things were in readiness for the formation of an establishment, by which all power is placed in the hands of the travelling preachers, and through which, they have gained a degree of ascendancy over the people, sufficient to induce them, 'without any itinerant suggestion or influence, whatever,' to expel from their communion, faithful servants of Jesus Christ, for having the boldness to call in question, the legitimacy or reasonable-



ness, of a system of church government, which still retains the powers so '*assumed.*'

“The mighty influence of these English preachers, and their manner of exercising it in view of its ultimate object, will be more satisfactorily understood by attending to an additional sketch or two from the history of those early times.

“From the date, 1773, the revolutionary troubles interrupted the progress of the work for several years; and we read in the preface of Lee's History of the Methodists, &c., page 5, 'there have been, in general, very many errors and imperfections in the minutes of the Annual Conferences.' We shall, therefore, take no notice of them from the year 1773 till 1779. In this year, 1779, two conferences were held. One at Mr. F. White's, in Delaware, the place of Mr. Asbury's retirement;—the other at the Broken-back church, in Fluvanna county, Virginia. According to the large minutes which were published in 1813, it appears that on the 28th April, 1779, sixteen preachers attended the conference at Mr. White's; and thirty-two at the Broken-back church, on the 18th of May following;—twenty-two days only, after the conference at Mr. White's. The number of preachers reckoned for the two conferences is forty-nine. \* We have been told, however, that the conference at Mr White's, was attended by Freeborn Garretson, Joseph Hartly, William Glendenning, Daniel Ruff, Joseph Cromwell, Thomas S. Chew, Thomas McClure, Caleb B. Peddicord, John Cooper, William Gill, and William Waters, who, together with Mr. Asbury, made up twelve in number. If this communication was erroneous, and the true number was sixteen, it will

\* “There must have been one absent, whose name was afterwards inserted.”

not materially change the view which we propose to take of these two conferences.

“ The conference at Mr. White’s, was convoked by Mr. Asbury, and if sixteen in number, it consisted of less than one-third of all the preachers who ought to have been present, in order to do the weighty business which was done by them.

“ One of the questions proposed and answered, was as follows:

“ ‘ Ought not brother Asbury to act as general assistant in America ?

“ ‘ *Ans.* He ought. 1st, On account of his age. 2d, Because originally appointed by Mr. Wesley. 3d, Being joined with Messrs. Rankin and Shadford, by express order from Mr. Wesley.’

“ Another question proposed and answered by the same conference, was as follows, viz:

“ ‘ How far shall his (brother Asbury’s) power extend ?

“ ‘ *Ans.* On hearing every preacher, for and against what is in debate; the right of determination shall rest with him, according to the minutes.’ That is, his power in America, shall be equal to Mr. Wesley’s in England.

“ The appointment of a general assistant, and the adoption of a resolution conferring upon him such plenary power, was an act of the greatest importance. At the time when this was done by eleven, or if we admit it, by fifteen, there were thirty-two other preachers, all absent. But the eleven, or say fifteen, ‘ *assumed* ’ the prerogative to say for the whole forty-nine, that Mr. Asbury ‘ *ought* ’ to rule over them all, after the manner above stated. To judge rightly of the extent of this ‘ ASSUMPTION,’ it must be recollected, that the regular conference \* was expected to meet in about twenty

\* “ Freeborn Garretson, in his last letter, recognizes this as the regular Conference.”

days, in Fluvanna county, Virginia, where, in fact, thirty-two did meet and pass resolutions, and adopted measures, promising to be more consistent with independent American views of church government. To make this measure plausible, Mr. Asbury held out this conference as one preparatory to the conference at Broken-back church, and appealed to a similar instance in Mr. Wesley's administration, in England:—not seeming to have perceived, that this appeal implicated his assumption of a standing parallel with that of Mr. Wesley. And it is the assumption of which we complain.

“In 1780, 24th April, a part of the preachers met in Baltimore, it would seem, at the instance, and under the special influence of Mr. Asbury. Shall not this conference be considered to have been a preparatory one, as well as that which met the year preceding, at Mr. White's? The regularly appointed conference was expected to meet at the Manakin Town, in Virginia, on the 8th day of next month, two weeks from that time. This second preparatory conference was composed of about fourteen or fifteen young men, nine of whom attended the conference at Mr. White's. To these nine were added, Messrs. John Hagerty, Richard Garretson, Micajah Debruler, Joshua Dudley, Philip Cox, perhaps, and John Tunnell. The large minutes would lead to the supposition that the conference consisted of twenty-four. But there were at least five young men received on trial, which would make the number of acting members to be nineteen. The minute seems to be marked with uncertainty. It is obvious, however, that the whole number of the preachers, as stated for the year 1780, is forty-two. In course, that nineteen of them met in Baltimore;—we will say nineteen, in order to conform to the minute, and these nineteen ‘*assumed*’ the power to ‘nullify’ the proceedings of the regular conference;—of the thirty-two who met the preceding year, at the Broken-back church, in Virginia.

“ Three questions were proposed and answered in accomplishing this nullification, viz:

“ ‘ *Quest.* 20. Does this whole conference,’ [all these nineteen preachers,] ‘ disapprove the step our brethren have taken in Virginia?’

“ ‘ *Ans.* Yes.

“ ‘ *Ques.* 21. Do we look upon them no longer as Methodists, in connexion with Mr. Wesley and us, till they come back?’

“ ‘ *Ans.* Agreed.

“ ‘ *Ques.* 26. What must be the conditions of our union with our Virginia brethren?’

“ ‘ *Ans.* To suspend all their administrations for one year, and all meet together in Baltimore.’

“ And was not this the most absolute dictation? To us it has that appearance.

“ Mr. Asbury’s influence must have been very considerable, or he could not have succeeded in carrying into effect, measures so inconsistent with the rights of the preachers. Under that influence a few of them ‘ *assumed*’ the right to act for the whole, in declaring him the General Assistant, and in awarding to him a degree of power, totally incompatible with American views of government of any kind. Under the same influence, another *preparatory* conference ‘ *assumed*’ the right to nullify the proceedings of a majority, and actually to declare the majority excluded from the fellowship of Mr. Wesley and themselves, unless they would submit to the dictation of the minority, and show their obedience by a strict regard of that dictation for one year, and then present themselves at Baltimore, ready for further orders.

“ The Virginians, although they had some disposition to assert their rights, were not able to resist the influence of

Mr. Asbury, whose authority was already admitted by the preachers to the North. We read in Lee's History, page 73, that Mr. Asbury 'met with the preachers in conference at Baltimore,' as has been already mentioned. He then visited his brethren in Virginia, and attended the conference at the 'Manakin Town,'\*\*\* and 'had to exert all his powers, and to use all possible prudence, in order to bring about a settled peace and union among all the preachers.' He might have said, *in order to bring all the preachers into the state of submission*, proposed and established by the eleven, at Mr. White's. It would seem, that the Virginians could not perceive at first sight, the weight of the reasons assigned for making Mr. Asbury general assistant, and clothing him with absolute power. The eleven had said he 'ought' to act in that capacity, because of his age. And how old was he? In 1771, when he came to America, he was twenty-six. In 1779, he was thirty-four. Virginians could not feel sufficient weight in thirty-four years, to justify the appointment. But the eleven had two additional reasons, or at least, one additional reason, twice told, so as to seem to have had three. They said he *ought* to act as general assistant, because 'he was originally appointed by Mr. Wesley.' Virginians knew, that Mr. Wesley did not originally appoint him to act as general assistant, but as an assistant only, and as inferior to Mr. Rankin. But to guard against this exception, which appears to have been anticipated by them, they state the reason over again, and admit the truth of the case, as if it were a third reason, and say, 'he *ought* to act as general assistant, *because he was joined* with Messrs. Rankin and Shadford, by express order from Mr. Wesley.' Virginians knew, that Mr. Wesley appointed one general assistant, and no more,—Mr. Rankin; and that Messrs. Shadford and Asbury, were assistants to Mr. Ran-

kin. They were not misinformed in respect to this matter. Mr. Rankin travelled at large himself, and appointed to Messrs. Shadford and Asbury, from year to year, their respective circuits and stations. As to the motive of Mr. Asbury, and those entering into his views, in aiding and sustaining him in these measures, by which he was daily gaining new accessions of power, we shall say nothing to the disparagement of his reputation. Mr. Wesley, had set the dictatorial example. Mr. Asbury, thought it best to follow on in his footsteps;—and, that he considered his course to be *apostolical*, his own journal bears ample testimony. But in view of the principles of government, it is undeniably true, that he had not any other than an ‘*assumed*’ authority, to convoke and organize a conference of twelve of the preachers, when the whole number of them was forty-nine. And when it is considered, that this ‘*assumption*’ was intended to forestall the regular conference, that was so soon to meet at Broken-back church, we are compelled to feel toward the measure, the greater objection. This unauthorized conference, had no right to appoint Mr. Asbury, general assistant. The writer of the minute seems to have been conscious of this, and the questions which were proposed and answered by the Englishmen in 1773, as well as those which were proposed and answered at Mr. Asbury’s conference, at Mr. White’s, were framed accordingly. When they had respect to the authority of the preachers, in the instance of 1773, and to the appointment of Mr. Asbury, in the instance of the Delaware conference; they were made to read thus: ‘Ought not the authority,’ &c.? ‘Ought not the doctrine,’ &c. And ‘ought not brother Asbury, to act as general assistant in America?’ As if it were a matter of doubt. And yet their decisions were acts of legislative purpose; and the question, which was intended to mark the extent of Mr. As-

bury's power, is obviously imperative; as thus: 'How far SHALL his power extend?' The Conference which was convened at Baltimore, consisting only of a part of the preachers, and obviously intended to forestall the depending conference at the Manakin Town, had none other than an '*assumed*' authority to nullify the proceedings of the majority at Broken-back church. Nevertheless, things went on after this manner, and Mr. Asbury continued to gain such an ascendancy over the south as well as over the north, that as early as the year 1782, he had pretty well secured all that was necessary. 'The conference in the north,' says Mr. Lee, 'was of the longest standing, composed of the oldest preachers; it was allowed greater privileges than that in the south; especially in making rules and forming regulations for the societies. Accordingly, when any thing was agreed to, in the Virginia conference, and afterwards disapproved of, in the Baltimore conference, it was dropped. But if any rule was fixed on at the Baltimore conference, the preachers in the south were under the necessity of abiding by it.' With these things in view, we cannot be surprized, that the preachers were prepared by the year 1784, for the adoption of an episcopal form of church government so constructed, as to exclude the people and local preachers from their conferences, and secure to themselves and their successors, all power to legislate, and all authority to execute the discipline of their church.

"It is due to the lay brethren, to state, that all these matters were conducted by the preachers alone. The people had no part nor lot in the matter."

The following account of the unauthorized *assumption* of the title of "*bishop*," by those whom Mr. Wesley had appointed, in 1784, plain "*superintendents*," may also serve to throw some light on the early history of Methodist epis-

copacy. It is taken from Lee's "Short History," &c. pp. 127—129:—

"In the course of this year," [1787, or three years after the organization of the Methodist *Episcopal* Church,] "Mr. Asbury reprinted the General Minutes; but in a different form from what they were before. The tittle of this pamphlet was as follows:

"'A Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America,' &c.

"In this discipline, there were thirty-one sections, and sixty-three questions, with answers to them all.

"The third question in the second section, and the answer, read thus:

"'Q. Is there any other business to be done in conference?

"'A. The electing and ordaining of bishops, elders, and deacons.'

"This was the first time that our superintendents ever gave themselves the title of bishops in the minutes. **THEY CHANGED THE TITLE THEMSELVES WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CONFERENCE;** and at the next conference they asked the preachers if the word *bishop* might stand in the minutes; seeing that it was a scripture name, and the meaning of the word *bishop*, was the same with that of superintendent." [!!!]

"Some of the preachers," continues Mr. Lee, "opposed the alteration, and wished to retain the former title; but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word *bishop* remain; and in the annual minutes for the next year, the first question is, 'Who are the bishops of our church for the United States?'

"In the third section of this form of discipline, and in the sixth page, it is said, 'we have constituted ourselves into an *episcopal church*, under the direction of *bishops, elders, deacons* and *preachers*, according to the form of ordination an-



nexed to our Prayer Book, and the regulations laid down in this form of discipline.' From that time the name of bishop has been in common use among us, both in conversation and in writing."

I shall not pursue this part of the subject any further, because, although the question whether Mr. Wesley did or did not recommend the episcopal form of church government, may be regarded as highly important, by Methodists, who entertain so great a deference for his authority, yet, to the public at large, it is not material.—Those, however, who may desire to see this point more fully discussed, are referred to Mr. McCaine's History, and Dr. Emory's Defence.

But, supposing that Mr. Wesley *did* ordain Dr. Coke a prelatical bishop, and direct him to confer the same episcopal office on Mr. Asbury,—by what authority, we inquire, did he presume so to do? Mr. Wesley was a *presbyter* in the Church of England, and so was Dr. Coke. Now, by what ecclesiastical authority, could one presbyter make another presbyter, a prelatical bishop! How could he confer, what he did not himself possess? How could he invest his equal with an authority greater than his own? It was well remarked, that if Dr. Coke was raised by Mr. Wesley to a rank above a presbyter, and invested with superior powers, then "he that was sent, was greater than he that sent him!" And the strange anomaly was seen of the inferior giving his superior his instructions, and not only calling him to an account for his episcopal acts, but actually punishing him for his alleged misconduct!! Or, as the Rev. Dr. Horne, bishop of Norwich observed,—“if a presbyter can ordain a bishop, then the greater is blessed of the less, and the order of all things is inverted.” The truth is, that if such an attempt was really made, it was not only necessarily abortive, but supremely ridiculous!

Equally amusing it is to observe the confusion of ideas—the self-contradictions—and the awkward shuffling of the apologists of Dr. Coke's "episcopal" ordination in particular, and the defenders of Methodist episcopacy in general. When pressed by the undeniable want of authority on the part of presbyter Wesley to ordain Dr. Coke a prelatical bishop, they deny that he intended to make him a bishop in that sense—and allege that their bishops are *not* a distinct order superior to presbyters, but only invested with a superior executive office' But when they undertake to defend their episcopacy in general—and to justify the exercise of episcopal rights and powers on the part of their bishops, why then, forsooth, Mr. Wesley *did* intend to create Dr. Coke, and through him, his successors, bishops "in fact," with all the rights and powers of prelatical bishops, and they affirm that their bishops *do* constitute a distinct order, &c. &c.!!

Thus, Dr. Emory, in his Defence, sec. V., says,—in reply to the alleged absurdity of Mr. Wesley's attempting to ordain Dr. Coke a bishop in the common acceptation of that term,—“Now, *if* Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke in no such sense;—*if* he pretended to no such thing;—*if* neither our bishops nor the Methodist Episcopal Church have ever pretended to any such thing,—what then? Why, then it follows, that all the smart sayings on this transaction, which have been repeated and copied from my lord bishop of Norwich down to Mr. McCaine, are wholly wide of the mark,” &c.

Thus, also, Dr. Bond, sen., in his “Narrative and Defence,” page 66, says—“As to the charge of our having at any time considered our bishops as a distinct ministerial order, contra-distinguished from, and superior to, presbyters or elders, it has no foundation in fact. The very circumstance

of our having acknowledged the *right* of elders to ordain, is a sufficient refutation of the allegation. We consider the episcopacy a superior office in the church—not a distinct ministerial order; and this is the light in which it has been considered ever since its institution.”

This is all very plain—but let us take, *per contra*, one or two specimens of their defence of Methodist episcopacy in general:—

Dr. Emory, in his Defence, sec. VII., thus writes—“ We assert with confidence, that any intelligent, candid and impartial man, who shall examine this Prayer Book, will say, either that Mr. Wesley intended to establish the ordination of an order of superintendents, to act as bishops *in fact*, though with the title of superintendents; or, that he did not intend to establish the ordination of any orders of ministers at all; and that ‘ our fathers utterly mistook the whole affair.’ The preceding remark is confirmed by this fact. The forms recommended to us by Mr. Wesley for ‘ ordaining of *superintendents, elders, and deacons,*’ are precisely similar to those used by the Church of England, and by the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, for ordaining of ‘ bishops, priests, and deacons.’ The only difference is, that Mr. Wesley somewhat abridged the forms, with a few verbal alterations, and substituted the title ‘ superintendent’ for ‘ bishop,’ just as he did that of ‘ elder’ for ‘ priest.’ So that it is plain, if by ‘ superintendent,’ he did not mean *that order of ministers denominated by those churches ‘ bishops,*’ neither by ‘ elder,’ did he mean that order of ministers denominated by those churches ‘ priests.’ In whatever sense distinct ordinations constitute distinct orders, in the same sense *Mr. Wesley certainly intended that we should have THREE ORDERS.* For he undeniably instituted three distinct ordinations.” !!

Thus, also, in the article published by the Rev. Messrs. N. Bangs and J. Emory, in Buck's Theological Dictionary, edition 1825, it is said,—“As to the government, the title sufficiently ascertains its distinctive character, it being in fact, and in name, *episcopal*. **THREE ORDERS** of ministers are recognized, and the duties peculiar to each are clearly defined.”!!!

Let us place this testimony in juxta-position:—

*Dr. Bond, sen.*

“As to the charge of our having at any time considered our bishops as a *distinct ministerial order*, contra-distinguished from, and superior to, presbyters or elders, it has no foundation in fact.”

*Dr. Emory.*

“*In whatever sense distinct ordinations constitute distinct orders, in the same sense Mr. Wesley certainly intended that we should have three orders.* For he undeniably instituted three distinct ordinations.”

*Dr. Bond, sen.*

“We consider the episcopacy a superior *office* in the church—*NOT a distinct ministerial order*; and this is the light in which it has been considered ever since its institution.”

*Mess. N. Bangs & J. Emory.*

“*Three orders* of ministers **ARE** recognized, and the duties peculiar to each are clearly defined.”

Now, in reply to these consistent apologists and defenders, we say,—that either Mr. Wesley intended to ordain Dr. Coke a *prelatical* bishop, or he did not:—Either the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church are in fact prelatical bishops, or they are not. If Mr. Wesley intended, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, to raise Dr. Coke to a higher order in the ministry, and to invest him with

episcopal powers, in the *prelatical* sense, then did he assume an authority which did not belong to him, and the whole transaction was a contemptible trifling with sacred things! But if this was *not* intended—if neither Dr. Coke, nor his successors in the episcopal office, were made prelatical bishops, then the whole account of their ordination, &c., is not only ludicrous, but adapted to convey a totally false impression! To allege that the Methodist bishops are not bishops in the prelatical sense, and yet, to adopt the form of episcopal ordination employed in the Church of England, and to use the same terms in describing their order, office, succession, powers, &c., which are used in describing those of bishops in the common or prelatical sense, is, I repeat it, supremely ridiculous—if not something a great deal worse! Who would ever dream, in reading the pompous account contained in their Book of Discipline of the “episcopal” ordination of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, or the forms directed to be used in the ordination of their bishops, taken almost *verbatim* from the liturgy of the Episcopal Church of England, that their bishops are not to be regarded as bishops in the usual or prelatical sense? If nothing more is intended, by their distinct “episcopal” ordination, than the conferring upon them, the power of general superintendence, why talk about “three distinct orders”!—or make so much ado about “the *validity* of their *episcopal* ordination”!!—or breathe a word about their due “order and succession”!!!—Why borrow a form of episcopal ordination from a church, which is only used by that church in the ordination of prelatical bishops, and then gravely argue, that, because the same *ceremony* is employed, the same *powers*, &c., are of course conferred!!! If men will perpetrate such nonsense, they need not wonder that they are laughed at for their simplicity—and by none more heartily than Episcopalians themselves, whose forms they so absurdly follow.

To cap the climax of this absurdity, it appears that “bishop” Coke, after he had been made, as is alleged, a bishop “in fact,” by Mr. Wesley, and of the “validity” of whose “episcopal” ordination the General Conference say they were “fully satisfied,”—not being *himself* satisfied, applied to bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, for *re-ordination*! In the humiliating letter which he addressed to bishop White, he says,—“He (Mr. Wesley) did indeed solemnly invest me, AS FAR AS HE HAD A RIGHT SO TO DO, ! with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place. \*\*\*\* Our ordained ministers will not, ought not, to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I don’t think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a re-ordination, if other hindrances were removed out of the way”!!—that is, if the knowledge of the learned languages, &c., usually required, could be dispensed with! This extraordinary letter of “bishop” Coke to bishop White—which he might well ask the latter to “burn,” in case he had no thought of improving the proposal—and a letter of bishop White to his friend on the subject of Dr. Coke’s proposition, may be seen in Mr. McCaine’s *History and Mystery*, pp. 24—27.

It is remarkable, also, that whenever this “bishop” left this country and returned to England, he left his *title* behind him—and becoming again plain Dr. Coke, fell into the ranks of Mr. Wesley’s preachers, and received his appointments and directions from that presbyter!! Moreover, it seems that, notwithstanding the failure of his application to bishop White, about eight years afterwards, he wrote a letter to the bishop of London, requesting *him* to ordain a given number of preachers to travel through the connexion in England, for

the purpose of administering the sacraments, agreeably to the usages of the established church!—See extracts from this letter in Mr. McCaine's History, pp. 30 and 31, copied from "Drew's Life of Dr. Coke," p. 288.

Dr. Emory, in apologizing for the letter of "bishop" Coke to bishop White, suggests that the doctor might have made those proposals, "for the sake of union with the Protestant Episcopal Church," without intending thereby to acknowledge the invalidity of his episcopal ordination; and he produces evidence to show, that the Dr. subsequently expressed his regret that he had made the application, and that he did not doubt the validity of his episcopal ordination by Mr. Wesley. But such subsequent expressions of regret—*after the failure* of his proposals, are entitled to but little weight. Besides, is it not strange, if he had no doubt himself of his episcopal ordination, that he should speak of it in that letter so doubtingly?—And particularly, for the purpose of becoming "united" to a church, in which, the preachers and members of his society in general, were "convinced that, there was a great deficiency of vital religion"!!!—And still more singular, when "the great revival of religion," of which Mr. Wesley had been "the father," was then "extending *over the earth*, by the means of the Methodists"!!!

Before we pass from this part of our subject, it may be proper to observe, that while we cannot but regard their "third order" of ministers as illegitimate and spurious, we are not unwilling, in charity, to recognize the validity of the *presbyterial* ordination of the Methodist clergy. According to the polity of the Church of England, of which Mr. Wesley was a minister, he had no authority to ordain a presbyter, much less a bishop,—and the commission of Dr. Coke was not the act of a presbytery, regularly constituted, but of

individual presbyters, assembled for that purpose, at the instance of Mr. Wesley. Notwithstanding these irregularities, however, as Dr. Coke had been previously and duly ordained a presbyter in the Church of England, and as “other regularly ordained ministers assisted” in the ordination of Mr. Asbury, &c., we are willing to recognize the validity of their *presbyterial* ordination, on the ground of “the exigency of necessity.” And if, after the organization of their church, they had chosen to elect a permanent moderator or general superintendent, and had seen proper to invest him with “superior executive power,”—while *we* should not have thought that the most excellent or scriptural plan,—yet, we should have regarded the transaction with becoming respect. But when they confer upon their superintendents the exclusive title of “bishops”—create them by a “distinct *episcopal* ordination”—describe them as a “third order” of ministers—and speak of their episcopal “succession,” &c., it is not possible for us to view their pretensions and conduct without heartily laughing at their childishness and folly.

In compassion, however, to our Methodist brethren, and to shield them, as far as we can, from the taunts of their high church prelatial neighbours, I will republish the fact that, *the latter* were themselves, within an ace, in *their* “exigency of necessity” ! of having quite as spurious an episcopate as the former ! And, although they fortunately escaped, yet the admissions which were made by the gentleman who afterwards became their senior bishop, and the arguments which he adduced in favour of *presbyterial* ordination, should cause them with becoming modesty to hold their peace. In consequence of the revolutionary war, there was, it appears, great difficulty in procuring the episcopal ordination of ministers for their churches in this country. There being then no bishop



here, the candidates were obliged to go to England for ordination—the churches in the mean time suffering for want of pastors. In this state of things, the Rev. Dr. White, afterwards consecrated bishop, wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled “The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered.” In the “sketch of a frame of government,” contained in that work, and which he proposed should be adopted by the episcopal churches, he says,—as quoted by Dr. Emory in his Defence, sec. II:—

“In each smaller district there should be elected a general vestry or convention, consisting of a convenient number, (the minister to be one.)—They should elect a clergyman their *permanent president*; who, in conjunction with other clergymen to be also appointed by the body, may exercise such powers as are purely spiritual, *particularly that of admitting to the ministry.*” Page 11.

Again; “The conduct meant to be recommended, is,—to include in the proposed frame of government *a general approbation of episcopacy*, and a declaration of an intention to procure the succession as soon as conveniently may be; but in the meantime, *to carry the plan into effect WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE SUCCESSION.*”—Ib. p. 15.

“It will be said, we ought to continue as we are, with the hope of obtaining it (the succession) hereafter. But,” continues Dr. White, “are the *acknowledged ordinances* of Christ’s holy religion to be suspended for years, perhaps as long as the present generation shall continue, out of delicacy to a *disputed point*, and that relating only to externals?—All the obligations of conformity to the divine ordinances, all the arguments which prove the connection between public worship and the morals of a people, combine to urge the adopting of some *speedy* measures, to provide for the public minis-

try in these churches. If such as have been above recommended," (viz: ordination by the president clergyman, in conjunction with other clergymen appointed by that body,) "should be adopted, and the episcopal succession afterward obtained, any *supposed* imperfections of the intermediate ordinations might, *if it were judged proper*, be supplied, *without acknowledging their nullity*, by a *conditional* ordination resembling that of *conditional baptism* in the liturgy."—Ib.

But if the "succession" had never been "afterward obtained," there can be no doubt, as Dr. Emory well observes, that Dr. White would have maintained the validity of the ordinations on his plan, without the succession. For, as Dr. White very justly argues in another place,—“If even those who hold episcopacy to be of divine right, conceive the obligation to it to be not binding when that idea would be destructive of public worship, much more must *they* think so, who indeed venerate and prefer that form as the most ancient and eligible, but without any idea of divine right in the case. *This*, the author (Dr. White) believes to be the sentiment of the great body of episcopalians in America; in which respect, they have in their favour, *unquestionably*, the sense of the Church of England, and, as he believes, the opinions of her *most distinguished prelates*, for piety, virtue, and abilities.”—Ib., p. 25.

In view of the above extracts from the writings of the senior bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the reader may judge what ground there is for prelatical episcopacy—and how readily, “in the exigency of necessity”! the greatest admirers of “apostolical succession,” can recognize and *prove the validity of presbyterial* ordinations!!

The truth is, that according to the Scriptures, there is but *one* permanent order of ministers in the church of Christ.

In the New Testament they are called, interchangeably, "bishops," and "presbyters" or elders. The term presbyter denoting their general office,—that of bishop, their particular function as the pastors of parochial churches or congregations. Every pastor, therefore, was originally styled a bishop, and continued for a considerable time afterwards to be so called:—nor, after the death of the apostles, whose office was extraordinary, has there ever been, by divine right, any order of ministers superior to pastors in dignity and authority.

As to the "order of deacon,"—it is sufficient to remark, that *deacons* are no order of ministers at all! The office was instituted for the express purpose of rendering it unnecessary for ministers to attend to its duties! From the account given of its institution, it appears that some of the poor complained that they had been neglected: when the apostles said to the people,—“It is not reason that we should *leave the word of God, and serve tables*. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”—Acts. 6: 1—6. Deacons, therefore, were appointed—not to preach—but to take care of the poor; in order that ministers might give themselves without interruption to their official and more appropriate work.

After presenting the Scriptural proof in favour of ministerial *parity*, and the testimony of the earliest Christian fathers, the Rev. Dr. Miller, in his tract entitled, "Presbyterianism, the Truly Primitive and Apostolical Constitution of the Church of God," page 17, says,—“Thus it is evident—the ancients themselves being our witnesses—that, in the apos-

tolic age, bishop and presbyter were the same; that, the bishops were parish ministers; that, in every parish, a body of elders, with their pastor at their head, conducted the government and discipline; that, of course, presbyterian parity in the gospel ministry universally prevailed; that the rite of ordination was equally the prerogative of all who were empowered to preach the gospel, and administer the sacraments; that it was habitually performed "by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery;" that matters continued in this situation for more than a hundred years after the close of the apostolic age; that then clerical pride, ambition and cupidity began, more sensibly than in the preceding times, to disclose their native effects; and that the pastors of the more opulent towns claimed special pre-eminence and powers, as peculiarly the successors of the apostles, which, by little and little, were admitted, and at length, permanently established. Thus were parochial bishops, or the pastors of single congregations, gradually transformed into diocesan, or prelatical bishops, and, under an old and familiar title, a new office artfully introduced; until, in the fourth century, when Christianity became the established religion of the empire, when the clergy were pampered by imperial bounty, defended by imperial authority, and their honours arranged according to the gradations of rank, which were obtained in the state; all traces of primitive simplicity and purity were lost in the plans and splendour of worldly policy. Bishops became 'lords over God's heritage,' rather than 'examples to their flocks.'"

Those who wish to see, in a small compass, a most triumphant refutation of the claims of prelatical or diocesan episcopacy, as well as a most satisfactory establishment of the scriptural doctrine of ministerial parity, are referred to the

tract of Dr. Miller, from which we have made the foregoing extract.—And high church episcopalians in particular, are respectfully referred to the *sensible* pamphlet of their late senior bishop beforementioned.

Having thus disposed of the origin, &c. of Methodist “episcopacy,” I will proceed, in the next chapter, to expose the true character of the government and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

## CHAPTER II.

### GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE.

The government is anti-republican, because all the legislative and executive power is in the hands of their clergy—the laity have no representation in the General or Annual Conference, and of course have no voice in the government.—The discipline is tyrannical, because the members are amenable to any rules and regulations which it may please their clergy from time to time to agree upon—and because the usual forms of law and justice are not constitutionally prescribed and secured in the trial of church members,—such a system is, in its tendency, dangerous to public liberty and the free institutions of the land.—The truly republican character of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church.

THE government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is *anti-republican*, because all the legislative power is in the hands of the itinerant ministry, *exclusively*, and *without responsibility*. In other words, the people have no representation in the General Conference, which body possesses the power of legislation;—the people, therefore, have no voice in the making of the laws by which they are governed, and no means of bringing their clerical legislators to an account for the character of their legislation!—They must submit to be governed as the itinerant preachers please, or be expelled from the communion of the church!

That the whole legislative power of the church is in the hands of the General Conference, is evident, from the following extracts from the Book of Discipline, chapter I., section 3.—“The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every twenty-one members of each Annual

Conference, to be appointed either by seniority or choice, at the discretion of such Annual Conference: yet so that such representatives shall have travelled at least four full calendar years from the time that they were received on trial by an Annual Conference, and are in full connexion at the time of holding the conference.” \*\*\*\* “Who shall attend the Yearly Conferences? All the travelling preachers who are in full connexion, and those who are to be received into full connexion.” \*\*\*\* “The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules and regulations for our church, under the following limitations and restrictions.”—What these limitations and restrictions are, we shall see presently.

It thus appears, that the General Conference is composed of a certain number of delegates from the Annual Conferences;—that the Annual Conferences are composed exclusively of itinerant ministers;—and that the power of making rules and regulations is vested solely in the itinerant preachers composing the General Conference. No lay delegates are admitted into the composition of the Annual Conferences, and of course none into the General Conference; and, consequently, the people have no voice in the government, to which, nevertheless, they are held amenable under pain of excommunication or expulsion!

It is true that the powers of the General Conference are said to be limited and restricted; but of what avail are these alleged “limitations and restrictions,” when it is “provided, nevertheless,” that a certain number of the preachers, (without the consent, or even against the will of the people,) “shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions, excepting the first article”!!—*Discipline, chap. I., sec. 3.* And with regard to “the first article,” which relates to the *doctrines* of the church, the exception is of little practical use, because it is notorious that the professed creed of a denomination may

remain unaltered, while the greater part of those who formally subscribe it are grossly heretical. Look, for example, at the Church of England, the avowed model of the Methodist Episcopal Church;—her Calvinistic creed has never been “altered,” and yet the Rev. John Wesley and hundreds of other Arminian preachers have subscribed it—not “for substance” merely—but as really teaching Arminianism itself!! And if the “thirty-nine articles,” and the “homilies” of the Church of England, can be construed into Arminianism, without alteration,—then, as easily, and as honestly, might the present vague and brief Arminian articles of Methodism, without modification or change, be construed into scriptural Calvinism! But who shall judge whether the preachers have become heretical in doctrine or not? Have the people any part in their trial? If the great body of the people should be convinced that their ministers had changed their doctrinal sentiments, have they any redress? Could they exercise any power in their suspension from the ministry, or even prevent them from the occupancy of their pulpits? No, they have no legal or constitutional redress. The preachers may change, at will, and without responsibility, any of the present “rules and regulations” of the church; and as to the doctrines, they may believe and preach what they please, so that they do not alter the letter of the book, and yet the people have no power either to expel them from the ministry, or to eject them from their parsonages and pulpits. Yea, more, there is nothing to hinder the preachers from *repealing* that *verbal restriction* which excepts “the first article.” All that would be necessary, would be for them to “agree” among themselves, that the words—“excepting the first article”—should be expunged from the book, and then they might proceed, even without this slight impediment, to alter the doctrines of the church, as they now may the discipline, *ad libi-*



*tum!* And is there any constitutional method, by which the laity could prevent the repeal of this doctrinal restriction?—or any legal mode of redress, in case the preachers should repeal it, and avowedly change the doctrines as they are now stated in the book?

But let us examine this system of government in detail: and that I may direct your attention more distinctly to the several parts, I will present them in the form of question and answer.

*Quest.* Who make all “the rules and regulations” of the society?

*Ans.* The General Conference.—*See Discipline, chap. I., sec. 3,* which I have already quoted.

*Q.* Who compose the General Conference?

*A.* The General Conference is composed of representatives from the Annual Conference.—*Ib.*

*Q.* Who compose the Annual Conferences?

*A.* *Itinerant preachers exclusively.*—*Ib.*

*Q.* Who compose the Quarterly Meeting Conferences?

*A.* The travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and class leaders of the circuit.—*Dis., chap. I., sec. 5.*

*Q.* By what rules and regulations are the Quarterly Meeting Conferences governed?

*A.* By the rules and regulations adopted by the General Conference, which is composed exclusively of itinerant preachers.—*Dis., chap. I., sec. 3.*

*Q.* How are the ministers stationed?

*A.* By the “bishops,” who are elected exclusively by the travelling preachers.—*Dis., chap. I., sec. 4.* What, have not the people the right to choose their own pastors? No, they must receive any preacher whom the bishop may choose to appoint. No matter how ignorant, or unacceptable, either as a man, or as a preacher, the people must submit to the appointment until his time expires. And if the bishop should

send another equally undesirable—yea, if they should never get a man whose ministry they would prefer, there is no remedy, they must succumb or leave the church!

Q. Who nominate the stewards?—Surely the people have the right to select and appoint these officers, as they estimate the table expenses, &c., of the preachers?

A. However unjust and indelicate it may seem, the preachers have legislated to themselves the exclusive right of nominating the stewards, and the Quarterly Meeting Conference can elect from those so nominated only.—*Dis., part II., sec. 3.*

Q. Who appoints the class leaders?

A. The preacher in charge appoints all the leaders—and changes or removes them at his pleasure.—*Dis., chap. I., sec. 10.*

Q. Who nominates the trustees, by whom the parochial property is held?—Surely the people have the right of electing these purely temporal officers?

A. Not at all. The preacher claims the exclusive right of nomination, and the vacancies are filled up, by the remaining trustees, from those so nominated!—So that the congregation have not even the privilege of assenting to the nominations of the preacher!!—*Dis., part II., sec. 2.*

Thus the reader will perceive, that the ministers not only make all the laws, but they appoint, either directly, or indirectly, all the executive officers—from the “bishops” down to the class leaders! The people have no representation—no voice in the legislative department of the government—and they must either passively receive, as executive officers, those whom their clerical governors may choose to appoint, or elect those only, whom it may please their superiors to nominate!—The preachers—the preachers—the preachers are every thing—and the people—just nothing at all!!!

The *discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church is equally anti-republican and tyrannical.

If a member is accused of any crime, which “is expressly forbidden by the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory,” the preacher has the power of arraigning him “before the society, of which he is a member, or a select number of them;” and “if the accused person be found guilty by the decision of a majority of the members, before whom he is brought to trial,”—“let the minister or preacher who has the charge of the circuit expel him.”—*Dis., chap. II., sec. 7.*

From this, it would appear, that it is optional with the preacher to arraign an individual before the society, or a committee—selected and appointed by himself! Surely, if this be so, it is the grossest tyranny—and may be made subservient to the worst of purposes. How easily could any preacher, by such a “packed jury,” convict or acquit an accused person, as suited his favouritism or prejudice?—Who would submit to such tyranny in civil society? Who would allow the civil judge to select and appoint the jury? Who would yield the right of challenge?—especially, if he saw the judge appointing as jurors, those whom he knew to be his personal enemies, or avowedly prejudiced against his cause!

Moreover, there is no specified time allowed the accused to prepare for his defence—and no constitutional rules for the proper and equitable conduct of the trial! The preacher may cite the accused to appear, forthwith, before the society, or his select committee; and whether he is ready to proceed with his defence or not, the preacher is not obliged by law, to grant him any time for preparation! And with respect to the manner in which the trial shall be conducted, notwithstanding the great and sometimes vital importance of the forms of justice, every thing is left to the arbitrary will

of the presiding preacher—no matter how ignorant or how tyrannical he may be!—He lays down the law—he admits or overrules evidence, &c. &c., according to his own judgment or discretion! And if a majority of his select committee declare the accused guilty of the charges, the preacher passes and executes the sentence of expulsion! There may be extenuating circumstances—the guilty party may appear in some measure penitent—but there does not appear to be any medium between acquittal or excommunication!—A reprimand might be sufficient, or, at most, a temporary suspension from the privileges of the church—and, perhaps, if the award were left to the society or committee, they would inflict a just and righteous punishment. But no—if declared guilty of the facts charged, the preacher passes the sentence, and the book provides for no less punishment, in such cases, than expulsion!!

And yet, notwithstanding such tyranny, if a member dares to “inveigh against the discipline”—no matter how orthodox he may be in doctrine, or pious in practice—he is actually liable—according to “the rules and regulations” adopted by the preachers, and who make the discipline just what they please—to be expelled from the church!—“If a member of our church shall be clearly convicted of endeavouring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending, shall be first reprov'd by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and, if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the church.”—*Dis., chap. II., sec. 7.* What an evidence does this despotic provision afford of the anti-republican and tyrannical character of their government and discipline! And yet it is just such a provision as might be expected from those who have assumed to themselves the whole power of government,

and who deny the people the right of representation. But is it not monstrous, not only to refuse the people all participation in the making of the discipline, but to deny them the right of “inveighing” against any of “the rules and regulations” which the preachers may choose from time to time to enact, however unjust and despotic they may appear to the people to be!—Such despotism has never been equalled in this republican country, unless we may find a parallel in the odious “alien and sedition law,” which our fathers repudiated with abhorrence!

Further. It appears that if the preacher is not satisfied with the decision of the society, or committee before whom an individual has been tried, he has the power to refer the case to the next Quarterly Meeting Conference, where he may expect the decision to be more in accordance with his judgment or wishes. It is not enough that the member has been tried and acquitted, or condemned by the committee selected by the preacher himself, but if the decision is not agreeable to him, he may have the cause tried over again by a court composed of officials, who are, as such, the creatures of the ministry!—“Nevertheless, if in any of the above mentioned cases, the minister or preacher differ in judgment from the majority of the society, or the select number, concerning the innocence or guilt of the accused person, the trial, in such case, may be referred by the minister or preacher to the ensuing Quarterly Meeting Conference.”—*Dis., chap. II., sec. 7.*

It is true, that, if the party tried is not satisfied with the decision of the society or committee, he may “appeal to the next Quarterly Meeting Conference.”—*Ib.* But this privilege is delusive, because the “local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and class leaders,” who compose that meeting in conjunction with the travelling preachers of the circuit, are either directly or indirectly appointed by the itinerant preach-

ers—and the greater part, usually, of that body, viz: the “class leaders,” are liable to be removed by the ministers at pleasure!—*Dis., chap. II., sec. 2.* These officials, therefore, are, in the sense explained, the creatures of the travelling or stationed preachers; and cannot, therefore, be expected to feel the same sympathy with the people, as if they were elected by them, or were really responsible to them. They are not the representatives of the people whom they try—they are not responsible to the people for the manner in which they dispose of the cases that are brought before them—and, however partial and unrighteous their decisions may be, the people cannot remove them from office, and must not even “inveigh” against their tyrannical acts under pain of being “expelled from the church”!! On the other hand, if a majority of these officials, composing the Quarterly Meeting Conference, do not please the preachers—to whom they owe all their authority and importance—they may be, at the mere will of the preachers, superceded by others, who will be more subservient!! Now, without accusing those brethren with a want of common honesty, or asserting that they have ever decided intentionally wrong with a view to retain the favour of their clerical superiors, we may safely affirm that their official dependence is strongly adapted, however unconsciously to themselves, unduly to influence their minds and bias their judgments. A court of appeal, whose decisions are final, should be so constituted as to be above suspicion. The people, who are so deeply and irremediably affected by its adjudications, should at least be fairly represented.—At all events, the members composing such a tribunal, should not be so dependent upon the will of the preachers, nor so entirely irresponsible to the people.

Having thus shown—from their own Book, the anti-republican and tyrannical character of their government and dis-

cipline, I will now quote the published opinions of others, to show that I am by no means singular in my interpretations.

My first citation shall be from the tract entitled, “Questions and Answers, Explanatory of the Government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by the Rev. W. B. Evans,” &c. This gentleman, from his former ministerial connexion with the church, is not only well acquainted with the theoretical principles of the government, but also with their practical operation, and his deliberately expressed and published opinions are, therefore, entitled to great respect. The following extracts are taken from the tract just named:—

“*Quest.* What is the nature of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church; that is to say, is it republican or anti-republican?”

“*Ans.* ANTI-REPUBLICAN.”

“*Q.* What are we to understand by a republican government?”

“*A.* It is a government where the sovereign power is in the hands of the people, or where all parts of the governed are fairly represented in the legislature.”—*Page 5.*

“*Q.* But is it not contended that the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is republican, because persons authorized to preach, must first be recommended by the people, and does this not constitute them their representatives?”

“*A.* Some do so contend, but others, (yea, and ministers of high standing) publicly thank God that their government is *not* republican, and proclaim in their sermons, that no church can have a republican government, without dethroning Jesus Christ.

“*Q.* But does not the circumstance of their being so recommended by the people at first, constitute the government republican?”

“A. No, for though this be the case, the people never thought in that act, of constituting them law makers, but only recommended them as suitable persons to preach. That this is the fact, is evident: First, because a majority so recommended and licensed, never become travelling preachers, without which, they can have no voice in the government, and of course cannot be the representatives of the people: Second, many of those who become travelling preachers, never go to the General Conference, and consequently cannot represent any one there: Third, if some few do, after many years, become members of the General Conference, they may have changed their views very much since they were recommended to preach, and of course, could not suitably represent the views and wishes of the people now: Fourth, however corrupt they may have become since that time in their principles, and oppressive in their measures, the people have no authority to remove them from office and elect others in their places; so, you see, this is a curious kind of republicanism, and this fine superstructure, which has been so much harped upon among the ignorant and uninformed, tumbles to the ground, for want of a foundation to support it.

“Q. But did not the people, at the organization of the church, consent to this kind of government by conventional enactment; and if so, is it not founded in the will of the people, and consequently republican ?

“A. No, the people were never consulted at the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, they had no representative present: but a few ministers, of themselves, in the city of Baltimore, in 1784, framed the government without the concurrence or consent of the people, and have held with tenacious grasp ever since, all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogative.



“ Q. But did they not virtually embrace and approve of this kind of government, in the act of joining the church, and in this act concede to the preachers the right to make and execute all the laws, and will not this make it republican ?

“ A. No, not one in a hundred, if one in a thousand, thought any thing about the principles of government when uniting with the church, but were influenced in this act by entirely different considerations.

“ Q. But is there not a majority of the members in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in favour of this kind of government, and is not their peaceable submission to it an evidence of that fact; and if so, is it not founded in the will of the people, and republican ?

“ A. This is very doubtful and uncertain, as it has never been tested; neither are the preachers willing to submit it to the voice of the members in a fair election, but have told them plainly that they have no right to a voice in such matters. (See the report of the General Conference in 1828.)”  
—*Ib.*, pp. 7—10.

“ Q. By whom are the laws made, for the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church ?

“ A. By the General Conference.

“ Q. Can no one be elected a member of the General Conference but a travelling preacher ?

“ A. None.

“ Q. Can no one vote for members of the General Conference but a travelling preacher ?

“ A. None.

“ Q. May it not then be emphatically called a government of travelling preachers ?

“ A. Yes.

“ Q. Upon whom are the laws of the General Conference binding ?

“A. Upon the travelling and local ministers, and membership.

“Q. Have the local ministers and members any representatives in the law-making department?

“A. No, it is denied that they have any right, either natural or acquired, to representation. (See the report of the General Conference of 1828.)

“Q. How did the travelling preachers get the power to legislate for the local preachers and members without their consent?

“A. They assumed it.

“Q. Is it not contended by many, that they have a sufficient check upon their rulers, by withholding their pecuniary contributions, and consequently, the support of the ministry?

“A. Many use this argument and think it unanswerable.

“Q. Is it not a good argument?

“A. No; 1st. Because it could never be effected; for though some might withhold their support, others would not, and in such case, the deficiency could be supplied from the immense book and chartered fund, which is entirely under the control of the ministers. \*\*\*\* 4th. It would be the very essence of rebellion, and it must be a bad government, indeed, which has no other remedy for existing evils but rebellion.”—*Ib.*, pp. 11—14.

“Q. How are the members brought to trial in the Methodist Episcopal Church?

“A. Before the society, or a select number, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon or preacher.

“Q. What time is allowed the accused to prepare for trial?

“A. This depends entirely on the will of the preacher in charge; he may be brought up forthwith.

“ Q. Can the accused have his choice, whether he will be tried before the society, or a select number ?

“ A. No, the preacher decides, and tries him accordingly.

“ Q. Who appoints the jury to try the accused ?

“ A. The preacher in charge.

“ Q. Is there any inconvenience arising out of this power, exercised by the preacher in charge ?

“ A. Yes, he can pick a jury, either favourable or unfavourable to the accused, as he may stand affected.

“ Q. Is the right of challenge secured to the accused ?

“ A. No, his enemies may be kept on or removed at the pleasure of the preacher.

“ Q. Are there any privileges secured to the accused ?

“ A. He is allowed an appeal to the next Quarterly Conference.

“ Q. Upon whom are a majority of the members of the Quarterly Conference dependent for their office ?

“ A. On the preacher in charge, as he appoints all the leaders; these generally make a majority. He nominates the stewards, licenses the exhorters, &c.

“ Q. May not the conference thus constituted, be considered in the case of appeals, as the preacher's jury ?

“ A. Yes.

“ Q. With all these advantages may he not turn out or keep in whom he pleases ?

“ A. It does appear so.”—*Ib.*, pp. 23 and 24.

The following extracts are taken from a monthly periodical, entitled, “ Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Edited by a committee of ministers and laymen:”—All of whom were, at the time, in connexion with the church, and some of whom had been for many years in the travelling and local ministry. The main design of this periodical was in fact, to effect a

peaceable *reform* of the government of their church; and had they been allowed to proceed in their labours, they would, no doubt, have succeeded. But as the bishops and travelling preachers were unable to compete with their superior talents and intelligence, or answer their weighty and conclusive arguments and proofs, they were arraigned before a “select number,” and conveniently expelled from the church, for “inveighing against the discipline!”—But to the extracts:—

“To me, no principle or maxim under heaven, appears more plain and self-evident, than that free men should, either in their own persons, or in their representatives, have a voice in making the laws that are to govern them. Plain as this maxim is, however, it is controverted and denied by the enemies of reform. They say, that free men (other than travelling ministers) have no right to legislate for the church—in other words, that they have no right to govern themselves! Does not every one see at once the danger, as well as the absurdity of such a monstrous doctrine as this? It strikes a deadly blow at the very root of religious liberty; and hence we see the great propriety of a speedy reform in the Methodist Episcopal Church. When such doctrines as the above are openly avowed, and strongly advocated by men who have all power, and all rule, and all authority in their own hands, it is time, high time, that the members of our church should wake up to a sense of their condition, and exert themselves by all lawful means, to obtain the liberty enjoyed by the members of other protestant churches—I mean an equitable representation.

“Although not among the laity myself, yet I am free to confess, that it would rejoice my heart to see them raised from their present degradation, and occupying an honourable seat in the law-making department of the church. This is their just and obvious right; and to withhold it from them,

is illiberal and unjust in the extreme. \*\*\*\* Yes, sir, I love my church, I love her doctrines, &c., and I would to God, that she had such a form of government, as that I could in truth, say—I love that too. But, alas! here candour obliges me to stop: I can go no further. I cannot act the hypocrite, and say I love the government, when I do not. How can I love a government that is arbitrary and oppressive in its nature?—That withholds from free men their just and dearest rights—the right of suffrage—the right of self-government—the right of equal representation. No, indeed, sir, I can no more love such a government as this, than I can change the essential properties of my nature. I cannot, I will not love what I conceive to be essentially and radically wrong.”—*Vol. I., pp. 48 and 49.*

“Let us examine a few particulars, which constitute parts of the *system*”—[that is, of the government and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.]

“1. The travelling ministry possess *exclusively* the legislative power, which they exercise over the whole body of the laity and local preachers *without responsibility*.

“2. The travelling ministry, independently of the membership, appoint all the class leaders.

“3. They nominate all the stewards, and the Quarterly Conferences, a majority of which are class leaders, make their election out of the nominations of the preachers.

“4. They nominate all trustees, and the trustees, out of the nominations, according to the discipline, fill all vacancies in their boards.

“5. They appoint the committees for the trial of accused members, and the accused have no legal right to object to any person so appointed by the preachers.

“6. In all cases of trial, the travelling preacher sits as judge. He may summon any accused member to trial, and

is not obliged to furnish the accused with specifications of complaints or charges, until the parties meet at the time and place of trial;—thus rendering it impossible for the accused to prepare for his defence. The accused member has no legal right to demand a postponement. And however hard the decision, he must submit, saving only, that he has an appeal to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, a tribunal so constituted, that a majority of its members are class leaders, men exclusively appointed to office by the travelling preachers. If the preacher's committee should acquit the accused, and the acquittal should not meet the approbation of the preacher, he may carry up the case to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, and try the accused member over again, before that body.”—(This extract is contained in an article signed by the Rev. Messrs. “Samuel K. Jennings, Alexander McCaine, Daniel E. Reese, James R. Williams,” and eight others.)—*Ib.*, vol. III., pp. 135—137.

Again, “that the travelling preachers are in possession of all power and authority in the church, it is presumed, no person who is at all acquainted with our economy, will pretend, for a moment, to deny. If, however, this should be called in question by any man, I would ask him, if any one, except travelling preachers, can vote at the election of members for the General Conference, where all the laws of the church are made? I would ask further, if any, except travelling preachers, are at all eligible to the conference? \*\*\*\* I ask again, whether the whole membership can appoint or displace a single class leader? and whether the travelling preacher has not the power to do both at his own good pleasure, asking no questions; just as the lord of a manor would appoint his steward, or as the owner of a plantation would elevate or depose one of his servants. And when the itinerant preacher has at any time exercised his prerogative, and a

class leader has been put up, or put down, have the class any right to say a word in the way of disapprobation? And I would ask yet again, if a steward, or trustee be wanted, whether the travelling preacher does not name his man? and whether the members can appoint any other person except the one so nominated by the preacher? In like manner, if any member be charged with immoral conduct, whether the travelling preacher has not the power to appoint the committee for the trial of the case? and this too, without check or restriction, although it gives an opportunity, if at any time such opportunity might be sought, to pack a jury! Does he not himself sit as judge of the court on the trial? Has he not the power of summoning persons to trial, forthwith, without furnishing any specification of the charges preferred against them? And has any person, when about to be tried, a right to object to those who may be appointed to sit on his case, however certain he may be of their prejudice against him! \*\*\*\* If in any particular instance, a society should be dissatisfied with the decision of a committee, have they the right of an appeal? Does not the travelling preacher alone possess this right? And if he should think fit to disapprove of an appeal, is not the society without redress? Can any person, except a travelling preacher, have any thing to do with the *book concern*? Does not the discipline recommend, that all church property be deeded to the use of the travelling preachers, which, of course, in all possible cases, is lodged in the hands of men of their own choosing?

“Does not the conference dispose of all monies without rendering any account to the members? In a word, are not all the temporal concerns of the church, directly or indirectly, at the disposal of the travelling preachers? The travelling preachers, then, must be the fountain from whom all

power flows. Without them, there can be no class leaders, no steward, no trustee, no meeting-house, no appropriation of money, no trial of members, nor can any member be received into the church, or taken upon trial. Without them the church can have no laws; for they elect each other to the legislative councils of the church. Without them the government cannot be administered; for they have the executive power exclusively in their own hands. In fact, they have charge of, and do govern and rule the temporal and spiritual concerns of the church. And all this heaven and earth moves at their nod. The whole membership, with the local preachers, exhorters, stewards and trustees, to help them, cannot make one class leader, nor do any thing else without a travelling preacher. He must point his finger or give his nod, or the wheels of our Zion must stand still.

“Are the local preachers and lay members of the church, so incompetent to self-government, and so entirely unworthy of trust and confidence, that they ought to be thus carefully and entirely proscribed? Why else are they placed at such a distance? Why this studied solicitude to keep them under foot? Why all this sensibility, when their degraded situation is complained of? Why all this jealousy and this fear, lest they should have a check upon the power exercised over them?

“Are travelling preachers the only wise men living, and will wisdom die with them? Is all the virtue in the church treasured up in themselves? Do they alone care for the things of Jesus Christ? And have they alone the necessary wisdom to seek after them and secure them? This appears to be the language of our government. The language of the men, who hold the reins in their hands. Where is humility in all this? It is certainly too much for humble men to say all this of themselves. It would be enough to



hear it from the lips of others. Is there no danger to be apprehended from such great and irresponsible power? Is it not known, that a sudden induction into it, generates pride and ambition? And does it not tend to produce a spirit of resistance or debasement in those over whom it is exercised?"—*Ib.*, vol. I., pp. 469—471.

Once more,—“These august law-makers” [travelling preachers] “are free from all restraint.—First, they are free from the restraints of *representation*: no delegate of the people can open his mouth in their legislative assemblies. Secondly, they are free from *constitutional* restraint: for though they have a little instrument of their own making, which they *call* a constitution, yet it is evident to common sense, that it is no constitution of the people; and the makers of it can alter it when they please, without the people having a single voice in the matter. Thirdly, they are free from any restraint of *scripture*: for in their law-book, we read, that when members have broken their rules of discipline, ‘if they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit exclude them,’ [the church] ‘showing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of discipline, and not for immoral conduct.’ Thus it stands glaring in the open face of heaven, that the Methodist Episcopal Church claims authority to expel members from the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, who are guilty of no breach of his laws, (not for immoral conduct) but merely because they have violated such ‘rules of our discipline’ as, according to her own confession, involve no immorality! It is evident, if the church has authority to make *one* such law, she has authority to make a *thousand*: of course, she can make laws, and expel members, independently of Divine revelation.”—*Ib.*, vol. III., pp. 253 and 254.

The following extracts are taken from the letters of the Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D. D., Professor of Theology in the

German Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, published some years since in "the Gettysburg Star and Republican Banner," in a controversy with a Methodist itinerant preacher, of the name of Young, who had taken exception to certain remarks made by the professor in his work, entitled, "Popular Theology."—The Dr. in one of his letters thus writes:—

"But it is not to the episcopacy as such, but to the fact, that the itinerant preachers, with these bishops, assumed in this republican country, all the legislative and executive powers of the church, that we apply the terms rank aristocracy. That the Rev. Mr. Young, if better informed on the history of his own church, would not have been so sensitive at my remarks, and that I have asserted nothing new, will clearly appear.

"I. *Mr. Wesley himself avowed that his system was not 'republican,' that it was aristocratic.* In a letter to Mr. John Mason, dated near London, Jan. 13th, 1790, he says,—*'My dear brother—As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not, and never had such a custom. We are no republicans, and never intend to be.'*—(London Wesleyan Mag., April, 1830.) This language from a loyal subject of Great Britain, is not remarkable; but that the travelling preachers, after our glorious revolution, should still deny to the people all participation in the legislative judicatories of the church, we view in a different light.

"II. The powers of the travelling preachers have been pronounced aristocratic, and regarded as such, by *some of the most distinguished, adhering and seceding ministers of the Methodist Church!* It is well known that a very large portion of the Methodist Church in this country, laboured for a season to reform the aristocratic features of their government, and were *expelled* from the church for the attempt.

Is it not true, then, that it is ‘dangerous’ for a Methodist minister to speak against their discipline? And is it not laughable, to hear the Rev. Mr. Young assert, that the failure of the laity as a body to *ask* their right of representation in the conference, is the reason why it has not been granted; when it is a notorious fact, that those who ventured to ask, were expelled? But some of the most distinguished, adhering Methodists in the land, have pronounced the same judgment. *Dr. Coke*, the same as bishop Coke, in a printed circular, dated Wilmington, Del., May 4th, 1791, termed it an ‘arbitrary aristocracy.’—(Methodist Prot., p. 244.) ‘Bishop McKendree and Mr. O’Kelley actually withdrew, because of the unwarrantable assumptions of the conference.’—(Ib., p. 244.)—And Ezekiel Cooper, of the Philadelphia Conference, declares that in the violent debate which then occurred on this subject, Mr. McKendree observed, ‘it is an insult to my understanding, and such an arbitrary stretch of power, so *tyrannical* (or) *despotic*, that I cannot (or) will not submit to it.’—(Ib., p. 244) We suppose, then, that out of the mouth of two such respectable witnesses, two of the first Methodist bishops in this country, the matter might be considered as ‘established:’ and if Mr. Young had reflected on these things, he had better said nothing about them. But as an American, we are opposed to having this point decided by *mere authority*, even of such witnesses, and will resort to facts.

“III. We shall now *demonstrate by an actual induction of particulars*, that the declarations of these men, who pronounced the system *aristocratic*, as the ‘Popular Theology’ also does, spoke the truth. In doing this, we shall purposely avoid enlarging on the odiousness of that system, by which the travelling preachers usurp exclusively to themselves those numerous privileges, which in other churches

are shared between the laity and clergy. Nor shall we stop to prove, either from reason or history, what the ablest writers on political philosophy all admit, the ultimate and certain connexion between civil and religious liberty, or the reverse. These matters I leave to the conscientious reflections of my Methodist brethren themselves, who I am persuaded, are in politics as good republicans as others, although, in religion, they are submitting to a clerical aristocracy, inconsistent in my judgment with those unalienable rights, which God and his word adjudge to them. By aristocracy, says Dr. Beattie, is meant a government which ‘puts the balance of power in the hands of a few, who are equal or nearly equal among themselves,’ &c. And, in the general sense of the term, by aristocracy, is meant the exclusive assumption or possession of those rights and privileges by a few, to which others have also a just claim. Of this character we regard the following privileges of the Methodist *travelling preachers*:—

“1. *Their exclusive right of suffrage* in the election of delegates to the general convention, and of bishops. In the Lutheran, German Reformed, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and all other Protestant Churches, the laity aid in electing the highest officer, be he a bishop, president, or moderator; as also in choosing the delegates to their highest judicatory, be it termed a General Synod, or Assembly, or Convention.

“2. *Their exclusive eligibility*, both to the Annual and General Conferences. In the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, Episcopal and all other churches, laymen are eligible to all the judicatories of the church.

“3. *Their exclusive unlimited power to legislate* for the whole church, in matters of doctrine, discipline, forms of worship, and minor regulations—‘full powers to make rules

and regulations for the church.' \*\*\*\* In the Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian and all other churches known to me, the *laity* form part of the judicatories, which alone have the right to legislate on these subjects.

“ 4. *Their exclusive right* to sit in judgment on the moral conduct of travelling preachers. In all other churches, such trials are conducted jointly by laymen and ministers.

“ 5. *Their exclusive right* of appointing all committees for the *trial of lay members* accused of immorality, without the power on the part of the accused, to challenge any member of such committee, though he could prove him his bitterest enemy. This is not so in any other church in our land.

“ 6. *Their exclusive right* to control and conduct the entire book concern, and appropriate its extensive profits exclusively to their own benefit. In all other churches known to us, such matters are under the joint management of laymen and clergy.

“ 7. *Their exclusive right* of eligibility to editorship of the periodicals of the Methodist Church; local preachers and laymen being excluded by the discipline. In no other church is such an exclusive privilege enjoyed.

“ 8. *Their exclusive right* to hold and control all the Methodist Churches and parsonages deeded according to the discipline, to say who shall, and who shall not occupy them, without consulting the wishes of the laity, who paid for them. Even the trustees are nominated exclusively by the travelling preachers! In every other Protestant Church in the land, each congregation owns and has control of its own parsonage and church.

“ 9. *Their exclusive right* to fix the amount of their own salary, that is, the amount to which they may retain their collections, and receive their dividend from the several funds.

In every other church, salary is jointly fixed by the laymen and minister.

“10. The *exclusive* right of their bishops to determine what ministers each congregation shall have, without consulting the judgment of the people. In all other churches of our land, the congregation invites whom they think best suited to them.

“11. Their *entire irresponsibility to the people* for all their acts, legislative, judicial and executive—and for their distribution of the extensive funds possessed by them. \*\*\*\*

“Here then, if the Rev. Mr. Young will have the proofs of aristocracy, let him take them.”

The following extracts are from the pen of the Rev. H. B. Bascom, a distinguished preacher, still in connexion with the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They were written while he and others were endeavouring to effect a reform in their church, and were designed to show its necessity. Why he should have continued to *adhere* to such a government, after his reforming brethren were expelled, and had organized themselves into a church according to the principles which he as well as they so earnestly insisted upon, it is not for us to say. But the *truth* remains the same, and cannot be affected by the inconsistency of its advocates.—The extracts are copied from a paper, entitled, “Declaration of Rights:”—

“As all men are essentially EQUAL, in their *rights, wants,* and *interests*, it follows from these, that representative government, is the only legitimate human rule, to which any people can submit. It is the only kind of government that can possibly reconcile, in any consistent way, the claims of *authority*, with the advantages of LIBERTY. A prescriptive legislative body, making laws without the *knowledge* or *consent* of the people to be governed by them, is a DESPOT-

ISM. Legislators without constituents, or peers and fellows, deputing them, as their representatives and actors—thus constituting themselves a legislature beyond the control of the people, is an exhibition of TYRANNY in one of its most DANGEROUS forms. In the momentous affairs of government, nothing should be made the *exclusive property* of a FEW, which by right, belongs to ALL, and may be safely and advantageously used by the rightful proprietors. The justice of every government, depends essentially upon the original consent of the people;—this privilege belongs to every community, in right of the law of nature; and no man, or multitude of men, can alter, limit, or diminish it. Constitutional law is an expression of the will of the people, and their concurrence in its formation, either personally, or by representation, is essential to its legitimate authority.”—*Art. 4.*

“No community can be said, without mockery, to have a constitution, where there is a consolidation of the different powers of government in the hands of the same men, and the remaining portion are left, of course, WITHOUT ANY SECURITY FOR THEIR RIGHTS.”—*Ib., art. 5.*

“A government uniting the *legislative, judicial, and executive* powers in the hands of the same men, is an *absurdity* in theory, and in practice, TYRANNY. The executive power, in every government, should be subordinate to the legislative, and the judicial, independent of both.—Whenever, therefore, it happens, that these three departments of government are in the hands of the same body of men, and these men not the representatives of the people, first making the laws, then executing them, and finally the sole judges of their own acts, there is no liberty, the people are VIRTUALLY ENSLAVED, and liable to be *ruined* at any time.”—*Ib., art. 6.*

“EXPEDIENCE and RIGHT are different things. Nothing is expedient that is *unjust*.—Necessity and convenience, may render a form of government useful and effective for a time, which afterward, under a change of circumstances, and an accumulation of responsibility, may become oppressive and intolerable. That system of things, which cannot be justified by the word of God, and the common sense of mankind, can never be expedient. Submission to power, gradually and insidiously usurped, should seldom or never be received as proof of the legitimate consent of the people, to the peculiar form of government, by which they are oppressed; as such submission may be the result of principles, attachments, and energies, which owe their existence to causes foreign from the government, which is supposed to produce them. Peaceable submission by the people, to a system of government, can never be construed into a proper approval of it, as one of their own choice; for, as men by birth and education, may become the subjects of a form of civil government, they do not approve, so thousands may be born into the kingdom of God, and nurtured in his family, under forms of ecclesiastical polity, materially inconsistent with the *lights* and *notices* of revelation on this subject. The continued sufferance and submission of the people, so far from proving the *divine* right of those who govern, does not even furnish proof of any right at all, except the claim which arises from MERE FORBEARANCE.”—*Ib.*, art. 11.

As an additional evidence of the anti-republican and tyrannical nature of the government and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I may state, that the most earnest remonstrances and petitions have, from time to time been presented to the General Conference on this subject—public meetings of their people have been held, in various places, at which the strongest resolutions have been passed against the government—and numerous secessions have ta-



ken place, in consequence of the refusal of their rulers to grant the desired reform.

We have seen with what indignation Dr. Coke and Mr. McKendree denounced the government:—the former, as an “arbitrary aristocracy”—and the latter, as “such an arbitrary stretch of power, so tyrannical (or) despotic, that he could not (or) would not submit to it,” and that he actually withdrew, “because of the unwarrantable assumptions of the conference!”

So also we find, that as early as 1794, the *people* were very much dissatisfied—and earnestly insisted upon their right of representation.—“This,” says Mr. Lee, “was a year of great trouble and distress among the Methodists in the southern states, partly owing to the divisions that had taken place, as mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and partly to an uneasy and restless spirit that prevailed in many places, both among our local preachers and private members. Some of them contended that the local preachers ought to have a seat and a vote in all our conferences; and others said, there ought to be a delegation of lay members.”—*Lee's Short History, page 213.*

“The history of the Methodist Episcopal Church presents a melancholy picture of strife and division; one upon which we could dilate; but we forbear. The truth is, from its organization down to the present time, it has been one continued scene of secret heart burning, or open contention. It never had perfect peace, it never will have perfect peace under the present form of government. Let us not be censured, then, for exhibiting what we believe to be a plain and honest statement of facts; but let our censure be turned against the *cause*, and let us all unite to put it away from us forever.”—*McCaine's Hist., page 69.*

Not many years since, an extensive and systematic effort was made to effect a reform in the government of the Meth-

odist Episcopal Church. Some of the most venerable and distinguished clergy connected with the itinerant and local ministry, together with many of the most intelligent and respectable lay members, united in this highly necessary and laudable effort. They published the monthly periodical called the "Mutual Rights," and formed "Union Societies" in various places, for the purpose of forwarding their views. They discussed the subject with remarkable ability; and proved, beyond all doubt, the urgent necessity of reform: but, in the midst of their useful and increasingly successful labours, many of them were arraigned on the charge of "inveighing against the discipline!" and were expelled from the church!!—(Those who desire to see an interesting account of their arbitrary trial and unrighteous expulsion, are referred to the venerable Dr. Jennings's "Exposition," and for such an apology as the case admitted of, to a pamphlet, entitled "Narrative and Defence.") The reformers subsequently organized themselves into the church, designated "*The Methodist Protestant Church*," to which a considerable number of seceders from the Methodist Episcopal Church, both clerical and lay, in various parts of the country, united themselves. And from the time of their organization until now, they have been steadily increasing, both in numbers and influence;—and we cordially bid them God speed, in their efforts to extend the principles of equitable government and Christian liberty.

As a *specimen* of the resolutions passed by the Methodist people in their primary assemblies, occasioned by the arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings of their clerical rulers towards the reformers, I will transcribe the following:—

“Resolutions of the male members, at Kensington, Philadelphia.

“At a general meeting of the male members of the Kensington Methodist Episcopal Church, convened agreeably to

previous notice, in said church, on the evening of the 17th inst. Mr. John Vaughan, being called to the chair, and Mr. George J. Hamilton, appointed secretary. The design and object of the meeting being briefly stated, after which a committee was appointed to draft resolutions expressing the sense of the society; the following preamble and resolutions were separately read, discussed, and unanimously adopted.

“ PREAMBLE.

“ Whereas, the members of this church have understood, with sincere regret, that a war of extermination has been in a state of progression, by the church rulers in the city of Baltimore, against the friends of equal representation in that city, and being apprehensive, that consequences the most serious, are likely to result from the exercise of such arbitrary power to suppress freedom of inquiry.

“ Therefore, *resolved 1st.* That it is the unquestionable right and privilege of every individual, to examine into the character of our church polity; freely and fully to expose its defects; and respectfully to suggest any alterations and modifications, which reason, experience, observation and revelation may dictate.

“ *Resolved 2d.* That the arbitrary and uncontrolled powers vested in the ministry, have been, and will continue to be, the ostensible cause of much uneasiness and affliction to the laity, and, if it be correct to form an opinion from the past and present movements of some of our rulers, is likely to convulse to its centre our Zion.

“ *Resolved 3dly.* That our brethren in Baltimore, who have been pointing out the defects of our present administration, and pleading the necessity of an alteration in it, so as to recognize the grand representative principle, have been engaged in a good work, following the dictates of enlight-

ened reason, supported by revelation, and deserve the thanks, support, and well wishes of all good men.

“*Resolved 4thly.* That the arbitrary power, exercised by the Rev. J. M. Hanson, in the city of Baltimore, in suspending the local preachers, and expelling the private members from the church, for opposing the present organization of power and legislation in our church, is calculated to widen the breach already too wide; and if persisted in, will inevitably produce consequences the most alarming and distressing to every real lover of the church.

“*Resolved 5thly.* That in the opinion of this society, the principle of an equal representation of the whole church in her legislative department, is sacred and important to the liberty and happiness of myriads yet unborn, and that to suspend ministers or expel members from the church, for advocating the mutual rights, both of the ministry and membership, is a shameful departure from the political maxims contained in the Declaration of Independence, a setting at defiance the unalienable rights of Christ’s freemen, and a positive proof, that our government is not altogether constituted in accordance with liberal and republican principles.

“*Resolved 6th and lastly.* That the secretary of this meeting be requested to furnish duplicate copies of the foregoing pre-amble and resolutions, one of which shall be sent to the editorial committee for insertion in the *Mutual Rights*, and the other to the Rev. J. M. Hanson.

“John Vaughan, chairman. Attest, G. J. Hamilton, secretary.”—*Mutual Rights*, vol. IV., pp. 213 and 214.

Further, in the deliberate judgment of some of the most intelligent Methodists, who were for many years connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and who may be supposed, therefore, to be best acquainted with this subject—the *tendency* of the government of that church is *highly dangerous to the civil liberties of the United States*. The testi-

mony which they have publicly borne on this subject is very decided; and their earnest warning should be seriously pondered by the whole country.

“The right to be represented”—says the Rev. Mr. Bascom—“where law is made to govern, is not only essential to civil freedom, but is equally the basis of religious liberty. Civil and religious liberty are intimately connected, they usually *live* and *die* together, and he who is the *friend* of the one, cannot consistently be the *enemy* of the other.”—*Dec. of Rights, art. 9.*

“Many perceive”—says Dr. Jennings—“distinctly, the tendencies of the present system, to prepare the people, some day, to approve aristocratical and monarchical principles in *civil* government.”—*Mutual Rights, vol. I., p. 174.*

“For in the same proportion”—says “a layman”—“as we become attached to one system of government, we imperceptibly lose our affection for that which is opposed to it, in principle, even should one be ecclesiastical, and the other political or civil; and it has generally been the case, that men’s views of civil policy, have yielded very much to their religious opinions. Such, at least, was the case in Europe, generally, before the reformation. It was not, however, until the pope and clergy, had usurped all authority in the church, and wrested from the people their primitive rights, that they attempted to exercise any controlling influence in the state, but after this was effected, the other was easily accomplished. This was also the case in England, after the reformation. It will be recollected, that the bishops and clergy of the episcopal hierarchy in England, during the reigns of the Stuarts, very generally, if not universally, supported these tyrants in their iniquitous proceedings. It was a favourite doctrine of James the First—no bishop, no king. And it was to the liberal policy and republican principles of the Presbyterians and Baptists, that England was

rid of those tyrants. This difference of sentiment, so unanimous in the different sects, can only be attributable to those principles which they had respectively imbibed in their churches. We find those that favoured clerical dominion, ready to support kingly despotism; and those that were educated in liberal church principles, carried them with their politics of state, and resisted kingly despotism with as much zeal as they did the ghostly dominion of the church. It is to those liberal spirits, who, to escape from the tyranny of the church and state in England, in the commencement of the seventeenth century emigrated to America, bringing their republican principles with them, and transmitting them to their children, that we are indebted for our present blessings and privileges.”—*Mutual Rights, vol. I., pp. 444 and 445.*

“The unyielding struggles of the Methodist Episcopal Church”—says the Rev. Mr. Shinn—“against this righteous and valuable enterprize,” [ecclesiastical reform,] “and the determined spirit of preachers and people, to resist all our efforts, are so far from furnishing an argument against the correctness of our views, that a very strong reason hence arises, to stimulate us to perseverance. For if it be a fact, that in the heart of this American republic, where liberal principles of government have been instilled into our minds from our cradles, a most formidable stand is made against the same principles, when urged in the church, it convincingly appears, that ecclesiastical power has an amazing influence over the minds of the people; and of consequence will ultimately endanger the liberties of this nation, unless arrested in its sovereign course, by efforts proportioned to the magnitude of the object. That such a stand should be made against our principles of reform, in *this* country, is surely one of the wonders of the world; and must convince all reflecting minds, that few things in nature are more in-

fatuating, or calculated to get a firmer hold of the human soul, than *ecclesiastical power*. That the principles of absolute monarchy should have started up in the Methodist Church, in this free country, commencing at the period of our revolution; that they should have grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength; that they should have spread their influence from the centre to the circumference of our nation, at a time when sound republican principles appeared to be universally regarded as our national happiness and glory, is truly a wonder which deserves the attention of our enlightened and patriotic statesmen. \*\*\*\* Now, what is the obvious, indubitable inference, from these facts? It is, that ecclesiastical power is more to be dreaded by mankind, than any other species of power, exercised under the sun. For if it can get such a hold of the public mind, in a country like ours, what can it not do, when surrounding circumstances are all favourable to its progress? Bleeding Europe has long ago answered this very serious question. Let America learn how to answer it, while that answer may serve to save the dearest enjoyments of all her children, and not wait until the answer will have to be received in forlorn and dreadful silence; and when all argument and remonstrance will be in vain, as they were in ‘the holy inquisition.’”—*Mutual Rights, vol. III., pp. 139—140.*

“That the church is in danger of being corrupted”—says “A Layman”—“in consequence of the powers held by the traveling ministers cannot be doubted; for the desire to possess power and exercise authority is strongly marked in the human character. Where power is to be obtained, man is strongly tempted to resort; and where can it be found in a more complete and extended degree than in the person of an itinerant minister of the Methodist Church, who possesses the functions of a legislator, a judge, and an executive officer, over those to whom he is not at all responsible.”—*Ib., vol. II., p. 56.*

Yea, it has been publicly asserted, that a great change for the worse, has in fact, already taken place in the character of the Methodist clergy generally.—An able writer over the signature of “Luther,” says—“We speak to Methodists, and fearlessly inquire, if indeed the itinerants are holy, harmless, and changeless, as they would have us believe them to be? Have they more of self-command than other ministers? are they less assuming, or do we hear more boasting from any other profession of men, concerning their achievements? Are they more patient of contradiction? or less inclined to persecute those who differ from them in opinion than other men? Is not the track of some of them marked with inquisitorial violence and ruin, even in this enlightened age and country? If the civil authority could be called in to sustain them in the work of persecution, have we not reason to fear, after the recent deeds of some of them, that they would soon make the prisons of the country groan with their dissenting brethren? We cheerfully admit that there are many excellent men among them, but we must nevertheless ask if the last thirty years can exhibit so fearful a change in any other body of ministers? Should this deleterious change progress in the same ratio for the next fifty years, these western infallibles will have accomplished more in half a century than the eastern infallibles of Europe did in five hundred years.”—*Mutual Rights, vol. IV., pp. 362 and 363.*

Thus have we shown from their own Book—and by the testimony of several of the most intelligent and competent witnesses—that the government and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church are “anti-republican and tyrannical,” and that the *tendency* of that ecclesiastical system is highly dangerous to the civil liberty of these United States. Our greatest astonishment is, that any “Methodist” should have had the temerity to challenge the production of the proof! Whether he, or his brethren, will now be “satis-



fied," or not, we are confident that an intelligent and unprejudiced community will regard the evidence as amply "satisfactory"—because overwhelmingly conclusive.—The evidence deduced from the Book of Discipline—confirmed as it is by the testimony of Dr. Schmucker, and that of the Rev. Mr. Bascom, an adhering minister of the church—to say nothing of the concurring testimony of the seceding clerical and lay Reformers—is, certainly in my judgment, and I verily believe will be in the judgment of every impartial reader,—irresistibly decisive.

Before I leave this branch of the subject, allow me briefly to call the attention of the reader, by way of contrast, to the truly republican and liberal principles of the government and discipline of *the Presbyterian Church*.

The *constitution* of the Presbyterian Church—comprising her doctrines, form of government, discipline, and directory for public worship—was originally adopted by the *joint vote* of the ministers, and the ruling elders, as the representatives of the people: and no additional constitutional rule can be introduced, or any present constitutional rule altered or rescinded, without being first transmitted, by the General Assembly, to all the Presbyteries, and receiving the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof.—*See Form of Government, chap. XII., sec. 6.*

In *all* our Presbyterian judicatories,—from the Church Session to the General Assembly, *the people are fairly represented* by lay members, called ruling elders. \*

The *Church Session*, which constitutes with us a parochial

\* It has been questioned whether ruling elders should be called *lay* members, as their office is *spiritual*: But I use the phrase here merely for the purpose of distinguishing them from *ministers* or *preachers*, which they are not. And they are intended, according to the theory of Presbyterianism, *specially to represent the people*:—"RULING elders are *properly* the representatives of the people," &c.—*Form of Gov., chap. V.*

presbytery, is composed of the bishop or pastor of the congregation, and as many ruling elders as the congregation may choose to elect. This body is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation: receives members into the church, admonishes, rebukes, suspends or excludes from the sacraments, those who are found, after a fair trial, according to the constitutional forms prescribed by the Book of Discipline, to deserve censure; concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and appoints delegates to the higher judicatories of the church. And in all its proceedings and acts, the majority rules—the pastor having not even a vote, unless there be a tie.—*Ib.*, chap. IX.

“A *Presbytery*,” which is the next court above the church session, “consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district.”—*Ib.*, chap. X.

“A *Synod*,” which is the next court above the presbytery, “is a convention of the bishops and elders within a larger district, including at least three presbyteries. The ratio of the representation of elders in the synod is the same as in the presbytery.”—*Ib.*, chap. XI., sec. 1.

“The *General Assembly* is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church. It shall represent, in one body, all the particular churches of this denomination.” \*\*\*\* It “shall consist of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each presbytery.”—*Ib.*, chap. XII., sec. 1 and 2.

If any church member is accused of immorality, he is cited to appear before the church session: the charge is sent to him, in writing, with the specifications of time and place, together with the names of the witnesses; and at least ten days must elapse from the time of the citation before he can be brought to trial. The forms of justice are likewise minutely prescribed for the proper conduct of the trial, and all

the rights of the accused carefully guarded and secured.—  
*See the Discipline, chap. IV. and VI.*

If the decision be not satisfactory to the accused, he has the right to appeal to the Presbytery:—If not satisfied with the decision of the presbytery, he may appeal to the Synod:—And if still not satisfied, he may carry his appeal up to the General Assembly.—*Ib., chap. VII., sec. 3.* Thus the humblest member of the Presbyterian Church may have his case adjudicated by the whole denomination, through its representatives:—for “the radical principles of Presbyterian Church government and discipline are,—that the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one church of Christ, called emphatically *the church*;—that a larger part of *the church*, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein;—that, in like manner, a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united; that is, that *a majority shall govern*: and consequently that appeals may be carried from lower to higher judicatories, till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of *the whole church*.”—*See note appended to chap. XII., of the Form of Gov.*

As all our Presbyterian courts are composed of an equal number of clerical and lay members, so likewise *all the officers of the church are chosen by the people*.

Each Presbyterian congregation elects its *board of Trustees*, who hold the parochial property, in trust, for the use of the members of that particular church or congregation. And these trustees are subject to the instructions of those who appoint them—are elected for a limited period only—and may be re-elected or not, agreeably to the wishes of a majority of the people.

The *Deacons*, whose office it is to “take care of the poor,” agreeably to the original design of that office, as appears

from Acts 6: 1—4,—the deacons are elected by the people and have the entire management of the funds collected in the congregation for the poor.—*See Form of Gov., chap. VI.*

“*Ruling Elders* are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline, in conjunction with the pastors or ministers.”—*Ib., chap. V* If these officers should become, from any cause, unacceptable to a majority of the congregation, they may be required to cease acting as such, or the congregation may elect such additional deacons or elders as shall constitute a majority of them agreeable to their views. *Ib., chap. XIII., sec. 6 and 7.*

In regard to *Pastors*: each congregation elects its own minister, and fixes his salary; so that the people have always the man of their choice, and the regulation of the amount of his support.—*Ib., chap. XV.* If the pastor becomes, from any cause, objectionable or undesirable, the people have the right to petition the Presbytery to dissolve his pastoral connexion with them, that they may proceed to the election of another.—In like manner, if the pastor becomes dissatisfied with the people and desires the dissolution of his pastoral connexion with them, he has the same privilege as the people.—*Ib., chap. XVII.*

If a minister is charged with heresy or immorality, he is tried—not by ministers exclusively—but by an equal number of ministers and ruling elders.

In short, nothing is done, in the Presbyterian Church, without the concurrence of the people or their chosen representatives.—If a private member of the church is received, he is received by a vote of the church session. If a candidate for the gospel ministry is received upon trial, it must be by the joint vote of the ministers and ruling elders composing the presbytery. If a candidate is licensed, it is by the same concurrent vote. If a licentiate is ordained, or a min-

ister installed over any congregation, it is by the joint vote of the ministers and ruling elders. So in regard to all our denominational Boards of Education, Publication, and Missions; they are appointed by the same concurrent vote, and are composed—not of ministers exclusively—but of ministers and laymen.—In every department of the government, legislative, judicial, and executive, the representatives of the people have an equal voice with the clergy.

Thus you perceive, that the government and discipline of the *Presbyterian* Church are eminently republican and liberal. The people are fairly and fully represented in every department, and their rights and liberties amply and constitutionally secured. This is one reason of their firm adherence and unchangeable attachment to their venerated church. Between their pastors and themselves, there are no grounds for suspicion or distrust;—nor do they love their ministers the less, because they confide in the intelligence and integrity of the people, and commend them for the zealous maintenance of their unalienable rights. If space allowed, we might show that, to them, under God, more than to any other people, the world owes whatever of civil and religious liberty it now enjoys. And if any aristocratical or monarchical sect should ever attempt the destruction of public freedom, we may safely predict, from the history of the past and their present unabated attachment to their principles, that the Presbyterians of this country, will rally to a man around the standard of civil and religious liberty, and prove themselves not unworthy of the noble inheritance which they have derived from the word of God and their illustrious fathers!

## CHAPTER III.

### CLERICAL CONTROL OF CHURCH PROPERTY.

The Methodist meeting houses and parsonages under the control of the itinerant clergy.—Deed of settlement analyzed.—Unanimous opinion of seven lawyers—and the decision of the supreme court of Pennsylvania.—The chartered fund and book concern also under the entire control of the clergy.—Printed circular of 1842, showing the capital of the book concern to be upwards of six-hundred thousand dollars—Laymen expressly excluded from any share in the management or appropriation of these funds—Dangerous tendency of such proscription.—Testimony of others on these subjects.—The system of Methodism in these respects contrasted with Presbyterianism.

BEFORE I proceed to prove that the Methodist clergy have the entire control of their church property, I must expose the *quibble* to which some of the apologists of Methodism resort in defending their system against this weighty charge. When we allege, for example, that their meeting houses and parsonages are under the *control* of their preachers, they deny that they are in their *individual possession*, and proceed to show that they are not able to dispose of them and appropriate the proceeds to their private and personal use!—As well might the apologists of kings deny that, as such, they have not the *control* of “the property of the crown,” because they cannot sell and appropriate it to their private benefit!!

*Webster* gives the following definitions:—

“CONTROL, n.—1. *Primarily*, a book, register or account, kept to correct or check another account or register; a counter-register. Hence, check, restraint. 2. Power; au-

thority; government; command. 3. He or that which restrains.

“CONTROL, v. t.—1. To keep under check by a counter-register or double account. 2. To check; to restrain; to govern. 3. To overpower; to subject to authority; to counteract; to have under command. 4. To direct or govern in opposition; to have superior force or authority over.

“CONTROLLABLE, a.—That may be controlled, checked or restrained; subject to command.

“CONTROLLED, pp.—Checked; restrained; governed.

“CONTROLLER, n.—1. One who controls or restrains; one that has the power or authority to govern or control. 2. An officer appointed to keep a counter-register of accounts, or to oversee, control or verify the accounts of other officers.

“CONTROLMENT, n.—1. The power or act of controlling; the state of being restrained; control; restraint. 2. Opposition; resistance; counter-action; refutation.”

In vain do you look among the above definitions for the idea of personal possession:—the leading idea is, that of *authoritative* or *governmental restraint*. If we had intended to allege, that the Methodist clergy personally own the church property, and therefore have the power to sell it for their private use, we should have said so in just so many words. But when we say that the property of their church is *controlled* by their clergy, we mean precisely what the term imports, viz:—that it is “checked, restrained, governed” by them—that they have “the power or authority to govern” it—that it is “subject to (their) authority”—is “under (their) command”—and that they can “direct or govern (it) in opposition” to the will of the people, because they “have superior force or authority over” it. This is exactly what we allege—and now for the proof:—

Mr. Lee in his Short History, page 234, says—“We” (the General Conference) “also, for the first time, drew up,

and published in our general minutes, a deed, for the better securing of all our meeting houses; and it was determined as far as it was consistent with the laws of the different states, *it should be carried into effect. We concluded to have nine, seven or five trustees to each house.*”

The Discipline says,—“ In order, more effectually to prevent our people from contracting debts which they are not able to discharge, *it shall be the duty* of the Quarterly Conference, of every circuit and station, where it is contemplated to build a house or houses of worship, *to secure* the ground or lot, on which such house or houses are to be built, *according to our deed of settlement*, which deed must be legally executed; and also said Quarterly Conference shall appoint a judicious committee of at least three members of our church, who shall form an estimate of the amount necessary to build; and three-fourths of the money, according to such estimate, shall be secured or subscribed before any such building shall be commenced.

“ In future, *we will admit no charter, deed or conveyance*, for any house of worship to be used by us, *unless it be provided* in such charter, deed, or conveyance, that the trustees of said house shall at all times permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized *by the General Conference* of the ministers of our church, or by the Annual Conferences, to preach and expound God’s holy word, and to execute the discipline of the church, and to administer the sacraments therein, *according to the true meaning and purport of our deed of settlement.*”—*Dis., part II., sec. 2.*

Again, in the same section of the Discipline, the deed of settlement is thus introduced:—

“ *Ques. 4.* What shall be done for the security of our preaching houses, and the premises belonging thereto?



“*Ans.* Let the following plan of a deed of settlement be brought into effect *in all possible cases*, and as far as the laws of the states respectively will admit of it. But each Annual Conference is authorized to make such modification in the deeds as they may find the different usages and customs of *law require* in the different states and territories, *so as to secure* the premises firmly by deed, and permanently to the Methodist Episcopal Church *according* to the true intent and meaning of the following form of a deed of settlement; *any thing in the said form to the contrary notwithstanding.*”

Then follows the DEED OF SETTLEMENT, from which we transcribe the following extracts.—After stating in the usual technical form, the names of the grantor, and trustees, describing the property, &c., the indenture proceeds thus:—

“TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all and singular, the above mentioned and described lot or piece of land, situate, lying, and being as aforesaid, together with all and singular, the houses, woods, waters, ways, and privileges thereto belonging, or in any wise appertaining unto them the said \*\*\*\* and their successors in office for ever in trust, that they shall erect and build, or cause to be erected and built thereon, a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church *in the United States of America, according to the rules* and discipline, which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted *by the ministers* and preachers of the said church, at their General Conferences in the United States of America; and in farther trust and confidence that they shall at all times, forever hereafter, permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the Annual Conferences authorized by the

said General Conference, to preach and expound God's holy word therein; and in farther trust and confidence, that as often as any one or more of the trustees herein before mentioned, shall die, or cease to be a member or members of the said church, according to the rules and discipline as aforesaid, then, and in such case, it shall be the duty of the stationed minister or preacher (authorized as aforesaid) who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of the said church, to call a meeting of the remaining trustees as soon as conveniently may be: and when so met, *the said minister or preacher shall proceed to nominate* one or more persons to fill the place or places of him or them whose office or offices has (or have) been vacated as aforesaid."

It is provided also in the deed, that if the trustees should at any time be unable to pay the debt for which they have become responsible, "on account of the said premises," they "shall be authorized to raise the said sum or sums of money, by a mortgage on the said premises, or by selling the said premises, *after notice given to the pastor or preacher* who has the oversight of the congregation attending divine service on the said premises, if the money due be not paid to the said trustees, or their successors, within one year after such notice given; and if such sale take place, the said trustees, or their successors, after paying the debt and other expenses which are due from the money arising from such sale, *shall deposit the remainder* of the money produced by the said sale in the hands of the steward or stewards of the society belonging to or attending divine service on said premises; *which surplus* of the produce of such sale so deposited in the hands of the said steward or stewards, *shall be at the disposal of the next Annual Conference* authorized as aforesaid; which said Annual Conference shall dispose of the said money, according to the best of *their* judgment, for the use of the said society."—*Dis., part II., sec. 2.*

Appended to this form of a deed of settlement, there is the following:—"N. B. Let nine trustees be appointed for preaching houses, where proper persons can be procured; otherwise seven or five. The board of trustees of every circuit or station shall be responsible to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, circuit or station, and shall be required to present a report of its acts during the preceding year: provided that in *all* cases, when a new board of trustees is to be created, it *shall* be done (except in those states and territories, where the statutes provide differently) *by the appointment of the preacher in charge, or the presiding elder of the district.*"—*Ib.*

Now, if these official documents do not prove that the Methodist clergy have the "entire control" of their meeting houses and parsonages, it is not only impossible to prove any thing, but it is impossible for any body of men officially to secure such control. That they did *design* by this authoritatively enjoined and carefully constructed indenture, (which looks much more like the elaborate work of "counsellors learned in the law," than that of Methodist preachers,)—that they did *design* by this deed to secure to themselves the entire control of the property of the church, there can be no doubt; and we think that they have effectually accomplished their purpose.

But let us examine the evidence in detail—for the method of induction is the most "satisfactory," because it is the most certain.

1. It appears from the foregoing quotation from the Book of Discipline, that every Quarterly Meeting Conference is required to appoint a committee to estimate the cost of any church which the people contemplate erecting, and that "three-fourths of the money, according to such estimate, shall be secured or subscribed before any such building shall be commenced."—Is this not assuming the right of control?

I will say nothing of the interference with the rights of the people, in the *appointment*, by the conference, of such a committee, and the authority thus vested in *them*, to determine what amount is necessary for the erection of a place of worship. But suppose that a congregation desired to commence a house of worship, *without* having such an amount secured or subscribed, would they not be, by this clerical rule, effectually “checked,” or “restrained?” Now, what other body of protestant ministers, in this free country, would undertake to forbid any of their congregations from commencing a house of worship, unless they first secured or had subscribed a certain amount of money? Would any other people succumb to such clerical dictation, in a matter purely temporal? We know not what our Methodist brethren understand by the word *control*—but we can assure them that the tamest Presbyterian parish in Christendom would scorn to submit to such a restraint as this! Observe, we have said nothing relative to the *expediency*, or in-expediency of commencing a house of worship, without having such a proportion of the estimated cost secured or subscribed in advance; and had the conference simply *recommended* that, in ordinary cases, such an amount should be previously secured, *we* should certainly have nothing to say against it;—but the rule is *obligatory*—the prohibition universal and authoritative, and therefore an unjustifiable check or restraint upon the temporal rights of the people.

2. The General Conference has made it “the duty of the Quarterly Conference, to secure the ground or lot on which such house or houses are to be built, according to our deed of settlement.”—*Ib.* Is not this control,—check, restraint, government?

3. “In future, *we will admit no charter, deed, or conveyance, for any house of worship, to be used by us, unless*

it be provided in such charter," &c.—“ according to the true meaning and purport of our deed of settlement.”—*Ib.* Is not this control?—Suppose a congregation should adopt a charter, providing that their property should be for the use of that particular society, and subject to the rules and regulations which a majority of its own members should from time to time adopt, would the deed be accepted by the conference?—Or suppose that they should prudently provide in their charter, against being obliged to submit to any future rules which the conference might adopt, contrary to the views of a majority of the congregation, would their deed be accepted? Certainly not.—You may build the house, and pay for it, say the conference to the people, but we will not use it—that is, we will not preach the gospel to you, or administer the sacraments in it, unless you make your deed in accordance with the form which *we* have prescribed!!

4. It appears from the “N. B.” before quoted from the Discipline, “ that in *all* cases, when a new board of trustees is to be created, it *shall* be done (except in those states and territories where the statutes provide differently) *by the appointment of the preacher* in charge, or the presiding elder of the district.” And in the deed of settlement it is expressly provided, that if any vacancy should occur in any board of trustees—the “ pastor shall proceed to nominate one or more persons to fill the place”—and the remaining trustees, “ shall proceed to elect, and by a majority of votes, appoint the person or persons so nominated;” “ and in case of an equal number of votes for and against the said nomination, the stationed minister or preacher shall have the casting vote.”—Is not this control? It might be supposed that when the deed by which the parochial property is held is in accordance with their prescribed form, that this would be quite sufficient, and that the people would at least be trusted with the

privilege of appointing their own board of trustees, and of filling any vacancies that should occur in them. But no,—if a new board is to be created, the *preacher* is to appoint his men—and if any vacancies occur, in boards already existing, the remaining trustees must fill them up, from the nominations of the pastor.—Is not this control—check, restraint, government?

In reference to this, “A Methodist” says,—“The preacher has the power of nominating trustees in case of vacancy. This has been said to give him control over them. If so, the president of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, *controls* the judiciary of this country, as he nominates the judges of the supreme court.” I am obliged to “A Methodist” for this illustration—it answers my purpose exactly. In order, however, to make the two cases analogous, suppose that the president of the United States had not only the power to *nominate* the judges of the supreme court, but also of *making all the laws* by which the judges must be governed in their judicial administration, would he not have the control of the judiciary of this country—and, through it, of the civil and political rights of the people?—For, be it remembered, the Methodist preachers not only nominate the trustees, but make all “the rules and regulations,” by which the trustees are governed! Our civil and political “*security*” is, *not* merely that the judges are “not removable” at the pleasure of the president, but that they are bound to administer laws which are made by the representatives of the people, and according to the constitution, adopted by the people and alterable only by their sovereign will—and that the judges are liable to impeachment, and hence amenable to the people, through their representatives, for any mal-administration of their office. If it were otherwise—if the president had the power of making what

laws he pleased, and the judges appointed by him were irresponsible to the people, what security should we have for our property, liberty, or lives? Would not such a control over the judiciary of the country be regarded as imminently dangerous? Would the people of these United States tolerate it for a moment? And yet, it is an undeniable fact, that the trustees of Methodist meeting houses and parsonages are not only nominated by the preachers, but they are subject to all the "rules and regulations," which may be from time to time adopted by the General Conference; nor can either the trustees or the preachers be called to an account for their official acts, by the people:—and hence, it is evident, that the clergy of that sect have the entire control of the property, held by the trustees, so nominated and governed.

5. In the deed of settlement it is specially provided "in farther trust and confidence, that they" (the trustees) "shall at all times, forever hereafter, permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said church," (the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America,) "as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conferences of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the Annual Conferences authorized by the said General Conference, to preach and expound God's holy word therein." And in the second section of part II. of the Discipline, the conference declare that they will not admit any charter in which this provision is not incorporated! Now, is not this control? Suppose the trustees and congregation of any Methodist Church were dissatisfied with a preacher sent to them by the bishop, *could they exclude him from the occupancy of their house of worship?* Suppose the trustees and congregation were unanimously desirous of making an arrangement with ministers

of other persuasions to occupy their pulpit on the sabbaths, when their circuit preacher was absent, could not the preacher change his appointments, and so prevent the congregation from carrying out their wishes? Suppose that the trustees and congregation were desirous of granting the use of their meeting house for some useful exhibition, or popular lecture, could not the preacher prevent it by making an appointment to preach on that day and at that hour? Observe, the question is not whether it would ever be expedient for a Methodist congregation to loan their church for any such purpose, or wise to allow any minister of another denomination to occupy their pulpit, without the consent of the pastor or preacher in charge; but the question is, cannot the preachers, by this clause of the deed, restrain the people from using their property as *they* might think proper? The question is not even whether the General Conference have the moral right to say on what terms they will use the meeting houses for the purpose of expounding God's holy word therein, it is simply a question of *fact*—whether this clause in the deed, prescribed by them, does not give them the *control* of the property? And that it does give them the restraining or controlling power over every house of worship held by this deed of settlement, or by any charter which is “according to the true intent and meaning” of this deed, who can doubt?

6. It appears from the deed of settlement, that the property is not held for the use of the *particular congregation* who build and pay for it, but for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church *in the United States of America!* Thus:—“in trust, that they” (the trustees) “shall erect and build, or cause to be erected and built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of



America.” The right, therefore, is not vested in the members of any particular congregation, such as “the Light street Methodist Church,” or “the Eutaw street Methodist Church,”—but in the members of “the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America!” The congregation, who *pay* for the building, are not even to be named in the deed as the owners of the property for which they have paid!! And, pray, who are the legal representatives or agents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in which the right of property is thus vested? Are they not the ministers and preachers composing the General Conference? And who are the exclusive and irresponsible rulers of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America? Are they not the ministers and preachers composing the General Conference? And as they have the entire government of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in which the right of property is vested, have they not therefore the entire control of the property?

I am grieved and mortified to be obliged to expose, what must be regarded as either an unpardonable oversight by “A Methodist,” or as a wilful and wicked suppression of the truth. In his last article, he says,—“As to the church property, the Discipline recommends a deed of settlement, (p. 161,) in which the property is conveyed to trustees, ‘for the use of the *members* of the Methodist Episcopal Church.’” Now, with the deed before him, how could he overlook the remaining part of the sentence—“*in the United States of America?*”—Or, if he saw it, how could he deliberately suppress it! Did he wish his readers to infer, from his imperfect quotation, that the property was conveyed, according to the deed, for the use of the members of the congregation who built and paid for it, and that the right of ownership was

vested in them? Whether he designed to make this impression or not, it is certain that many actually received it, and not a few regarded the quotation as decisive proof to that effect! Really, Mr. "Methodist," such carelessness in citing authorities, or such disingenuousness in the use made of them, is very, very dishonourable and reprehensible!

7. Agreeably to the deed of settlement, the trustees are authorized to hold the property in trust "for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, ACCORDING TO THE RULES AND DISCIPLINE, *which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted* BY THE MINISTERS AND PREACHERS *of the said church,* at their General Conferences in the United States of America." That is,—gentlemen, you may hold the property in trust for the use of the members,—but—but the members shall use it only according to the rules and discipline, which *we*, the ministers and preachers, may from time to time agree upon and prescribe!!! If this is not assuming the *control* of the property, pray, what would be? Observe, it is not restraint enough, that the members are authorized to use the property only according to the rules and discipline *already* agreed upon by the General Conference; but they are authorized to use it, only in accordance with the rules and discipline which it may please the ministers and preachers to agree upon and adopt *hereafter*—"from time to time"!!! Yes, no matter how arbitrary the rules, or how oppressive the discipline which may be in future agreed upon and adopted by the General Conference, the members can only have the use of the churches which they have erected and paid for, by submitting to and acting in accordance with them!!!—This is not mere control—but control the most despotic—and by any *other* intelligent protestant denomination would be regarded as intolerable!

Now, why did not "A Methodist" quote *this* part of the deed?—especially as it forms a part of the very sentence from which he quoted! *Why* he did not, we leave with his own conscience: but the public cannot fail to see, that, if he had quoted the entire sentence, it would have demonstrated, beyond all doubt, the truth of what I had alleged! But this is not all;—immediately after the imperfect quotation before noticed, he says,—“The only right reserved to the preachers, is the right to preach in the church when regularly appointed to do so.”!! So, indeed! Then the reserved right to make what “rules and discipline” they please, and according to which, only the members have the privilege to use their meeting houses, is considered by “A Methodist,” either as no right at all! or as too insignificant to mention! O shame! that a gentleman should thus overlook, or wilfully suppress, the most material parts of a document from which he professes to quote!—and that, too, while he is volunteering to convict an accredited minister of the gospel—a “friend”!—of “bearing false witness against his neighbours”!!! No wonder that some, who had not examined the deed for themselves, imagined that the charge of clerical control of church property was shown, triumphantly, to be false!—for who would have suspected, that “A Methodist” would either have overlooked, or suppressed, the remainder of a sentence, which indisputably proves the charge to be true!! Now, if this had been done by an “unconverted” and “cold-hearted” *Presbyterian*, it would not have been worse than some would have expected, and it might have furnished another illustration of the alleged “licentious tendency of Calvinism”!—Ah! it is easy, very, to shout “Glory!” “Hallelujah!”—but, according to our old fashioned notion, it is much more acceptable in the sight of God, to avoid such negligence, or disingenuousness. I will only

say further, that if the Rev. *Mr. Annan* were convicted of the same carelessness, or want of candour, I should not indeed vauntingly manifest quite as much *fastidiousness* as “A Methodist,” but I would cordially unite with him in repudiating his authority!

8. According to the deed of settlement, the trustees of a Methodist Church are not at liberty either to mortgage or sell the property held by them, in liquidation of the debts due by the congregation, without giving a year’s notice to the pastor or preacher of said society—“They,” (the trustees) “or a majority of them, shall be authorized to raise the said sum or sums of money, by a mortgage on the said premises, or by selling the said premises, after notice given to the pastor or preacher who has the oversight of the congregation attending divine service on the said premises, if the money due be not paid to the said trustees, or their successors, within one year after such notice given.” Is not this control—check, restraint, government?

9. It is further provided in the deed of settlement, that, if the property is sold, the balance, after paying the debt and other expenses, shall be deposited, not with the trustees of the congregation, to be by them disposed of, as they or the people may judge proper,—but in the hands of the steward or stewards, *to be disposed of by the Annual Conference*, according to the best of *their* judgment, for the use of said society!—“And if such sale take place, the said trustees, or their successors, after paying the debt and other expenses, which are due from the money arising from such sale, shall deposite the remainder of the money produced by the said sale in the hands of the steward or stewards of the society belonging to, or attending divine service on said premises; which surplus of the produce of such sale so deposited in the hands of the said steward or stewards, shall be at the

disposal of the next Annual Conference, authorized as aforesaid; which said Annual Conference shall dispose of the said money, according to the best of their judgment, for the use of the said society.” Is not this control? It has been remarked on this clause of the deed, that “it is an indisputable principle of the law, that if a property be sold for debt, the residue of the proceeds, after all claims on the property have been satisfied, is at the disposal of the legal owner of the property. But the deed says, ‘the conference shall dispose of it;’ therefore, the conference is the legal owner. The fact that the surplus is to be disposed of for the *use* of the society, only proves that those who wrote the deed, meant to act honestly, and if they could not retain the church, would not pocket the money; but it does not affect the ownership of the church itself”—or disprove the fact, that, from beginning to end, the conference claim the right of *controlling* the property—yea, even the residue of the proceeds arising from its sale!

10. It also appears, from the note appended to the deed of settlement, that the trustees are not accountable to the congregation, but to the Quarterly Meeting Conference.—“The board of trustees of every circuit or station shall be responsible to the Quarterly Meeting Conference of said circuit or station, and shall be required to present a report of its acts during the preceding year.”

Lastly. It is evident from the deed of settlement, that *the right is so vested in the General Conference, as that the property can never be alienated from them, or withdrawn from their control.* This is the avowed design of the deed prescribed in the Book of Discipline:—“to secure the premises firmly by deed, and permanently to the Methodist Episcopal Church.” Observe, not to the particular congregations who erect and pay for them,—but “to the Methodist Episcopal

Church.” And hence, in the deed itself, it is provided that the property shall be held in trust “for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, according to the rules and discipline, which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the ministers and preachers of said church at their General Conferences in the United States of America; and in farther trust and confidence, that they” (the trustees) “shall at *all times, forever hereafter*, permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conferences of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the Annual Conferences authorized by the said General Conference, to preach and expound God’s holy word therein.” It is obvious, therefore, that if the trustees and congregation of any Methodist Church should *unanimously* desire to withdraw from their present ecclesiastical connexion, they could not secede and yet retain their place of worship!—No matter how heretical, in their unanimous judgment, the General Conference had become, or how intolerably arbitrary and tyrannical their discipline, the congregation could not exclude them from their pulpit, or invite any other ministers to occupy it in their place! They might indeed secede, as individuals, from the denomination, but they could not secede and yet retain the property,—*that* would remain, “firmly” —“permanently”—aye, “forever hereafter!” for the use of the Methodists in the United States of America!! and for the occupancy, *ad libitum et æternùm*, of the ministers and preachers duly authorized by the General Conference!!! If this commitment, unqualified and “forever hereafter,” were only to rules and discipline already known and unchangeably established, we should not be so much astonished;—but it is, be it remembered, to any rules and discipline

which may be hereafter, from time to time agreed upon and adopted by the General Conference—the nature of which cannot of course be foreknown, and which may be wise, or foolish—liberal, or despotic—scriptural, or anti-scriptural!!!—Verily, this, this is control with a witness!

Now, in view of all these particulars—derived from the Book of Discipline itself—is not the induction irresistible, that the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church have the “entire control” of the meeting houses and parsonages belonging to that denomination?—They have forbidden the people to commence any place of worship, without first securing or having subscribed three-fourths of the cost, estimated by a committee, to be appointed by the Quarterly Meeting Conference:—they have forbidden them to proceed, unless the lot, on which they contemplate erecting their church, is first secured according to their prescribed deed of settlement:—they have resolved that they will admit no charter which is not in accordance with that which they have enjoined:—they have assumed the right of appointing every new board of trustees, and of nominating persons to fill all vacancies:—they have reserved to themselves the right to use the churches, at all times, forever:—they have required, that the property shall be held in trust, for the use, not of the members of any particular congregation, but of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America:—they have, decreed that the churches shall be used by the members of the denomination, only in accordance with the rules and discipline which they may from time to time agree upon and adopt:—they have determined, that the trustees shall not be authorized to mortgage or sell the property to pay the debts of the congregation, without giving a year’s notice to the pastor:—they have enacted that, if the trustees are compelled to sell the property, the pro-

ceeds shall be at the disposal, not of the congregation, but of the Annual Conference:—they have resolved, that the trustees, instead of making their report to the society, whose money they manage, and to whom they ought to be accountable, shall be responsible to the Quarterly Conference, and make their yearly report to them:—and they have required, that the ownership of every church shall be secured, firmly, permanently, and forever, to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, of which they are the exclusive and irresponsible agents and controllers! so that no congregation can refuse to submit to the rules and discipline which they may see fit to adopt, or secede from their connexion, without forfeiting the privilege of using the place of worship, which they have, perhaps with many sacrifices, erected and paid for!—Surely, surely, from all these particulars, the fact is indubitably established, that the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church have the “entire control” of the meeting houses and parsonages of that denomination.

It would seem to be a work of supererogation to produce any further evidence in proof of a charge so clearly and fully demonstrated: but I will subjoin, for the “satisfaction” of my Methodist brethren, the unanimous opinion of no less than seven lawyers, and the decision of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

“It is,” says Dr. Schmucker, “the concurrent opinion of the members of our bar, that the property thus deeded, belongs not to the congregation, but to the Methodist Church in the United States, represented by the conference. I showed the deed to *seven* of our *lawyers*, being all whom I could find when I had it with me, and this was their *unanimous opinion*.”

Again, the Dr. says, “the principle was actually decided by *the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*, as I am informed by



a member of our bar. The jury, governed, we presume, by the equity of the case, gave verdict for the Radicals," [Methodist Protestants,] "who were a majority both in the church and of the trustees. The minority of the trustees, as agents of the conference, appealed, and the supreme court reversed the decision! It is therefore undeniable," he continues, "that if every member and every trustee of a church, thus deeded, regarded any future measures of the conference as tyrannical, and desired to withdraw and introduce other preachers, the conference could turn the key on them, and they could be compelled to submit! We might proceed to show that the plea set up for a distinction between the right of 'occupancy' in the conference and of 'possession' in the congregation, is a quibble, not mentioned in the deed, nor recognized by the laws of our land: but we believe the opinion of our respectable bar, and of the supreme court of our state, a sufficient answer to all such evasions."

"A Methodist," who appears to have been either very little acquainted with the deed of settlement, or else very much afraid of its real character, says,—"In fact, but few of our churches are held under this deed of settlement. In this city, the trustees fill their own vacancies, and in most of the Eastern Conferences, the trustees are elected by the membership." To this we reply, that, so far as the General Conference *could* control the people, they have obliged them to adopt their deed of settlement—not only by enjoining its adoption "in all possible cases," but by resolving that they "will admit no charter" that does not include the material provisions before mentioned, "according to the true meaning and purport of our deed of settlement."—*See Dis., part II., sec. 2.* And if, in some of the states and territories, in which the *civil* statutes will not admit of the adoption of the deed in the precise form in which it is found in the Book of

Discipline; or if in cases where the usages and customs of the people require some modification of the form prescribed,—some change in the form of conveyance is allowed,—yet, in every case, the substance of the deed of settlement must be preserved. Thus:—“Let the following plan of a deed of settlement be brought into effect in all possible cases, and as far as the laws of the states respectively will admit of. But each Annual Conference is authorized to make such modification in the deeds as they may find the different usages and customs of law require in the different states and territories, so as to secure the premises firmly by deed, and permanently to the Methodist Episcopal Church, according to the true intent and meaning of the following form of a deed of settlement; any thing in the said form to the contrary notwithstanding.”—*Ib.* In order to test the matter—let the deeds of the Methodist Episcopal Churches in this city be published, fairly and fully, and then the public will be able to judge whether they are not “according to the true intent and meaning” of the deed of settlement. And if in this city, where the Methodist Protestants have so ably advocated the rights of the people, any Methodist Episcopal congregations have adopted charters differing materially from the deed of settlement, they are only exceptions to the general rule, and are manifestly in direct opposition to the laws of their church, as published in the Book of Discipline. But we do not believe that the preachers have “admitted” any such charters—because they have deliberately and formally declared that they would not—and this declaration is still published by them to the world; and therefore, if any such charters exist, we challenge their publication.—We shall be “satisfied” with no mere assertion or evasion—let us have the deeds themselves. And after the imperfect quotation from one which we have had occasion to expose, we shall

not be thought unreasonable in demanding their publication *in extenso*—especially as they are more private and less accessible to the public than the form of the deed contained in the Discipline.

Hitherto we have spoken only of the *meeting houses* and *parsonages* under the control of the travelling preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and which are estimated to be worth at least “THREE MILLIONS EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS:”—But there are other, and immense funds, under their “entire control.” In addition to what they term “*The Chartered Fund*,” which amounts at present, it is said, to “about thirty thousand dollars,”—they have what they call “*The Book Concern*,” the capital of which exceeds, considerably, the half of a million of dollars. For the institution, management and appropriation of these funds, see Book of Discipline, part II., sections 7th and 8th.

As it is not denied that *these* funds are under the absolute control of the preachers and for the exclusive use or pecuniary benefit of themselves and families, the mere reference to the Discipline, as just given, is, I presume, sufficient.

The extent and profitableness, however, of the book concern, deserve a more particular notice. These may be seen from the following printed circular, addressed to each of the Annual Conferences on the 1st of Jan., 1842, and which was, at my request, politely procured for me, from the office at New York, by “A Methodist.”

“*New York, Jan., 1, 1842.*”

“To the           Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church:—

“Dear Brethren,—

“In the discharge of our duty as agents, we beg leave to lay before you a brief statement of the affairs of the Meth-

odist book concern up to December 31, 1841. We were in hopes a year ago, that the financial and mercantile embarrassments of the country had reached a crisis, and that we might thenceforward look for an improvement; but in this we have been disappointed, and have found the difficulties, growing out of the deranged state of the currency, to exceed all former years. Our loss in exchange, amounts to upward of \$10,000. Fewer books have been sold, and remittances greatly retarded. While we deeply deplore this state of things, we have found it wholly out of our power to control it, and, with others, have been compelled to submit. For the success which has attended the business of the concern, (for it has not been without some success) we are, as we always have been, greatly indebted to the interest felt and manifested by its friends, many of whom have laboured with their accustomed zeal, by selling books, obtaining subscriptions for periodicals, and making remittances to promote the great objects for which this institution was established. And it is to be hoped that such are the views of brethren with regard to the connection which exists between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the book concern, and their dependence, one upon the other, that there will be no falling off of friends, or relaxation of effort, but a constant increase of both until its utmost capacity of doing good to the bodies and souls of men is fully developed.

“ We remain dear brethren,

“ Your’s very affectionately,

“ G. LANE & P. P. SANDFORD.

" EXHIBIT OF THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN,  
JANUARY 1, 1842.

" ASSETS.

|                                                                                                                                     |             |             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>Real Estate</i> .—Four houses and lease of lots in Crosby street,                                                             |             | \$12,000,00 |             |
| Lots in Mulberry street,                                                                                                            | \$12,215,00 |             |             |
| Buildings on do., with steam engine, water works, and warming apparatus,                                                            | 75,634,14   | 87,849,14   | \$99,849,14 |
| 2. <i>Printing Office</i> .—Presses, type and furniture,                                                                            |             | 21,767,08   |             |
| Stereotype plates,                                                                                                                  |             | 76,067,14   |             |
| Steel plate engravings, and wood and metal cuts,                                                                                    |             | 4,265,00    | 102,099,22  |
| 3. <i>Foundery</i> .—Materials, tools and furniture,                                                                                |             |             | 904,75      |
| 4. <i>Bindery</i> .—Presses, tools and materials,                                                                                   |             |             | 5,717,16    |
| 5. <i>Notes and Book Accounts</i> .—Viz. in notes,                                                                                  | 50,764,68   |             |             |
| In book accounts,                                                                                                                   | 165,070,25  | 215,834,93  |             |
| Deduct 20 per cent. for bad debts, transportation and exchange,                                                                     |             | 43,166,98   | 172,667,95  |
| 6. <i>Merchandise</i> .—Sunday school books, Bound books of the general catalogue, including Charleston and Pittsburg depositories, |             | 20,543,27   |             |
| Sheet stock,                                                                                                                        |             | 65,292,55   |             |
| Paper, furniture in offices, &c.                                                                                                    |             | 84,960,34   |             |
|                                                                                                                                     |             | 4,738,92    | 175,535,08  |
| 7. <i>Cash</i> .—In bank, drafts, and certificates of deposite,                                                                     |             |             | 9,135,34    |
| 8. <i>Periodicals</i> .—Amount due on the books of the Christian Advocate and Journal from subscribers,                             |             |             | 42,000,00   |
| Total amount of assets,                                                                                                             |             |             | 607,908,64  |

" LIABILITIES.

|                                                          |  |          |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--|----------|------------|
| The concern owes on notes,                               |  | \$765,00 |            |
| On book accounts,                                        |  | 6,701,62 | 7,466,62   |
| Nett amount of capital stock estimated at,               |  |          | 600,442,02 |
| The nett profits of the concern the past year amount to, |  |          | 39,738,10  |
| Total amount received for publishing fund to this date,  |  |          | 45,175,16  |

## “REMARKS.

“The bound books of the general catalogue are reckoned at a discount of fifty per cent. from the retail price, and the Sunday school books at twenty per cent. The folded and sheet stock at estimated cost. The stock in printing office, bindery, &c., at what it is believed to be worth in cash.”

From the foregoing circular, it appears, that the “NETT CAPITAL” of the book concern alone, notwithstanding the heavy loss sustained a few years since by fire, amounted, on the first of January, 1842, to MORE THAN SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS: and this immense and increasing capital is admitted to be under the “entire control” of the preachers; and the profits are in fact, exclusively appropriated by them to the exclusive benefit of themselves and families!

The “nett profits” of the book concern during the year mentioned, notwithstanding “the financial and mercantile embarrassments of the country,” and “the difficulties growing out of the deranged state of the currency,” which, they say, “exceeded all former years”—and notwithstanding their “loss in exchange amounted to upward of \$10,000,”—notwithstanding these unprecedented difficulties and losses, “*the nett profits* of the concern,” (exclusive, of course, of the salaries of all their bishops, who are provided for out of this fund,) amounted to very nearly FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!

What the profits would have been, but for the extraordinary embarrassments of the times, and the enormous “loss in exchange,” we cannot tell, but no doubt they would have been much greater. And who can estimate the “profits” of such a concern, when it shall be “developed” to its “ut-

most capacity!"—Let it be remembered, that every traveling preacher is personally interested in the sale of the books and the circulation of the periodicals, issued by the concern—that these interested clerical agents number several thousands, and have peculiar facilities for promoting this trade—and that the people who constitute their liberal and zealous customers, number more than eight hundred thousand:—let these facts, I say be remembered, and the reader may form some idea of the "capacity" of this immense concern, when it is "fully developed!"

There are serious objections to this secular trade on the part of ministers of the gospel, personally interested in its success, and especially of those who boast of being pre-eminently disinterested—as specially devoted to the alone work of winning souls to Christ! The apostles would not be interrupted in their spiritual employment, even to attend to the supply of the necessary wants of the poor; and hence required the people to elect deacons, who should attend to this matter, that they might give themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." But the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, not only engage in the immense business of the book concern, and appropriate its profits to their own exclusive benefit and that of their families,—but they have, by express legislation, *excluded all laymen* from taking any part in its control!! And is there no tendency in all this to secularize their minds, and engender within them the spirit of cupidity and worldliness? In their great zeal to proselyte men from Calvinistic Presbyterianism to Arminian Methodism, may they not sometimes be unduly influenced by the desire to increase the number of their customers? And is there no danger to be apprehended from these large and increasing acquisitions? Is not money—power? Is it right or safe to intrust any body of

clergymen with such absolute and irresponsible control over property amounting to so much, and capable of being increased almost indefinitely? Already it is supposed to amount—including their numerous churches and parsonages—to **BETWEEN FOUR AND FIVE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS!**—and this sum, immense as it is, is yearly and rapidly augmenting. It is idle to say, that they are pious men, and therefore will not abuse their power. We know that they are but men; and, according to their own doctrine, the best of them may “fall from grace.” We know from history the corrupting tendency of clerical wealth and power—and what has been, may be again. If their purposes are purely benevolent and upright, what objection can there be to allow the laity to participate with them in the control and disbursement of the funds? Have they any more right to mistrust the people, than the people have to mistrust them? The truth is, that independent of the natural jealousy of immense wealth—the fact that they have retained the whole of the book concern under their exclusive and irresponsible control, and for the exclusive benefit of themselves and families, is adapted to create, in thinking minds, the deepest apprehensions for the future! Nor does it at all lessen the fears of such, that the very men who thus retain the entire control of this immense and increasing capital, are the very men who have excluded laymen from any participation in the government of their church, and have assumed to themselves, all legislative, judicial, and executive power! With the right to make what “rules and regulations” they please—with the meeting houses and parsonages “firmly and permanently” deeded to them for their exclusive use—and with a “capital” in trade already amounting to more than six hundred thousand dollars, and constantly increasing, their power may well excite the fears—not of Methodist Christians alone—but of all reflecting patriots!



To show that, in the judgment of others, the "profits" of the book concern, in ordinary times, are very large; and that the irresponsible control of such an establishment, by the Methodist clergy, is really dangerous in its tendency to the civil and religious liberty of the country, I will submit the following additional testimony. The first is from the tract written by the Rev. W. B. Evans, entitled "Questions and Answers, explanatory of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

"*Ques.* Who claims the right of property in the Methodist Episcopal Church ?

"*Ans.* THE TRAVELLING PREACHERS.—(*Dis.*, p. 159, *Ed.* 1832.)—(See also deed of settlement, and the note at the end of said deed.)

"*Q.* What is the probable amount of church property thus claimed by the travelling preachers ?

"*A.* It is supposed that it cannot be less than THREE MILLIONS EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

"*Q.* Is not this interest greatly augmented by the quarterly and yearly collections ?

"*A.* Yes.

"*Q.* Have they not, also, a large chartered fund and book establishment under their exclusive control ?

"*A.* Yes, they have in the city of Philadelphia, a chartered fund of about thirty thousand dollars, and in the city of New York, they have a large book establishment, with a capital of from two to five hundred thousand dollars," (see the *circular* before quoted,) "and their periodicals bring them an immense revenue, one of which is worth, perhaps, *forty thousand dollars per annum.*—(See C. Springer's *Review*, &c., pp. 28 and 29.

"*Q.* Is not this interest rapidly increasing ?

"*A.* Yes, great efforts are making to extend the interest of the establishment; hence it is made the duty of presiding

elders and preachers to promote the circulation of books, make collections, &c.

“ Q. What is the *aggregate amount* of the whole ?

“ A. Perhaps not less than FOUR MILLIONS THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

“ Q. Does this establishment receive a liberal support from the members of the church ?

“ A. Yes.

“ Q. Have the members who thus liberally contribute their support to this establishment, any voice or control in its management or government ?

“ A. No, they have no voice, either directly or indirectly, but it all belongs to the travelling preachers.

“ Q. Does not the history of the church in past ages admonish us of the *danger* of placing in the hands of the clergy, and under their exclusive control, such a vast amount of wealth ?

“ A. Yes, but we are slow to learn from such examples, and consequently, they have to be repeated again and again.”  
—pp. 21 and 22.

The following extracts are taken from one of the published letters of the Rev. Dr. Schmucker before referred to:—

“ ‘ *The chartered fund* ’ was established in 1796, at which time the previously existing ‘ stock of the preachers’ fund ’ was united to it, and the resolution adopted, that the profits of the book concern should also be thrown into this fund, and the *interest* of the whole be applied to the preachers’ salary. That this stock was profitable thirty-six years ago,” (the Dr. wrote in 1834,) “ is seen from the following paragraph in the discipline of 1797, (9th edition.)

“ ‘ *Question.*—What sum of money shall be allowed distressed preachers out of the book fund ?

“ ‘ *Answer.*—266½ dollars annually.’

“Subsequently, but how soon, we know not, the profits of the *book concern* were no longer thrown into the chartered fund, to be on interest, but they are now wholly applied from year to year, in making up the preachers’ salaries. The amount of the chartered fund alone, was in Jan. 1829, \$27,000. The annual amount of profits from the book concern, is, so far as we can learn, never officially published to the churches; yet, from the nature of the case, they must be very great. Of the weekly religious paper alone, upwards of 30,000 copies are circulated,” (at present the number is probably much greater,) “which, at \$2,00 each, may, from so large an edition, yield a profit of at least \$30,000 annually. Add to this, several other periodicals, the profits on the doctrinal, practical, biographical and other works, published by them. Every minister, is by the discipline, officially a book agent, and is bound to ‘see that his circuit be duly supplied with books, and to take charge of all the books sent him,’ &c., (*p.* 186, *ed.* 1825.) The presiding elders are superintendents of the book business in their district, &c., with whom the preachers must settle their accounts annually, &c. (*p.* 185.)\* In short, the Methodist itinerants are carrying

\* Since the edition of the Discipline from which Dr. Schmucker quotes, there appears to have been some change in the regulation of this business. In the edition of 1842, part II., sec. 8, it is said,—“No books shall *hereafter* be issued on commission, either from New York, Cincinnati, or any other depository or establishment under our direction. Every Annual Conference shall appoint a committee or committees, to examine the accounts of the presiding elders, preachers and book stewards, in their respective districts and circuits.” And it is added,—“Every presiding elder, minister, and preacher, shall do every thing in his power to recover all debts due to the concern, and also all books belonging to it, within the bounds of his charge.”

In the same edition of the Discipline, (1842) chap. I., sec. 5, it is made the duty of every presiding elder—“To oversee the spiritual and *temporal business* of the church in his district, and to promote, by all proper

on an immense book trade, the profits of which they apply to their own salary, and to the support of their widows and orphans. It appears from the following caution annexed to the 'Portraiture of Methodism,' that their people are admonished not to buy from other booksellers or printers, any books with which their preachers and agents can furnish them. 'As the profits of the above mentioned books, are for the benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and to be applied to religious purposes, it is recommended to the ministers and members of said church to promote the sale of the said books; and not to purchase any books which we publish of any other persons, than the afore-said D. Hitt and T. Ware, and the Methodist ministers, or such persons as sell them by their consent.' When we reflect, that the number of preachers thus obligated to act as agents, is upwards of 1700," (now more than double this number,) "and that the members of the church, who chiefly confine their custom to this clerical book concern, is stated at 420,000," (in 1842, upwards of 800,000, exclusive of coloured persons,) "and that this concern has printed not only Methodist books, but all such other books as they particularly desire their members to read; every reflecting mind will perceive, that the annual profits must be enormous. Now all these profits the discipline expressly declares, shall, after retaining the necessary capital, to carry on the business, be applied *to no other purpose than the payment of the preachers' allowance.*\* THE WHOLE AND SOLE CONTROL OF THESE

means, the cause of missions, and Sunday schools, and *the publication, at our own press, of Bibles, tracts, and Sunday school books, &c.*" And in chap. I., sec. 10, of the same edition, (1842) it is made the duty of every preacher who has the charge of a circuit,—“To take care that every society be duly supplied with books.”!!

\* “The profits arising from the book concern, after a sufficient capital to carry on the business, shall be regularly applied to the support of the deficient travelling preachers and their families, the widows and orphans of preachers, &c.”—*Discipline, part II., section 8, edition 1842.*

FUNDS IS IN THE TRAVELLING PREACHERS, not a single layman, or even local preacher having either a seat or vote at the distribution of them.”

The following extracts are taken from an article, originally published in the “Mutual Rights,” and subsequently revised and inserted in Dr. “Jennings’s Exposition.” The author, the Rev. Geo. Brown, was, at the time he wrote, an itinerant preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and connected with the Pittsburg Conference. His testimony is important—because it shows how rapidly and alarmingly the *power* of those who control such an immense amount of property, has been in fact progressing! He says:—

“The forming a church government which gives all ecclesiastical *power* to the *ministry*, was a *bold step*. But bishops stop not here; the creation of presiding elders, who are the *special agents* of the bishops, has given them a degree of *power*, over the *whole church*, which really looks *alarming*.  
\*\*\*\* In fifty years, power has marched farther in the Methodist Episcopal Church, than it did in the three first centuries of the primitive church.—*M. R.*, vol. III., p. 112.

“To me it does appear to be a duty, which we owe to the glorious author of our holy religion, to our fellow Christians, and to posterity, to discuss this subject before the whole church; that the slumbering sons of our Zion may be roused, and kept awake, with an attentive eye fixed, ON THE STEALING MARCH OF ECCLESIASTICAL POWER. We have seen what the Christian church was in its origin, we have seen what it *grew to*, in process of time. The people trusted too much to the goodness and infallibility of the ministry; and the preachers seeing this, took advantage of it, and went on increasing their own power, until the church was ruined. Let the Methodist Episcopal Church take warning. The wreck of one fallen church now covers the world, and what has happened to the church of Rome, may happen to us, if

we are not *careful, vigilant, prayerful and resolute.*”—*M. R., vol. III., p. 113.*

“ I shall now sustain myself, by an induction of particulars, and leave the community to judge, whether ‘ ecclesiastical power’ has been on the ‘ *stealing march,*’ *backward or forward.*

“ 1st. In 1784, in the city of Baltimore, on Christmas day, at the organization of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the itinerant preachers did *then, and there,* boldly march up to a principle of ecclesiastical polity, *and take it into their safe keeping,* after which the Roman clergy struggled, by trick, stratagem, and pious fraud, for 1160 years, before they laid their hands upon it, *and took it into their safe keeping;* and when they got it, the church was ruined. The principle is this, namely, *that to the itinerant clergy alone, does pertain of divine right, all legislative, judicial and executive power, over the whole church; leaving nothing to the local preachers and the lay members, but absolute submission to their will, or expatriation from the church.— Their will officially expressed by a delegation of one for every seven itinerant ministers, in the General Conference, is now the law of the church, against which, there is no balance of power, no check, or defence in any way.* A single pope never sat in St. Peter’s chair at Rome, for 1160 years, without the elective voice of the people, as may be seen by an appeal to Mosheim’s and Gregory’s church histories; but when had our local preachers and members a voice in the election of a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church? Never!

“ 2d. In changing the *title* of *superintendent,* in 1787, for that of *bishop,* without the consent of the American Conference—See Lee’s ‘History of the Methodists,’ p. 128: and contrary to the express instructions of Mr. Wesley—See ‘Moore’s Life of Wesley,’ p. 285: and when becoming an independent Methodist Episcopal Church, Doctor Coke, Mr.

Asbury, and the itinerant preachers, did abundantly strengthen themselves in the possession of the power which they had *assumed* at the time of the organization of the government.

“3d. According to Lee’s ‘History of the Methodists,’ p. 183, the power to make presiding elders, which was first *assumed*, and ‘used for several years’ *without law*, and was finally, in 1792, established to the bishops by the General Conference, gave them a power over the whole church, which indeed really looks alarming! No man in his senses will pretend that the power of episcopacy is weaker by the presiding elder system. This system renders the whole government, in its practical operations, vastly more powerful in every way.

4th. In 1796, according to Lee’s History, p. 234, a ‘deed of settlement’ was got up, to be carried into execution throughout the whole connexion, as far as the civil authorities and laws would allow. This deed makes the property a kind of common stock, or at least, the use of it is made common to all the Methodists in every state and in every conference. It is placed under the **ABSOLUTE LEGISLATIVE CONTROL OF THE ‘GENERAL CONFERENCE of ministers and preachers,’** for the people can only use it according to their *legislation*. It is placed also under the **ABSOLUTE APPOINTING POWER OF THE BISHOPS**, who have the power to put the occupants into the pulpits and parsonages, without consulting any *will* but their own. Thus, the itinerant clergy, by taking this *anti-christian hold* of the temporalities of the people, **HAVE IMMENSE POWER OVER THEM.** By controlling the property, they control the people themselves: ‘*for power over a man’s substance, really does, in most instances, amount to a power over his will.*’ Is this march retrograde, or onward?

“5th. In 1808, the restrictive instrument, improperly called a constitution, was formed, by which our bishops be-

came *officers for life*. The General Conference became a delegated body, and the whole government was so *saddled upon the Methodist community, by the itinerant ministry alone*, that no *vital changes can be effected or hoped for, without the consent of all the Annual Conferences, and a vote of a majority of two-thirds of the subsequent General Conference*. This the bishops can easily hinder, as they hold all the *appointing power*, and consequently all the *church livings* in their hands. This is onward too.

“6th. In 1820, if I mistake not, our bishops became pensioned upon the book concern, at New York, for all their table expenses. Henceforth, they are not to know want like other men. Their support is as *certain* as that concern can make it. Numbers have given them power. Wealth has given them power, for what would a king be, with all his arbitrary principles of government, without men and money?

“In this induction of particulars, we think we have shown *the stealing march of ecclesiastical power* in the Methodist Episcopal Church, to be **ONWARD, FEARFULLY TENDING TOWARDS ACCUMULATION.** \*\*\*\* The fact is, the principles *assumed* by the itinerant clergy, in the organization of the government, are without parallel in our country, for this *tyrannical character*, and these principles, the itinerant clergy have become amazingly strengthened in, by their various additions, and by nothing are they more strengthened, than by their firm grasp on **CHURCH PROPERTY**, through the medium of the ‘*deed of settlement*,’ and the constitution, as they call it, of 1808—this girds the government fast upon the people, and leaves them no hope, but in ecclesiastical expatriation.”—Jennings’s Exposition, *chap. XVIII., pp. 160—162.*

Once more. Let us hear the testimony of another gentleman, the Rev. Alexander McCaine, who had “himself been a preacher in connexion with them for upwards of thirty



years"—and who, at the time he wrote, was still a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church.—

“To recapitulate the leading points: every one will perceive with what rapidity we have advanced in our career of ambition and glory; and with what boldness the pretensions of our bishops have been set forth by themselves or their advocates. IN FORTY YEARS WE HAVE OUTSTRIPT ROME HERSELF, in her march to grandeur; and it would seem, that what some writers have affirmed respecting the western hemisphere, namely, that every thing in America is upon a larger and grander scale, and that the natural productions sooner arrive at maturity here, than on the eastern continent, is to be verified in our church matters also. We began our church establishment a few years ago, and rested the foot of our ecclesiastical ladder upon Mr. Wesley’s authority; but his authority was soon rejected. The first step of our ladder is the identity of bishops and presbyters, or *two* orders. The second, ‘episcopal authority,’ with limitations and restrictions. The third, three distinct orders. The fourth, a ‘presbyterian ordination, and an episcopal ordination as good as any in the world.’ The fifth, Methodist bishops, ‘very much resemble’ primitive evangelists. The sixth, ‘divine authority’ for episcopal power. The seventh, a right ‘to overrule the spiritual and TEMPORAL concerns of the church.’ The eighth, ‘divine right’ to legislate for the church to the exclusion of local preachers and laymen. By such steps have we advanced to the ground we now occupy; *and time alone can develope what other steps may be added in the progress of the work.* We have no idea, however, that the present bishops have found a stopping place; nor that they or their successors will voluntarily relinquish one particle of their authority. Indeed, we are rather inclined to think, *they will still continue their exertions to ascend.* And, that what was said of the bishops of another church, may

be said by the future historian respecting them.—‘ It is very remarkable, that of the one hundred and fourteen popes between Boniface III., who laid the foundation of the papal grandeur, and Gregory VII., who raised it to the highest pitch, not one ever lost an inch of ground his predecessor had gained.’ ”—*His. and Mystery*, pp. 57 and 58.

In view of this testimony, and the facts by which it is supported, is there no danger to be apprehended to civil and religious liberty? Let the reader reflect upon the rapid progress which has already been made in ecclesiastical power, and the accumulation of wealth by the travelling preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church—let him ponder upon the nature of the government they have established, and the immense pecuniary capital they have already amassed, which they wield without responsibility and for their own exclusive profit—let him duly reflect on these things in the light of past ages, and he cannot but feel that such a system *may* become a tremendous curse both to the church and the world!

Now, contrast this system and policy of Methodism, with the government and institutions of the *Presbyterian* Church. With us, the clergy have not the slightest control over the parochial property of the people. Any Presbyterian congregation can build a place of worship, whenever they please, and at whatever cost they choose. The deed is drawn according to their own wishes, and always in the name of the particular congregation who expect to build and pay for it. As the title is thus properly vested in the congregation, they can use it according to their own pleasure, and dispose of it at their own will. If they choose at any time to secede from the Presbyterian denomination, and to unite with any other, so far as the power of the Presbyterian ministry is concerned, they can do so, and yet retain their parochial or congregational property. The *civil* courts, if invoked, might interfere to protect the *civil* rights of a minority, if such ex-

isted, but if the congregation were unanimously in favour of the change, there could be no interference, either ecclesiastical, or civil. The churches are held by trustees, but the people elect, from among themselves, whomsoever they please—and can re-elect or change them at the expiration of every year. These boards hold the property for the congregation—not subject to the “rules and regulations” which it may please the General Assembly to adopt—but subject to the instructions of their constituents, to whom they are alone responsible. Having thus secured their house of worship, the congregation are not obliged to receive into their pulpit any man whom the Presbytery or General Assembly might choose to send as their pastor; they have the inalienable right and precious privilege, as Christian freemen, of electing their own spiritual instructor. And having obtained “the man of their choice,” as long as the pastoral union is mutually agreeable to the parties, there is no ecclesiastical power that can dissolve the sacred and endearing relation.

With regard to the general funds of the Presbyterian Church—they are all managed by boards elected by the *joint vote* of the ministers and the representatives of the people. These boards are always composed in part of laymen, and their receipts and expenditures are officially and regularly published. We have, for example, a board of publication—but unlike the Methodist book concern, the *laity* have an equal share in its management, and its proceeds are devoted—not to the benefit of the clergy—but to the diffusion of knowledge and piety among the people. We have also our boards of home and foreign missions, which are designed to aid in the support of missionaries; but these boards are composed of ministers and laymen, and the appropriations made by their concurrent vote.—In short, there is no institution and no fund, belonging to the Presbyterian Church, over which her ministry have exclusive or irresponsible control.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

Extracts from the Discipline.—The amount of their “annual allowance” fixed by the Methodist clergy themselves.—Their salary greater than that of the clergy of other denominations.—Probable average amount of the salary of a country circuit preacher,—of one stationed in a large town or city.—Provisions made for the support of supernumerary and superannuated preachers,—for the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen.—The amount of the allowance of Methodist ministers several times increased by themselves.—The testimony of others on these subjects.—Competent and faithful ministers entitled to a liberal support.—The salary of Presbyterian pastors regulated by the people.—The average amount of their salary less than that of the Methodist preachers.—No provision is made for disabled or worn out Presbyterian ministers,—nor for their widows and orphans.

THAT no injustice may be done to our ministerial brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the subject of their pecuniary support, and in order that the reader may have the whole matter fully before him, I will quote, *in extenso*, the fourth and fifth sections of part II., of the Methodist Book of Discipline.—

#### “ SECTION IV.

“ *Of the allowance to the ministers and preachers, and to their wives, widows, and children.*

“ 1. The annual allowance of the married, travelling, supernumerary, and superannuated preachers, and the bishops, shall be two hundred dollars, and their travelling expenses.

“2. The annual allowance of the unmarried travelling, supernumerary, and superannuated preachers, and bishops, shall be one hundred dollars, and their travelling expenses.

“3. Each child of a travelling preacher or bishop, shall be allowed sixteen dollars annually, to the age of seven years, and twenty-four dollars annually from the age of seven to fourteen years; and those preachers whose wives are dead, shall be allowed for each child annually, a sum sufficient to pay the board of such child or children during the above term of years:—*Nevertheless*, this rule shall not apply to the children of preachers, whose families are provided for by other means in their circuits respectively.

“4. The annual allowance of the widows of travelling, superannuated, worn-out, and supernumerary preachers, and the bishops, shall be one hundred dollars.

“5. The orphans of travelling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, and the bishops, shall be allowed by the Annual Conferences the same sums respectively which are allowed to the children of living preachers. And on the death of a preacher, leaving a child or children without so much of worldly goods as should be necessary to his, her, or their support, the Annual Conference of which he was a member, *shall* raise, in such manner as may be deemed best, a yearly sum *for the subsistence and education* of such orphan child or children, until he, she, or they, shall have arrived at fourteen years of age. The amount of which yearly sum shall be fixed by a committee of the conference at each session in advance.

“6. The more effectually to raise the amount necessary to meet the above mentioned allowances, let there be made weekly class collections in all our societies where it is practicable; and also for the support of missions and missionary schools under our care.

“7 Local preachers have an allowance in certain cases, as mentioned sec. IX., p. 196.

“SECTION V.

“*Of raising annual supplies for the propagation of the gospel, making up the allowance of the preachers, &c.*

“1. EVERY preacher who has the charge of a circuit, shall earnestly recommend to every class or society in his circuit, to raise a quarterly or annual collection by voluntary contribution, or in such other way or manner as they may judge most expedient from time to time; and the moneys so collected, shall be lodged with the steward or stewards of the circuit, to be brought or sent to the Annual Conferences, with a regular account of the sums raised for this purpose in the classes or societies respectively.

“2. Wherever there remains in the hands of the stewards a surplus of the moneys raised for the use of the circuit preachers, after paying the allowances of the preachers in the circuit, let such surplus be brought or sent to the Annual Conference.

“3. Every preacher who has the charge of a circuit shall make a yearly collection, and, if expedient, a quarterly one, in every congregation where there is a probability that the people will be willing to contribute; and the money so collected shall be lodged in the hands of the steward or stewards, and brought or sent to the ensuing Annual Conference. To this end, he may read and enlarge upon the following hints:—

“ ‘How shall we send labourers into those parts where they are most of all wanted? Many are willing to hear, but not to bear the expense. Nor can it as yet be expected

of them. Stay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us, in the mean time, to supply their lack of service? To raise money out of which, from time to time, that expense may be defrayed? By this means, those who willingly offer themselves may travel through every part, whether there be societies or not, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite to promote this glorious work?

“ ‘ Besides this, in carrying on so large a work through the continent, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at a considerable expense, or the work must be at a full stop. Many, too, are the *occasional* distresses of our preachers, or their families, which require an immediate supply, otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.

“ ‘ The money contributed will be brought to the ensuing conference.

“ ‘ Men and brethren, help! Was there ever a call like this since you first heard the gospel sound! Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jesus, who are pressed above measure. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Help to send forth able and willing labourers into your Lord’s harvest: so shall ye be assistants in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Help to propagate the gospel of your salvation to the remotest corners of the earth, till the knowledge of our Lord shall cover the land as the waters cover the sea. So shall it appear to ourselves and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one spirit; so shall the baptized heathens be yet again constrained to say, ‘ see how these Christians love one another ! ’

“4. A public collection shall be made at every Annual and every General Conference, for the above purposes.

“5. Let the annual produce of the charter funds, as divided among the several conferences, be applied with the above contributions: but so as not to militate against the rules of the charter fund; and also the annual dividend arising from the profits of the book concern. Out of the moneys so collected, and brought to the respective Annual Conferences, let the various allowances agreed upon in the fourth section be made up; but in no case shall an allowance be made to any travelling preacher who has travelled in any circuit where he might, in the judgment of the Annual Conference, have obtained his full quarterage, if he had applied for it: and if, at any conference, there remain a surplus after making up all such allowances, the conference shall send such surplus forward to that conference they judge to be the most necessitous.

“6. Every Annual Conference has full liberty to adopt and recommend such plans and rules as to them may appear necessary the more effectually to raise supplies for the respective allowances. Each Annual Conference is authorized to raise a fund, if they judge it proper, subject to its own control, and under such regulations as their wisdom may direct, for the relief of the distressed travelling, superannuated, and supernumerary preachers, their wives, widows, and children, as also for missionary purposes.

“7. It shall be the duty of each Annual Conference to take measures, from year to year, to raise moneys in every circuit and station within its bounds, for the relief of its necessitous superannuated and supernumerary ministers, widows, and orphans.—And the conference shall annually appoint a committee to estimate the several sums necessary to be allowed for the extra expenses of such necessitous claim-



ants, who shall be paid in proportion to the estimates made and the moneys in hand.

“ 8. If the respective allowances are not raised as provided for, the church shall not be accountable for the deficiency, as in a case of debt.

“ 9. To defray the expenses of the delegates composing the General Conference, a collection shall be taken up in each circuit and station, some time previously to the sitting of the conference, and the sums so collected shall be brought up to the General Conference, and applied to the object herein contemplated in proportion to the expenses of the several delegates.

“ *Quest.* What advice or direction shall be given concerning the building or renting of dwelling houses for the use of the married travelling preachers?

“ *Ans.* It is recommended by the General Conference to the travelling preachers, to advise our friends in general to purchase a lot of ground in each circuit, and to *build a preacher's house thereon*, and to furnish it with, at least, heavy furniture, and to settle the same on trustees appointed by the Quarterly Meeting Conference, according to the deed of settlement published in our form of discipline.

“ 2. The General Conference recommend to all the circuits, in cases where they are not able to comply with the above request, *to rent a house* for the married preacher and his family, (when such are stationed upon their circuits respectively,) and that the Annual Conferences do assist to make up the rents of such houses as far as they can, when the circuit cannot do it.

“ The stewards of each circuit and station shall be a standing committee, (where no trustees are constituted for that purpose,) to provide houses for the families of our married preachers, or to assist the preachers to obtain houses for

themselves when they are appointed to labour among them.

“3. It shall be the duty of the presiding elders and preachers to use their influence to carry the above rules respecting building and renting houses for the accommodation of preachers and their families into effect. In order to this, each Quarterly Meeting Conference *shall* appoint a committee, (unless other measures have been adopted,) who, with the advice and aid of the preachers and presiding elders, shall devise such means as may seem fit to raise moneys for that purpose. And it is recommended to the Annual Conferences to *make special inquiry* of their members respecting this part of their duty.

“4. Those preachers who refuse to occupy the houses which may be provided for them on the stations and circuits where they are from time to time appointed, shall be allowed nothing for house rent, nor receive any thing more than quarterage for themselves, their wives, and children, and their travelling expenses. Nevertheless, this rule shall not apply to those preachers whose families are either established within the bounds of their circuits, or are so situated that in the judgment of the stewards, or the above mentioned committee, it is not necessary, for the benefit of the circuit, to remove them.

“5. It shall be the duty of the said committee, or one appointed for that purpose, who shall be members of our church, to make an estimate of the amount necessary to *furnish fuel and table expenses* for the family or families of preachers stationed with them, and the stewards shall provide, by such means as they may devise, to meet such expenses, in money or otherwise: provided the stewards shall not appropriate the moneys collected for the regular quarterly allowance of the preachers to the payment of family expenses.

“6. There shall be a meeting in every district, of one steward from each station and circuit, to be selected from among the stewards by the Quarterly Meeting Conference, whose duty it shall be, by and with the advice of the presiding elder, (who shall preside in such meeting,) to take into consideration the general state of the district in regard to temporalities, and to furnish a house, fuel, and table expenses, for the presiding elder, and to apportion his entire claim among the different circuits and stations in the district according to their several ability.

“7. Each Annual Conference in which a bishop or bishops may reside, shall annually appoint a committee of three or more, whose duty it shall be to estimate the amount necessary to furnish a house, fuel, and table expenses for said bishop or bishops, and that they be authorized to draw on the funds of the book concern for said amount.”

From the foregoing sections of the Discipline, the reader will observe that, there is this peculiarity in the Methodist economy, viz, that THE PREACHERS THEMSELVES fix the amount of the annual “allowance” to themselves, their wives, and children, WITHOUT CONSULTING THE PEOPLE: and this amount, as we shall presently show, they have from time to time *increased*, according to their own sovereign pleasure! And, certainly, if all that they have decreed and advised, be not regularly and universally received by them, it cannot be for the want of sufficient clerical legislation or earnest recommendation and entreaty!!

It is queer—I will not say suspicious—that the salaries of the ordinary pastors and circuit preachers, should be so mixed up with the subjects of missions and mission schools;—and that the various appropriations for the support of the preachers, should be stated—not in the same—but in different sections of the Discipline. From the manner in which

these different subjects are mingled, it is almost impossible to tell, for what specific object some of the collections are to be made, or in what proportion they are to be distributed among the several objects mentioned. And from the scattered items of ministerial support, it requires a considerable degree of attention to ascertain them all. For instance, if the reader examines "Section IV.," he might readily suppose from its title—"Of the allowance to the ministers and preachers, and to their wives, widows, and children"—that *all* the items are there enumerated. But this would be a great mistake. For, in the next section—although it professes only to speak "Of the *raising* annual supplies for the propagation of the gospel, *making up* the allowance of the preachers," &c.—there are several additional items stated;—and these are nothing less than "*House rent—furniture—fuel—and table expenses*"!! This matter, moreover, is so arranged, that it is not possible for the public to ascertain, from the book, what all these items, in the aggregate, actually amount to. All that we can do, therefore, is to gather the items together and give a probable estimate of their value, of the correctness of which the reader must judge for himself.

I will first enumerate the different items included in the salary of a Methodist preacher who has a family.

1. He is allowed, annually, for himself and wife, *two hundred dollars*.—*Section IV sub. sec. 1.*
2. His travelling expenses.—*Ib.*
3. For each child, to the age of seven years, sixteen dollars annually; and twenty-four dollars annually, from the age of seven to fourteen years.—*Ib. sub sec. 3.*
4. House rent.—*Sec. V., sub sections 1 and 2.*
5. At least, heavy furniture.—*Ib., sub sec. 1.*
6. Fuel.—*Ib., sub. sec. 5.*
7. Table expenses.—*Ib.*

It appears, therefore, that *in addition* to the amount which they annually receive for themselves, their wives, their children, and their travelling expenses,—which is regulated exclusively and irresponsibly by themselves,—they have made it the duty of the people to raise an amount sufficient for their fuel and table expenses; and have advised them, either to build them parsonages, or to rent dwellings for their accommodation, and to furnish them with, at least, heavy furniture.

I will now give an estimate of the total sum which a Methodist circuit preacher, with a wife and five children, two above and three under seven years of age, annually receives, or is allowed by the discipline of his church to receive. This calculation, be it remembered, is made for a *country* circuit—and that it may be as fair and as accurate as possible, I will take the *average* of three published estimates that I have met with, from gentlemen of different denominations.

|                                                                              |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Annual allowance for himself and wife, . . .                                 | \$200,00 |
| For two children above seven years of age,<br>each \$24, . . . . .           | 48,00    |
| For three children under seven, each \$16, .                                 | 48,00    |
| For house rent, and the use of heavy furniture,<br>probably, about . . . . . | 55,00    |
| For table expenses, and fuel, probably, about                                | 283,66   |
| Travelling expenses, probably, about . . .                                   | 30,00    |
|                                                                              | —————    |
|                                                                              | \$664,66 |

The above estimate is made, as I have stated, for a *country* circuit:—the sum total, for a station in a town or large city, must be much greater, as in them, house rent, fuel, and provisions, are so much more expensive.

I endeavoured—but in vain—to ascertain the precise amount of the salaries of the Methodist preachers stationed in this city (Baltimore) for the last five or six years. I

called on "A Methodist" and requested him to furnish me with this information; but he declared that he could not give it, and referred me to another gentleman—an official and active member of their church. On this gentleman I accordingly waited, and in making the same request, assured him that I wished to state nothing but the truth—and that if he would obtain the information for me, I would publish it just as received. He appeared to be perfectly willing—promised that he would procure the desired intelligence—and in the course of the conversation stated, that the pastor of Light street church received a salary of *twelve hundred dollars*, (\$1200,00) *exclusive of house rent*; but added, that they gave him two hundred dollars more than they otherwise would, because, from his central location, he was obliged to entertain an unusual number of clerical visitors.\* After waiting a sufficient time, I wrote the gentleman a note, requesting him to send me the result of his inquiries, agreeably to his promise. Instead of doing this, he informed the bearer, that since he understood that I intended to continue the controversy, he must decline giving the information desired; and that, when he made the promise, he supposed that the facts, if communicated to me privately, would be seen to be of such a character as to render any farther controversy unnecessary!!! Now, not to insist that, at the time he made the promise, he was distinctly told that I intended to make a public use of the facts,—I will ask,—if the information would be so decisively favourable to Methodism, why not give it?—Would it be withheld if it were so? Let the public judge. I mention these circumstances to show, that I was not only willing, but desirous of publishing their own statement, if it could have been procured.

\* This conversation took place last fall—1842.

In the absence, therefore, of official and precise accounts, we can only give an estimate of the probable amount of the salaries of the Methodist preachers stationed in the *large cities*.

The only detailed estimate, relating to cities, that I have met with, gives the sum total of \$1596,00. That calculation, however, appears to have been made for the city of New York, where the cost of living is unusually high:—in the following estimate, *I have deducted nearly fifty per cent.* from the aggregate amount of the items of travelling expenses, house rent, fuel, and table expenses—which is certainly a very liberal reduction! Thus:—

|                                                          |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Annual allowance for himself and wife, . . . . .         | \$200,00 |
| For two children above the age of seven years, . . . . . | 48,00    |
| For three children under seven years, . . . . .          | 48,00    |
| For travelling expenses, probably about . . . . .        | 30,00    |
| For house rent and the use of heavy furniture, . . . . . | 250,00   |
| For fuel and table expenses, . . . . .                   | 400,00   |
|                                                          | \$976,00 |

The above is, I suppose, a fair estimate of the *average* salary of a Methodist preacher, with such a family, in one of our large cities. No doubt some of them receive more, and some less—and I presume that, the amount varies, according to the cost of living in different places, and as “prices” are elevated or depressed. From the statement of the gentleman before referred to, it appears that the salary of one of their pastors, in this city, during the past year, was \$1200,00, exclusive of his house rent, which, if included, would make his salary equal to about FIFTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS PER ANNUM. If from this, we deduct \$200,00, the additional

sum said to be given for the entertainment of strangers, it would still leave one thousand dollars, exclusive of house rent,—which is two hundred and seventy-four dollars *more* than the amount which I have given above as the probable average of their salaries, exclusive of house rent. In other words, the estimate of their average salary which I have given, is *less*, by four hundred and seventy-four dollars, than the amount said to be actually received by the pastor of one of their churches in this city.

With the items, however, before him let the reader judge for himself:—And if he has any knowledge of the genteel manner in which the Methodist pastors live, and any personal experience of the cost of house-keeping, let him say whether *he* could honestly support himself, a wife, and five children, in such a style and in such a city as this, for much *less* than the average sum I have mentioned!

It is probable that the salaries of the Methodist pastors, *in our principal cities*, are not as large as those of the pastors of some other churches, but the number stationed in these is comparatively small, and they are not allowed, according to the discipline, “to remain in the same station more than two years successively.”—Chap. I., sec. 4. That the compensation of those of them, who are stationed in the *country*, is *greater* than that of the pastors of other churches, similarly located, there can be no doubt. And when a general comparison is drawn, between the support of the Methodist clergy, and that of the ministry of other denominations,—the reference is not to an insignificant number of them, or to a few places,—but to the whole body, and the entire country.

In addition to the foregoing provisions, for the support of those preachers who are actively engaged in fulfilling their



appointments, there are *others* mentioned in the discipline, for the support of such ministers as are unemployed, disabled, or superannuated; as also for the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen.

If, for example, there are more preachers than places, the Book provides, that all "*supernumeraries*," together with their wives, shall receive the same monied allowance as those who are actively fulfilling appointments.—*Part II., sec. 4.*

If they are "*worn-out*," or "*superannuated*," they and their wives continue to receive the same monied allowance as if they were still actively and regularly employed.—*Ib.* So that, if a Methodist preacher is disabled from preaching after being but a few months in the service, the allowance is continued, both to himself, and his wife, as long as they live—it may be for half a century.

And if, in any case, the salary of the travelling preachers and the monied allowance of the supernumerary, disabled, and superannuated ministers, should not prove sufficient, it is made the *duty* of the Annual Conference to provide *further* and *immediate relief*.—"Many, too, are the OCCASIONAL distresses of our preachers, or their families, which require an immediate supply, otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work."—*Dis., part II., sec. 5.*—And again—"It shall be the duty of each Annual Conference to take measures, from year to year, to raise moneys in every circuit and station within its bounds, for the relief of its necessitous, superannuated and supernumerary ministers, widows and orphans. And the conference shall annually appoint a committee to estimate the several sums *necessary* to be allowed for the EXTRA expenses of such necessitous claimants, who shall be paid in proportion to the estimates made and the moneys in hand."—*Ib.*

With regard to the *widows* and *orphans* of their deceased clergy, it is provided:—"The annual allowance of the *widows* of travelling, superannuated, worn-out, and supernumerary preachers, and the bishops, shall be one hundred dollars. The *orphans* of travelling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, and the bishops, shall be allowed by the Annual Conferences the same sums respectively which are allowed to the children of living preachers."—*Ib.*

If on the death of a preacher, it should appear that the above allowance, with what he may have bequeathed to them, is not sufficient for the support and education of his orphans, the Book further provides,—that "the Annual Conference of which he was a member, *shall raise*, in such manner as may be deemed best, *a yearly sum for the subsistence and education of such orphan child or children*, until he, she, or they, shall have arrived at fourteen years of age. The amount of which yearly sum shall be fixed by a committee of the conference at each session in advance."—*Ib.* That is, no matter how large a fortune a Methodist preacher may leave behind him, his widow and orphans are entitled to receive the allowances previously mentioned;—but, if he dies poor, *in addition* to such allowances, this part of the discipline provides, that the conference shall raise, if necessary, an extra sum, sufficient for the "subsistence and education" of his children.—How disingenuous, therefore, it is to say—that the poor widow of a Methodist preacher receives *only* one hundred dollars annually for herself, sixteen dollars for each child under seven years of age, and twenty-four dollars for each child above seven years—when it is expressly provided that, if *more* be necessary for the "subsistence and education" of the children, the conference shall annually raise it!

And if with all these liberal provisions for their widows and orphans, there should be any “*occasional*” distresses among them, we have already shown that the Book makes it the duty of the Conference to afford them immediate relief.—*Sec. 5, sub. sec. 7.*

Thus it appears, from their own showing, that the Methodist preachers have amply provided for the support of themselves and families, not only whilst actively engaged in preaching the gospel, but also towards their subsistence in sickness and old age—and even while “*supernumeraries!*” And that they have likewise made very liberal provision for their wives and children, after their death. We may safely and confidently affirm, that there is no body of clergy in this country, who receive, while living, so ample a support; or whose families, after their decease, are so liberally provided for.

I have already remarked, that the *usual* and *definite* provisions which are made for the support of the Methodist preachers and their families, during their life, and, after their decease, of their widows and orphans, were fixed and are appropriated by themselves, without the voice or concurrence of the laity. And so the *additional* appropriations for the relief of the preachers and their families “occasionally distressed,” and the “extra” allowance for the “subsistence and education” of the orphans of deceased poor ministers, are estimated and appropriated by the Conference alone or a committee appointed by them from their own clerical body.

It appears, also, that they have, from time to time, *increased* their “monied allowance,” by simply voting among themselves that it should be increased!! And if, at any future time, they should judge the present sum inadequate, and

should be of the opinion that their financial resources would justify a further increase, they would have nothing to do, according to their form of government and their past practice, but pass a resolution in their General Conference to raise their salaries, and their salaries would be raised!!! Prior to the year 1800, the annual "money allowance" of a preacher and his wife was \$128,00,—then it was increased to \$160,00,—and since then it has been increased to \$200,00.—And, from time to time, other and valuable provisions have been "agreed upon!" by them, for the benefit of themselves and families—their widows and orphans. As a specimen of their method of proceeding, take the following extracts from Lee's History, chap. X., pp. 267 and 269.—"At this conference it was *agreed* to raise the allowance of the travelling preachers, &c., \* four dollars in each quarter; which will amount to \$80,00 per year, instead of sixty-four. We also *agreed* to make some allowance for the children of preachers, and for orphans. \*\*\*\* Until this time our preachers were to give an account of all the private gifts they received, whether it were money, clothing, or any thing else, towards their support; and it was to go in part of their quarterage, or else it was to be applied to make up the deficiencies of the other preachers at the next conference. At this conference *it was agreed*, the preacher might receive any present, and not give an account thereof."

It has been said, however, that the Methodist preachers do not in general receive the full amount of their salaries. This, if true, would be no more than what might be said of every other body of protestant clergy in the land—for very

\*This *et cetera* refers to the superannuated, worn-out, and supernumerary preachers, the wives of all the preachers, and their widows—the annual allowance of each being increased in the same ratio.

many of them do not receive the *nominal* amount which is promised them, though this nominal amount is, in most cases, much less than the nominal value of the various provisions made for the support of the Methodist preachers as stated in their Book of Discipline. But we have reason to believe that, in general, the Methodist clergy *do* receive the full amount—or nearly the full amount—prescribed in the discipline, and that the exceptions, if any, are comparatively few. We may not only infer this from their peculiar method of “raising supplies,” and from the number and vastness of their financial resources,—but we have the direct testimony of those who were once themselves “itinerants,” and who therefore testify from personal knowledge. As to the suggestion of “A Methodist,” that the nominal amount fixed by the Discipline is intended merely as “a *standard* by which the overplus and deficiency may be regulated”—we inquire—if this were so, why was the amount increased?—If it were intended merely as a nominal standard, \$80,00 would have answered that purpose as well as \$100,00—or \$64,00 as well as \$80,00!! The very fact, therefore, that the amount has been from time to time *increased*, is sufficient proof that it is generally received:—and even with respect to the *exceptions*, they may be relieved under the head of “*occasional* distresses,” which, in the language of the Discipline, “require an immediate supply, otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.”

Having thus exhibited, from the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the various provisions which are made for the support of their ministers and families, and expressed my own opinion upon them in detail; I will now cite the published opinions of others in confirmation of the correctness of my views.

The Rev. Dr. Schmucker, of the *Lutheran* Church, in the *letters* to which I have previously referred, thus writes:—

“In a recent work, termed ‘Popular Theology,’ I felt it a duty when discussing the different modes of ministerial support in Europe and America, to mention also that of the Methodist Church. I have known many members of the Lutheran, Reformed, and Presbyterian Churches, who lightly esteemed their own pastors, because they had been stigmatized as money preachers by some disingenuous circuit rider, who was himself receiving a larger salary than they. I therefore deemed it a duty, not indeed to ‘misrepresent’ the Methodist system, but to let the *truth* be known. In order to commit no error, I quoted the very words of the discipline, referring to the page and section, and even specifying the edition contained in my library, that of 1825; and omitting nothing which I found on this subject. The relevant passages in the discipline are the following:”—(these I omit because they have been already quoted, see pp. 135—142.)

“Now, let it be remembered,” continues Dr. Schumcker, “that these are literal extracts from the discipline, and are all that I find on the amount and contingencies of ministerial salary. Take an average case, say a minister with a wife and five children, two above and three under seven years, and what is his salary at the above rates? The table expenses, that is, provisions of every kind to board the family, omitting the youngest child, at the rate of \$1,00 per week amounts to \$312; house rent \$60; travelling expenses to conference and on his circuit \$25; the additional allowance for himself, wife and children, \$296; in all \$693. If his family is larger, his salary increases, if smaller, it is diminished in the same ratio. If he keep domestics, their boarding is found. If provisions rise in value, or he reside in a city, he loses nothing, his salary rises with it. An indi-

vidual minister in a neighbouring city, I am credibly informed, receives \$1000 in money, for his table expenses and house rent alone, besides all the other allowances above detailed! I will not say it is too much, but merely state the fact as an example of the rise of table expenses and house rent. Now, what denomination of Christians is there in our land, whose ministers generally would not gladly accept this provision? Especially, as the prospect of receiving the amount promised, is probably at least as good as in other churches. If the salary promised to other ministers, is not made up by the congregation, they lose it all. But if all the collections and subscriptions, public and private, by the minister, and by the steward, (which the Discipline says, sometimes overrun the above allowance) do not together amount to his salary, he reports the deficiency to the Annual Conference, and receives from other funds, either the whole or part of it, as the dividend for that year may allow. Besides all this, says the discipline, 'there are many *occasional* distresses of our preachers or their *families*, which require' additional allowance, 'lest their hands hang down,' or they be 'constrained to depart from the work.' Again, if the above minister becomes disabled, even in the first year of his ministry, his own allowance runs on for life, and for six months' service, he may possibly receive his salary for twenty or forty years. And not only his own salary thus runs on, but after four years from his reception as a preacher, the allowance of his wife also runs on for life, even if he is disabled from preaching. And finally, on his death, his wife receives the same sum as before, and his children 16 dollars each, as near as the funds will admit."—(At present, as the Dr. himself observed in a subsequent letter, after seeing a later edition of the Discipline,—the orphans are allowed "the same sums respectively which are allowed to the children of living preachers"—and if left poor, any addi-

tional sum that may be deemed, by a committee of conference, necessary for their "subsistence and education."—Dis., ed. 1842, part II., sec. 4.) "These, fellow citizens," continues the Dr., "are the explicit provisions made by the travelling preachers, in the discipline, in behalf of themselves; for let it not be forgotten, that the *local* preacher, however faithful or able, receives not a cent. The itinerants, who engross all the legislative power of the whole church, have thought best to keep all the money to themselves; thus pronouncing the services of local preachers undeserving of any reward, also both them and all lay members unworthy of a seat or vote in their legislative judicatories. And now the question arises, whether the very few remarks upon this system in my book are *misrepresentations*. I have there said, p. 194, 'the support of Methodist ministers we regard as a full competency, and have only often been surprised, that they should still complain of its insufficiency, especially as its provisions very justly extend to sickness, to old age, to widows and orphans.' Whether calling their allowance a full competency misrepresents the discipline, judge ye. One thing I am certain of, that a very large number of able, faithful pastors of other churches would be glad to accept this mode of support; because the amount promised is greater, and the prospect of getting it better, than in the average cases of most, if not all other churches. \*\*\*\*

"And what, if in some poor stations, or in better stations under some unpopular preacher, all their collections at quarterly meetings, and camp meetings, and subscriptions to the preacher and steward, together with his allowance from the general fund, do not amount to his fixed salary, yea, fall far short of it; these cases are exceptions, and the discipline must be supposed to represent the general rule. And do not ministers in every other church often fail to receive the full



amount of their stipulated salary? even when that sum is far less than the above? How many receive but half the amount of their unavoidable expenses, and must either labour or teach school to aid in defraying them, or be involved in bankruptcy? But if such an extreme case occurs to a Methodist preacher, is he left to struggle with his fate and trust to Providence for deliverance?—No, for lo! it is written in the discipline, that, ‘lest his hands fall,’ or ‘he depart from the work,’ an immediate supply is required for this ‘*occasional* distress.’ Is this, perhaps, the meaning of that phrase, in general so differently understood, that a Methodist minister is not permitted to go in debt? How happy would many other ministers be, to be robbed in the same manner of that liberty? To be compelled to do a cash business, and in case of absolute inability, to meet unavoidable demands, be able to refer to the clause of the Discipline on ‘occasional distresses!’ In short, many sensible members of the Methodist Church are but imperfectly acquainted with that complicated system of finance, by which their travelling preachers secure to themselves a substantial independence for life. \*\*\*\*

“Now, let it be remembered, that of all these various and seasonable provisions, copied literally from the discipline itself, my book utters no censure, but merely dares to pronounce them a full competency. And what tradesman, what farmer, what man of reasonable expectations in any business, would not consider them in the same light? It is worthy of remark, too, that the Methodist travelling preachers, who possess the exclusive power of fixing the amount of their own allowance (lay members having merely the privilege of paying the money by direct subscriptions, or in profits on books,) have evinced no backwardness in legislating on the subject. Their table provisions, house rent, and travelling

expenses, they may, for aught we know, have allowed themselves from the beginning; yet their additional monied allowance for themselves and wives, *has several times been enlarged*, but never diminished. Of the precise amount, we are not absolutely certain, but state on the authority of one of the principal members of that church in this place, that it was first \$64 each, then \$80, and now we know it is \$100." (See quotation from Lee's History, p. 151.) "If this allowance were merely nominal, they would not have raised it. But this is far from being the case. And even the collection of it is not accompanied with the same trouble as in other churches generally, a large portion of it being derived from general funds. What they do receive, is settled within the year, and their dividend for the deficiency, if any, they receive at the conference which terminates the year; whilst the ministers of other denominations must often wait, two, three, or more years, for a considerable portion of what they do receive. Who ever heard of a case in the Methodist Church, similar to the following, mentioned in the 'North American Review:' A country parish in New Hampshire, proposed to their pastor to raise his salary from \$250 to \$300. 'Spare me, my Christian friends,' replied the worthy man, 'it is a weary burden to collect \$250; I should be worn to death by trying to scramble together \$300.'

"We will now take leave of this topic," continues Dr. Schmucker, "by introducing the testimony of a *Methodist* minister, who knew all about the system from *personal observation and experience*. This letter is taken from the New Haven '*Religious Intelligencer*,' (for 1833, p. 793,) one of the most respectable and authentic periodicals in America, and the minister's name was publicly offered by Mr. Whiting, the editor, if applied for:

"Mr. Whiting—I have read your paper of the 18th of January, on the support of the ministry. The following re-

marks and facts are at your disposal, to use as you may think proper. I should wish to observe, that I myself was brought up a Methodist, and my parents are to this hour members of that society. I have also *been a preacher in that denomination a number of years.* In the year —, for reasons which it will not be profitable to mention here, I thought it my duty to request a dismissal from that body, with a certificate of my standing, for the purpose of connecting myself with the Congregational or Presbyterian churches. As there was nothing against my religious and moral character, I was accordingly dismissed; and united myself to a respectable association of Congregational ministers in New England. Soon after this, I had a call to settle with the church and congregation of which I am now pastor. From this statement, you will easily conclude, that I must be well acquainted with the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists. It is with the utmost satisfaction I come forward, unsolicited by any mortal, to bear testimony to the *truth of your statements*, as it respects the salaries of Methodist preachers. To the honor of the Methodists, I can say, I always received my salary with great punctuality, and uniformly met with the utmost kindness from them.' ["Here," says Dr. S., "he enters into calculations, which I omit, because they are exactly like those in my former communication, excepting that he *actually received* \$4,00 a week boarding for himself and wife, whilst I put them at \$2."'] 'As it respects their not getting what the discipline allows, it is true, *this may be the case in some FEW cases*; but without any reflection on the Methodist preachers as a body, most of those men are of that class, who would get far less in almost any other situation, and especially as ministers of religion. I have made the proposal several times to my society, to place my salary on the plan of the Methodist discipline.' ["Here," says Dr. S., "he compares his salary with what it would be in

the Methodist Church, and finds that for himself, wife, four children and ‘*boarding for a servant maid,*’ his salary, by the discipline, would be raised \$28, and the house rent!”] ‘That the respectable Methodist preachers do get their salaries, is a fact which we cannot doubt. I can at any time bring forward cases, in which Methodist preachers have received the *notes of the circuit stewards on interest* for the balance of their salary for the year, in cases where it has not been promptly paid. That the Methodists do support their ministers, and have made ample provision for the same, is perfectly clear; and it is the disgrace of many of *our societies*, that they do not consider the subject sufficiently.’”

I will now cite the opinion of the Rev. W. Annan, of the *Presbyterian Church*, and the reader will observe, that his estimate of the average salary of the Methodist preachers, is LESS than Dr. Schmucker’s, and considerably less than that of the writer, whom I shall subsequently quote. And I cite the opinion of Mr. Annan, chiefly, that the reader may have before him each of the three estimates, the average of which I have given on page 144.

“It is the deliberate conviction of our mind,” says Mr. Annan, “after a pretty careful examination, that in relation to this matter, the preachers of Methodism are dealt with more generously (or rather have *provided for themselves* more liberally) than the ministers of any other branch of the American church. In this, they have only practised upon the principle avowed by the founder of their system. ‘I know,’ says Wesley, (works, vol. I., p. 78,) ‘the spiritual labourer is worthy of his reward; and that if we sow to our flock spiritual things, it is meet that we reap of their carnal things: I do not therefore blame, no, not *in any degree, a minister’s taking a yearly salary.*’ It is true, the impression is often made, that whilst the ministers of other denomi-

nations are abundantly paid for their labours, the Methodist preachers not only receive no pecuniary compensation, but indignantly spurn the thought, as degrading them down to a level with hireling priests. Whether this impression is *intentionally* left upon the minds of the people, we know not; we only state the fact. It should be kept in mind, moreover, that when we speak of the compensation of Methodist preachers, we mean the *travelling preachers* and circuit riders; the local preacher receives no pay by the rules of the discipline, except when he 'fills the place of the travelling preacher.'

"Let us now examine what provision is made in the Book of Discipline for remunerating the travelling ministry for their toils, always bearing in mind, that be it scant or liberal, it is precisely what these preachers have legislated into their own pockets; and that at their pleasure, it may be increased to any practicable extent, without consulting the people who pay it." [Here follow the several items from the discipline, which have been already stated.]

"Thus far the discipline. Now let us sum up. We will take an average case, say a preacher with a wife and five children, *two* above and *three* under seven years of age. The account will stand as follows:

|                                                                                                                                           |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Annual allowance to the preacher, . . .                                                                                                   | \$100,00 |
| do do to the preacher's wife, . . .                                                                                                       | 100,00   |
| Two children above seven, \$24 each, . . .                                                                                                | 48,00    |
| Three children under seven, \$16 each, . . .                                                                                              | 48,00    |
| Table expenses, or boarding, at 75 cents each<br>per week, for six persons, omitting the<br>youngest child, and omitting domestics, . . . | 234,00   |
| House rent, . . . . .                                                                                                                     | 45,00    |
| Travelling expenses to the conference, &c.,                                                                                               | 25,00    |
|                                                                                                                                           | <hr/>    |
|                                                                                                                                           | \$600,00 |

“This allowance of *six hundred dollars* is greatly increased, if the preacher’s family numbers eight or ten. And should he become disabled by accident or infirmity, the allowance is continued to him and his children, even though he should be laid aside in the early part of his ministry; so that for a few years’, or weeks’, or days’ service, he and his family may receive their allowance for half a century. And when he goes to rest from his labours, he has the consolation of knowing that his widow and children will not be cast upon the cold charity of an unfeeling world, but will be provided with a very respectable annual allowance. Well may we inquire with Dr. Schmucker, ‘what denomination of Christians is there in our land, whose ministers would not gladly accept this provision?’”

“Nothing but the necessity of defending ourselves against the ungenerous assaults of our adversaries, would constrain us to enter into these minute calculations. Since, however, they have provoked the discussion, we esteem it to be our duty to let the Christian public know the whole truth. It should be remembered, therefore, that the foregoing estimates are made for a region of country where the ordinary salaries of the ministers of other denominations rate from \$400 to \$500—rarely above the latter sum, except in a few instances in large and expensive villages, and their vicinity; and often *less* than the former amount—\$400. With what shadow of truth or justice, then, are these men denounced by the ‘preachers,’ whose allowance by their own Discipline, is considerably larger? This their most zealous advocates are compelled to admit. The Discipline moreover, is the handy work of the preachers exclusively. This sum, therefore, (\$600,) is the annual compensation which *they have ordained* to be due for their ministerial services. This is the sum they will *receive*, if they can get it, and which they have

passed the requisite laws to secure, provided the people will submit to be taxed to this amount. What then becomes of their voluntary poverty? Ought they not to blush for the outcry which they have raised respecting the *large salaries* of the clergy of other branches of the church? Is it fair, is it honest, to indulge in harsh reflections and taunting insinuations against ministers who do not receive, in numberless instances, so large a salary as Methodist preachers have *decreed to be not too large a sum* for a clergyman with a certain family?

“In confirmation of the above estimate, the Rev. R. S. Storrs, in a letter to the editor of the ‘Home Missionary,’ speaking of Lower Canada, writes as follows: ‘The salary of the Methodist ministers is fixed at one hundred guineas per annum, with a furnished dwelling house; and thirty guineas are added when there are three children; and ten guineas more on the addition of each child to the family.’ So that a preacher with four children, would receive one hundred and forty guineas, which, with a furnished dwelling house, would be worth between seven and eight hundred dollars. And yet Mr. Storrs says, ‘the expense of living in Canada is comparatively small.’

“We are not sufficiently in possession of the facts to form a detailed estimate for our largest sized towns and cities. The following statements however, will afford a clue to explain how these matters are managed there. In the trial of an action for *libel* in New York, brought by Azor Hoyt against Rev. Messrs. Waugh, Emory, Bangs and J. Collard,—Rev. Mr. Durbin (now president of Dickinson College) testified as follows: ‘My salary is *twelve hundred and fifty dollars* annually; that of Mr. Bangs, I think, *fifteen hundred* or upwards—that of Mr. Merritt, about *twelve hundred*—that of Mr. Waugh, *sixteen hundred*—that of Mr.

Mason is, I think, *over one thousand and under fifteen hundred dollars.*' Now, whether it is understood that besides this monied compensation, these gentlemen receive a furnished house, rent free, table expenses, &c., according to the discipline, we are not informed. If so, the foregoing sums would be swelled to a very handsome remuneration for their toils.\* \*\*\*\*

“In conclusion: If such be the POVERTY of the ministry of Methodism, I presume there are but few who, in relation to themselves, would refuse to write upon it, ‘*perpetua esto.*’ Six or seven hundred dollars secured in compensation of labours, for the right performance of which there has not been any preparatory expenditure worthy of notice, is no mean provision for the good things of this life. In most other denominations, the intended minister is required to pass through a course of training, from seven to twelve years in duration, in which he must expend a small estate before he can enter upon the duties of his profession; and if, in the providence of God, he is disabled by disease or accident after the few first years or weeks of his ministry, he must resign his charge, and of course his means of subsistence, to some more favoured occupant. Not so the preacher of Methodism. After the expiration of the few first years or weeks of his ministry, even though reduced by the visitation of Heaven to a state of utter helplessness, he is entitled to a clear income for himself and wife of *two hundred dollars*, or the interest of *three thousand three hundred and thirty three dollars*; and his children are also provided for. It may be ques-

\* From the largeness of the sums mentioned, I suppose that their “table expenses” were included in them; but it is highly probable that they were accommodated with dwelling houses rent free—and as rents are very high in New York, this alone would greatly swell the amount of their actual salaries.



tioned whether any man, minister or layman, would be considered far from the pathway of wealth, who, in *four years*, or as it may be, in *four days*, with scarce any previous expenditure, and with no risk of pecuniary loss, could realize an annual income of equal magnitude. And should the preacher survive for fifty years in a state of incapacity, and his wife be also spared, they will be entitled to draw the sum of ten thousand dollars, besides the support of their children.”—*Difficulties of Arminian Methodism, letter VIII., p. 283, &c.*

I will now cite the opinion of an able writer, who published a series of articles on METHODISM, in 1834, in the “Christian Intelligencer” of New York—the organ of the *Protestant Reformed Dutch Church*. The following extracts are taken from No. VI., entitled “*The salaries which the different grades of ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church are called to receive.*”

“In regard to the temporal economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, our limits will allow us to notice only the most important facts. It shall be our aim to state these facts fairly as they appear in the Book of Discipline.

“The first fact to be observed is, that the buildings erected and occupied as Methodist Episcopal meeting houses, with their appendages, belong in no instance to the people of the several congregations; but every meeting house, in the United States, belongs to the General Conference. \* \* \*

“The next particular to be noticed, is the allowed salaries of the Methodist Episcopal itinerant preachers. ‘The annual allowance of the travelling preachers, shall be one hundred dollars and their travelling expenses.’ This is small enough to satisfy the scruples of the most jealous hater of clerical salaries. But it is written also in the Book of Discipline, that ‘the annual allowance of the wives of travel-

ling preachers shall be one hundred dollars.’ Surely it is no more than right that the wife of a travelling preacher who is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, should be provided for as well as himself. ‘Each child of a travelling preacher shall be allowed sixteen dollars annually to the age of seven years, and twenty-four dollars annually from the age of seven to fourteen years.’ In another part of the Book of Discipline, it is made the duty of the people in each circuit or station, to provide the preacher with a house, and ‘to furnish it, at least, with heavy furniture.’ A Methodist Episcopal travelling preacher and his wife and children cannot live comfortably, without a house to shelter them, and heavy furniture to use, more readily than preachers of other sects and their families. It is also made the duty of a certain committee, to estimate the amount necessary to pay for the fuel or fire-wood and the table expenses of the preacher’s family; and the duty of the stewards to provide the estimated amount, in money or otherwise, by such means as they may devise. A Methodist Episcopal itinerant preacher and the members of his family, have ‘eyes, organs and dimensions,’ as well as preachers of other sects and their families. They are ‘fed with the same kind of food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, warmed by the same summer, and cooled by the same winter,’ as preachers of other sects and their families. And since they have found all this to be true, it is not wonderful that the General Conference has passed a law making it the duty of the people to provide them with fuel, and to defray their table expenses. Suppose, then, the case of a married preacher with two children, from seven to fourteen years of age, and three children under seven years of age,—his annual allowance amounts to two hundred and ninety-six dollars. If such a man can be supplied, in addition to this, with a

house, and with half his household furniture, and with fuel, and with what will meet his table expenses, and with his travelling expenses as he rides round his circuit, or journeys to the conferences; and if he can receive, besides, the little and occasional free-will offerings of his people; and if his people will sometimes go round into congregations of other denominations and beg for him; how much is his living worth in money? Certainly, it is worth not less, but more than the average salary of all the Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, and Congregational ministers in the United States. Certainly there are very many Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, and Congregational ministers, who would gladly exchange their salaries for the support of Methodist Episcopal circuit preachers. Certainly, very few Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, and Congregational societies would undertake to pay their pastors at the rate of the allowance and perquisites of the Methodist Episcopal travelling clergy. *But the items already enumerated, are not the whole.* Let the itinerant preacher hold on till he is superannuated, or worn-out, and he is still entitled to receive, whether rich or poor, one hundred dollars annually for himself; and if he has a wife, one hundred dollars annually for her. When he dies, whether in early life or old in years, whether independent or insolvent, he leaves to his widow and his orphans, a right to draw the same allowance which he might have drawn for them had he lived. It is also made the duty of the Annual Conference to 'raise in such manner as may be deemed best, a yearly sum for the subsistence and education of such orphan child, or children,' as may be left entirely destitute by a deceased member of the Annual Conference, 'until he, she, or they, shall have arrived at fourteen years of age. The amount of which yearly sum shall be fixed by a committee of the conference at each session, in advance.' How much

would it be worth to a Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, or Congregational preacher, if, instead of being called to trust implicitly in ‘the God of the widow and the Father of the fatherless,’ he might enjoy the assurance that his wife and children, in case of his removal, should be partakers in some such tangible provision against want?

“Let us endeavour to make a fair estimate of the total sum which a circuit preacher with a wife and two children from seven to fourteen years of age, and three under seven years, annually receives, or is allowed by the Book of Discipline to receive.

|                                                                                                                                  |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| “ Allowed to receive for himself, . . . .                                                                                        | \$100,00 |
| For his wife, . . . . .                                                                                                          | 100,00   |
| For two children from seven to fourteen years<br>of age, . . . . .                                                               | 48,00    |
| For three children under seven years of age,                                                                                     | 48,00    |
| For travelling expenses, probably, about .                                                                                       | 40,00    |
| For house rent and the use of ‘heavy furni-<br>ture, probably, about . . . . .                                                   | 60,00    |
| For fuel, probably, about . . . . .                                                                                              | 40,00    |
| For table expenses, estimated by a commit-<br>tee, (one member with which we are ac-<br>quainted,) a few years since, at about . | 265,00   |
|                                                                                                                                  | <hr/>    |
| Total sum, . . . . .                                                                                                             | \$701,00 |

“In this statement we have omitted to mention, that a circuit preacher in riding round his circuit is absent from his family a great part of his time, and necessarily obtains his boarding and horse keeping amongst his people, free of expense to himself. If these items were taken into the account, they would swell his allowed salary, to at least, eight hundred dollars.

“ Suppose that a Methodist Episcopal itinerant preacher with the same number of persons in his family, and of the same ages as we have supposed in the above calculation, should be stationed by the bishop in one of our large cities; and what would he annually receive, or be allowed by the Book of Discipline to receive ?

|                                                                                                                                                                 |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| “ Allowed to receive for himself, . . . . .                                                                                                                     | \$100,00  |
| For his wife, . . . . .                                                                                                                                         | 100,00    |
| For two children from seven to fourteen years<br>of age, . . . . .                                                                                              | 48,00     |
| For three children under seven years of age,                                                                                                                    | 48,00     |
| For travelling expenses : in a large city, the<br>hire or the keeping of a horse, to enable<br>him to perform his journeys, would proba-<br>bly cost, . . . . . | 125,00    |
| For house rent, and the use of ‘heavy furni-<br>ture,’ in a large city, they would, probably,<br>be worth, . . . . .                                            | 700,00    |
| For fuel, probably, . . . . .                                                                                                                                   | 100,00    |
| For table expenses, probably, . . . . .                                                                                                                         | 375,00    |
| <hr/>                                                                                                                                                           |           |
| Total sum, . . . . .                                                                                                                                            | \$1596,00 |

“ ‘ The preachers in the city of New York, in the year 1821, received as follows:

“ ‘ A. Hunt, \$750; S. Merwin, 847; L. Clark, 816; B. Hibbard, 763; J. Spicer, 564.—Total, \$3,750, *exclusive of house rent*, which may be called at the lowest, \$1,260, making \$5000 for five preachers.’—*New York Telescope. Mut. Rights and Chris. In., April 20, 1830 p. 158.*” [The subsequent increase of house rent, &c., in New York, would of course, greatly swell these amounts and make the average probably about as stated above.]

“The Methodist Episcopal bishops are allowed to receive their salaries annually from ‘the funds of the book concern.’ Their salaries must be paid out of these funds before any part of them are appropriated to pay the salaries of the itinerant preachers; of course, the bishops are sure of receiving their money, whether any be left for the travelling preachers or not. ‘The book agents, and the book committee in New York,’ are constituted a committee ‘to estimate the amount necessary to meet the family expenses of the bishops;’ and if the bishops can make it appear that their reasonable family expenses amount to *one, two, three, or four thousand dollars per annum*, there is nothing in the Book of Discipline to prohibit their receiving as much; for there are no limits prescribed to their salaries.

“It may, perhaps, be said by the people of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that their itinerant preachers do not generally receive as large salaries as the Book of Discipline allows them to receive, because they are unable to obtain them from their societies. Admitting this to be true, still the case is not materially altered; for the fact remains, that they hold to the principle of receiving the full amount of their salaries as allowed them by the Book of Discipline. The same plea might be urged by many of the ministers of the Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches. It is, perhaps, not exceeding the bounds of truth, to state that one third of them do not obtain the whole of their stipulated salaries, from the inability of their people to pay them. Reformed Dutch, Presbyterian, and Congregational ministers, however, are destitute of resources similar to those of Methodist Episcopal preachers, when their societies fail to furnish their salaries. It is a matter of trifling importance with a Methodist Episcopal itinerant preacher when his people fail in giving him what the Book of Discipline allows, so long

as he can be a sharer in the income proceeding from what are called 'the chartered fund' and 'the book concern.' The income arising from which must be very great."

I will now introduce the testimony of *Methodist* preachers themselves—men who had been, for many years, in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and who therefore had, from personal experience and observation, the very best opportunities of knowing the truth on this subject.

In "The Mutual Rights," &c., vol. I., p. 237, they say:—

"We take the minutes of the year 1823, and find there are 1226 travelling preachers; of these we will suppose one half to be married, and each married preacher to have, on an average, two children, one over seven years, and the other under. The whole number of married preachers will be 613, and the number of single preachers the same. We will not undertake to say what number is stationed in towns and cities, but suppose there may be one hundred. If we allow one third of this number to be married men, (and surely this is a very low calculation) we shall have 33 men with their families, and 67 single men to fill the city stations; all the rest are appointed to circuits. We shall allow no discount for those who are stationed in towns, because we believe they get their full quarterage. The account then will stand as follows:

|                                                                                                                                                                    |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 33 married men and their families, at \$800<br>per annum, including all expenses for<br>quarterage, table expenses, house rent,<br>fuel, travelling expenses, &c., | \$26400,00 |
| 67 single men, at \$260 per annum, includ-<br>ing quarterage, boarding, travelling ex-<br>penses, &c.,                                                             | 17420,00   |
|                                                                                                                                                                    | \$43820,00 |
| Amount carried forward,                                                                                                                                            | \$43820,00 |

|                                             |              |             |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Amount carried forward,                     |              | \$43820,00  |
| 580 married men on circuits, at \$100,      | \$58000,00   |             |
| 580 wives, at do.,                          | 100 58000,00 |             |
| 580 children over 7 years, at               | 24 13920,00  |             |
| 580 do under 7 years, at                    | 16 9280,00   |             |
|                                             |              | <hr/>       |
|                                             |              | \$139200,00 |
|                                             |              | <hr/>       |
| Discount at 50 per cent. is                 |              | 69600,00    |
| Board of 580 men, at \$2 per week,          |              | 60320,00    |
| Ditto of 580 wives, at \$2 per week,        |              | 60320,00    |
| Ditto of 1160 children, at \$1 per week,    |              | 60320,00    |
| House rent and fuel, \$75 per annum,        |              | 43500,00    |
| Travelling expenses, \$12 per annum,        |              | 6960,00     |
| 546 single, at \$100,                       | 54600,00     |             |
| Discount on this sum at 50 per cent., is    |              | 27300,00    |
| Boarding at \$2 per week each,              |              | 56784,00    |
| Travelling expenses at \$12 per annum each, |              | 6552,00     |
| Keeping 1126 horses at \$1 per week each,   |              | 58552,00    |
|                                             |              | <hr/>       |
|                                             |              | \$494028,00 |

“Note. In all our estimates, we have wished to be *under*, rather than over the true sum.”

According to the above statement, when the number of itinerant preachers was only 1226, and with the deduction of 50 per cent. on the “quarterage” of *all* the circuit preachers, and allowing only *two* children to each married preacher, the annual expense of their support was four hundred



and ninety-four thousand and twenty-eight dollars:—being an average (with the discount mentioned, and allowing only two children to each) of \$583,32 for every married preacher—and, with the same discount, an average of \$222,59 for every single preacher. Without the discount, the total sum for the support of 1226 preachers, would be five hundred and ninety thousand nine hundred and twenty-eight dollars:—being an average of \$696,86 for each married preacher, with a wife and only two children;—and \$267,12 for every single preacher.

According to these gentlemen, the *average* salary of a Methodist preacher, with a wife and two children, one under and one over seven years of age, “stationed in *towns and cities,*” is . . . . . \$800,00

|                                                                                                             |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Add the allowance for two more children under 7 years, at \$16, . . . . .                                   | 32,00  |
| Ditto for one child above 7, . . . . .                                                                      | 24,00  |
| Ditto for the boarding of two of the additional children, omitting the youngest, at \$1 per week, . . . . . | 104,00 |
|                                                                                                             | 104,00 |

The total sum is \$960,00

Which is very nearly the sum (\$976,00) that I have stated as the fair average.—See page 146.

Now let us make a calculation, according to the rate given by these gentlemen, of the support of a married preacher, with a wife and five children, three under and two above seven years of age—when appointed to a *country* circuit or station. The case would stand thus:—

|                                                              |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Allowed for himself and wife, . . . . .                      | \$200,00 |
| Ditto for 5 children, 3 under and 2 above 7 years, . . . . . | 96,00    |
|                                                              | 96,00    |

Amount carried forward, \$296,00

|                                                                                      |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Amount carried forward,                                                              | \$296,00 |
| Table expenses, or board for himself and<br>wife, at \$2 each per week, . . . . .    | 208,00   |
| Board of children, at \$2 per week for the<br>four, omitting the youngest, . . . . . | 104,00   |
| House rent and fuel, . . . . .                                                       | 75,00    |
| Travelling expenses, . . . . .                                                       | 12,00    |
| Keeping of a horse, at \$1 per week, . . . . .                                       | 52,00    |
|                                                                                      | \$747,00 |

Thus, according to these gentlemen, who had the very best opportunity of knowing, the *average* salary of a Methodist preacher, with such a family, if appointed to a *country* circuit or station, would be, without any discount on his “quarterage,”—\$747,00;—which is upwards of eighty dollars *more* than the average which I have given on page 144.

Again, in their “Review of the answer given by the late General Conference to the petitions and memorials sent up by the Reformers,” they say:—

“In pursuing this report, we have now arrived at a point which brings to view, ‘a topic, to which we advert with great reluctance;’ but the conference ‘compel us.’ The paragraph is long, and in our opinion, presents a novel specimen of self gratulation, and irreverend boasting. ‘The present economy bears with peculiar severity upon the personal and domestic comforts of the itinerant ministry.’ ‘The surest way to secure their worldly interest, personal ease, and domestic comforts, would be to effect the changes proposed.’ ‘We do not doubt that the changes proposed would increase our temporal comforts,’ &c.

“Such is the style of the report. But are such the facts? To facts we must appeal, however delicate the investigation. Where can a man of talents perform services with more cer-

tain prospects of reward than in the Methodist itineracy? If he be poor, he is at once substantially made rich, if comfortable accommodations may be called riches. What table does not offer him the best; though the day before he may have left the plough, the shoe maker's bench or the tailor's board, the day after he has a servant to wait upon him. Should not one more suitable be at hand, perhaps aged and respectable men, either from politeness or love, become his servants. If hitherto obscure and unknown, he is at once introduced into the most respectable society. The varied field of life through which he moves, diversifies his delights, and relieves him from those mental labours, common to stationary ministers.

“We are of the opinion that a system which at once elevates men from the various departments of humble life, and from a state of dependence, to sovereign rule; from comparative ignorance, to the means of improvement in knowledge; so far from being a system of sacrifice and self-denial, in these respects, is one of great enjoyment; *and it sometimes proves a system of EMOLUMENT.* Could we fully receive the report of the conference, we might suppose, that, like Moses, they had denied themselves the prospect of great honours, wealth, and pleasure. We are however constrained to believe, that there are few, if any, of those itinerants, who would change their situation for one of less sacrifice, unless it afforded him as great enjoyment and emolument.

“The day has gone by in this country when the Methodist ministers went ‘forth in tears’ on account of persecution, ‘sowing precious seed;’ the winter is now past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; ‘the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.’ The Methodist itinerants of former times, were like ‘the voice of one crying in the wil-

derness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait.' They were *then* men of plainness and self-denial. A contrast of such with those of the present time *certainly exhibits a great disparity.*

“ But would the changes proposed really improve the condition of our itinerant brethren, as their report supposes? How could it? They have all power in their hands at present; what more can they have, according to the civil laws of this country? The change proposed contemplates the transfer of that power to the Methodist community at large. Query: If the community had the selection of talents, would all the itineracy be continued in service? If the preferment of men depended on talents and moral worth, instead of episcopal patronage, would not immediate ins and outs ensue? If our ministry in general were to stand or fall on the ground of personal worth, instead of that of authority, should we not soon have a more studious, holy, able and useful ministry? Whatever party men may say in answer to these queries, we cheerfully confide their solution to the ‘good sense and candour of the public.’”—*Ib.*, *vol. IV.*, *pp.* 358 and 9.

The foregoing extracts, be it remembered, were penned by gentlemen, who, from their long connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church and ministry, were able to speak from *personal knowledge*:—and I have copied them, not only because they show that the support of the Methodist preachers is ample, but likewise because they exhibit what are, in their judgment, the literary character of many of the itinerants, and the real value of their services as public instructors.

In order to guard against misconception, let it be distinctly observed, that we do not doubt that “the labourer is worthy of his hire.” We have exhibited the foregoing esti-

mates, &c., because the fact which they prove has been most flatly denied, and its proof rudely and pertinaciously challenged—and also for the purpose of exposing the invidious and unrighteous comparisons which are often made between the salaries of Methodist preachers and those of the pastors of other protestant churches:—and not because worthy ministers are not entitled to a liberal support for their laborious and valuable services. How far it is for the good of society to maintain those who are mere ministerial quacks—who, by their notorious incompetency and vulgar fanaticism, are a disgrace to the clerical profession, and a reproach to religion—is a question which I shall not at present discuss. But that those among the Methodist clergy—(and doubtless there are such) who are pious and faithful men, and “able to teach others,” are worthy of a liberal support, there can be no doubt; and it is an honour to the laity of that church, that they do provide so amply for them. I will quote, with approbation and pleasure, the following generous extract, which will not only express my own views on the subject of ministerial support, but at the same time serve to show that the Methodist Reformers, whose estimates and views I have just given, were actuated by no envious or malignant spirit towards their itinerant brethren. The extract is taken from an article headed “**RIGHTS OF THE ITINERANT MINISTERS,**” and is as follows:

“They are entitled to a support from those for whom they labour. That support ought always to be regulated by the ability of those who pay, and the necessities of him who labours. And we believe that in general, this is the case among the Methodists, quite as much, at least, as among any other Christian denomination. Nothing, it would seem, is more clear, than that if the church requires the whole time and attention of an individual occupied in her service, she ought

to assume the maintenance of that individual. It is furthermore evident, I would suppose, that the church ought to afford her ministers such a support as will enable them to appear respectable in their persons and families, and to exercise a becoming hospitality to strangers, who may visit them; as also to be able to give something in charitable donations to the poor. The reputation of the church itself must needs require that her ministers appear respectable, and I hope no Christian will be willing to deny them the ability to share in the pleasures of benevolence. Our confidence in their integrity, ought to remove the fear of intrusting them with something more than a bare supply, for the true minister of Christ will be as likely to appropriate his supply to a charitable use, as any other man. I have thrown together these disunited and broken ideas, in order to attract the attention of some one who has more leisure than I for the prosecution of the subject. And because I wish it distinctly understood, that while I seek reform in the church, I respect, and intend ever to maintain the rights of the ministers, as well as those of the members.”—*Mutual Rights, vol. II., pp. 251 and 2.*

Having thus shown, from their Book of Discipline, and the testimony of others, what is the probable average salary of the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, let me now, in further prosecution of my design, make a few remarks relative to the salary of *Presbyterian* pastors;—observing that the same might be made, substantially, respecting the ministerial support of all the other principal protestant denominations.

The following extracts from *our* Form of Government, chap. XIV., will show what are the moral and literary qualifications required of candidates for the gospel ministry in the Presbyterian Church:—

“The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had of them who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded, by being committed to weak or unworthy men; and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose presbyteries shall license probationers to preach the gospel, that after a competent trial of their talents, and receiving from the churches a good report, they may, in due time, ordain them to the sacred office.

“It is proper and requisite that candidates applying to the presbytery to be licensed to preach the gospel, produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character, and of their being regular members of some particular church. And it is the duty of the presbytery, for their satisfaction with regard to the real piety of such candidates, to examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office. This examination shall be close and particular, and, in most cases, may best be conducted in the presence of the presbytery only. And it is recommended, that the candidates be also required to produce a diploma of bachelor or master of arts, from some college or university: or, *at least*, authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.

“Because it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the church, to intrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men, the presbytery shall try each candidate, as to his knowledge of the Latin language: and the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written. They shall also examine him on the arts and sciences; on theology, natural and revealed; and on ecclesiastical history, the sacraments,

and church government. And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce the doctrines of the gospel, the presbytery shall require of him,

“ A Latin *exegesis* on some common head in divinity.

“ A *critical exercise*; in which the candidate shall give a specimen of his taste and judgment in sacred criticism; presenting an explication of the original text, stating its connection, illustrating its force and beauties, removing its difficulties, and solving any important questions which it may present.

“ A *lecture*, or exposition of several verses of Scripture; and,

“ A *popular sermon*.

“ These, or other similar exercises, at the discretion of the presbytery, shall be exhibited until they shall have obtained satisfaction as to the candidate's piety, literature, and aptness to teach in the churches. The lecture and popular sermon, if the presbytery think proper, may be delivered in the presence of a congregation.

“ That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of insufficient men into the sacred office, it is recommended, that no candidate, except in *extraordinary* cases, be licensed, unless, *after* his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have *studied divinity* AT LEAST TWO YEARS, under some approved divine or professor of theology.”—[It is *now* usual for our candidates, after they have graduated at some college, or have gone through a regular course of learning, to spend THREE years at some one of our theological seminaries in the study of divinity.]

The course of study thus required, occupies from seven to ten or twelve years; and in its prosecution, the candi-



date is often obliged to spend a considerable estate—sometimes the whole of his patrimony. It is true that a great many, being unable to defray the expense, are assisted by the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church; but it is with the distinct understanding, that the money advanced, shall be refunded, if ever the candidate becomes able to do so.

The regulation of the salaries of Presbyterian ministers, is left, as it should be left—*with the people*. Each congregation calls the man of their own choice, and determines the amount of his salary. This amount is generally regulated more by the estimated ability of the congregation, than the necessities of the minister whom they call. That is, the sum agreed upon by the congregation, is usually *less* than the people would acknowledge to be requisite for the comfortable support of the pastor; but it is what they are able, or think themselves only able to give. All that is said on this subject in our Form of Government is contained in the following form of a call:—

“The congregation of            being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you and having good hopes, from our past experience of your labours, that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum of            in regular quarterly, (or half yearly, or yearly) payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.”—*Chap. XV*

The blanks in the foregoing form, are filled, as I have said, by the people themselves, according to their own sense

of propriety or ability; and I have never known of a case in which any of our ecclesiastical courts have interfered with the pecuniary arrangement thus made by the people with their respective pastors.

The nominal amount of the salaries of Presbyterian bishops or pastors varies much according to the ability or liberality of their flocks, and the expense of living in different places.

In *country* parishes, and in the smaller towns and villages, I suppose that their salaries range, nominally, from \$400 to \$500. Some receiving much less than the sum first named, and a few, perhaps, a little more than the amount last mentioned. Certain am I, that \$400 are considerably *more* than the average salary of the country pastors, settled within the bounds of the Presbytery of Baltimore. And it should be remembered, that of the sum promised, many do not receive the full amount—some not more than one-half, or two thirds; and even for what they do receive, they must wait, oftentimes for months, yea, years!

It may be asked,—how do they live on such trifling salaries? I answer, that if they depended entirely on their salaries, they could not live! Multitudes of them are therefore obliged to employ a large portion of their time in teaching, or in cultivating the soil, and others are drawing largely upon their own private means to make up the deficiency of their ministerial support! With their previous liberal education and mental discipline, they are able to sustain themselves as religious teachers with much greater facility than they could otherwise do, but even with these advantages, many of them are compelled, by their daily secular employments, to devote the hours usually allotted to recreation and repose, in studious preparation for their sabbath and ministerial duties! It is my deliberate conviction that there is

not a body of clergy on earth, with any thing like the same piety, talents, learning and zeal, who receive so poor a remuneration for their services. And yet these are the men, between whom, and the Methodist itinerants, who receive so much more, the most invidious and disingenuous comparisons are often drawn! I confess that, with my personal knowledge of their deprivations, self-denials and toils, I have found it difficult to restrain my indignation, when I have heard of such men being denounced as “hireling priests” and “money preachers,” by the friends of that very system whose circuit preachers are so much more liberally and amply provided for!! Beloved men of God! your lot is indeed hard:—to be deprived of what is necessary for your support, or else obliged to “labour with your own hands,” to keep yourselves and families from actual starvation!—and yet to be thus stigmatized and persecuted by men calling themselves Christians!—but remember that your reward is on high—and great and glorious will that reward be, if ye persevere, “through evil as well as good report,” faithful unto the end!—Brethren, my prayer is, that you may be divinely supported under your painful sacrifices and arduous labours, and that God may give your accusers the grace, not only of repentance, but of Christian honour, truth, and charity!

The nominal salaries of the Presbyterian pastors, located in the *larger towns and cities*, are perhaps about double what they are in the country parishes. They probably range from \$800 to \$1000—some receive less than the former sum, and very few more than the latter.

In the *principal cities*, where the cost of living is very high, their salaries are greater. A few pastors, presiding over large and wealthy churches, receive what may be called comparatively large salaries; but the number of these is

very small indeed. I think it probable, however, as I have before stated, that our pastors do, in general, receive larger salaries, in some half a dozen of our principal cities, than the Methodist ministers stationed in the same places. And yet it is a fact, that many of them receive *less* than some of the Methodist pastors, located in the same cities.

Let me state the case of one, as an example, and I take this one, not only because I am best acquainted with its details, but because it has been made the subject of invidious comparison with the alleged "small salary" of the neighbouring Methodist preachers. The Presbyterian bishop to whom I refer, was settled in this good city of Baltimore, between twelve and thirteen years ago. For several years after his settlement, he received a nominal salary of \$800, which was subsequently increased, until it amounted, in 1840, to \$1500. The amount *actually received* by him, during the twelve years, *averages*, precisely, *one thousand and thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents* (\$1033,33) per annum. Out of this comparatively small salary, he has given in money, towards the liquidation of the debt of the church alone,—to say nothing of the contributions to other benevolent institutions, and the poor,—the sum of one thousand three hundred and fifty dollars. If this sum, thus returned directly to the church, were subtracted from his salary, it would leave an *average of nine hundred and seventy dollars and eighty-three cents* (\$970,83) per year. And yet, while the Rev. pastor of the Light street Methodist Church is said to have been receiving *twelve hundred dollars* (\$1200,00) per annum, *exclusive of house rent*,—this Presbyterian bishop is privately stigmatized, by some of the friends of Methodism, as receiving an enormous salary!! I said that the salary of this Presbyterian pastor was recently raised to

\$1500:—this sum, however, he received for a single year only. At the expiration of that year, in view of the monetary embarrassments of the times, he voluntarily relinquished one-fifth of it, (\$300,00) and has continued to do so ever since. Yea, further, finding the pressure of the times increasing, this Presbyterian bishop spontaneously expressed to his congregation his cheerful readiness to submit to *any additional reduction* which they might judge expedient, rather than that the church should get involved, or he become a burthen to his flock.

Let it not to be supposed, from this statement, that this pastor has ever *complained* of the comparative smallness of his salary, or of a want of Christian liberality on the part of the people to whom he ministers. Very—very far from it. He has always been content with his pastoral lot, and has ever spoken of the love and generosity of his beloved flock in terms of the highest commendation. They were, at first, but few in numbers, and oppressed by a large church debt; but as, by the blessing of God, they grew in numbers and ability, so did they abound in liberality towards their chosen and cherished pastor. The fact that his salary was increased within ten years to nearly double the amount of what it was originally, is sufficient and substantial proof of their affection and generosity towards him; which he has not been slow either to appreciate or acknowledge. And to their honour it should be stated, that when, a short time since, their pastor expressed a willingness to make any further sacrifices which might be necessary, in view of the continued and increasing pecuniary difficulties of the times, they spontaneously and unanimously determined, that no additional sacrifices on his part should be permitted. In view of the misrepresentations which have been specially made of late, I

may be pardoned for quoting the resolutions adopted on that occasion, by those who have known him long and intimately:—they are as follow:—

“ *Resolved*, That this meeting fully appreciate the earnest zeal and untiring liberality of their pastor, as exemplified and illustrated by the *facts* embodied in the report of the Board of Trustees. Deservedly strong, as he has been, at all times heretofore, in the affectionate regards of the congregation, the evidences of zeal and liberality thus afforded, cannot but endear him the more to his flock, and give him yet stronger titles to their esteem and love.

“ *Resolved*, That while thus bearing testimony to the self-devotion, the labours and sacrifices of their pastor, on behalf of the church and congregation committed to him, the congregation earnestly respond to the anxiety expressed by the Board of Trustees, that he shall not, under any circumstances, be called on to make any additional sacrifices. With those already made, seconded as they have been by the liberal co-operation of all who felt interested in its prosperity, the church has been enabled to emerge from the gloom of its early difficulties, and in effect, to discharge all its pecuniary liabilities. In this satisfactory state of its concerns, the congregation cannot entertain the thought of additional sacrifices by their pastor. An extraordinary depression in business affairs, such as has been experienced for two years past, may indeed justify the measure of sacrifice, as now existing, yet a little longer. But under no circumstances could this meeting consent to any increased or additional sacrifices, on the part of their beloved pastor. And while they resolve, that none such shall be permitted, they pledge themselves, as a congregation, to join heartily with the Board of Trustees, in all requisite measures and action, for render-

ing such additional sacrifice on his part, in any event unnecessary.”

And yet, this is the man,—of whom his own people, who know him best, thus spontaneously and unanimously testify—this is the man who is often contrasted invidiously, by many of the friends of Methodism, with the alleged disinterestedness and superior devotedness of Methodist preachers! I blush to make this exhibit:—but, as even the humble and holy apostle was sometimes “provoked” to speak of his own sacrifices and labours for the public good, so we are sometimes compelled to speak of things, which nothing but a sense of duty, in self-defence, could possibly extort from our lips or pen.

In connection with the foregoing statements of the nominal amount of the salaries of Presbyterian pastors, it should be remembered that, with very few exceptions, the sums mentioned are *all* that they receive. Some few churches have provided parsonages or dwelling houses for their pastors, and in some few instances, in the country, a lot of ground is added for their accommodation. But these exceptions are rare. In general, the pastors are obliged to pay their house rent out of their salary—and in no instance, within my knowledge, is any thing allowed, in addition to their salary, for table expenses, fuel, furniture, travelling expenses, &c.

Nor is there any provision made for the “*occasional distresses*” of Presbyterian pastors or their families. No matter how inadequate their salary may be to their support—no matter how much in arrears their people may be in paying them what they had promised—no matter what providential misfortunes may have overtaken them, there is no provision made for their relief—no general fund from which they may derive assistance.

Neither is there any provision made for the support of those, who, though competent and willing to perform ministerial service, are yet unable to procure a pastoral charge. There are no "*supernumeraries*" on "half-pay" in the Presbyterian Church. However long it may be before a Presbyterian clergyman is settled, and however much he and his family may suffer on that account, he receives nothing until he obtains a situation, and is actively employed in his professional work.

There is not any provision made even for those who have become *disabled* by sickness or infirmity from performing pastoral duty. The salary of a Presbyterian pastor is promised and paid, only "during the time of his being and continuing the regular pastor of the church." As soon as he ascertains that he has been permanently disabled, he resigns his charge; and there is no provision made for the subsequent support either of himself or family. He may have spent the whole of his patrimony in his preparation for the sacred office, or sacrificed all that remained of his inheritance in making up the yearly deficiency of his ministerial support. He may have spent the best part of his life in labouring for the good of his flock, and actually destroyed his health in their service,—still there is no provision made for his sickness or declining age, for he is supported no longer than he is able to discharge his pastoral duties with acceptance to his people. Many faithful, but sick and aged pastors, are thus literally cast upon "the cold charities of the world!" I say not that this should be so—that such men have not any *moral* claim on the Christian sympathy, and even *justice* of the churches which they have faithfully served during their health and manly vigour. No, no, beyond all question, it *is* the sacred duty of the churches to make some



provision for their sick and “worn-out” pastors—especially as, during their active service, they seldom receive more than a *bare support*, and very often not that! But I am now speaking only of what is the *fact* respecting such pastors of Presbyterian Churches, and for the purpose of contrasting their destitute and miserable condition, with the comparative ease and comfort of Methodist preachers similarly disabled or superannuated.

And we must add, that there is no provision made, by the church, for the “*widows and orphans*” of Presbyterian pastors. If they depart in poverty—and few, if any, are able to lay up any thing for their families from their ministerial salary, their widows and orphans are left utterly destitute! Who can tell the anxiety and grief of many pastors in anticipation of their decease on this account! Who can tell the agonizing struggle of many such in death, as they bid their weeping companions and children adieu, and leave them in a selfish and unfeeling world without the means of procuring even the necessaries of life! What a relief it would be to such a dying husband and father, if he could point to some ecclesiastical statute which provides so much for his widow during her life, and as much as may be “necessary” for the “subsistence and education” of his beloved children! And what a consolation to his wife and children in the remote or immediate prospect of his decease! But while Methodist preachers and their families have these precious consolations, (and I rejoice and thank God that they have) Presbyterian pastors and their families are entirely destitute of them: for their church has made no provision for the support of the widows of their deceased clergy, or for the subsistence and education of their orphans. They may indeed, if by extra labour, or severe economy, they can afford it, invest a portion

of their income in some *voluntary association* for the relief of their widows and orphans: but, I repeat it, the Presbyterian Church, as such, has made no provision for them, and has no fund appropriated to such objects.

And now, in view of all these facts, is it not true, that, “notwithstanding their ungenerous and invidious comparisons, the Methodist clergy are, *indirectly, but substantially and really*, BETTER PROVIDED FOR, AS TO TEMPORALITIES, than the clergy of other Christian denominations?” Certainly, so far as the Presbyterian ministry are concerned, the Methodist clergy, as a body, receive considerably larger salaries, while actively employed in their profession:—and, in addition, they have very valuable provisions made for them, when occasionally distressed, when out of regular employment, when disabled by sickness, and when worn out by age, which Presbyterian ministers have not. And besides these great advantages, the widows and orphans of Methodist preachers are liberally provided for, while those of Presbyterian pastors are left, by their church, entirely destitute.

Before I dismiss this topic, I will again remark that my object has not been to show, that the Methodist clergy and their families receive too much. Those among them who are faithful men and competent instructors, well deserve and are justly entitled to a liberal compensation for their professional services. And if their friends had been content silently to allow their preachers to enjoy their comfortable livings and emoluments, without reflecting on others in reality less liberally provided for, not a syllable should we ever have uttered or written on this subject. But when their advocates indulge in the most invidious comparisons between the ministerial support of Methodist preachers and that of the clergy of other Christian churches—when Presbyterian

pastors, especially, are represented as receiving “large salaries,” and are stigmatized as avaricious and worldly minded men, who preach only for money!—then it becomes an imperative duty, in self-defence, to expose the whole truth. It is enough that we should be required to bear the deprivations and incessant anxieties and toils of our actual lot, without being subjected to misrepresentation and detraction! And it has been with a view to correct such false representations, and to defend ourselves against the injurious effects of such unchristian defamation, that we have spread the foregoing facts and detailed statements before the public:—particularly as our former brief allusion to them elicited so flat a denial of their truth, and the evidence on which the reference was made, was so arrogantly and provokingly challenged!

## CHAPTER V.

### FINANCIAL MEASURES, OR MODE OF RAISING SUPPLIES.

Class meetings.—Comparative cost of “free seats” and rented pews.—Love feasts.—Special subscriptions and collections.—Book concern, periodicals, &c.—The immense aggregate amount raised from great numbers, by small, yet frequent contributions.—These methods contrasted with the system adopted by the Presbyterian Church.

HAVING shown what provisions have been made by the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the temporal support of themselves and families; I will devote a few pages in exhibiting their peculiar mode of “*raising supplies.*”

First, by “*class meetings.*” Many persons, not conversant with the Methodist system of finance, are under the impression that their weekly class meetings are purely religious, or devoted exclusively to spiritual exercises. But the truth is, that they constitute one of their most important and profitable financial measures—more money being actually raised by them than by any other means.

The *origin* of class meetings is thus described by Mr. Wesley himself—as quoted by Lee in his “Short History of the Methodists,” page 15:—

“In 1742, the societies having greatly increased, they were divided into *classes*, each class consisting of about twelve persons, who were committed to the care of one person styled the leader.—Mr. Wesley observes on this occasion as follows:

“Feb. 15, 1742—Many of us were met together in Bristol, to consult on a proper method of paying the public debt, contracted by building; and it was agreed, 1. That every member of the society that was able, should contribute a penny a week—2. That the whole society should be divided into little companies or classes, of about twelve in each class.—3. That one person in each class should receive the contribution of the rest. Thus began, says he, that excellent institution, *merely upon a temporal account*; from which we have reaped so many spiritual blessings: we soon fixed the same rule in all our societies.’”

Having, by this casual circumstance, perceived the important *financial*, as well as spiritual use which might be made of such “classes,” the founder of Methodism “soon” incorporated them into his system—and they have since yielded an immense pecuniary revenue to the preachers of that sect.—Few indeed, have any adequate conception of the vast aggregate amount thus annually raised, because the weekly individual contributions are comparatively small.

This subject deserves particular notice, because nothing is more common than for Methodists to boast of their “free seats,” and to inveigh against the “rented pews” of other churches. And yet it is a fact, that, on an average, they actually pay more—much more, in the course of a year, for their “free seats,” than the members of other churches do for their rented pews! There is a singular adaptation in the system of Methodism to *conceal* the truth on financial subjects. As it is impossible even to *approximate* the amount of their preacher’s salaries without collecting together the various items which are mixed up with other subjects, and spread over some eight or ten pages of their Book of Discipline; so it is impossible for even their members to know, *how much* they pay towards the support of their pastors and

their families, without keeping a tedious account of various small sums which appear in themselves too insignificant to be remembered, much less “booked,” but which, in the space of a year, amount in fact to a very considerable sum. From the want of this attention, multitudes are deceived by the smallness of their weekly contributions and have no idea of the aggregate amount in the course of a year. Let each contributor keep an exact account of every sum, however small, which he contributes in his class—at love feasts—at the stated sabbath collections, and on special occasions, for a single year, and he will be astonished to find how much his “free seat” costs him per annum!! It is true—these contributions are voluntary—each one pays as much, or as little as he pleases—and nothing at all if he so chooses. But it is precisely so also in those churches which have rented pews. No one is compelled to pay pew rent, if he does not choose to do so. The rents are graduated so as to suit the circumstances of the congregation, and a man may therefore rent a pew at almost any price he desires. Many families, who are not able to pay pew rent, occupy pews for years without paying a cent for them—and they are cordially welcome to their occupancy, without being expected or desired to contribute any thing. But while there is no compulsion in either case, is it not expected in both, that those who are able will contribute towards the support of the church? and that too, according to their ability? Would any man be considered a worthy and acceptable member of a Methodist class, who is able to contribute something, and yet will not? Does not the Methodist Episcopal Church inculcate it as a moral or religious duty, that every member should give, if able—and as much as he is able? This is not only indubitably true theoretically, but the system has been practically so arranged, as that very few, in their church, can ask to

be excused on the plea of poverty. Certainly, very few can say that they are not able to give "a penny a week!" And thus the system is made to embrace all, except the most destitute; and, of course, a large number, who, in other churches, would not be expected to give any thing at all!!

The sums contributed at the weekly class meetings vary according to the ability and liberality of the members. A respected clergyman who had been, for many years, in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, informed me that the amounts ranged from a few cents up to a dollar—and that he believed the weekly contribution of each member would average ten cents. Well, low as this average appears to me to be, let us adopt and compare it with the average cost of a "rented seat" in one of our pewed churches. For example, in the Third Presbyterian Church in this city, the *average* rent of pews is precisely \$18,29 $\frac{1}{3}$  per annum:—which, allowing six persons to each pew, (and that number can be very comfortably accommodated in them,) would be about \$3 per year for each seat, or *LESS* than *six cents per week* for each person. Thus it appears, that while, on an average, the members of Methodist classes pay *ten cents* per week, the average weekly pew rent of individuals in the Presbyterian Church named is between five and six cents, or only a little more than one half as much! No wonder that "free seats" are lauded, and "rented pews" denounced, when it is discovered that they probably raise about twice as much money by their *free system*!!—It should be observed, that in this calculation, I have not included the sums expected to be given at love feasts—special collections, &c., &c.—If these were added, they would greatly increase the average yearly cost of a Methodist free seat! and serve to show, still more striking-

ly, how much cheaper, after all, ~~rented pews~~ ~~to~~ say nothing of their superior comfort and important moral advantages.

Let me state the case in another form. In the Presbyterian Church mentioned, the greater number of families rent but the *half* of a pew, which will comfortably seat at least three adult persons. The average rent of a half pew would be \$9,14½ per year, or about *seventeen cents* a week. Whereas a family consisting of an equal number belonging to a Methodist class, would pay on an average, *thirty cents*, per week, or \$15,60 a year! In other words, a *family* of three persons, can rent a half pew in the Presbyterian Church, for seven cents more per week, than a *single person* pays, on an average, as a member of a Methodist class!—Or, if there are three persons in a family connected with a Methodist class, they pay, on an average, *nearly twice as much* as such a family would pay, on an average, for the half of a pew in the Presbyterian Church!!—to say nothing of the *additional cost* of Methodist love feasts—special subscriptions, &c. &c.

With regard to the Methodist “*love feasts:*” it may be proper to inform the reader, that they, like their class meetings, are used for the purpose of revenue. No one who receives a ticket of admission to them is indeed compelled to pay any thing; but then it is expected that every one, who is able, will give something, and as much as he is able. And as the occasion is one of special interest, it is to be presumed that the people will be as liberal as possible. No doubt the love feasts are very profitable, and that the preachers realize from them a very considerable sum. I was informed, by the Rev. gentleman before referred to, that the individual contributions vary according to the ability or generosity of the members; and that the average of each one would be about ten cents at each quarterly love feast. At



this rate, the members pay, on an average, (in addition to their class money,) forty cents a year; and, of course, if there are three in a family, one dollar and twenty cents per annum. If this be added to the amount which such a family contribute at their class meetings, it will make the aggregate \$4,20 per quarter, or \$16,80 per year! Whereas the average cost of a half pew in the Presbyterian Church, which would accommodate the same number of persons, would be only \$2,28 per quarter, or \$9,14½ per year!!

It should also be stated that, in addition to the contributions which the members are expected to make at the weekly class meetings, and the quarterly love feasts,—there are numerous *special subscriptions and collections* for the support of their ministers and their families, to each of which, every member, who is able, is expected to contribute. The amount raised in this way, must be immense! Many give on such special occasions very liberally, and most, no doubt, contribute something. Now, if all the money thus given in the course of a year—in the form of special subscriptions, and at special collections, in behalf of the particular objects mentioned, were added to the contributions at classes, and love feasts, it would greatly swell the average cost of a Methodist “free” seat!!

Again. The yearly sum which those contribute at the class meetings, who do not pay even the average amount before mentioned, is much more considerable than any one would suppose, without making the calculation. For instance, if a member of a Methodist class contributes but *six and a quarter cents* a week, it will amount to eighty-one and a quarter cents per quarter, or three dollars and twenty-five cents per annum: and if there are three of them in the family, they pay, unitedly, two dollars and forty-three and a quarter cents per quarter, or *nine dollars and seventy-five cents a*

*year*—which is considerably more than the average rent of a half pew, capable of accomodating the same number of persons, in the Presbyterian Church referred to!

It should be observed, that hitherto we have taken the *average* price of the pews in the Third Presbyterian Church in this city. But many of them rent for *much less* than the average amount stated. In fact, there are no less than *seventy two* pews, or very nearly one half of the whole number in the church referred to, which rent for *less* than the average sum before mentioned. Some of them rent as low as \$8 per annum—and from that to \$10—\$12, and upwards. *A family* consisting of three adult persons, may therefore rent a half pew, which would amply accommodate them, for *four dollars a year*—which would be one dollar per quarter, and between seven and eight cents a week—or, *for each person*, LESS THAN THREE CENTS A WEEK! Now, how few members there are, of Methodist classes, who pay *less* than three cents a week!—and yet, for this amount, any individual may obtain a rented seat in the Presbyterian Church!—Or, to state the case in another form, if three individuals contribute each three cents a week in a Methodist class, they pay one dollar and seventeen cents a quarter, or four dollars and sixty-eight cents per year for their “free seats;”—whereas the same number may rent a half pew in the Presbyterian Church for one dollar a quarter, or four dollars a year!

The truth is, however, that many of the poor families who contribute at the rate of three cents a week, in the *Methodist Church*, would not be expected to rent a pew at all, if they attended the Presbyterian Church; but would in welcome occupy their seats, literally and truly “*free!*”

In the above calculations, I have not included the ordinary sabbath collections—subscriptions towards building churches and parsonages—collections for missions—the poor,

&c., &c., because these are common to all the evangelical denominations. I have not the least doubt, however, but that these general objects cost the members of the Methodist Church quite as much as the members of the Presbyterian or any other Christian church. Probably I should have added something to the cost of Methodist "free seats!" on account of the *building of meeting houses*; because, instead of being obliged to pay only for the one they occupy, as the members for example, of a Presbyterian congregation are, they are, at least, in this city, bound, in a peculiar sense, to pay for all the Methodist meeting houses which have been, or which may be hereafter erected within their particular district! And judging from the number and cost of such buildings erected within a few years past, the amount necessary to pay for them, and which, according to their system, must be raised from their members generally, must be very considerable, very!—It is rumoured, that some of their more wealthy and liberal members, *pay*, in this way, *enormously*, for their "free seats"!!—Indeed, it is within my own personal knowledge, that some men, in very moderate circumstances, have been induced to subscribe amounts, which some of our *wealthiest* members would regard as oppressive!

To illustrate still further, the immense *aggregate* amount which may be raised, by great numbers, in small weekly contributions, let us suppose that each of the members included within the *Baltimore Conference*, contributes, on an average, only ten cents a week—at class meetings—love feasts—special collections, &c. &c. According to their official Minutes for 1841—2, there were 46,844 white members, and 13,526 coloured, making a total of 60,370:—say in round numbers 60,000. Now, 60,000, each paying ten cents a week, would make \$6000 per week, and \$312,000

per annum. This sum, divided by 214, the whole number of travelling and superannuated preachers reported as belonging to the Conference, would give upwards of *one thousand four hundred and fifty dollars* (\$1450) per annum to each minister, exclusive of the preachers' widows and orphans who may be located within their conference bounds, and who, of course, come in for their share.

Let us now make an estimate for the *whole denomination*. According to the minutes just referred to, the whole number of white members was 803,988—coloured 107,296—Indians 2,617—making a total of 913,901:—let us say 850,000. If that number contribute, on an average, but *five cents* a week, in their respective *classes*, it will amount, in the aggregate, to *two millions two hundred and ten thousand dollars* (\$2,210,000,) per annum!

If the same number contribute, on an average, *ten cents*, at each of the *quarterly love feasts*, it will amount, in the aggregate, to *three hundred and forty thousand dollars* (\$340,00) a year!

If the same number contribute, on an average, *a single dollar* in the course of a year, towards the various *special subscriptions and collections* which are so common among that denomination in behalf of their preachers and families, it would amount, in the aggregate, to *eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars* (\$850,000) per annum!

At this rate, from these three sources, alone, viz. class meetings, love feasts, and special collections, there would be realized the immense sum of **THREE MILLIONS FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$3,400,000) PER YEAR!!**—a very handsome revenue, certainly, to be divided among about 4,000 preachers and their widows and orphans!

And if we add to this, the large profits of their "book concern," and their various periodicals, and the receipts of their local preachers' aid societies, and associations for the relief of the widows and orphans of deceased Methodist ministers,—the grand total would be vastly augmented!—Whether the estimates, as far as given, are too high, or too low, the reader is to judge for himself. He has the data before him, and can form his own opinion.

Now let us contrast these methods of "raising supplies," with the system adopted by the *Presbyterian Church*. I have already remarked, that each Presbyterian congregation elect their own pastor, and determine his salary. To raise the amount thus promised to their minister, as well as to aid in defraying the incidental expenses of their church, it is customary to rent the pews, at prices fixed by the Board of Trustees, and so graduated as to suit the various circumstances of the families composing the congregation. In general, the rents of the pews, together with the ordinary sabbath collections, are the *only* sources of revenue to pay the pastor's salary and all other expenses connected with the maintenance of public worship. In some country parishes, instead of renting pews, they raise what they can by annual subscription; and sometimes, when the ordinary revenue falls short, special collections are made, to supply as far as possible the deficiency. But, in general, the Presbyterian Churches are pewed, and the rent accruing from them is their only source of revenue with which to meet the salary of their pastors;—the ordinary sabbath collections being seldom sufficient to meet the incidental expenses.

I have stated that, the average rent of the pews in the Third Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, is precisely \$18,291 $\frac{1}{3}$  per annum; each pew being capable of seating at least six

adult persons; and that consequently, the average cost of a single seat, is about \$3 per year. What is the *precise* average actually paid by the *communicants* who are pew holders, it would require a good deal of trouble to ascertain, because some of the pews are vacant—some are rented by persons not communicants—some communicants have whole pews, others halves, &c.—and some of them do not pay any rent at all. Many of the vacant pews are those which are considered the least eligible, and of course are the cheapest. Taking, however, the whole of the actual proceeds from the pews occupied by communicants and non-communicants, and distributing the amount among the whole number of the communicants attached to the church, I find that the average, to each communicant, would be about four dollars (\$4) per year. In other words, if *all* the pews were actually rented, the average of each seat would be about three dollars (\$3) a year:—as it is, the more costly, because the more eligible pews being rented, the amount actually paid by the present pew holders, communicants and non-communicants, if divided among the whole number of communicants exclusively, would be about four dollars (\$4) each yearly. If we were to subtract from this what is paid by non-communicant pew holders, the average actually paid by the communicants would be of course so much less. Let us however adopt this sum for the purpose of estimating what would be at the same rate, the aggregate amount collected from the total number of communicants within the bounds of the Presbytery of Baltimore, according to the last published report:—apprizing the reader that the returns as published in the minutes are very imperfect, and again reminding him that many persons are pew holders, who are not communicants.

According to the minutes of 1842, (the last published,) the total number of communicants within the bounds of the *Presbytery of Baltimore* is 1466. The reports from the churches under the care of this Presbytery were, however, unusually imperfect the last year, as to the number of communicants. I have good reason for supposing, that the total number is about 2000; which, at \$4 each, would be \$8000. If we divide this aggregate by 23, the total number of ministers, it will give to each *three hundred and forty-seven dollars and eighty-two cents* (\$347,82) per annum!

It will be remembered that, in the estimate which we made of the receipts of the *entire* Methodist Episcopal Church, we *deducted fifty per cent.* from the alleged average class meeting contributions in this city—because much less is generally received from the members in the country, than from those residing in the larger towns and cities. To make the comparison fairly, we must of course throw off the same discount in reference to the *whole* Presbyterian Church. According to the minutes of 1842, the total number of communicants in the *Presbyterian Church in the United States*, is 140,433; which at \$2 each, would make \$280,866. If we divide this aggregate by 1508, the whole number of ministers, it will give to each *one hundred and eighty-six dollars and twenty-five cents* (\$186,25) per year!

Or, suppose we make no reduction for the country churches, and take the sum which we certainly know is more than what is actually paid, on an average, by the communicants of the Third Presbyterian Church in the city of Baltimore—the account would then stand thus:—Total number of communicants 140433, which, at \$4 each, would make \$561,732. This, divided by 1508, would give *three hun-*

*dred and seventy-two dollars and fifty cents (\$372,50) to each Presbyterian minister per year!*

Now, it is not pretended that these estimates are *exact*—for all that can be done is to *approximate* the truth. The data, and the explanatory remarks, are before the reader, and he may form his own opinion. Certain I am, that, upon a comparison of the two systems, he must be convinced, that the Methodist “free seats,” yield a much larger revenue, in proportion to the number of communicants, than do the “rented pews” of Presbyterian churches!

But it may be inquired, if the pew system yields so much less revenue than the other, why do Presbyterians adhere to it? I reply, that we willingly forego great pecuniary advantages for the sake of others, which we consider of far greater importance. Some of the reasons which induce us to prefer the pew system are the following:—

*It is much more convenient.* Each family having their own pew, they can always procure their seats, without being excluded by others, or uncomfortably crowded in them. They need not go an hour or two before the time, in order to get seats, or incommode others by crowding into seats already sufficiently filled.

It is much more conducive to *right family government and discipline.* As each family sit together in the same pew, the parents can of course see whether their children are in church or not—whether, if they are present, they are awake or asleep—attentive or inattentive—orderly or disorderly, and can exercise such authority and discipline as their conduct may require.

The pew system, moreover, is much more conducive to *the order and decency becoming the house of God.* Where families sit together and the sexes are unseparated, even the worst disposed are necessarily restrained in their conduct



during public worship—for no man would dare to be guilty of any indecorum towards a lady in the presence of her husband, father, or brother. And as they leave the church together, there is no opportunity for wives and daughters to be insulted, by persons crowding around the doors under the pretext of waiting for their scattered companions! We never witness any confusion or disorder in our houses of worship, and never heard of any insult being offered to any one in leaving them; and we ascribe the quietude and order of our congregations in a great measure to our pew system. We need no *watchers* to prevent disorder in our churches—nor do we ever require the *police* to interfere for the purpose of preventing or suppressing a riot! The ladies of our congregations are not required to wait until they are discovered by their protectors after the service, or made to pass from the house of God through a long double file of men, to be gazed at by the impudent, or elbowed, pulled, and otherwise insulted by the vicious! I have no doubt but that the pious members of Methodist churches and all orderly persons connected with their societies, discountenance, and endeavour, as far as possible, to prevent the monstrous evils to which I have alluded: but they are not able wholly to prevent them, nor will they ever be, as long as they adhere to their “free seats,” or to the separation of families in their meeting houses.

The truth is, that many of the *Methodist* people themselves are *painfully* convinced of the evils of “free seats,” and are fully satisfied of the superior advantages of the pew system. Indeed it is said that in many of the northern and eastern states they have long had pewed churches; and but recently such a church was erected by Methodists in the city of Philadelphia. And if we may rely upon public rumour, there are some in this city who have also determined upon

erecting a pewed church! I think it not unlikely that the pew system would be generally adopted among them, if they could collect the rent weekly, instead of quarterly, or semi-annually, and thus realize as much money as they at present do from their weekly class meetings. True, many of them now magnify their “free seats,” and inveigh against rented pews. But the time was when many of them used to thank God that *their* preachers were not “made ministers”—“college bred ministers,” &c., and yet now they have their colleges and seminaries—such as they are—and appear by no means ashamed of those among their clergy who have been “educated for their clerical profession!” And why may we not anticipate the general introduction of the pew system among them? especially if, in connection with their weekly classes, they can make it equally profitable? And if the pew system should be generally adopted by them, why not the permanent settlement of pastors? We shall see. Hear what some *Methodists* can say in *favour* of the pew system, when they have resolved actually to adopt it.—I quote from the printed “Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Trinity Church of Philadelphia,” pp. 7 and 8:—

“INTRODUCTION. The project of erecting a Methodist Episcopal Church, to be furnished with pews, has long been entertained by a number of the members of the church in this city. No decided movement calculated to promote the measure was made, however, until early in the present year,” (1841,) “when, after a free interchange of sentiment on the subject, it was agreed that a meeting of persons friendly to the object should be held, for joint conference and advice in the matter. This meeting convened on the evening of Tuesday, February 2d, and was opened with prayer by the Rev. *John Kennaday*. The Rev. *James Smith*, presiding

elder, acted as chairman, and *John Wetherill, jr.*, as secretary.

“The strong feeling in favour of a pewed church manifested at this meeting, and the high degree of encouragement offered, led to the adoption of immediate measures for carrying out the plan. Committees were appointed to enter into preliminary arrangements and inquire as to the prospect of obtaining subscribers to the stock, and in the course of a very few days, so liberal was the support offered, and so gratifying the approval expressed by numbers who were spoken to on the subject, that the immediate erection of a church with pews was deemed to be fully authorized, and that too, under circumstances of the most auspicious character.

“The friends of this measure, which, though new in Philadelphia, has long been satisfactorily tested in the northern and eastern conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as by the Wesleyan Methodists of England, believe that, by the erection of a pewed church, the following advantages will, under the blessing of Providence, be enjoyed and secured, viz.:

“1. Parents will be enabled to be seated with their families and friends, during divine worship, and thus have the immediate charge of their children; *a measure eminently calculated to promote order and good behaviour.*

“2. The *inconvenience* of crowded seats, often *painful* to persons in delicate health, and the difficulty of procuring a place, will be avoided, and the satisfaction enjoyed of having, as a matter of right, a particular seat in the church, which may be occupied under all circumstances without infringing on the comforts of others.

“3. The cause of true religion, under God’s favour, will be promoted, in extending the tidings of the gospel of

Christ to a class of hearers who are averse to visiting Methodist churches, simply because they cannot secure a seat of *their own*—many such having already agreed to occupy pews in Trinity Church.”

On page 10, there is the following note:—“Trinity Church is regularly attached to the Philadelphia Conference, and the society is, in all respects, governed by the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this country. The Rev. *John Kennaday* was appointed pastor by the last Conference.”

Now, what more need be said in favour of pewed churches, than what has been said, in print, by the members of the “Methodist Episcopal Trinity” (pewed) “Church of Philadelphia?” Certainly, the first two reasons which they have assigned, if there were no others, are quite sufficient: and I would advise Presbyterians, when they hear the advocates of “free seats” inveighing against rented pews, to quote them the language of their Methodist brethren of Philadelphia—presuming that *their* testimony, even without an “endorser,” will be “satisfactory!”

I will merely add, while on this topic, that no stranger should be prevented from entering a pewed church from fear of being considered an intruder. I am aware that great efforts are sometimes made to *prejudice* persons against such churches, on the ground that, as they are not pew-holders, they would not be welcome! Such misrepresentations are slanderous. Let any stranger enter one of our pewed churches, and he will find no gentleman—much less a Christian—unwilling to accommodate him in his pew. Indeed, it is common for our Boards of Trustees, to appoint committees, who, in rotation, take their stations at the doors of the church, for the express purpose of furnishing strang-

ers with eligible seats:—such, certainly, is the practice in the Third Presbyterian Church in this city. And if any *family* desire habitually to worship with us, and yet are unable to pay the rent of a pew, they will always be able to find vacant seats; or, upon application to the proper officers, they will have particular pews assigned for their *gratuitous* accommodation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PRACTICAL METHODISM—ITS MORAL MACHINERY—RELIGIOUS CHARACTER AND FRUITS.

Importance of distinguishing between mere Excitements and true Revivals of Religion.—The illiterate character of Methodist preaching generally.—Their habitual and shameful misrepresentation of other Christian churches—their disparagement of the Christian character and piety of other denominations.—*Methods* employed by Methodists in collecting members into their church, and in proselyting from other denominations—boasting of numbers—camp-meetings—protracted services—enrollment of names—prejudicing serious and inquiring individuals against other denominations—tampering with the members of other churches with a view to proselyte them to their sect—special object of their camp-meetings and frequent Excitements to proselyte from other churches.—The alleged efficiency of Methodist preachers compared with the fruits of Presbyterian ministers.—*Effects* of Methodism—in lowering the standard of qualification for the Gospel ministry—the little value they place upon Christian instruction—the perverted taste which Methodism creates for hearing the word of God—the improper notions it begets in regard to divine truth—its unhappy effects upon the world.—Illustrations of the amazing credulity and gross fanaticism of Methodism.

BEFORE I proceed to exhibit the “moral machinery,” &c. of Methodism, the reader will indulge me with one or two preliminary remarks.

It is a very common device of the advocates of certain “revival measures,” as they are called, to represent all who oppose *them*, as being opposed to revivals of religion—to denounce those who write and speak against fanaticism, as writing and speaking against spiritual and vital godliness—and to represent all opposition to the aiders and abettors of

such enthusiasm, as opposition to God himself!! But we are not, by the grace of God, to be deterred from our duty by such denunciations. We have abundant evidence, that the “revivals” produced by such machinery, are nothing but *spurious excitements*; and that their effects are most disastrous to the permanent interests of true religion. And just in proportion as we value *genuine revivals*, we feel it to be incumbent on us, to guard them, as far as possible, against corruption and abuse. *Pure* revivals are too important to the prosperity of Zion, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, to be allowed silently to degenerate into mere fanatical commotions, evanescent in their duration, it is true, but in their effects, permanently and widely injurious both to the church and the world. We are, God knoweth, the earnest advocates of scriptural revivals of religion—we sincerely labour and pray for their promotion—we rejoice whenever we hear of them from any part of Christendom—and it has been graciously vouchsafed to the writer, more than once, to thank God for their existence and blessed results under his own ministrations of the gospel: and, *therefore*, it is, that we so earnestly oppose all counterfeits, and feel it to be our duty to expose the machinery by which they are produced.

An additional reason for exposing these things is, because the members of that denomination frequently appeal to such commotions, as evidences of the superior usefulness and piety of their church—and represent those churches, in which such excitements do not exist, as being destitute of “the life and power of godliness.” It is true that, with those who have been properly instructed—who are able to discriminate between true and false religion—and who have had an opportunity of judging between the permanent results of a genuine and spurious revival, such representations, or rather misrepresentations, can have but little effect. But it is far

otherwise with multitudes who have but little spiritual discernment and still less Christian experience. Such are often deceived by present specious appearances, and sometimes actually ensnared before they are made conscious of the awful delusion! It is due therefore to our own vindication, as well as to the interests of immortal souls, to exhibit these matters in their true light.

It has been my design throughout this work, not merely to present my own individual opinions and impressions, but also to exhibit the *proof* of the facts in the case, either from official and authentic documents, or the testimony of intelligent, pious and unimpeachable witnesses. In accordance with this, I shall now present the testimony of one, who, it will be seen, has the very best of “endorsers”—and whose statements have been corroborated by many other individuals. The articles entitled “PRACTICAL METHODISM,” from which I shall quote, were originally published in the Philadelphia “Christian Advocate,” edited by the *Rev. Ashbel Green*, D. D. L. L. D.—for many years the respected Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, in the city of Philadelphia, and subsequently the venerated President of the College of New Jersey at Princeton. The learned, pious, and patriarchal editor, thus introduces the writer to his readers:—

“EDITORIAL REMARKS.—We have seen, for a considerable time past—and we have seen it with sincere and deep regret—that we could not redeem our pledge to defend, to the extent of our ability, the Presbyterian Church against unjust attacks, nor sustain, as we understand it, the character of a *Christian Advocate*, without making some unpleasant strictures on our Methodist brethren. They have openly and frequently, from the press and the pulpit, indulged in bitter invectives, against the doctrines, the ministers, and the order of the Presbyterian Church. We have hitherto borne



this without any reply; and it is not our intention now, to do more than permit our correspondent to exhibit to the readers of our miscellany, some of the bad features of what he calls *practical Methodism*. We think that such things as he has hitherto noticed are, to say the least, not 'lovely and of good report,' and that as such they ought to be publicly exposed; and we believe that in doing this we render a service to genuine Christianity, and do all that is necessary at present to the defence of the church to which we belong—

'Vice is a monster of such odious mien,  
As to be hated needs but to be seen.'

"Our correspondent professes to speak of what he has personally known; *and we know him too well to doubt the truth of his statements*. We understand him to say, that although the practices which he condemns *are general* in the Methodist communion; yet that there are individuals (we would hope a goodly number) who neither approve of nor indulge in them." — *Ch. Ad. vol. VIII. p. 474.*

At the conclusion of the series, the venerable editor advertises his readers as follows:—

"A very respectable and truly esteemed member of the Methodist communion, called on the editor, and at his request stated what occurred at the time, as subjects of complaint, in the papers entitled 'Practical Methodism.' The statements of the complainant were written down in his presence, and read to him by the editor, that their correctness might be unquestionable; and a promise was made, that, if conviction of error should ensue, the errors should be promptly acknowledged, and publicly corrected.

"The items of complaint, were, as soon as practicable, transmitted to the author of the papers in question, and he was asked to say what he could in his own vindication. In the mean time, the editor carefully inquired of all who he supposed could give information relative to the points com-

plained of; and he had opportunities to do so, from individuals of candour, reputation and intelligence, from many parts of the country, both far distant and near at hand. He also received letters, in which voluntary, unsolicited observations were made on the papers entitled 'Practical Methodism,' so far as they had then appeared in the Advocate; and the whole had appeared, except the one" [the last] "to which these remarks are subjoined. The result has been, a more complete and satisfactory conviction in the mind of the editor, than he feared the subject would admit of, that *nothing has appeared in his pages that cannot be strictly verified.* The reports, without one exception, have been, that the statements are unequivocally true; and some have gone farther in their allegations than the writer of 'Practical Methodism.' \*\*\*\*

"He" (the writer) "replies in detail to all the other items of complaint which were transmitted to him; but it is not necessary to insert his particular replies, since in relation to *all* he has written, he affirms—'No fact has been stated, which I cannot substantiate. The facts either passed under my own observation, or were narrated to me by creditable and pious individuals. If facts are even *highly coloured*, it is a *fact* of which I am not conscious. So far from doubting a single statement made, I have not heard an individual say a word respecting them, who did not say that they were similar to what he was called to witness continually.' This, it will be perceived, is in exact accordance with the reports which, as we have stated, have been made to us from various quarters. *We are therefore perfectly satisfied, that we have made no representations that need to be corrected, qualified, or explained, beyond what is now before the reader.*"—*Ib.*, vol. IX., pp. 249—50.

With the foregoing remarks of Dr. Green before him, the reader will be prepared to appreciate the following extracts from the articles referred to:—

1. *The illiterate character of Methodist preaching.*—"One

of the first characteristics of their preaching is, that it communicates little or no instruction. This is owing to two causes; the illiteracy of their preachers, and the little value they place upon evangelical truth, as a means of conversion and sanctification. However, in theory, some of this denomination may value learning and biblical truth, I am persuaded that practical Methodism, speaking of it at large, disregards both. And the fact that a man has passed through a preparatory course of instruction for the ministry, is, in many parts of the country, a strong argument against him. And that preacher who addresses himself to the understanding, and who, through the understanding only, attempts to call up the affections, is usually unpopular, and considered jejune. With the multitude of the denomination, the best possible recommendations, for the gospel ministry, are strong lungs, excitable feelings, a ready flow of words, and a great show of zeal.

“To be satisfied of the truth here stated, nothing more is necessary than to attend their places of worship a few times. It will immediately appear that there is an evident attempt to excite the feelings, and to arrest attention; but you will rarely hear the text explained, its connexion given, its difficulties removed, or the truth it inculcates clearly stated. And if ever these are attempted, so great a lack of ability will usually be discovered, as to induce you from the heart, to wish that the preacher had tarried at Jericho a little longer. I recollect, not long since, hearing a circuit preacher \* preach from the text, ‘Keep thy heart with all dilligence,

\* The writer here used the common expression, “circuit *rider*”—but as it appears this phrase was complained of, in order to avoid unnecessary offence, I have taken the liberty (notwithstanding the satisfactory explanation which was given for its use) of substituting the word “preacher”—and will do the same in the other instances in which the obnoxious *sobriquet* is employed.

for out of it are the issues of life.’ The following was his exegesis of the passage. ‘Here,’ said he, ‘the heart is compared to a vessel, kept together with hoops. If the hoops become loose, or the staves shrink, the water in the vessel will *issue* out. So it is with the heart. Unless it is kept with dilligence, the life will issue out of it, and then you will be destitute of life.’ The few hearers present thought this explanation wondrous clear. And this want of instruction from the pulpit, is clearly discoverable among the people. They become attached to a few cant phrases, and to a few peculiar doctrines; but the accession which they make to their stock of Bible knowledge is exceedingly limited. Thus the truth of the adage is clearly exemplified—‘*like priest, like people.*’ I venture to say that there is no class of protestant Christians so generally ignorant of the Bible, or of the connexion and bearing of its solemn and eternal truths, as those of this denomination.”—*Ch. Ad.*, vol. VIII., pp. 471 and 2.

The above allegations are *general*, and of course admit of honourable exceptions—as the writer has acknowledged. It should be recollected also, that their best qualified ministers are usually appointed to *city stations* or the *larger towns*—and in these, doubtless, their people are better instructed. But taking the country at large, or considering the qualifications of their clergy as a body, the foregoing statements are literally and mournfully true. And this is the only fair method of forming a just judgment.—No one would be justified in pronouncing the ministry of a church illiterate, because there are a few individuals among them comparatively ignorant—and that there are such, among the clergy of every denomination, is freely admitted. So neither may we consider the Methodist clergy, as a body, properly educated and duly qualified for their profession, because there are in-

dividuals among them who have been liberally educated. It is true—and I mention it to their honour—that, of late years, they appear to be more friendly to an educated ministry; but still, it is notorious, that the greater part of them are comparatively ignorant men; nor have they, as yet, as far as I know, so altered their rules, as to *require*, ordinarily, a liberal course of learning on the part of their candidates for the sacred office.

2. *Their habitual and shameful misrepresentation of other Christian churches.*—“Another characteristic of their preaching is, abuse of other denominations of Christians. The word abuse is, we know, sometimes applied to a candid examination of the opinions of those who differ from us in sentiment. But when the word is so used, it is itself *abused*. When I say that the Methodists in their preaching abuse other denominations, I employ the word in its legitimate sense. I mean to say that, for sectarian purposes, they pervert and caricature the opinions and belief of their brethren. And this is a sin, as far as I know, co-extensive with Methodism.—If there are individual exceptions, I have not met with them;—nor is it an occasional sin, nor a sin of infirmity; it is habitual, and a sin in whose commission they delight. And so uniform has been this abuse, whenever I have heard them preach, that I have frequently thought a sermon was not considered by them complete without it. And then such abuse! If it was wit, or argument—if it displayed genius, or erudition, it could better be borne. But such torturing of sentiment—such absurd conclusions as they press home upon their opponents—such ignorance as they exhibit respecting the opinions they combat—such violence done to all reason and logic as they manifest, have been to me truly astonishing. Above all things else, the doctrines of grace are their peculiar abhorrence. The divine decrees they re-

present as excluding all agency on the part of man—perseverance, according to them, lulls into carnal security; and so with all the rest. And not only do they charge these false and denied conclusions upon Calvinistic preachers, but they put them into our very creed, and proclaim to the world that we receive them with a cordial credence.

“From doctrines they pass on to a *hireling ministry*. This is with them a very fruitful source of declamation. They distort it, magnify it, dwell upon it, until, in the minds of the ignorant, they give it some importance; and call their brethren who have stated salaries in the ministry, by the charitable names of *wolves, hirelings, fleece-seekers*. Then they revert to themselves, and exhibit themselves as the only men who have freely received, and who freely give. Nor is all this without its effect. And this I have known them to do, not unfrequently, when their own salaries for preaching were much greater than those of the parties against whom they were declaiming; and when, as respects the declaimers themselves, it might truly be said, their preaching was not worth a farthing. Nor is this abusive warfare confined to one denomination—it is indiscriminate. It is waged with the Baptist, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian;—none of any Shibboleth escape but those of Wesley.

“And then the occasion on which this abuse is frequently commenced, greatly aggravates the evil. We should conclude that our Methodist brethren, who make a high claim to piety, and a desire to promote the salvation of souls, never would introduce controverted subjects, so as to turn the attention of their hearers from the *one thing needful* to disputative doctrines. But it is far otherwise. Wherever, under the labours of other ministers, God is pouring out of his blessed Spirit, they are sure to be there. If harmony prevails, the great object is to disturb it. If there are no Meth-

odists there, the chief aim is to make some. They commence by preaching on doctrines, and reviling the prevailing denomination, whatever it may be. If a word is said in opposition to their measures, they cry out *persecution, persecution*; and on this terrific word they ring the changes until, if they can effect it, a division takes place, a party is formed, and they gain a footing. And this course they pursue, until, too often, the candle of the Lord is extinguished, the windows of heaven are closed, and the Spirit of grace withdraws his saving and converting influence. We have known of more than one revival stayed in its progress, by just such a course of conduct as this. It would seem in such instances, as if their great object in the ministry was, to make converts to Methodism; and that to make consistent and intelligent Christians, was an object of only secondary importance.”—*Ib.*, vol. VIII., pp. 473 and 4.

Let me here give a few specimens, from their oracle, *Wesley*, of the candid, pious, and charitable language which many of them habitually employ, when speaking of the doctrine of decrees; held by a large part of Protestant Christendom, and particularly by the Presbyterian Church.—I quote from a sermon by Mr. Wesley, entitled “Free Grace,” contained in the 1st vol. of his Works, New York edition, 1835:—

“But is it,” (the grace or love of God) “free FOR ALL, as well as IN ALL? To this some have answered,”—[who?—the answer is included within the usual marks of quotation, but without reference to any author!—were the commas placed there to make his readers believe that he is quoting the express language of Calvinists?—how very candid and pious!!]—“To this some have answered, ‘No: it is free only for those whom God hath ordained to life; and they are but a little flock. The greater part of mankind God hath ordained to death; and it is not free for them. *Them God hateth*;

and *therefore*, before they were born, decreed they should die eternally. And this he *absolutely* decreed; because so was his good pleasure; because it was his sovereign will. Accordingly *they are born for this*, to be destroyed body and soul in hell. And they grow up under the irrevocable curse of God, *without any possibility* of redemption; for what grace God gives, *he gives only for this, to increase*, not prevent, *their damnation.*'”

Now observe—he does not say that such are, in his judgment, the logical *inferences* from the doctrines of Calvinists—(that would be odious enough!)—but that “some have answered” thus—in other words, such is their own horrible and impious belief!!—and that his readers may be persuaded to think so, the answer is placed within inverted commas, as though the words were quoted *verbatim*! And I have little doubt but that many of his readers, and many of his clerical followers too, have supposed that this was a literal extract from the veritable writings of some horrible Calvinist!! and have quoted it, from Maine to Georgia, as demonstrative proof, that Presbyterians actually hold the sentiments which they have habitually charged upon them!!! But what must we think of such conduct in Mr. *Wesley*?—a Presbyterian of the Church of England, and “sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford!”—Did not *he* know better?—I am free to say that, such instances of gross and slanderous misrepresentation and defamation go very far to impair my confidence in his general sincerity and piety.

Again Mr. Wesley says,—“It is a doctrine full of blasphemy;”—“that it represents our blessed Lord Jesus Christ as a hypocrite, a deceiver of the people, a man void of common sincerity;”—“as mocking his helpless creatures;”—“as weeping crocodile’s tears over the prey which himself had doomed to destruction.”—“It represents,” says he,



“the most holy God as worse than the devil, as both more false, more cruel, and more unjust.”!!!

And, to give only one more specimen;—in view of the representation which he had just given of the doctrine,—a representation which no intelligent and pious Calvinist can read without horror,—he breaks out in this strain—“One might say to our adversary, the devil, ‘thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls is as needless and useless as our preaching. Hearest thou not, that *God hath taken thy work out of thy hands*; and that he doeth it much more effectually? Thou, with all thy principalities and powers, canst only so assault that we may resist thee; but He can irresistibly destroy both body and soul in hell! Thou canst only *entice*; but his unchangeable decree, to leave thousands of souls in death, *compels* them to continue in sin, till they drop into everlasting burnings. Thou *temptest*; He *forceth* us to be damned: for we cannot resist His will. Thou fool, why goest thou about any longer, seeking whom thou mayest devour? Hearest thou not that *God* is the devouring lion, the destroyer of souls, the murderer of men? Moloch caused only children to pass through the fire; and that fire was soon quenched; or the corruptible body being consumed, its torment was at an end: but *God*, *thou art told*, by his eternal decree, fixed before they had done good or evil, causes not only *children of a span long*, but the parents also, to pass through the fire of hell, the ‘fire which never shall be quenched:’ and the body which is cast thereunto, being now incorruptible and immortal, will be ever consuming and never consumed, but ‘the smoke of their torment,’ *because it is God’s good pleasure*, ‘ascendeth up for ever and ever.’”!!!

Such, gentle reader, are a few specimens of the temperate, pious, and candid manner, in which the Rev. John Wes-

ley and his followers exhibit “the doctrines of grace,” as held by thousands of accredited ministers of the gospel, and hundreds of thousands of acknowledged Christians!! It is not my present purpose to vindicate those precious doctrines from these blasphemous caricatures and shameful misrepresentations: this I have done in the lectures recently published and previously referred to, entitled “A Brief Exposition and Vindication of the Divine Decrees, as taught in the Assembly’s Larger Catechism.” My object in citing the foregoing passages was, merely to show *the manner and spirit* in which the Methodists misrepresent and vilify them. And this, be it remembered, they have persisted in doing, notwithstanding their accusations have been a thousand times repelled, and their false inferences denied and refuted! No doubt but they are still employed in the candid, charitable and righteous work of charging upon us, as a part of our creed, sentiments which we have not only again and again disclaimed, but in regard to which, we have, in the most public, formal and solemn manner, expressed our utmost detestation and abhorrence.—Nor will they cease to urge inferences the most impious and horrible, from premises assumed by themselves and falsely attributed to us, with as much confidence and vehemence as if they had never been denied or refuted by us! And all this, we are well aware, is not without its popular effect. Thousands of uninformed people are thus persuaded, that Presbyterians do verily believe that God is more false, more cruel, and more unjust than the devil!!—that the non-elect are tempted and compelled to sin by the Almighty!!—and that they are unconditionally and unavoidably damned eternally, not on account of their voluntary and criminal rejection of the gospel, but solely by the good pleasure or sovereign will of their arbitrary and malignant Creator!!!—Yea, that children a span

long are in hell, suffering the torments of unquenchable fire!!!! No marvel that multitudes are so prejudiced against Calvinistic ministers that they will not hear them preach,—or read, with any thing like candour, what they have to say in their own defence. And yet, to guard against the possibility, that some might hear or read for themselves, and so be convinced of the shameful imposition which had been practised upon them, they issued an official tract, from their denominational press in New York, entitled “**DUPPLICITY EXPOSED!**” in which they gravely assure their readers that, although we disclaimed the sentiments which they had imputed to us, it was all duplicity, and was, therefore, entitled to no credit!!! True, it appears that public opinion would not tolerate such an official, wholesale, and scandalous libel upon Christian ministers and churches, and they have been compelled to withdraw it from public circulation. But the preparation and publication of such a tract, shows to what lengths they have actually gone in the unhallowed work of defamation. And I fear that, although that particular tract is no longer officially circulated, yet the slanderous matter it contained, is still disseminated, in other ways, by many of their bigoted preachers and multitudes of their illiberal and uncharitable members.—The Lord deliver us from the use of such carnal weapons!—They *may* multiply proselytes to Arminian Methodism, but it is at an awful expense, truly! And what other motive, than that of sheer sectarian selfishness, could induce men thus to impair the influence and usefulness of so many accredited ministers of the gospel?—Surely, if they were really disinterested, and more desirous of the conversion of souls to Christ, than the making of proselytes to Methodism, they would sincerely rejoice to learn, that their brethren disclaim sentiments, which *they* profess to hold in such abhorrence; and would cordially aid

in removing the prejudice, which themselves had unjustly created, against their fellow labourers in the kingdom of our common Lord and Saviour.

As a set-off to the foregoing passages from the sermon of Mr. Wesley, let us show what this same Mr. John Wesley could say concerning these Calvinistic doctrines—to serve a purpose—that is, when he desired to conciliate and effect a union between himself and some of those who held them. To counteract the legitimate *effect* of this glaring inconsistency, the editor of his works remarks, in a note, that these “extreme concessions” were made “in the early part of his ministry”—for peace-sake—and his “strong desire to unite with Mr. Whitefield.” To this, I reply—Mr. Wesley was born in 1703, and ordained in 1725, and that what follows was written by him in 1743; so that he was, at the time he wrote, *only* forty years of age! and in the eighteenth or nineteenth year of his ministry!—And as to the object assigned, how could that justify him in making such concessions, if he really believed the doctrines to be as unscriptural and horrible as he at other times and on other occasions represented them to be?—Was it the *failure* to effect a union with those impious Calvinists, which so embittered his spirit against their doctrines, and which caused him subsequently to write against them, more like a vulgar and malignant blasphemer, than a Christian scholar and divine? But let us hear him on this particular occasion, which constituted so memorable an exception to his usual manner. His words are:

“Having found, for some time, a strong desire to unite with Mr. Whitefield as far as possible, to cut off needless dispute, I wrote down my sentiments, as plain as I could, in the following terms:—

“There are three points in debate: 1. Unconditional election. 2. Irresistible grace. 3. Final perseverance.

“With regard to the first, unconditional election, I believe, that God, before the foundation of the world, did unconditionally elect certain persons to do certain works, as Paul to preach the gospel: that he has unconditionally elected some nations to receive peculiar privileges, the Jewish nation in particular: that he has unconditionally elected some nations to hear the gospel, as England and Scotland now, and many others in past ages: that he has unconditionally elected some persons to many peculiar advantages, both with regard to temporal and spiritual things: *and I do not deny*, (though I cannot prove it is so,) *that he has unconditionally elected some persons to eternal glory*. But I cannot believe, that all those who are not thus elected to glory, *must* perish everlastingly:” [Who does?—certainly Presbyterians do not:] “or, that there is one soul on earth, who has not ever had a possibility of escaping eternal damnation.

“With regard to the second, irresistible grace, I believe, *that the grace which brings faith, and thereby salvation into the soul, is irresistible at that moment*: That most believers may remember some time when God *did* irresistibly convince them of sin: That most believers *do*, at some other times, find God irresistibly acting upon their souls: Yet, I believe that the grace of God, both *before* and *after* those moments, may be, and hath been, resisted: and that, in general, it does not act irresistibly; but we may comply therewith, or may not: and *I do not deny, that, in some souls, the grace of God is so far irresistible, that they cannot but believe, and be finally saved*. But I cannot believe, that all those must be damned, in whom it does not thus irresistibly work: or, that there is one soul on earth, who has not, and never had, any other grace, than such as does, in fact, increase his damnation, and was *designed* of God so to do.”

[Who does?—Did Mr. Whitefield?—Do Presbyterians?—Certainly not.]

“With regard to the third, final perseverance, I incline to believe, *that there is a state attainable in this life, from which a man CANNOT finally fall.*” [This is *too strong for us!*—We believe that God’s grace will *prevent* his people from falling, so that they *will not*—not that they *cannot* fall:] “and *that he has attained this, who can say, ‘old things are passed away; all things’ in me ‘are become new.’*”—*Wesley’s Works, vol. III., p. 289.*

I need not add any thing to what the writer of “Practical Methodism” has said, respecting the invidious comparisons which Methodist preachers are in the habit of making between their “ministerial support” and that of others, as I have abundantly exposed the injustice of such comparisons in a preceding chapter. I will therefore proceed to extract what he says on the subject following, viz:

3. *Their disparagement of the Christian character and piety of other denominations.*—“The time was, when our Methodist brethren made a great show of charity—it was, when they were far less numerous than they are at present; and when they were compelled to conceal their real feelings, in order to make any progress. And this show of charity, under certain circumstances, is not unfrequently made even now. When they enter a place where any other sect is dominant and popular, they are very conciliating in public; they preach only on the acknowledged doctrines; they talk much about charity, and brotherly love; and yet, too often, are at this very time, profuse of their invective in private. Indeed it is not going beyond the truth to say, that there are not a few of them who can assume almost any hue, to suit circumstances.

“ They appear to believe that all but themselves are very worldly minded. In the avowal of this opinion they make no hesitation whatever. They point to their broad hats, and plain bonnets, and straight coats, as evidences of their crucifixion to the world, and of their want of conformity to its fashions and vanities; and they refer to the more becoming, though not more expensive dress of others, as a convincing testimony that their hearts are filled with vanity. So much do they permit their minds to dwell upon these trifling matters, that they suppose their friends, who attach themselves to other churches, are and must be actuated only by worldly motives. They also think and proclaim, that the ministers of other denominations make their sacred vocation merely a profession; and enter it because they like it better than law or medicine, and have no other object than to make a living. And so much do their ‘itinerants’ dwell upon these subjects, that the common people among them are fully persuaded, that there is nothing like true devotion, beyond the circle which encloses Methodism! On this subject I speak not theoretically. I testify what I do know. When I was surrounded by Methodism, and was inquiring to what body I should attach myself, my ears were continually filled with invectives against other denominations. I was told of the formality of Episcopalians, the want of piety among Presbyterians—the worldly mindedness of their ministers, how they frequented balls, and parties, and theatres; and how many of them were given to intoxication!!! Not supposing that a spirit of proselytism ever could lead to the utterance of such untruths, I believed all that was told me, until I learned from experience that they violated the ninth commandment.

“ Again, they suppose all but themselves very destitute of practical piety. They have imbibed the fallacious opinion,

that there is no piety where there is not a great excitement of animal feeling. Hence their meetings are conducted with great confusion, two or more praying at the same time; in prayer, the voice is raised to the highest note; during preaching, the house echoes with the cry of amen. Hence, too, they conclude, that the worship, where similar confusion does not exist, is a formal service; and that the denominations which oppose it, are all destitute of the power of godliness. This is the *datum* on which they arrive at their conclusion; on which they exclude all but themselves from the reigning power and influence of divine grace.

“Believing that genuine piety is found only among themselves, they seem as desirous to proselyte from other denominations, as to convert a sinner from the error of his ways. And when from a sister church an individual passes over to them, they consider it a matter of as much rejoicing as if a profligate had become pious. Can this be accounted for in any other way, than that they consider the denomination from which the proselyted individual comes, as destitute of all true religion? I think not. The same truth is evident from the manner in which they lament the conduct of a child, or a friend, who joins any other denomination of Christians. They mourn over it with bitter lamentation; and in appearance are as much affected by it, as if the child or friend had imbibed some damnable heresy. \*\*\*\*

“That this is their feeling is also obvious, from the way in which they talk about Methodism. With many, it is the synonyme of piety and godliness. According to their reckoning, where there is no Methodism, there is no religion. In the west and south, the prayer is frequently heard—‘Lord revive Methodism; may this wicked people be converted to Methodism; may Methodism have free course and be glorified.’ What but a disbelief of the total want of



piety among other denominations, connected with the most abject ignorance, can account for such absurd, I had almost said impious conduct.

“The feeling above described, is also obvious, from the manner in which they locate their preachers. The great object of every society, having in its power the location of evangelical ministers, should be to send the gospel to the really destitute. But this forms no rule of conduct for our Methodist conferences. Their object frequently is, not to find out destitute places and to supply them, but to find out where there is a probability that some of their vociferous and fluent declaimers can distract a supplied and quiet people, and make Methodists. I say not that this is their uniform object; for many of the younger brethren are sent into the woods, until they catch the pitch; but I assert it to be frequently their object. I have known itinerants to locate themselves in towns where there was not a single Methodist, and where there were large churches of other denominations well supplied. What possibly could have been their object, when thousands were famishing for the bread of life in their own vicinity? The only legitimate inference is, that they considered these places as destitute. At the distance of a few miles from my residence, is a very pleasant county town. In that town, there is a large Baptist and Presbyterian Church. In each of these churches, there are two sermons delivered every Lord’s day; and one or more lectures during the week. The town contains ONE member of the Methodist Church; and that member is an old lady, so infirm that she rarely can attend on preaching. And yet, in that town, for a year and upwards, one of their most polite and declamatory ministers has been preaching; whilst many parts of the county are as destitute as you can well imagine. This preacher has been using every effort to make

Methodists, and hitherto without success; when I last visited the place, the good old lady ‘stood alone.’ And this is only a specimen of their conduct throughout the country. To what feeling can we trace such conduct as its origin? Plainly and unequivocally, to a belief that other denominations are destitute of the life and power of true godliness.

“ I make not these statements by way of complaint against the Methodists, as if they had not the common privilege of thinking as they see fit about their brethren; but I do make them for the purpose of placing their true character before the public.—They have more credit for kindness of feeling towards others than belongs to them. Nay, we venture to assert there is not a Christian denomination, the” [Roman] “ Catholics only excepted, that regard those who differ from them with less complacency. This opinion an intimate acquaintance with them, of more than twelve years, has constrained me to adopt. \*\*\*\*

“ And is it so then, that the Methodists, as a body, are more pious than other denominations? It is true *they* say and think so; but does *their* testimony establish the fact? We admit that they make a greater show of piety; that they preach and pray more boisterously; that some of them wear long faces and plain garments. . . But these things may all be assumed, for the sake of impression. Long and public prayers, unwashed faces, and broad phylacteries, were no sure indications of piety among the Scribes and Pharisees.—How then can they be so among the Methodists? And if the factitious methods by which they have obtained, and retain, a character for piety, were laid aside, we believe their piety would be considered generally, as it now is by the enlightened and thinking, as little deserving of confidence, to say the least, as that of many other protestant people.

“Piety consists not in any form of dress, in any show of feeling, nor in the use of any cant language. It consists in a firm belief, and in right conceptions, of the being, perfections and providence of God; with suitable affections to him, trust in the Redeemer, and a constant obedience to his holy will. Was it my object to depress Methodism, I could show very plainly, that their piety falls farther short of this definition, than that of many of their sister churches.”—*Ch. Ad., vol. VIII., pp. 517—520.*

In this city, as I have abundant evidence to know, nothing is more common than for many Methodists to boast of the superior piety of their own church, and at the same time to disparage that of other denominations. Many of them talk as if there were no real religion in the world, except among themselves, and affect to deplore the want of vital godliness in other ministers and churches! In this spirit they not unfrequently speak of others, as having “only the form of religion”—and of themselves, (humble souls!) as having its vitality and “power!” And they talk much of “the life” of their meetings, and of “the coldness and deadness” of the religious services of others. I have no doubt but that, with many, the selfish motive in all this is, *to make proselytes* from other churches in order to swell the number of their own sect. But with others, who are more sincere, it arises from false notions of the nature of true religion, and the very small degree of real piety which they themselves possess.

If religion consisted in wearing a broad brimmed hat, a plain bonnet, or a straight coat:—*If* it consisted in assuming a sanctimonious countenance and air—in using certain cant expressions—in singing and praying vociferously, as if the Almighty were deaf:—*If* it consisted in shouting, and

clapping, and dancing—in crying “amen!” or shouting “glory!” “hallelujah!”—*If* it consisted in swooning, or laughing hysterically—in dreams, and visions, and fanatical impressions and impulses:—*If* the religion of the God of decency and order, consisted in Phariseeism, fanaticism, confusion and uproar,—then, I grant, it might be easy to prove, that there is not only *more* of “the power of godliness” in the Methodist, than in other churches, *but very little* of it, comparatively, among the other sects—except, perhaps, the *Shakers*, who, notwithstanding their denial of the Deity of Christ, &c., can shout, and shake, and dance with prodigious noise, “power,” and agility!! But is this the religion of the Bible! Are practices such as these, infallible evidences of pre-eminent holiness? Are they indicative of any, of the least degree of piety? Is it not an undeniable fact, that multitudes who glory in them, give very little, if any evidence of real religion? Yea, is it not notorious, that some who shout the loudest, prove, by their daily walk and conversation, that they are no better than their ancient prototypes—the Scribes and Pharisees—so graphically described and severely rebuked by our Lord and Saviour. (See Matt., 23d chap.) However great may be their *self-complacency*, I can assure them that the *pretensions* of many of them to superior piety, are pretty well understood by the intelligent and observing—and particularly by many who have acquired some *experience* in their commercial dealings with such saints! And if they have any doubts concerning their general reputation, let them go upon “’change,” or enter the counting-houses of any of our intelligent merchants, and try how far their straight coats, long faces, and cant expressions will procure them credit!—Or, if they allege that mere worldlings are no proper judges of “the life and power of Methodism,” let them test the value of their loud amens,

&c., among "the knowing ones" of their own "brethren," and see how far *they* will trust them, without other security than that of their Methodistical profession!! I do not indeed, suppose that *all* who indulge in the enthusiastic and fanatical practices adverted to, are hypocritical or irreligious—many of them, no doubt, are truly sincere and strictly pious, according to their views of truth and duty. What I affirm is, that such practices are no indications of piety at all—much less of eminent holiness; because they may, and actually do often exist in connection with conduct which is utterly irreconcilable with genuine piety. It is with pleasure, I acknowledge also, that many of the more intelligent and pious among the Methodists, do not themselves approve of many of the things to which I have alluded. And were it not for the *use*, which many of that sect habitually make of these matters, I should gladly have omitted all reference to them. But when they are held up by multitudes for the double purpose of glorifying their own church, and of disparaging the religious character of other denominations:—when it is confidently asserted, that they are proofs of the life and power of religion among the Methodists, and their absence in other churches, infallible evidences of their formality and spiritual deadness:—when bigots and proselyting zealots are, on this ground, perpetually seeking to prejudice the members of other communions against their own denomination, and in favour of Methodism, it is our obvious duty to expose them.

I said that this disparagement of the piety of other churches, arises not only from false notions of the nature of true religion,—but also from the very small degree of piety which they themselves possess. Unless this were so, it would be morally impossible for them to characterize the instructive exposition of the word of God, as un-

edifying—the faithful exhibition and enforcement of divine truth, as dry and cold—the orderly, reverential and solemn prayer and praise of other churches, as formal, dead, &c. The truth is, these exercises are *too spiritual* for their carnal hearts, or comparatively dwarfish Christian experience. If they *had* the life of true religion within their souls, or had *more* of it than they have, they would be able to enter into these purely spiritual exercises with unspeakable interest and profit. No marvel, if they are wholly destitute of piety themselves, that nothing but the excitation of their natural sensibilities can make them conscious of any *feeling* in the house of God! No wonder, if they possess only a small degree of grace, that so many adventitious circumstances and appliances are indispensable to enable them to realize what they take to be the *power* of religion, or to elicit, in any good degree, their love, and gratitude and praise! But instead of disparaging the spiritual services of evangelical churches, let such endeavour to obtain the grace of God, or an increase of it, and then they will no longer contemn the ordinances of Jehovah, or characterize them as “cold formalities,” and “lifeless, unedifying ceremonies.”

4. In addition to what I have already quoted, the writer of “Practical Methodism” thus animadverts on **THE METHODS employed by our Methodist friends in collecting members into their church and in proselyting from other denominations.**

“There is,” says he, “scarcely a periodical published from Maine to Mississippi, under Methodist influence, which is not continually ringing changes on their 450,000 members.” [This number has been, since then, more than doubled, and their boastfulness has fully kept pace with its augmentation.] “They are never tired of proclaiming that they are the most numerous religious denomination in the

Union; and that they are more rapidly increasing than any other. And whilst I have no desire to break in upon round numbers, or to deny that they are increasing, it may be well to inquire, how so large a number has been collected, and by what means additions are making to them.

“ In the collecting of this large number, ‘ *camp-meetings*’ have been very efficient. The annual recurrence of the ‘ *camp-meeting season*,’ is the great harvest of Methodism. Then every sickle, no matter how dull, is expected to cut; then, from every field, no matter how unpromising, the reapers are expected to return, bearing their sheaves with them. Hundreds, of every class and description, flock to these meetings; some for one purpose, some for another. Day and night, they are harangued with all the strength of lungs and language, which bishops, circuit ministers, local preachers, class leaders, men and women, can command. There are but few imaginations so dull as not to be excited by the scenes here exhibited; and but few possessing feelings so ‘ *saturated with earth*,’ as not to be kindled up by the wild enthusiastic addresses which are made to them. The consequences naturally to be expected ensue. Much feeling is awakened—many are excited to tears—some are heard sobbing aloud—and some, under the pressure of a boisterous address, are almost frantic. Feeling begets feeling”— [just as naturally as laughter begets laughter—or gaping begets gaping.] “ The contagion spreads from circle to circle, and from camp to camp; and soon they are seen led in from all quarters, ‘ *to be prayed for*.’ The *names* of all who are in any way excited, are taken down by the ministers; and at the breaking up of the meeting, they are declared to have united with the Methodists. And a notice is written and sent to the ‘ *Advocate and Journal*,’ stating that at such a *camp-meeting*, so many were converted.

“It is true that the ‘Discipline’ requires an apprenticeship of six months, before they are admitted to *full* communion. But this is merely a theory of the ‘Discipline,’ which is but rarely practised. I have known them ‘converted’ one day, and partake of the communion the next. If there is a difference between communion and *full* communion, I know not what it is, or on what it is based.

“I could state a great many facts, respecting these camp-meeting converts. Whilst some, I freely admit, have honoured their profession and their Saviour, by a life of godliness, I have known many others return to the beggarly elements of the world. Four or five years since, in the town adjoining that in which I live, about one hundred were converted; or, to use Methodist language, ‘got religion,’ at a camp-meeting. At this time, scarcely one of them maintains a character for piety. A few of them yet ‘hold on,’ but the rest ‘have fallen from grace.’ It is presumed that these backsliders, with all the like circumstances throughout the country, go to swell up the round sum of 450,000 members. It is not a very uncommon circumstance, to hear an individual exclaim at these meetings that he has ‘got religion,’ and to see him, before he has returned home, get drunk. And a more common circumstance is, to see them ‘brought out with power,’ and to hear them pray, and exhort, and shout, and in the course of a few months afterwards, to hear them say that ‘religion is all a hoax.’ To these things I can testify. And yet it is presumed that every name placed on the ministerial books at the meetings, goes to make up the round sum of 450,000 members.

“The circuit preachers pursue a plan, well adapted to increase their numbers, without adding to the amount of piety. The fact is, that almost every circuit preacher is a Methodist recruiting officer. The moment any thing like seriousness



occurs in a place, the preacher furnishes himself with pencil and paper; and with the one in his pocket and the other in his hat, enters the meeting. After a noisy exhortation, he passes round the room, asking man, woman, and child, if they wish to be prayed for; and if so, to give in their names. Without any hesitation, they generally answer his question in the affirmative, and give their names. In the course of a few weeks, some of them become the hopeful subjects of grace. The preacher visits them, and they tell him the fact. 'Oh! yes,' he replies, 'I have been praying for you, and I knew the Lord would convert you.' If the brother or sister expresses a desire to join some other church, he makes no hesitation in saying, 'you have been converted by Methodist prayers, and now you should join the Methodist Church.' If this is not clear demonstration to the individual he is addressing, he produces the paper, on which the name was at first enrolled, as evidence that the conversion was the result of Methodism. If neither his art nor persuasion succeeds in making the individual a Methodist, he retires from the house, perhaps saying, 'thank God, I am not so proud, but that the Methodist religion is good enough for me.' And afterwards, in his intercourse with his brothers and sisters, he vents his insinuations against the piety of the individual. Throughout the country, these are things of constant occurrence.

"Not long since, in a village not far from my residence, there was a little excitement in a sabbath school. From the school it extended itself among several of the youth of the place. The circuit preacher heard of it, and was soon on the spot. After a most vociferous sermon, he requested the youth to remain behind. He took out his paper and enrolled all their names. He was uncommonly solicitous that they should join the 'class.' And this, too, when they were,

nearly to an individual, the children of parents attached to other denominations. His conduct so disgusted the better informed, as to induce them to forbid their children going to meeting; and it is believed was the means of stopping a work, which gave promise of a very interesting spiritual harvest.

“Another fact to illustrate what I call their recruiting spirit. Not many miles distant from the town in which I live, is a very pleasant village, in which there is but one Methodist professor. And from all accounts, although of age, he can neither read nor write; and although a Christian, he frequently needs the presence of a parson to drive away the witches. This village being supplied by a minister who was rather unpopular, the ‘itinerants’ thought it was a good time for them to make a descent. They gave notice of a ‘two days’ meeting,’ and came at the time appointed. Crowds came to hear and see them. At the close of their meeting, which was nearly occupied by drawing caricatures of Calvinism, and in abusing other denominations, one of their orators arose and made a speech, in substance as follows—‘We have come here, my friends, to do you good, and to preach the gospel to you in its simplicity and purity. If we can procure a good class here, we will continue to meet regular appointments; if not, we must go where we can.’ He then gave an invitation to any who desired to form themselves into a class, to come forward and give in their names. None appearing to move, he rose a second time, and addressing himself first to some professors of other churches, said, ‘will you join?’ They replying with a very significant shake of the head, he passed on to the others; and went round the room, putting the question to every individual, ‘will you join?’ And grievous to relate, not one of them consented, although under the excitement

of a 'two days' meeting.' And this Tertullus had to sit down, under the by no means desirable conviction, that his labours and hopes were all in vain. But the very course of conduct whose failure is narrated here, is that which in other places is doing execution, and has achieved wonders in swelling the list of members to the round sum of 450,000.

“Another method used by them for increasing their list, and which is considerably powerful, if we may judge of its strength by its effects, is that of *prejudicing serious and inquiring individuals against other denominations*. Perhaps no trait is more generally characteristic of Methodism than this. And the extent to which it is sometimes carried is truly astonishing. It is however in perfect keeping with their general character. Having imbibed the opinion, that of all sects, they are the most holy, orthodox, devoted, and (to use a phrase from their own vocabulary) ‘God honouring people;’ and that all other denominations are formal, worldly minded, erroneous in belief, and without the power of godliness, we might reasonably expect just such a course of conduct, as that on which we are animadverting. But surely neither law nor gospel, nor Christian charity, can countenance the conduct to which we see this opinion lead every day. When a person is reported as serious, and who is known to have but little prejudice in favour of any denomination, a visit may very soon be expected from the circuit preacher. If, in the course of conversation, he discovers any leaning to another fold, he is sure to discant upon the character and doctrines of its shepherd and sheep. And that too, in such a way, as to make the impression, that they are not walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. To verify the truth of these remarks, I could narrate at least twenty instances, within my own knowledge. Nor is this conduct without its effect, in swell-

ing the list of 450,000 members. There is no period of mature life, perhaps, when individuals are more credulous, than when under a deep conviction of sin. At such a period, every thing said, especially by Christian ministers, has its weight. And when statements are made by an individual wearing a clerical dress, and a very sober countenance, with a drawling, religious tone, the serious inquirer cannot find in his heart to think that all is not just so. And the deceptive representations of other denominations, made by 'itinerants' to individuals under these circumstances, I have known to make impressions which all time will not erase.—Nor is this conduct confined to serious persons, who have no particular predilections. I have known it to be pursued towards the wives and daughters of members and elders of other churches.

“To place in a clear and convincing light what I state, I ask the liberty of inserting an extract from a letter I hold in my possession. Its history is as follows—In a certain town, there was a fashionable young lady, who became serious, obtained a hope of her good estate, and expressed a desire to unite with a Presbyterian Church. The Methodist itinerant preacher was uncommonly anxious that she should unite with them. How to accomplish his desires he knew not. On opening the door one morning, the letter from which the following extract is made, was found, directed to the young lady. The itinerant preacher was charged to his face with being the author of it, and never denied it.—

“My Sister,—As you are about to take a step which will be of great importance to your future welfare, permit me to ask a few questions, which though you may not see proper to answer, yet they will be remembered when you and I are standing at the tribunal of Almighty God. 1st. What benefit do you expect in the Presbyterian Church which you can-

not find in ours? Do they preach the gospel any purer, or with more success? Do they pray with more zeal, or do they possess any more of apostolic fire, than our preachers do? Who has manifested the greatest desire for the salvation of ——; the Methodists or the Presbyterians? Brother H—— (meaning himself) has never got but twenty-two dollars, whereas the Presbyterians have collected near one hundred dollars at one time. Whose labours does God bless the most, that of the Methodists, or Presbyterians? Do not the Presbyterians admit of card-playing, going to the theatres, &c., &c.; how then, can they be the people of God? Take heed, my sister, how you join that church; you may repent of it, when it is eternally too late. Leaving out of view all the God-dishonouring horrors of election and reprobation, I cannot see how you can join that people. Beware, my sister, what you do; farewell till we meet at the judgment, where you will know that he who writes this is

YOUR FRIEND.'

“Does this need any comment? Can there be a more preposterous exhibition of hypocrisy, avarice, falsehood and impiety! And whilst I would by no means, say, that all their ministers would go as far as ‘YOUR FRIEND,’ I have no hesitation in saying that the feeling exhibited in the above extract is that which, in kind, is possessed by a large majority of the itinerants, in the Methodist connexion. And whilst two thousand and upwards of such men are abroad through the land, beating up for Methodist recruits, and determined to make Methodists in any way, and at all hazards, can we wonder that they can boast of the round number of 450,000 members?”—*Ib.*, vol. IX., pp. 20—24.

The same pharisaical, bigoted, and proselyting spirit is constantly manifested by many of them in this city. They are perpetually endeavouring in private to disaffect the mem-

bers of other churches, with a view to proselyte them to Methodism. And the lengths to which they sometimes go, are almost incredible. They often speak, as if there were no real conversions under the ministry of other denominations, and no vital or experimental religion among the members of other sects.—“Come to *our* meeting”—they often say to the members of other churches—“come to *our* meeting, if you want to get religion!” And one of them, in remonstrating with his relative against sending her child to a Presbyterian sabbath school, is said to have exclaimed—“What ! do you want your child to go to hell ! !”

In their efforts to disaffect our people and to proselyte them to their sect, they sometimes resort to the most shameful vilification of our doctrines, and to the most dishonourable and uncandid misrepresentations of the personal views, feelings and conduct of Presbyterian pastors. Let me give one or two examples. For some years after my settlement in this city, I was in the habit of occasionally inviting their ministers to occupy my pulpit; as I felt a desire to be upon friendly terms with every evangelical denomination of Christians. But in no one instance, was this professional courtesy ever reciprocated by them. Had this uncivil neglect been all, I should never have publicly noticed it; but, to my surprise, I heard from one and another, that the members of the Methodist Church were privately animadverting upon my “bigotry,” in not being willing to preach in their pulpits!—“*Our* preachers,” said they, “frequently preach in your pulpit, but your pastor is so proud or bigoted, that he will not preach in any of ours ! !” Again, when one of their meeting houses in my neighbourhood was undergoing repairs, I cheerfully consented to their occupying our house of worship, which they did for weeks—and left, without even saying, “thank you sir !” But this want of politeness

was a trifle, compared with the representations which some of their members were making, during the very time they were occupying our church, of my alleged heresy and illiberality!! In short, without entering into further details with which I have been personally connected, I have had but too much reason to know, that private misrepresentation and personal detraction are, to a great extent, employed by Methodists in their efforts to break down other churches, with a view to the upbuilding of their own. And I may add that, so far as my experience goes, the utmost liberality and kindness are utterly lost upon many of them, who seem to be incapable of appreciating either, when exercised by a Calvinist, and who appear to think, that almost any measures are lawful, in opposition to Presbyterian ministers and churches.

One great object too, of their camp-meetings and occasional excitements in their churches, is, no doubt, to *prose-lyte* the members of other denominations. This I infer, from the zeal with which they invite and urge the members of other congregations to attend. Without these expedients, they would have but little prospect of proselyting from other Christian sects—for their ordinary services are, to say the least, not more interesting than those of other churches; nor, without them, could they have the same *pre-text* for enticing others from their usual places of worship. But there *seems* to be no sectarian design, in inviting other Christians to a “camp-meeting”—and many go, without ever suspecting that the object is, if possible, to convert them to Methodism. So every now and then, an *excitement* is “gotten up,” in one or more of their meeting houses; and it again furnishes a pretext for inviting and urging the members of other denominations to visit their churches. To create such an excitement, they usually have on hand some “extraordinary preacher”—some “wonderful orator”—some

“great revivalist”—and generally, he who happens to be the present operator, is the most eloquent, powerful and successful preacher, that has ever preceded, or that ever will come after him! Accordingly, their members flock from their different places of worship, and from all parts of the city to hear the orator and revivalist,—(and to give information of the desired point of concentration, their numerous pulpits and class meetings afford abundant and unusual facilities,) and then the crowd, thus created, is alleged as demonstrative evidence, not only of the prodigious eloquence of the preacher, but also of the extraordinary presence and power of God! They sing and pray vociferously—shout at the top of their voices—clap their hands, and hollow “glory! hallelujah!”—and then it is circulated far and wide, that a powerful and glorious revival of religion is in progress in such a meeting house! And now, *now* is the time for making proselytes—to urge those who belong to other sects to come and hear the prodigy, and to participate in the revival! Now is the time for many to show their revived Christianity! by disparaging other ministers and churches, and by drawing comparisons between “the life and power of Methodism,” and “the formality and deadness” of other communions! And in order that the greatest possible number may be thus enticed, the revival, as they call it, like some *portable machine*, is carried from one meeting house to another, and from one section of the city to another. This machinery is usually set in motion, at least once a year; though, if any special reason exist, or if any particular object is to be gained, it can be put in operation at any time, and in any place. I predicted, after the delivery of my lectures on the Divine Decrees, and before their publication, that soon after their appearance in print, a Methodist revival might be expected, in my immediate neighbourhood—



and so there was. I now predict that, (unless this exposure shall prevent it,) soon after *this* work makes its appearance, we shall have another, perhaps more “powerful,” to prove that all that is said concerning their polity, &c., is untrue, and that they are the very best Christians on earth. But if there should be a renewal of the same kind of excitement, I trust that it will be with no greater success, so far as my flock are contemplated—for to their honour, be it known, that, notwithstanding all the efforts which were made to proselyte them—and that for weeks in succession—not a man, woman, or child could be seduced from the church of their fathers. And if the selfish and sectarian objects of those who seek to entice the members of other denominations, were better understood and more generally known, there would be fewer proselytes from any of them.

But after all these methods of manufacturing converts, what is the boasted efficiency of Methodism, as compared, for example, with the alleged inefficiency of Presbyterianism? What are the relative numbers added to the respective denominations? According to the printed minutes of 1842, the increase of the Methodist communion was 60,983; and the number of travelling and local preachers, 10,920—which would not be equal to an increase of *six* individuals, on an average, for each minister during the year. Let us now compare this with the minutes of the Presbyterian denomination for the same year. The total number of additions reported (and the reports are far from being complete) was 14,714, and the number of ministers and licentiates, 1,508; which would be nearly equal to *ten* additions, on an average, to each minister during the year. Or, if we compare the total number of communicants reported in 1842, with the number reported in 1841, we shall find that the nett increase was 6,000; which would be an increase of, very

nearly, four individuals to each minister during the year. If all the Presbyteries and churches had reported the numbers added within their bounds, the sum total would have been far greater. But even as it stands, what ground is there for the frequent invidious comparisons, between the boasted efficiency of Methodist preachers, and the alleged inefficiency of Presbyterian ministers? Considering the “machinery” which is employed in the production of Methodist converts, and the frequency and “power” of their “revivals”—considering the boastful manner in which they are prone to speak of the success of their preachers, and the disparaging manner in which they frequently speak of the inefficiency of other clergymen, one would naturally expect, that the additions to their communion would be immense, when, lo! upon examination, it is discovered, that the increase to their denomination, according to their own Minutes for 1842, did not equal six individuals, on an average, to each of their ministers during the year!! What an advantage there is sometimes in subjecting such vain boastings to the test of figures!

While on this topic, I may be excused for adding a few remarks concerning the fruits of my own ministry. I have never before published, or caused to be published, a single line respecting the number of additions to the church over which I preside; although, during the deeply interesting seasons with which we have been divinely favoured, I have been urged by one and another to do so, because I have always felt a strong aversion to any thing like ostentation or boasting on such subjects. But as special pains appear to have been taken by some of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church—particularly since the Lectures on the Divine Decrees were delivered—to disparage my ministry, and to misrepresent the state and prospects of the church and con-

gregation with which I am connected, I feel it to be due, not only to myself, but likewise to the beloved people of my charge, to state, as briefly and as modestly as I can, the following facts:—

1. With regard to *the number of additions to the communion of our church*. I have been the bishop of the Third Presbyterian Church of Baltimore between twelve and thirteen years; having been elected its pastor, on the 17th day of May, 1830; and ordained, and installed as such, on the 25th day of July following. At the commencement of my ministry, the congregation was very small—greatly involved in debt—and very much discouraged in consequence of their previous disappointments and repeated failures. Many a time have I lectured, on a week-day evening, to two or three persons; and preached, on the sabbath, to fifteen or twenty individuals—and for several years I laboured under the greatest disadvantages. And yet, during my pastoral connexion with them, without any of the modern “moral machinery,” but by the blessing of God, upon his own appointed means of grace, there have been added to the communion of the church, *between four and five hundred souls—or, on an average, between thirty and forty every year.*

2. With respect to *the pecuniary condition of the congregation*, the following extract, from the last Annual Report of the Board of Trustees, will speak for itself:—“As we have now arrived at a new era in our financial history, it may be proper to advert briefly to the past. For several years prior to the installation of our present pastor, the condition of the church was most deplorable. Few in numbers, and overwhelmed in debt, the congregation was rapidly hastening to dissolution. In the fall of 1828, the then existing Board of Trustees were obliged to acknowledge their inability to extricate the church from its embarrassments; and, as a last re-

sort, appealed to their fellow citizens and the members of other sister churches for assistance. In that public appeal, (as appears from the mss. records,) after giving a description of the state of affairs, they say,—‘It is manifest that some spirited exertions *must* be made to extricate the church, in whole or in part from this debt, or the premises must be sold at auction to satisfy the just claims of its creditors. The friends of the church are unwilling to submit to this latter alternative; and they have therefore determined to make one last and potent effort to relieve it, in which they hope and pray that they may be sustained by their fellow citizens, and especially by those of the same Christian denomination with themselves.’ The proposition which was then made, viz.—to sell the pews—in a great measure failed; and things continued to grow worse, until the summer of 1830, when the present administration of the church began. Since then, by the blessing of God, and the cordial and united cooperation of the people, the church has been extricated from its difficulties and brought into a condition highly gratifying and encouraging. The property has not only been greatly enlarged and improved—at a cost of some five or six thousand dollars—but the original onerous debt, of at least the same amount, has been reduced to less than two hundred and fifty dollars. This, the ladies have generously assumed; and, judging from their past activity and efficiency, (for which they have our hearty thanks,) there can be no doubt but that, in due time, it will be extinguished. The church, therefore, may be considered as virtually free from debt;—a consummation devoutly wished for, and one demanding our special gratitude and praise!”

3. With regard to *the present state and prospects of the congregation*,—I can say without hesitation, that they have never before been so encouraging. The services of the

church have been of late, well sustained—the audiences unusually large—and the number of hearers, gradually, yet steadily increasing. The lectures, through the week have been remarkably well attended—and the church, large as it now is, has been generally well filled on the sabbath. And I will add, never, in the whole course of my ministry, have my people manifested greater attachment or been more kind and generous towards their pastor. Indeed, the opposition from without, has evidently served to bind them more closely to their friend and bishop, and to attach them the more firmly to the doctrines and order of their venerated and beloved church. I repeat it, that nothing but the misrepresentations which have reached my ears should have induced me to make these statements: and I trust that what I have stated, will satisfy the public that, for the present, at least, the Third Presbyterian Church is not hastening to dissolution, nor are a great many of its members about to turn Arminian Methodists!\*

I will now proceed to give some extracts from the articles on “Practical Methodism,” relative to *THE EFFECTS of Methodism on the church and on the world*. He says,—

“By way of preliminary, I would state, that I am very far from depreciating the good the Methodists are accomplishing all around us. I do, yea, and will rejoice, that

\* I will take the liberty of recording an additional fact—as remarkable as it is creditable to the Christian character of the congregation. During the whole period of my pastoral connexion with them, there has never been *a single jar* in either the spiritual or temporal Boards of the church; and I have yet to hear the *first negative voice* in any of the meetings of the church or congregation. And as to personal respect and kindness—their conduct has been most exemplary. Is it any wonder that a pastor should love such a people?—May he not be excused for this grateful acknowledgment and public commendation?—Especially, when strangers seek not only to alienate his people from him, but also to estrange him from them?

through their zeal and activity, the lamp of the gospel is carried to many, sitting in the regions of darkness. In the wild wastes, and new settlements of our country, as well as in foreign lands, they are accomplishing much, which without them, would probably remain undone. But yet, in several respects, I think the effects of their influence are very much to be deplored. And first, as it regards the church.

1. “Here the first obvious effect of their influence, is, *in lowering the standard of qualification for the Christian ministry.* All history bears its mournful testimony to the deplorable effects of an unqualified ministry. Incompetent teachers of religion have ever been the scourge of the church, the abettors of error—the tools of wily ecclesiastics and politicians, and at once the victims and supporters of superstition and fanaticism. Need I refer the readers of the Advocate to the evidence which proves these allegations? It is written in sunbeams on the pages of every ecclesiastical and civil historian. And in the face of all this light and evidence, the Methodists, as a body, are the stern advocates of an untaught ministry. Throughout the country, we see them elevating men to the dignity of ambassadors of Christ, utterly unprepared to discharge correctly, a single duty of the sacred function. And if report speaks the truth, in the south and west, it is no uncommon thing to hear them commence their sermons by thanking God that they were not ‘man made ministers,’ that they did not preach with the enticing words of ‘human larnin.’ To the ignorance of their clergy, as a primary cause, we may trace nearly all the conduct on which strictures have been made, in my preceding numbers.

“And I am sorry to state, that the influence of Methodist example in this respect, is felt and seen in other branches of the church of Christ. Influenced by motives not altogether

justifiable, they admit young men to the holy calling, before they have passed through a tythe of the necessary preparation. This is one of the signs of the times that makes me tremble, like Eli, for the ark of God. If ever the church sinks again into the darkness from which she was freed by the reformation, it must be for the want of an intelligent ministry. And if ever she becomes the joy of the whole earth, diffusing her saving light from pole to pole, and 'from the rivers to the end of the earth,' it must be, under God, to the influence of a pious, talented, well informed ministry. And the influence exerted by the Methodists, in advocating an illiterate ministry, and in slandering the learning and talents of their more enlightened neighbours, will, in its ultimate results, be found sufficient to counterbalance a large proportion of the good they are effecting.\*

2. "Another of their evil effects upon the church is, *the little value they place upon Christian instruction*. Their system is mainly formed with a reference to the passions. Their preaching, praying, classes, camp-meetings, and love-feasts, are all conducted so as to affect the passions. As it respects instruction, a moral famine pervades every thing they do. This might be expected from the character of a large majority of their clergy. The time was, when the labouring oar of ministerial duty, was the instruction of the rising and risen generation; when none were admitted to the church, without a knowledge of its doctrines and duties, without being able to give a reason for the hope which they professed. That was the golden age of the church, which produced the Erskines and Owens; the Henrys and Baxters; the Charnocks and Howes. Certain it is, that what these great luminaries considered a *necessary* course of instruction

\*See remarks on this subject on pp. 215 and 216.

for admission to Christian privileges, is by the Methodists, in a great measure neglected. A person professes conversion to-day, and is admitted to the communion to-morrow. And thus the church is filled with ignorant members; ignorant of the Bible, and in a very lamentable degree, of the plan of salvation. Were it not for their reigning desire to make members, they would probably, to some extent at least, pursue a different plan; but as it is, the course which they pursue is to be deplored. And their example in this respect, is exerting a deleterious influence on other portions of the church. Other denominations, to prevent their adherents from becoming Methodists, 'where they can get religion so easy,' admit them to membership, before the consent of enlightened piety and judgment would pronounce them qualified. If the Methodist Church is determined to run upon the rock on which the Romish Church split, and around which its broken fragments are floating until the present hour; it is earnestly to be wished, that her sister churches may not be so unwise as to follow her.

3. "Another of the evil effects of Methodism upon the church is, *the perverted taste which it creates for hearing the word of God.* Such a taste have they created for clamorous preaching, that now they will be satisfied with nothing else. The great object of preaching, surely, is to elucidate and explain the word of God, and to bring it home to the heart and conscience. These two things must necessarily be united; but among our Methodist brethren generally, such an union is not regarded as important, and is in fact, seldom witnessed. A didactic man among them is regarded as a mere dabbler in human learning, and is generally unpopular. What can be more detrimental to the purity and prosperity of the Church of Christ, than a sentiment like this? If in the sacred and divine institution of preaching, a calm, delib-



erate, rational and pungent exposition of the scriptures, is to give way to the narration of experience, and of wonderful incidents and anecdotes—often to the veriest rant and bombast, what is to become of the church? If the scriptures cease to shine from the pulpit, what is to enlighten and save the people?

“Nor is the evil influence of Methodism in this respect confined to themselves. Sorry am I to say, that it is seen and felt among other denominations. Our preaching is in many instances, dwindling down to declamation; our sermons to rhetorical flourishes: expositions of scripture are superseded by little flights of fancy, and too many of our youthful preachers are more ambitious to collect their laurels from Parnassus than from Calvary. When our modern sermons are compared with those of the Erskines, and Matthew Henry, and Witherspoon, how wide the difference between them! It cannot be denied or concealed, that the increasing tendency of our pulpit exercises is to superficialness. And that the rise and progress of Methodism has increased this tendency very much, especially among the clergy of the second order of mind, to me is as clear as demonstration.”—*Ch. Ad.*, vol. IX., pp. 189—191.

The tendency to the kind of preaching above mentioned, “among the clergy of the second order of mind,” generally, has certainly not been decreasing since the foregoing strictures were written. It has become in truth deplorably prevalent. How many of that class use their texts as mere *mottos*, and entertain their hearers with mere declamation or “rhetorical flourishes.” How seldom do such elucidate and explain the passage of scripture on which they profess to discourse. In many instances, the hearers are as little informed of its connexion and true meaning, after the sermon, as they were before. And if any one should happen to for-

get the text after it had been announced, he would never be reminded of it by the substance of the sermon itself. Indeed, so little do many of them “stick to their text,” that it is doubtful whether they themselves could tell what they were preaching from, if suddenly interrogated in the midst of their “flights of fancy” or irrelevant and bombastic declamation.—The grand object with such appears to be, either to “tickle the ears” of their hearers, or to make, what is called, “a powerful impression” upon their feelings.

I have no doubt but that, in many cases, it is the same inferiority of mind, which leads them to the adoption of much of the “*moral machinery*” of Methodism. Being unable to sustain themselves as public teachers, by the force of talent and the variety and instructiveness of their discourses, they are obliged to resort to various arts and appliances, to cover their deficiency, and to retain or replenish their audiences. And for the same reason, many of them call in the aid of some popular *revivalist*, every now and then, to resuscitate their languishing churches, which, without such extraneous aid, would literally die of spiritual *ennui*! Certain am I, that it would be morally impossible for some men to sustain themselves in the positions they occupy, if they were to dispense with their periodical helps from abroad, and the various machinery by which they contrive, for a long time, to keep up a factitious interest. And yet the machinery will ultimately wear out; and the feebleness and inefficiency of those who have very little else to rely upon for success, be made too apparent to be concealed. I know that such men are accustomed to place the employment of such machinery upon very different grounds:—They profess to use such measures because they judge them adapted to accomplish much good—and not content with the privilege of thus thinking and acting for themselves—though it be in direct opposition

to the clearest dictates of experience—they not unfrequently represent those of their brethren who will neither employ or connive at them, as being destitute of a revival spirit—as cold and negligent in their master's service. It is high time, therefore, in self-defence, to speak out what has long been our private opinion, and to expose, what we believe to be, in many cases, the real, though we would fain hope unconscious, cause of the employment of such objectionable measures.—They are resorted to, in many instances, *as substitutes for mental power*, and clung to in desperation, as the only means of keeping up a factitious interest. If any one wishes to test the truth of these remarks, let him visit the churches of such during the *interval* of their revivals, so called, and ascertain what interest the people feel in their exhibitions of divine truth, without the exciting accompaniments adverted to. And let him ask himself the question—how long would their audiences endure such preaching, without the hope of being relieved by the visit of some evangelist, or the re-enactment of those stimulating scenes to which I have alluded! No marvel, then, that certain Methodistical measures—measures originally resorted to by weak or ignorant men, as their only chance for creating any interest in their ministrations—should be adopted by some others, not Methodists;—they are in fact, their “capital stock in trade,” without which they would soon become bankrupt in reputation, and be obliged to retire in disgrace as incompetent to instruct and interest an intelligent people. In order, however, to guard against any misconstruction, I will add, that I am far from being opposed to the *occasional assistance* of evangelists, or other pastors, or to the *occasional multiplication* of the divinely appointed means of grace. Such occasional foreign aid is sometimes highly useful to a flock, supplied by the most able and faithful of pastors—and such an occasional

increase of the usual number of religious services, is often very profitable. My sole opposition is directed against the use of certain *Methodistical machinery*—called among other denominations “new measures”—which are, in my judgment, productive only of spurious revivals or mere popular excitements; awfully injurious, in their ultimate and permanent effects, upon the Church of Christ, and deceptive and ruinous to multitudes of immortal souls.—What these measures are—how they are applied—and what are their results, will be shown, in the succeeding chapter, after I have given the remaining extracts from “Practical Methodism.” The writer of those articles observes,

4. “But what is, perhaps, the greatest evil of Methodism, is yet to be named. I mean its effect *in begetting improper notions in regard to divine truth*. The influence which our views of divine truth exert on the heart and conscience, is extensive and powerful. In regard to the production of proper religious feeling, our views of truth are every thing. When they are obscure and undefined, there will be a corresponding confusion in our feelings; when rational and luminous, they impart warmth, vigour, and propriety to every holy affection. In this view of the subject, how deplorable the extension which is given to views and notions, based on clouds, and borne up by vapours, which vanish into thin air before the light of reason and scripture.

“Were it not that I resolved, at the commencement, to exclude all doctrinal discussion from these papers, I could easily elucidate what I mean, by a slight glance at some peculiarly erroneous sentiments. I would refer to them, however, merely as to their practical tendency. Among the Methodists there is very much religious irreverence,—arising, no doubt, from their improper views of the character of God. It is impossible to support their creed without derogating

from some of the essential attributes of his nature. His sovereignty, omniscience, foreknowledge and unchangeableness, are by implication set aside; and having lost a just view of his majesty, he can be approached with the less reverence. Hence their boisterous and unmeaning prayers, the great familiarity with which they treat the Most High,—their crude notions on the subject of ‘getting religion,’ and of sinless perfection. They suppose that religion can be obtained and lost at any time—that it consists in a boisterous agitation of the passions—that other means than prayer and the avoidance of temptation, are to be used in overcoming the devil,\*—and reverence and order in religious worship are the characteristics of coldness and formality. So incorrect are their notions in regard to some truths, and so lax and gross as it regards others, that where Methodism has been to any extent prevalent, it is almost impossible to make a proper impression upon the mind. You can do but little else than look upon, and weep over the wild waste that is widening around you. That there are individuals among the Methodists, who utterly disapprove of many, or of all the excesses, I have here mentioned, I freely and gladly admit; but that the specified errors and excesses do prevail among them generally, as a sect, is what I know to be true.

5. “I will conclude this paper by saying a few words respecting *the influence of Methodism upon the world*. *By the world*, I mean unsanctified sinners in general. Here I touch upon a topic, where what I shall offer, may, I am aware, be opposed by a great show of argument. Facts may be stat-

\*“A man of my acquaintance, a few years since, cried out, in an evening meeting among the Methodists, ‘brethren, I have got the devil, and will not let him go till I kill him.’ He continued fisting his satanic majesty against the wall, for half an hour, whilst the cries of ‘amen,’ and ‘glory to God,’ were rising all around him.”

ed which will, to all appearance, prove every thing which I say to be fallacious. We shall be told of the great zeal and success of the circuit preachers—of the 450,000 members collected together in the short space of 60 or 70 years,—of the revivals which they have enjoyed—and of the influence which they exert in promoting religion and virtue, and of checking immorality and vice. I will readily concede the truth of every modest statement that may be made on all these subjects. I cheerfully admit that they are doing much, very much, to advance the declarative glory of God, and to save sinners. And yet I am fully impressed with the belief that on the rational, thinking portion of the world, their example and influence produce a very unhappy effect.

“ I will suppose a case for the purpose of illustration. A man of intelligence is prompted by curiosity to attend one of their boisterous ‘camp-meetings.’ He goes from camp to camp, and from one praying circle to another. He hears the fervid enthusiasm of the preachers, which acts upon the mass, as a whirlwind upon the ocean. He sees some falling into fits—others exhausted with shouting—others prostrate on the earth, and crying out, ‘it made no difference to them whether they went to heaven head or heels foremost.’\* With what impressions respecting religion would he return from this scene of anarchy and confusion? Let any candid mind answer the question. Such scenes are as little calculated to honour the cause of religion as those exhibited by the Stylites, Mystics, or Whippers.

“ I will suppose another case. A man of intelligence visits their prayer meetings. He hears twenty or thirty praying at once, and the less fluent brethren and sisters

\* “ A scene actually witnessed at a camp-meeting, but a few miles from my residence.”

shouting 'amen.' He hears one exclaim—'I see the Saviour: there he is;' and another, 'I see heaven open, and God preparing to descend to us;' and another crying out, 'pray on, brothers and sisters, the blessing will soon come.' He sees little else than irreverence before Him who hath said, 'the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.' With what impressions respecting religion will he return from this meeting? Let any impartial mind answer. If such scenes are not well calculated to make the impression, that religion is only fitted for the vulgar; that it is all a matter of blind superstition; I know not what scenes are. And these are the scenes actually exhibited in nearly every camp-meeting, and in many prayer-meetings and love-feasts, from one extremity of the country to the other.

“ And the impressions which these scenes are calculated to make are the very ones that are made. Where the 'Methodist religion' has been for any time prevalent, unchecked by the presence of other denominations, you find the talented and influential members of society, generally in the opposition. They are opposed not only to the Methodists, but to every thing in the form of godliness. The region in which I live, bears a decided testimony to the truth of this fact. Methodism was once dominant. It carried nearly every thing before it; and now the intelligent and influential are generally infidels, or something as bad; and are rarely ever seen within the walls of a church. Methodism is at present on the wane: the people are becoming wearied of it: and that cold chill, which is the sure precursor of spiritual death, is pervading the whole community. From the facts stated, I conclude, that in many places where the Methodists are doing much good, they are also doing much harm; often where they are scattering some of the good seed of the word, they

are also sowing the bad seed of opposition and infidelity.”  
—*Ch. Ad.*, vol. IX., pp. 246—248.

To illustrate, still further, *the amazing credulity and gross fanaticism of Methodism*, as well as to show the real nature of many of their “conversions,” and the true character of much of their so called “Christian experience,” I will make a few extracts from the “Works of the Rev. John Wesley,” the founder of the sect. Only let it be remembered, that the wonderful stories, &c., related by him, are religiously believed by thousands of his followers in this country, and that similar visions, bodily agitations, &c., are still common among them. The extracts are as follow:—

“Tues., January 1, 1751.—About this time I received a remarkable letter; part of which ran as follows:—

\*\*\*\* “ ‘It was my custom to rise some hours before the family, and spend that time in reading. One Sunday morning I was just going to open my Bible, when a voice (whether inward or outward, I cannot tell) seemed to say very loud, ‘God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven thee.’ I started up, took the candle, and searched all about, to see if any one was near; but there was none. *I then sat down, with such peace and joy in my soul as cannot be described.* While I was musing what it could mean, I heard it again, saying, ‘go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee.’ I trembled exceedingly, not with fear, but such an emotion as I cannot express. Yet I got up the second time, and opened the door, to see if it was any human voice. Soon after it was repeated the third time, still louder; which drove me on my knees to prayer, being overwhelmed with the love of God, and, for the time, utterly incapable of doubt or fear.’ ”—*Wesley’s Works*, vol. III., p. 506.

The following samples were furnished by one of his clerical correspondents, and are introduced by him thus:—“I



shall easily be excused for adding here, a further account of the work of God in and near Everton:—

““I discoursed also with Ann Thorn, who told me of much heaviness following *the visions* with which she had been favoured; but said she was at intervals visited still with such overpowering love and joy, especially at the Lord's supper, that she often lay in a trance for many hours. She is twenty-one years old. We were soon after called into the garden, where Patty Jenkins (one of the same age) was so overwhelmed with the love of God, that she sunk down, and appeared as one in a pleasant sleep, *only with her eyes open*; yet she had often just strength to utter, with a low voice, ejaculations of joy and praise; but no words coming up to what she felt, she frequently *laughed* while she saw his glory. This is quite unintelligible to many; for a stranger intermeddled not with our joy. So it was with Mr. M——, who doubted whether God or the Devil had filled her with love and praise. O, the depth of human wisdom! Mr. R——, the mean time, was filled with solemn awe. I no sooner sat down by her, than the spirit of God poured the same blessedness into my soul. Hers continued till the time we were to set out for Cockin Hatley. *Then* her strength was restored *in a moment*, and we walked together, sixteen in number, singing to the Lord as we went along.

““ June 6, 1759.—I spoke this morning at Orwell, on Isa. 55: 1. One who had been before convinced of sin, fell down *in a kind* of fit, and broke out in great anguish of soul, calling on the Lord Jesus for salvation. He wrought, as in the agonies of death, and was quite bathed in sweat. *He beat the chair*, against which he kneeled, as one whose soul drew nigh unto hell. His countenance then cleared up at once: we hoped he would be presently set at liberty; but on a sudden he was more distressed than ever, being in the

sharpest conflict. Every muscle of his body was in strong agitation, as if nature was just dissolving. I never saw any convulsion fit so violent. But in a moment God dispelled the cloud. His face was again covered with smiles, and *he spake as seeing the Lord near him*. He cried unto him; and the Lord hearing, *pronounced him freely forgiven*. At that instant, he clapped his hands, and cried aloud, ‘Jesus is mine! He is *my Saviour!*’ *His soul was in peace*; neither did he find the least bodily pain or soreness.

“ ‘This morning, Ann Simpson, aged sixteen or seventeen, lay near an hour in *the utmost distress*, shrieking out, ‘Christ! Christ!’ and no other word; her face all the time being violently distorted. *I left her awhile, but could scarce sit down before I heard the voice of praise*. I went, and found her heaviness turned into joy, *even the joyful assurance that her sins were pardoned*.\*\*\*\* I asked her, *why* she cried out continually, ‘Christ! Christ!’ She answered, ‘I thought myself at that time, on a little island, and saw Satan in a hideous form, just ready to devour me, hell all round open to receive me, and myself ready to drop in; while no help appeared, nor any way to escape. But just as I was dropping in, the Lord appeared between me and the great gulf, and would not let me fall into it. *As soon as I saw him, all my trouble was gone*, and all pain I felt before; and ever since, I have been light and joyful, *and filled with the love of God.*’

“ ‘Fri. 13.—Mr. R——, as well as Mr. M——, was in doubt concerning the work of God here. But this morning they were both fully convinced, while Alice Miller, the little pale girl, justified May 20th, who is in the sixteenth, and Molly Raymond, who is in the twelfth year of her age, related their experience; *their artless confidence confirming all their words*.

“ ‘ When sermon was ended, one brought good tidings to Mr. B. from Grandchester, that God had there broken down seventeen persons, last week, by the singing of hymns only; and that a child, seven years old, sees many visions, and astonishes the neighbours, with her innocent, awful manner of declaring them.

“ ‘ While Mr. B. preached in the church, I stood with many in the church yard, to make room for those who come from far; therefore, I *saw* little, but *heard* the agonizing of many, panting and gasping after eternal life. In the afternoon, Mr. B. was constrained, by the multitude of people, to come out of the church, and preach in his own close. Some of those who were here pricked to the heart, were affected in an astonishing manner. The first man I saw wounded, would have dropped, but others catching him in their arms, did, indeed, prop him up, but were so far from keeping him still, that he caused all of them to totter and tremble. His own shaking exceeded that of a cloth in the wind. It seemed as if the Lord came upon him like a giant, taking him by the neck, and shaking all his bones in pieces. One woman tore up the ground with her hands, filling them with dust and with the hard trodden grass, on which I saw her lie, with her hands clenched, as one dead, when the multitude dispersed. Another roared and screamed in a more dreadful agony than ever I heard before. I omitted the rejoicing of believers, because of their number and the frequency thereof, though the manner was strange; some of them being quite overpowered with divine love, and only showing enough of natural life to let us know they were overwhelmed with joy and life eternal. Some continued long as if they were dead, but with a calm sweetness in their looks. I saw one who lay two or three hours in the open air, and being then carried into the house, continued

insensible another hour, as if actually dead. The first sign of life she showed was *a rapture of praise, intermixed with a small joyous laughter.*

“ ‘ Wed. 18.—We called at the house, where Mr. B. had been preaching in the morning, and found several there rejoicing in God, and several mourning after him. While I prayed with them, many crowded into the house, some of whom burst into *a strange, involuntary laughter*, so that my voice could scarce be heard; and when I strove to speak louder, a sudden hoarseness seized me. Then the laughter increased. I perceived it was Satan, and resolved to pray on. Immediately the Lord rebuked him, that laughter was at an end, and so was my hoarseness.

“ ‘ Thurs. 19.—Mr. J.—gs was a mild, good natured Pharisee, who had never been awakened: but he was now thoroughly convinced of his lost estate, and stood for a time in utter despair, with his mouth wide open, his eyes staring, and full of huge dismay. When he found power to speak, he cried out, ‘ I thought I had led a good life; I thought I was not so bad as others; but I am the vilest creature upon earth; *I am dropping into hell! Now, now; this very moment!*’ He then saw *hell open* to receive him, and Satan ready to cast him in; but it was not long before he saw *the Lord Jesus*, and *knew he had accepted him.* He then cried aloud, in an unspeakable rapture, ‘ I have got Christ! I have got Christ!’ For two hours he was in the visions of God; then the joy, though not the peace, abated.’ ”—*Ib., vol. IV., pp. 35—39.*

The foregoing are fair samples of many similar narratives with which his journal abounds. If my limits allowed, I would transcribe a few choice specimens of the apparition or *ghost stories*, which he also relates with the utmost gravity:—one of which he introduces with the expression of his

entire belief in the reality of *witches*, as well as ghosts, and accompanies with the most ludicrous *annotations!*—See his Works, vol. IV., pp. 159—161. 279—286.

I will only add the following, as illustrative of his own experience:—

“Fri. 9.—I was a little surprised at some, who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such *a spirit of laughter*, as they could in no wise resist, though it was pain and grief unto them. I could scarce have believed the account they gave me, had I not known the same thing ten or eleven years ago. Part of Sunday, my brother and I, then used to spend in walking in the meadows, and singing psalms. But one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into a loud laughter. I asked him, if he was distracted; and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but we were forced to go home without singing another line.”—*Ib.*, vol. III., p. 183.

Now, what confidence can be placed, by any intelligent and experienced Christian, in conversions and religious joys, founded upon *dreams* and *visions*, and “*kind of fits!*” Can any rational and truly pious man read such accounts, without shuddering at the awful consequences of such gross fanaticism and delusion?

There appears to have been considerable uncertainty and confusion in the mind of Mr. Wesley himself, in regard to many of these strange occurrences—and no little inconsistency in his manner of speaking of them at different times and on different occasions. He speaks of them, as partly natural, and partly supernatural—and ascribes them, sometimes to the agency of the Devil, and at other times, to the power of God.

On some occasions—smarting under the satirical exposures of his opponents—he almost repudiates them with indignation!—In reply to one of them, he says:—“Are you not convinced, sir, that you have laid to my charge, things which I know not? I do not gravely tell you (as much an enthusiast as you over and over affirm me to be) that I sensibly feel (in your sense) the motions of the Holy Spirit. Much less do I make this, any more than ‘convulsions, agonies, howlings, roarings, and violent contortions of the body,’ either ‘certain signs of men’s being in a state of salvation,’ or ‘necessary in order thereunto.’ You might with equal justice and truth inform the world, and the worshipful, the magistrates of Newcastle, that I make *seeing* the wind, or *feeling* the light, necessary to salvation.”—*Ib.*, vol. V., p. 57.

Yea, on some occasions, he appears to have been himself impressed with the necessity of checking this spirit of enthusiasm and fanaticism among his followers—and it would be well if these warnings, uttered during his more lucid and sober moments, were now heeded by multitudes who profess to revere his authority:—

“It is chiefly among these enormous mountains that so many have been awakened, justified, and soon after perfected in love; but even while they are full of love, *Satan* strives to push many of them to extravagance. *This appears in several instances:—*1. Frequently three or four, yea, ten or twelve, pray aloud all together. 2. Some of them, perhaps many, scream all together, as loud as they possibly can. 3. Some of them use improper, yea, indecent expressions in prayer. 4. Several drop down as dead, and are as stiff as a corpse; but in a while they start up, and cry, ‘Glory! glory!’ perhaps twenty times together. Just so do the French prophets, and very lately the Jumpers in Wales, *bring the real*

*work into contempt.* Yet, whenever we reprove them, it should be in the most mild and gentle manner possible.”—*Ib.*, vol. IV., p. 631.

“Perhaps some may be afraid, lest the refraining from these warm expressions, or even gently checking them, should check the fervour of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent, some kind of fervour, *which has passed for devotion.* Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking, not only to religion, but to common decency:—But it will never check, much less prevent, true, scriptural devotion.”—*Ib.*, vol. II., p. 444.

Indeed, when he noticed or heard of these bodily agitations, &c. in others—*not of his own persuasion*—or produced by *them* on any of his own followers, Mr. Wesley’s understanding appears to have been remarkably “penetrating,” and his judgment very decided! Take the following examples:—

“Mr. Evans now gave me an account from his own knowledge, of what has made a great noise in Wales:—‘It is common in the congregations attended by Mr. W. W., and one or two other clergymen, after the preaching is over, for any one that has a mind, to give out a verse of a hymn. This they [sing over and over with all their might, perhaps above thirty, yea, forty times. Meanwhile, the bodies of two or three, sometimes ten or twelve, are violently agitated; and they leap up and down, in all manner of postures, frequently for hours together.’ *I think,*” says Wesley, “*there needs no great penetration to understand this.* They are honest, upright men, who really feel the love of God in their hearts. But they have little experience, either of the

ways of God, or the devices of Satan. So he" (*the Devil*) "serves himself of their simplicity, in order to wear them out, and to bring a discredit on the work of God."—*Ib.*, *vol. IV.*, *p.* 157.

"Sun. 28.—I went, (having been long importuned thereto,) about five in the evening, with four or five of my friends, to a house where was one of those commonly called French prophets. After a time, she came in. She seemed about four or five and twenty, of an agreeable speech and behaviour. She asked, why we came. I said, 'to try the spirits, whether they be of God.' Presently after she leaned back in her chair, and seemed to have strong workings in her breast, with deep sighings intermixed. Her head and hands, and, by turns, every part of her body, seemed also to be in a kind of convulsive motion. This continued about ten minutes, till, at six, she began to speak, (though the workings, sighings, and contortions of her body were so intermixed with her words, that she seldom spoke half a sentence together,) with a clear, strong voice, 'Father, thy will, thy will be done. Thus saith the Lord, if of any of you that is a father, his child ask bread, will he give him a stone? If he ask a fish, will he give him a scorpion? Ask bread of me, my children, and I will give you bread, I will not, will not give you a scorpion. By this, judge of what ye shall now hear.'

"She spoke much (all as in the person of God, and mostly in scripture words) of the fulfilling of the prophecies, the coming of Christ now at hand, and the spreading of the gospel over all the earth. Then she exhorted us not to be in haste in judging her spirit, to be or not to be of God; but to wait upon God, and he would teach us, if we conferred not with flesh and blood. She added, with many enforcements, that we must watch and pray, and take up our cross, and be still be-



fore God. Two or three of our company were much affected, and believed she spoke by the spirit of God. But this was in no wise clear to me. *The motion might be either hysterical or artificial.* And the same words, any person of a good understanding and well versed in the scriptures, might have spoken. But I let the matter alone; knowing this, that ‘if it be not of God, it will come to nought.’”—*Ib.*, vol. III., p. 119. [Yes, fanaticism and superstition will eventually come to nought—but like Idolatry, Mohamedanism, and Popery, they may become very prevalent, and last a good while !]

But as soon as Mr. Wesley found that *some of his own followers were becoming the disciples of these French prophets*, why, then, no confidence was to be placed in dreams, visions, agitations, &c.—for these, it would seem, were only to be regarded as evidences of the power and approbation of God, when they occurred in connection with *his* ministry, or that of his co-adjutors!—

“Fri. 22.—I called on one who ‘did run well,’ till he was hindered by some of those called French prophets. ‘Wo unto the prophets, saith the Lord, who prophecy in my name, and I have not sent them.’ At Weaver’s Hall, I endeavoured to point them out; and earnestly exhorted all that followed after holiness, to avoid, as fire, all who do not speak according ‘to the law and testimony.’” [Thus letting the matter alone; knowing this, that “if it be not of God, it will come to nought!!”]

“In the afternoon,” he continues, “I preached at the Fish Ponds: but had no life or spirit in me; and was much in doubt, whether God would not lay me aside, and send other labourers into his harvest. I came to the society full of this thought; and began, in much weakness, to explain, ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, wheth-

er they be of God.' I told them, they were not to judge of the spirit whereby any one spoke, either by appearances, or by common report, or by their own inward feelings: *no, nor by any dreams, visions, or revelations, supposed to be made to their souls*; any more than by their tears, or any involuntary effects wrought upon their bodies. *I warned them, all these were, in themselves, of a doubtful, disputable nature*; they might be from God, and they might not; and were therefore not simply to be relied on, (any more than simply to be condemned,) but to be tried by a further rule, to be brought to *the only certain test, the law and the testimony.*"—*Ib.*, vol. III., p. 141.

No marvel, that among a people, given to such fanaticism, there should have been as much want of religious knowledge and consistency of Christian character, as Mr. Wesley himself, on some occasions, acknowledges:—

"Mon. 22.—The more I converse with this people," (the society at Limerick,) "the more I am amazed. That God hath wrought a great work among them is manifest; and yet the main of them, *believers and unbelievers, are not able to give a rational account of the plainest principles of religion.* It is plain, God begins his work at the heart; then 'the inspiration of the Highest giveth understanding.'"—*Ib.*, vol. III., p. 451.

And in the Minutes of one of his Conferences, he thus writes of the denomination in general:—

"The world say, 'the Methodists are no better than other people.' This is not true. But *it is nearer the truth than we are willing to believe.*

"N. B. For (1.) personal religion either toward God or man, is *amazingly superficial* among us.

"I can but just touch on a few generals. How little faith is there among us! How little communion with God!

How little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature! How much love of the world; desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money! How little brotherly love! What continual judging one another! What gossiping, evil speaking, tale bearing! **WHAT WANT OF MORAL HONESTY!** To instance only in one or two particulars: who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling, particularly in selling horses! Write him a knave that does not. And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves.

“(2.) Family religion is *shamefully wanting*, and almost in every branch.

“And the Methodists in general will be little the better, till we take quite another course with them. For what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every travelling preacher must, *instruct* them from house to house. Till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be little better than other people. **OUR RELIGION IS NOT DEEP, UNIVERSAL, UNIFORM; BUT SUPERFICIAL, PARTIAL, UNEVEN.**”—*Ib.*, vol. V., p. 213.

Before I conclude what I have to say on the subject of Episcopal Methodism, I will add a chapter on the subject of modern revivals and revival measures.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NEW MEASURES FOR PROMOTING REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

Extracts from an able article in the Princeton Repertory on the moral machinery or new measures of certain modern "revivalists," so called, in which the true character of such excitements, and the means by which they are manufactured, are exposed.—Letters of the Rev. Drs. Alexander and Miller, Professors in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, on the subject of revivals and revival measures.—The great importance of genuine revivals of religion, and the necessity of greater diligence, on the part of orthodox Christians, in the use of God's appointed means, for their promotion.

THE following copious extracts are from an article in the "Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review," January No., 1842:—a quarterly periodical, edited by an association of gentlemen, consisting of a number of the able, learned and pious Professors in the Theological and Literary Institutions in Princeton, whose praise is in all the churches. The article was written, not with direct reference to the Methodists, but in opposition to those "New School Presbyterians," &c., who had adopted and employed Methodistical "machinery" for the promotion of revivals of religion—or, as they are termed among Presbyterians, "new measures." I present these extracts for the instruction and admonition of *Presbyterians especially*:—and coming from such a source, they are entitled to, and will no doubt receive, the highest consideration. In confirmation of some of the statements contained in the Review, I have appended several *notes*,

which may not be unworthy of the attention and *reflection* of the reader.

After exposing the real character of the Arminian and Semi-Pelagian doctrines with which the "new measures" are usually associated, and from which they naturally flow, the reviewer proceeds as follows:—

"Now, with these views of regeneration and conversion, let us suppose a minister, or, what is more common, one of those expert and practiced itinerant tacticians, who claim to be revival preachers *eminenter*, to undertake the kindling of a religious excitement in a congregation or community—what course will he naturally pursue? All experience shows that the following become integral and inseparable parts of the 'moral machinery' put in requisition to achieve the desired result.

"First, a peculiar strain and style of preaching. One main object of the preaching will be to foster in the minds of the hearers, a practical unbelief of all those doctrines of grace which imply that true religion cannot exist in the soul, unless produced by a direct operation of the Holy Ghost. This, as we have already seen, accords with Mr. Finney's prescription for promoting revivals. For this purpose, the doctrines of election, inability, regeneration, are sometimes kept utterly out of view; sometimes explained away; sometimes obscured and mystified; sometimes coarsely misrepresented, caricatured and maligned; sometimes openly and directly denied. Having cleared away all obstacles to 'immediate action,' by making religion a mere act or resolution of the creature, a second great object is so to operate upon 'self-love,' that it shall prompt to an immediate and decisive resolution. To this end the everlasting woes of the wicked, and joys of the righteous, are vividly and abundantly portrayed, and this is a part of the counsel of God which

revival preachers can no way be accused of shunning faithfully to declare. In connection with this, invention is tortured for arguments, and memory for anecdotes, to inspire the belief, that if any do not escape hell during the present excitement, or perhaps the present day or hour, they never will. For the purpose of compassing these objects more effectually, every effort is made to spice the preaching with anecdotes and illustrations, often of the most strange, crude, motley description. We recollect once to have heard a sermon by a 'revival preacher,' which consisted wholly of three anecdotes. By this means they present a powerful inducement to all that class of persons who are seeking pastime and recreation, to come to their meetings, since there are few who are not fascinated with a good story well told; and hence it is said, that this sort of preaching competes with the theatre in its attractions for a numerous class. Besides, there is something peculiarly grateful and bewitching to the more coarse and profligate sort of wicked men, in seeing the pulpit, which in their minds, has ever been associated with a purity, sanctity and solemnity that they cannot endure, degraded into a stage for reciting droll and vulgar stories and grotesque images and comparisons. And especially if these are plied for the abuse, ridicule, or disparagement of those ministers and Christians who do not bow the knee to the revivalist, or of the ordinary teachers and professors of religion, whom these persons have ever hated, they enjoy a still richer 'feast of reason and flow of soul.' This is not the only advantage. Such anecdotes and illustrations serve the double purpose of giving plausibility to any notion, however absurd, which the preacher may wish to inculcate, and of lowering all that is spiritual and supernatural in religion to the standard of things purely natural, civil or moral, i. e. to the capacity and tastes of the carnal and worldly mind,

which is void of the renewing and illumination of the Holy Ghost.\*\*\* We have heard the wonderful skill of a noted revivalist illustrated by one of his admirers, thus: He was vindicating the necessity of protracted meetings, and for this purpose employed the following illustration: ‘If we kindle a single fire under a kettle it will warm the water somewhat, but will not raise it to a boiling heat. And if we wait till the water becomes cold before we again put fire under it, we may repeat the experiment endlessly without making it boil. The fire must therefore be kept a-going without interruption, till the result sought is attained. So with preaching. If it occur only on the sabbath, the effect dies away during the week. It must be therefore repeated without cessation, in order to accomplish any thing.’ This supposes that religion is a mere working up of the natural susceptibilities by the efficacy of persuasion, instead of a product of the divine power attending the preaching of the word. Otherwise it is unmeaning. Yet it is plausible with unreflecting minds. These are fair specimens of the anecdotes and illustrations used by this class of preachers. And although there is a legitimate use of anecdotes and illustrations, when conscientiously and judiciously employed by experimental and spiritually enlightened preachers, yet we insist that the free use of such as are commonly employed by the class of preachers under review, is obnoxious to all the charges we have laid against them.

“An itinerant revivalist makes his first *entree* into a place, with the advantage of a certain sort of celebrity, as a preacher of prodigious power and unparalleled interest, and a worker of wonders in the way of producing revivals. He is often sent for, under the idea that his advent will certainly bring with it a revival, and his fame is trumpeted before him on the wings of the wind. By means of this, and the

free application of the style of preaching we have described, day after day, and night after night, a crowd is soon gathered to witness this strange thing, and see whereunto it will come. Unless these means have already become stale, and bereft of the charm of novelty and freshness, by frequent repetition, unless they have thus exhausted the excitability and curiosity of the people, or unless their true nature and tendency have come to be generally understood, or there are other unpropitious circumstances, they will rally all sorts of people to witness the spectacle, whether they approve or disapprove it. And now the preacher is pretty sure to announce that a 'shaking' is about to occur under his labours, such as passes all former example, and points to the sensation already made, the crowds of people rushing to hear him, as premonitory symptoms of what will be witnessed by those who shall be on the ground a few weeks hence. Moreover, he teaches the praying people, that if they will offer the 'prayer of faith,' they can procure whatever conversions, and as much of a revival, as they ask. Thus the indications of a revival are made at once to appear. And now the great labour is to accumulate all excitements from heaven, earth, and hell, that urge an immediate taking of the great resolve, which is deemed equivalent to passing from death to life, and here is tested whatever virtue there is in efforts descriptive and histrionic, to make the auditory see themselves in the grasp of death, or standing before the judgment seat of Christ, or hear the sentence of the judge, or inhale the sulphureous fumes of the pit, or the balmy fragrance of the paradise above, to hear the frantic shrieks of the damned, or catch the transporting melodies of heaven, and thus to make the present seem the last moment in which the lake of fire can be exchanged for immortal bliss, and in this way to impel to that resolution to serve the Lord, which is made one



with spiritual regeneration. That the truths thus brought to view are most necessary to be enforced powerfully, and felt vividly, especially in a religious revival, we know full well. But then they must be unfolded in their proper places and proportions, according to the analogy of faith. And unless properly accompanied with other evangelical truths, they become incentives to spurious conversions and false hopes, instead of that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart. But this process alone is found ordinarily not to be sufficiently stimulating; hence, in order to hasten and develop the work still more palpably, certain *measures*, as they have been styled, are usually introduced at a favourable crisis.\*

\*I can corroborate the inefficiency of the preaching of such "revivalists," without the use of their peculiar "measures," by an experiment which I tried some years ago. There had been in my church, at the time alluded to, a very interesting state of religious feeling. I had been preaching for three or four evenings every week for several months in succession. The meetings were unusually solemn, and a considerable number had been hopefully converted to God. In this state of things, several of the members of the church suggested the expediency of inviting a certain "revival preacher," who, at that period, was producing great excitements in different parts of the country. Upon reflection, I determined to try the experiment, provided I could obtain his assistance without the introduction of his new measures. I had seen enough, in my native city, of the fruits of such machinery, and witnessed enough of the ultimate results of such measures, in the field of my present labours; and was, therefore, from the very outset of my ministry, determined never to employ them or countenance their use by others. I accordingly wrote to the revivalist—explaining to him my views, and inviting him to come and labour with me, if he could dispense with his objectionable apparatus. He replied that he would come with pleasure—that while he thought that, under some circumstances, such measures were useful, they were not always desirable, much less indispensably necessary—that for himself, he depended mainly upon the blessing of God on the preaching of the Gospel—and that, if he came, he would not think of introducing any measure in opposition to my judgment, &c. Well, he came; and, at his suggestion, another brother to co-operate with him. They preached alternately for nearly a week,

They have reference to that well understood principle of human nature, which is ashamed to renounce any course to which it is publicly committed, and on this they chiefly depend for the efficacy.

“One measure commonly resorted to at an early stage of these proceedings is, a call upon all persons in the assembly who are determined or disposed to come out on the Lord’s side, or to flee from destruction, or seek heaven, to indicate it by rising, and all who are of a contrary mind, to indicate it by keeping their seats. In this case, if those who are really determined to serve the Lord, respond to the call, it is quite certain, that most of those who are not, will join them. When men of the world are unexpectedly sur-

and held social meetings for prayer. But their preaching produced no good effect; and the religious feeling existing in the congregation at the time they commenced their labours, daily and rapidly diminished. Of this they appeared to be themselves convinced—for, after labouring a day or two, the chief “revivalist” began privately to intimate, that nothing could be done, unless *some measure* was resorted to for the purpose of bringing sinners to a decision, &c. I reminded him of his previous pledge; and told him positively that no novel measure should be employed. He seemed to be still dissatisfied; when I told him that, if he was not willing to continue to preach and pray, without the use of new measures, I would publicly state all the facts to the people, and put an end at once to the protracted meeting. He looked at me as if doubting whether I meant what I had said, when I again repeated the same words, and assured him that I was never more decided in my life. He then dropped the subject, and the services went on—the preaching becoming in fact every day more flat and soporific. This experiment convinced me that the “revival preachers” are powerless without their usual machinery—that the popular excitements which they produce, are effected by their peculiar apparatus, and not by the blessing of God upon their exhibitions of divine truth. The experiment was not without this advantage—that no such “revivalists” have since been desired by any of the members of my flock;—but it was, alas! too expensive, inasmuch, as I have every reason to believe, that the work of God, which had been progressing for months, was by it materially checked and injured.

prised into a dilemma, one horn of which is to go along with a bewildered and excited concourse of people, and the other to be set down in the black list, as sinners of extraordinary hardihood and desperation, very few have nerve and courage enough to choose the latter. We consider this procedure no better than a trap to ensnare men into insincere, or, in the best view, inconsiderate professions. We know it has been resorted to for the promotion of many worthy objects, in a manner, however, which involves less of the nature and sanctity of a vow to the Lord than in this case, with the design of extorting professions and pledges in their behalf, from persons who never expected to make them. But in the end, this trick, like all other tricks, cannot fail to re-act disastrously upon any good cause which adopts it. In the case of thus publicly calling on men to disclose their religious character, their pride is appealed to virtually, first to induce them to profess themselves religious, and then to induce them to preserve at least an outward and seeming conformity to the professions to which they have thus been ensnared to commit themselves. Indeed, we have heard an enthusiastic defender of a celebrated revivalist, who is now in the full tide of successful experiment, allege the influence of pride in holding men to professions already made, as the great reason and justification of all his manifold artifices to get men publicly committed to become pious. Moreover, in most cases, the preacher will largely expatiate upon the importance and necessity of taking a stand before men, by means of this and certain other measures, which we shall presently notice, as being the grand and decisive step on which their conversion depends. When this is done, no matter how many *salvos* the preacher throws in to clear himself from the charge of teaching the obvious delusion, that such a step is scriptural regeneration, the anxious hearer,

ready to catch at a straw, infallibly understands that this step is either identical with, or evidential of, or certainly antecedent to, true conversion; and that if taken with a desire of getting religion, it is one of the things that accompany salvation. And when a large concourse have thus publicly committed themselves to be religious, the news spreads far and wide, that a great religious awakening or revival is in progress in —— under the labours of the Rev. Mr. ——.

“ In order to perfect this public commitment, recourse is usually had to another series of expedients. Certain seats, rooms, or other localities, are allotted to persons in various conditions of mind. Some have a miscalled altar, to which all persons who wish conversion must come to be prayed for. Others set off a certain number of seats, usually those nearest the pulpit, which they style ‘anxious seats,’ which answer the purpose of the altar already mentioned. To these are often added ‘decision seats,’ ‘hoping seats,’ &c. &c. Instead of seats, sometimes a particular room is used, styled the ‘anxious’ or ‘inquiry’ room; and another styled the ‘young convert’s’ room. Or some other expedient is adopted answering the same purpose. And now all the influences already adverted to, and every other device which can reach the human sensibilities, are put in motion to induce sinners to come to the anxious seat, room or altar. They are made practically to believe that their salvation is staked upon it. Of course, if there is any excitement, great numbers rush to this hallowed point of entrance into the kingdom of God. Here they soon learn that the new birth is an act of their own sovereign power of willing, in which they choose God instead of the world, or determine to serve him, or come out on his side, or give themselves to him—an act to which they are at this moment, as at all times, every way competent. This is usually followed by what is sometimes

called the 'dedicatory' prayer—a prayer in which the speaker calls on his hearers to unite with him in giving themselves to God, and uses expressions in accordance with his previous instructions. And in the emphatic phrase of Mr. Finney, large numbers 'in the space of a few minutes come right out on the Lord's side;' ripe for the decision seats, or hoping seats, or young convert's room, or any other place to which they may be allotted. It is very common, in order to rally greater numbers around the anxious seats, for leaders in the work, sometimes the preacher himself, to go around the house and address individuals singly, urging them to the anxious seat or altar, and in order more effectually to awe and startle them, they often pray for them aloud by name. This is done in many cases, while others are publicly praying or exhorting. In order still further to perfect the commitment, it is usually insisted on as a capital point, that young converts should rise and state their feelings and purposes, and otherwise exhort and pray in the meetings. This heightens the startling effect of the rest of the proceedings, and ministers fresh food to restless curiosity and love of excitement in the assembling and gazing crowds. When the proceedings reach this pass, whatever of decorum, sobriety and rationality may have attended the beginning of the excitement, are usually supplanted by phrenzied and tumultuous excitement, and 'confusion worse confounded' takes the place of the solemn order and decency that befit the house of God.

“That by this course of procedure, going to the anxious seat or altar becomes the great matter in conversion, in the view of those who go to it, admits, we think, of no dispute. We know that these preachers try to evade the responsibility of inculcating a sentiment so self-evidently absurd and pernicious, by taking care to say that this step

has no intrinsic virtue or efficacy in it; and that, in itself considered, praying and preaching may be as salutary to an individual in one part of a church as another: but then they are ever careful to add, that there is a something in some way connected with or consequent upon taking the anxious seat, which makes it almost if not altogether the turning point of their salvation or perdition. And what matters it, as to the real importance and efficacy of the anxious seat, whether it cause conversion *per se*, or by means of its necessary adjuncts and consequences. They often say that ‘the seat is indeed nothing in itself, but going to it serves to break down pride, and is taking the cross, without which men cannot be saved.’ But are not bearing the cross, and breaking down pride, things which accompany salvation, and is not that which produces these things the cause of conversion? How then do these evasions help the case? Does not the anxious seat stand in the sinner’s mind after all as the great point of transition into the kingdom of God? Can it be otherwise, if a few stories are told as they always are, showing how persons who have refused to come up to the altar or anxious seat have been kept out of the hope and peace of the gospel, until they yielded the point, and on repairing to it, immediately had joy and peace in believing?

“ Besides, it is a fixed principle, that wherever uncommanded outward rites and observances are conceived to have an important agency in procuring the divine favour, there they overshadow, or rather supplant, in the practical estimation of men, the real righteousness which God requires. We believe this to be an unvarying fact. The same is true of rites having a scriptural warrant, if they are invested with an importance and efficacy which the Bible does not attach to them. Those who made so much of tithing mint, anise and

cumin, neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. This is the essence of formalism and hypocrisy, and has been the vice of the sacramental party in the church in all ages. No doctrine is so sweet and exhilarating to the unregenerate heart as the idea that some external ceremony propitiates the favour of God. It is eagerly grasped as a substitute for the spiritual conformity of the heart to the divine law, and for the prostration of all personal pride and self-complacency, in order to be justified exclusively by the merits of Christ. Hence, in some form, it has been the characteristic ingredient of every form of heathen superstition and spurious Christianity. Where uncommanded rites especially are exalted, so as to be deemed influential in procuring the divine favour, they at once usurp the place which belongs to the true objects of spiritual worship, and are regarded with downright superstition. The invocation of saints, the worship of the virgin, the bodily penances and asceticism, and all the rites of the Romish Church confirm and illustrate this remark. Who does not know that the anxious seat, room or altar, is extensively regarded with a similar superstition by those who subject themselves to their exorcisms? As to the *caveats*, which warn the people not to regard them as having an inherent, but only an attendant or consequential efficacy, who does not know that every Romish rite is enveloped by its advocates in a mist of sophistry far more subtle and attenuated than this? But what do such minute distinctions avail with the bewildered mass on whom these rites are imposed?\*\*\*\*

“That under this lashing process, immense numbers should be spurred to form and publicly indicate their determination to serve the Lord, and that the number of such converts may be equal to that blazoned in the printed accounts of these excitements, is by no means improbable.

As to resolutions to be holy, made by men with unregenerate hearts, we have a memorable instance recorded in Deut. v. 27—29, ‘Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and WE WILL HEAR IT AND DO IT. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O, THAT THERE WERE SUCH A HEART IN THEM, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and their children forever.’ The great vice of the resolutions of the unregenerate is, that being made by the ‘will of the flesh,’ while the affections of the heart are still impure, there is not such a HEART in those who make them, that they will keep God’s commandments always. Nothing is more common than for graceless men, under mere legal conviction, and terrors wrought by the common operations of the Spirit, or in seasons of affliction, to make resolutions to live righteously, and adopt a corresponding reformation of life, which in different persons is of various extent and duration. Nay, the whole form of religion may be assumed without its power. The spirit of bondage may goad the subject of it to the earnest purpose to obey the will of God, and to put forth all the appearances of piety. But the living and abiding root of grace in the soul is wanting; so that there is no living faith, no life-giving union to Christ, the only source of supplies of strength and growth, no inward transformation by the renewing of the mind, no true spirit of adoption, no love of holiness for its own sake. In this sense, many are partakers of the heavenly gift, and taste the powers of the world to come, who sooner or later fall away. Many anon hear the word with



joy, who, when tribulation ariseth because of the word, are straightway offended. Many, under the impulse of selfish hope or fear, or from a pride of consistency, keep up an outward and barren form of godliness through life, who nevertheless have no living principle of thrift and growth, and manifest none of the precious fruits of the Spirit.\*\*\*\*

“ We by no means intend to intimate that none, or even few of those who profess religion under such circumstances, prove in the end to be real Christians, and to walk as becometh the gospel of Christ. We rejoice in the belief that there are many such. But, as concerns the instrumental cause of this, we ascribe them chiefly to other agencies, which are wholly unnoticed in the blazing accounts of these excitements that are paraded in the public prints. We ascribe them to previous religious instruction, to the sabbath school, to pastoral preaching, prayer and other labours; to the teachings, prayers and tears of godly parents.\* \*\*\*\*

“ That we have not exaggerated the true character and results of these *manœuvres*, is attested by the concurrent voice of all competent witnesses in any degree acquainted with them. To present any considerable part of this description of evidence, which has been accumulating the last ten years,

\*There can be no doubt but that the sound conversions which take place during such excitements, is owing chiefly to the previous instruction of intelligent and faithful pastors—of pastors whose churches are often subsequently deserted, and whose ministry is often afterwards spoken of in the most contemptuous, ungrateful and uncharitable manner! And there is as little room for doubt, that, had many, if not all such, confined themselves to the scriptural ministrations of their pastors, and to the use of the ordinary but divinely appointed means of grace, they would have been eventually renewed and brought into the spiritual kingdom of God—and that too, under circumstances far more favourable to the formation of Christian character and their subsequent growth in grace.

would itself fill the usual space allotted to an article. We shall barely exhibit as a specimen the last that has come in our way. It is from a *conscio ad clerum*, preached by Rev. A. Newton, at the late commencement of the Western Reserve College. It is, therefore, from a source not liable to the imputation of being warped by ‘Old School prejudices.’ We take the following extract from the New England Puritan, of Sept. 23, 1841. *Ex uno disce omnes.*

“‘I do not know that any of our modern evangelists would consent to labour in a place at all, unless they could be allowed to hold a meeting of five or six weeks in continuance. During these meetings it is expected that Christians will suspend much of the ordinary business of life—that they will attend meetings from three to five times a day—that they will confess their sins in public—that they will converse with the impenitent—and generally, do what they have perhaps never done, and what they are not expected to continue to do for a great length of time. Furthermore, there is generally incorporated with this system the practice of dividing off those who seem to be affected with religious truth into classes, and assigning to them different seats, which take their names from the supposed spiritual condition of their occupants—as anxious seats—decision seats—hoping seats, &c. It is not an uncommon thing to call persons by name in prayer. There is also very generally encouraged a style and manner of praying so grossly familiar, as to shock most minds unaccustomed to it; and a manner of preaching is practised, which is calculated rather to affect the imagination and the passions, than enlighten the understanding and impress the conscience and the heart.’

“He further lays to the account of this system, the producing of many spurious conversions. And after showing *how* it produces the result, he says:

“ ‘ But what do facts teach us on this subject? If any reliance can be placed on the testimony of some of the most discriminating and judicious pastors, whose churches have been the theatre of these operations, we must believe that the system does produce a large proportion of unsound conversions. I am not permitted to name persons or places, but I may say that in one church where an evangelist was employed, more than half that united with the church, proved, within two or three years, in the estimation of the pastor, to be destitute of piety; that in another where upwards of one hundred conversions were proclaimed, not fifteen, in the opinion of the pastor, ever gave evidence of a saving change; and the children who had been thought converts, were pronounced by their school teachers to be seven-fold worse than before; and that in another church where an evangelist had laboured with great apparent success, the pastor in less than a year afterwards declared that of the two hundred who united with his church in the season of excitement, not more than fifty gave satisfactory evidence of piety. These three examples are adduced as fair illustrations of the effects of the system. The revivals occurred in different places, and were all conducted by different evangelists. And from an inquiry somewhat extensive on this subject, I have good reason to believe that not a much greater proportion of sound conversions has been the result of such efforts generally for the last six or eight years.’ ”\*

\*The history of *the Third Presbyterian Church of Baltimore*, prior to my pastoral connection with it, furnishes abundant evidence of the ruinous effects of new measures. It may not be generally known, from the present character and standing of the congregation, that this system was for many years in use in this church. It had frequent “revivals”—so called—an account of one of which is still extant in pamphlet form. During these seasons of excitement, numbers were added to the commu-

“ Our limits will now only permit a cursory glance at some of the more flagrant evils resulting from this whole system, which have not been distinctly noted in the foregoing analysis.

“ These are only so many developments of that law which governs the use of preternatural stimulants, throughout every department of animated existence. They are neither foodful nor nutritious. Though they may goad for the moment into a spasmodic energy and excitement, they do it by taxing those latent, residuary powers, which constitute a reserve force for future emergencies, and consequently, in a brief period, induce a greater debility than they found. Now all these expedients for producing a religious excite-

nion of the church; and the congregation was reported, at various times, as being in a highly prosperous and growing state. But the truth is, that the greater part of the converts would not *stay* converted; and left the church about as fast as they were brought into it. One minister after another took charge of it; and each, after raising expectation by his revival machinery, was in turn obliged to abandon it. In short, the church was revived, and re-revived, until it was nearly revived to death! The expedients resorted to were only temporary in their reviving effects, and left the church in a worse and worse condition. The conduct of some of the operators resembled that of certain planters, who care not for the ultimate impoverishment of the soil, so that they can only reap a few good crops. The church, in the emphatic language of one of its early friends, was like a good cow—milked, but not fed; and as soon as it became dry, the milker was off, to pursue the same easy and exhausting process somewhere else. When I came here, it would have been difficult to have found a dozen left in the church, who had been “brought out” under the high pressure system; and the congregation itself was on the eve of total extinction. One fact will illustrate the illusion of such measures. On one page of the Minutes of the Presbytery, a flaming narrative of a work of grace in the church, is given by the gentleman who was then its minister, and the effects of it upon the prospective interests of the congregation spoken of in glowing terms: when, lo! on the very next page, the record is made of the dissolution of his connection with the church, on the ground of inadequate pecuniary support! By one

ment, are but so many stimulants of man's inventing, applied to the natural susceptibilities, to produce a transient stir and commotion on the subject of religion. They are a substitute for the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, implanting new principles of hearty love and obedience to the truth as it is in Jesus. They are therefore perfectly analogous to those stimulants of the physical system, which excite a transient, unnatural, and almost a demoniac power, but instead of imparting real, abiding strength, only consume and exhaust it. As under the application of these stimulants there is a degree of overwrought, morbid excitement, which the human system cannot long endure, so, immediately on their cessation, there is a terrible relapse. An

who has not been placed in similar circumstances, it would be impossible to estimate the difficulties which were thus entailed upon the present pastor of the church. For a year or two, I could do but little else than teach the people what religion is *not*; and endeavour to counteract the unfavourable impressions which had been made upon the community in consequence of previous and frequent failures to resuscitate the church. And for many, many years, were we obliged to struggle with an onerous debt, contracted in great part, for the purpose of paying the salaries of one and another of the revival ministers who had been from time to time employed.

Moreover,—to say nothing of the character, generally, of converts made by such machinery,—it is found that the *number* added to the church was not as great as has since been added, by the blessing of God, upon the ordinary means of grace. The congregation was organized on the 5th day of May, 1822; and up to the summer of 1830, a period of eight years, according to the sessional records, there had been added to the church *two hundred and twenty* persons. During the first eight years of my ministry, that is, from 1830 to 1838, there were added to the church *three hundred and five* persons; or *eighty-five* MORE than during the same period under the high pressure system. And, blessed be God, with the exception of those who have gone to their eternal rest, and those who from time to time have removed from the city, and some *few* who have, alas! backsliden,—they remain to this day, the worthy members of the church—my hope and joy and crown of rejoicing!

awful torpor usually ensues, and that, in most cases, immediately.

“The ordinary means of grace, the unadulterated milk and meat of divine truth, cease to invigorate and quicken those who have been subjected to these exorcisms, just as nutritious food will not give the requisite tone to the system which has been chiefly kept up by narcotic or alcoholic stimulants. Hence preaching, and all other means of grace, are beyond precedent, stript of all power and interest among a people thus hardened and stupified. All the plain and solemn services of the sanctuary, as conducted by a stated ministry, become ineffably tame and dull to those who have so long been regaling themselves on droll stories, startling paradoxes, and degrading or delusive illustrations. Worshipping assemblies speedily become thin and inattentive. Decay and langour rapidly mark every thing pertaining to the cause of religion. Things wax worse and worse. And the withering re-action is equal to the overheated action. As a necessary result, a species of infatuation ordinarily possesses at least the leaders in these transactions. Those who are quickened by morbid stimulants, instead of attributing their subsequent lassitude and other distempers to the true cause, will usually charge them upon something else: perhaps upon influences most salutary in their nature. So in this case. They usually charge their decay and exhaustion upon those Christians and ministers who will not fall in with and endorse such proceedings, styling them ‘Achans’, ‘stumbling blocks,’ &c. &c. Or they charge it upon the want of the ‘revival spirit, or revival preaching,’ in the pastor, who may be endeavouring, by a judicious course of instruction, to restore the chaotic mass to a state of order and thrift.

“Hence the remedy for this prostration and debility, which is always resorted to, unless God graciously dispel their

blindness, is a more liberal use of the same sort of means which produced them. A mere repetition of the same precise measures is usually stale, and has little power to rouse the people. As novelty and strangeness formed a chief ingredient in the exciting power of their first measures, so these qualities vanish at each repetition, unless produced by some new devices still more strange and startling in their nature and disastrous in their results. And this process usually goes on from bad to worse, in places not cured of the love of such things, till the folly of these operators becomes manifest, and they can go no further, having tried experiment after experiment, till the most desperate expedients cease to affect the people. Thus Mr. Finney, who, in his discourse on measures, insists that there must always be something NEW, has tried every expedient, doctrinal and practical, he has at last taken up Perfectionism as the magic instrument which is to rouse the church to a higher standard of action, and revive those slumbering professors, whom he so emphatically denounced as a DISGRACE TO RELIGION. And his folly has become manifest to multitudes who never could see it before. For it is an unalterable law that 'evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.'

“And when such means come to be regarded as ‘the great power of God,’ the grand appliances by which religion receives its chief impulse and advancement, then a proportionate disparagement of the divinely instituted means of grace ensues. Having become insipid, unprofitable and powerless, they likewise become contemptible in the eyes of the people. That, in the train of these measures, the sabbath, sanctuary, ministry, and family religion, sink in the practical judgment and affections of the people, is not so much matter of speculation as of history. All these latter means contemplate a gentle, solid, and steady growth, a progress which, if slow, is sure. Of course they are at war with the

whole genius of new measures. What opinion would he have of the efficacy of family worship, or of a plain gospel-sermon on the sabbath, who conceived that it was the province, not of God, but of some famous, story-telling, paradoxical preacher to give the increase? We believe it to be a well-established fact, that family religion does not flourish in churches, which depend chiefly on these unnatural stimulants for the promotion of religion. If the form is retained, the power of it vanishes. And what more fatal shock can the permanent interests of religion receive, than the dissemination of a general contempt of these great ordinances of God for its promotion? Of course these measures sweep away the pastoral relation in their dreadful wake.

“People who have been regaling themselves on the rare entertainments afforded by this sort of preachers, with its varied condiment of vulgar humour, sarcasm, anecdote, illustration and histrionism, and who think this the great means of promoting religion, will not long endure plain gospel sermons, or those who preach them; ‘for the time shall come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but will after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.’ Pastors therefore are early victims to this course of things. All this has for a long time been matter of history. Through whole Presbyteries,” (new school) “and tracts of country where these men have figured, there is only here and there a settled pastor, and what few there are, have in most cases been settled, and are destined to continue settled, but a few months. Now if there is any sure method in which the curse of God is inflicted upon churches, it is in their privation of faithful and competent pastors.

“This system is the fruitful mother of doctrinal errors and heresies of every form and hue. It works this result in various ways. It is based upon and pre-supposes a fundamental



error respecting that power by which the heart of man is conformed and made obedient to the truths of the gospel. It substitutes human expedients which operate on the natural susceptibilities, for God's sovereign, omnipotent, transforming grace. It of course denies or explains away special grace, and all affiliated doctrines. This, as we have already seen, strikes, by inevitable consequence, at the very vitals of religious experience, and dwindles it down to a mere resolution put forth under the impulses of self-love. But after these errors, so exhilarating to the carnal mind, lose their freshness, they lose their power to arouse men; and they generally prefer to postpone attention to a religion which it is so easy to obtain at any moment, till they have a more convenient season for attending to it. Then the new conception of the 'prayer of faith' is brought in to surmount this obstacle. But when this demonstrates its own fallacy in unquestionable results, improved dietetics or Perfectionism is brought forward as the last desperate remedy for a desperate case. It is learned that external ordinances are an incubus on the free aspirations of the spirit within. The obligation of the moral law also is found to fetter inward liberty.\* It is discovered to be a dreadful bondage to be under any law but our own passions and lusts. Thus the most unbridled licentiousness has stalked abroad, with great swelling words of vanity, saying to humble piety, **STAND BY FOR I AM HOLIER THAN THOU.** Meanwhile, many who have been pronounced converts, and perhaps made foremost in promoting the revival, finding that their conversion is all a delu-

\*The New Measures appear to have produced the same anti-nomianism, &c. in *Mr. Wesley's* times. His Journal contains many examples of this among his converts; over which he bitterly lamented, but of the true cause of which he appears to have been profoundly ignorant.—*Wesley's Works*, vol. III, pp. 172-174.—p. 178.—pp. 181-183—pp. 186-190, &c.

sion, begin to consider all religious experience as a dream of enthusiasm, and all evangelical religion an imposture. In a genuine revival of religion, we have seen those who were fortified against it; because, as they said, 'they had been all through with this conversion before, and it was all a farce.' Spectators who observe these scenes and their results often imbibe the same sort of scepticism. Many of the more substantial sort of people, disgusted with such a course of things, flee for relief to some of those sects, where an orderly formalism takes the place of evangelical piety. Thus infidelity, Universalism and formality grow apace. The result is, in many cases, incurable divisions and feuds in churches; in others, their utter disruption and disorganization; in others, their complete apostacy and extinction, or, at best evanescence into Perfectionism, Unionism, *et id genus omne*.

"Suppose however, that these more fearful rocks and quicksands are avoided. Let us consider, for a moment, the case of such as, in the judgment of charity, are real Christians in churches which have been filled with members by these measures. Although their tendency may have been so far counteracted as to prevent fatal delusion in many cases, yet it does not follow that they are harmless even in that event. On the contrary, they do exceedingly mar, distort and debilitate the piety of real Christians. They serve to make them weak in the faith; to give them confused views of that truth by which they are sanctified; to impede their growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to impoverish all that part of religious experience which consists in communion with God, self-searching, mortification of lust, the inward conflict between nature and grace, love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and all the fruits of the Spirit. They greatly impair the beautiful proportion and symmetry of re-

religious character ; inspiring a disproportionate zeal for some things, and a comparative neglect of others equally important. There is often, for example, a most vehement zeal for the conversion of sinners, and the reformation of public morals, while there is little zeal against sin within the zealot himself, little habitual spirituality and heavenliness of mind. This degenerate, lean, starveling sort of religious experience has become exceedingly prevalent of late years, and is matter of universal complaint. There are immense multitudes who do not appear so much no Christians, as weak Christians ; babes in knowledge and grace, who retain all the weakness and imbecility of helpless infancy. They are incapable of withstanding the seductions of error and temptation. They are ‘ children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive,’ Eph. iv. 14. They have not their ‘ senses exercised to discern both good and evil,’ and ‘ when for the time, they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God ; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat,’ Heb. v. 12—14. And what else could be expected ? Can a bad tree bring forth good fruits ?

“ In short, what has been styled New Divinity and New Measures, is essentially Arminianism : it produces an Arminian religion : wherever it has prevailed in Calvinistic communions, it has reduced them to, if not below, the level of the surrounding Arminian sects. All that pre-eminence for scriptural knowledge, spiritual discernment, stable, sober and principled piety, which has been the glory of Calvinistic churches ; which has made them pioneers in religious enterprise and useful reformations, and bulwarks of truth, liberty, order, purity, intelligence and learning, against the vandal

irruptions of rationalistic and prelatie arrogance, fanatic and ignorant zeal, instantly vanishes when this leaven prevails ; and THE GLORY IS DEPARTED.\*\*\*\*

“ A few words as to the manner in which such principles and proceedings are commonly vindicated by their authors and abettors.

“ Although great evil confessedly attends them, yet it is deemed enough to silence all objections, that they accomplish great good, and are the occasion of many genuine conversions. But this plea renounces the only standard by which all controversies are to be tried, and appeals to results. We say ‘ to the law and the testimony.’ Moreover, appealing to results, they are non-suited, as the foregoing pages abundantly show. As to those who are truly converted at such times, could not and would not the grace of God bring them into his kingdom, in the due use of his appointed means, and in a manner far more promotive of the prosperity of their souls? Are not great numbers fatally deluded and otherwise injured, and are not all the interests of religion smitten with a withering blight? Is it said that the church can be purged by discipline? Under the purest administration, and the utmost vigilance, some false professors will find their way into the church, and there will be need of an occasional excommunication. But is it not unutterably cruel to beguile men into the church by a system of devices, which can only be defended on the ground that the mischiefs flowing from them, can be counteracted by inflicting on their victims the pains of ecclesiastical decapitation? And is it not ruinous to their souls to use measures expressly designed to produce religious excitement in them, which shall stop short of true conversion? For do not scripture and experience prove that, in such cases, ‘ the last state is worse than the first?’ It is one thing to be visited with such evils

occasionally in spite of the best efforts to avoid them, and quite another to adopt a system directly adapted to engender them.

“ They are in the habit of replying to all objections with great assurance, by saying that in this age the world moves by steam, and unless we adopt some more improved, rapid method of converting it, it will run away from us. This idea is put forth in every variety of form, *ad captandum*, to catch the unreflecting crowd. Our readers, we fear, will think we are dealing with trifles, in giving it this distinct and formal notice. But we are impelled to do it, in view of the serious use which is made of this fancy. When those who profess to surpass all others as teachers and promoters of religion, offer it as a serious answer to the objections of the ‘ Old School’ against their fierce and impetuous movements, and loose doctrines, that ‘ if any choose to travel in ox-carts or scows they can, but we prefer a steamboat or locomotive,’ when things of this nature are seriously thrown out in ‘ revival’ sermons, as they have been freely by those who have figured most prominently in these things of late ; then we say, it ought to be put in print ; so that it may become the object of calm contemplation ; and that those who presume to argue thus about God’s truth, and the order of his house, may retain whatever credit they can as teachers of ‘ the religion of the Bible,’ which is the same ‘ yesterday, to-day, and forever.’

“ In conclusion, we think that ample cause has been shown why the orthodox Christians of this land look with greater or less distrust upon all religious excitements, which are produced under the influence either of the doctrines or measures which have been examined, or of both conjoined ; and still more why they cannot look upon such excitements as evidential of the truth of the principles, the rectitude of

the measures, of the men, that are instrumental in their production ; and why they cannot confide in the authors and abettors of these doctrines and devices, no matter what wonders they may work, until they explicitly repudiate them.

“ And we think that in these things the course of duty is the course of safety ; that the more entirely all ministers and churches avoid all participation in, all sanction or countenance of these extravagances, the more will they be in the way of receiving the Divine blessing, and becoming ultimately sound and prosperous. Mark those which cause divisions and offences among you, and avoid them. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, is the course, not less of wise policy, than of gospel righteousness. And it behoves all concerned to see to it, that they so faithfully and prayerfully use the means of Divine appointment for promoting the cause of religion, that they shall give no occasion to those who seek occasion, and wish a plausible pretext for thrusting upon them the contrary sort of proceedings, and thus kindling UNHALLOWED FIRE UPON THE ALTAR OF THE LORD.”

As this subject is one of paramount importance, I will subjoin the letters of the venerable Drs. Alexander and Miller of Princeton, appended, among others from various distinguished clergymen of different denominations, to the Lectures of Dr. Sprague on Revivals of Religion.—These Lectures are admirably written—expository of the nature of a genuine revival of religion and of the scriptural means for their promotion ;—and the Letters, added in the form of an Appendix, are equally interesting and instructive : and proceeding from no less than twenty ministers, certainly among the most talented, learned, pious and useful in their respective communions, their unanimous and decided testimony is

entitled to great consideration. The following are the letters of Drs. Alexander and Miller :—

### LETTER

FROM THE REVEREND ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, New-Jersey.

“ *Princeton, March 9, 1832.*

“ REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

“ In compliance with your request, I send you a few thoughts on revivals. I am gratified to learn that you are about to publish some Lectures on this interesting subject. I hope they will be extensively useful; and if you should judge that any thing which I may write would subserve a valuable purpose, you are at liberty to make use of this letter as you may think best.

“ A revival or religious excitement may exist and be very powerful, and affect many minds, when the producing cause is not the Spirit of God; and when the truth of God is not the means of the awakening. This we must believe, unless we adopt the opinion that the Holy Spirit accompanies error by his operations as well as truth, which would be blasphemous. Religious excitements have been common among Pagans, Mohammedans, heretics and Papists. And in our own time there have been great religious excitements among those who reject the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; as for example, among the *Christ-ians*, who are Unitarians, and the *New-lights* or Schismatics of the west, and the Campbellites, who deny the proper Divinity of our Lord, and the scriptural doctrine of atonement. The whole religion of the Shakers also, consists in enthusiastic excitement. Hence it is evident, that revivals ought to be distinguished into such as are genuine and such as are spurious.

And the distinction should depend on the doctrines inculcated, on the measures adopted, and the fruits produced. 'Beloved,' says the apostle John, 'believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.'

"2. Again, a revival or religious excitement may take place when a few persons only are under the saving operations of the Holy Spirit: but when many are affected by sympathy, and by the application of extraordinary means of awakening the feelings. I have seen a powerful religious impression pervade a large congregation at once, so that very few remained unaffected; and most expressed their feelings by the strongest signs; and yet, as it afterwards appeared, very few of them became permanently serious. Besides, when the Spirit operates savingly on some, there is reason to think that his common operations are experienced by many. The minds of the people generally become more serious and tender; and many are deeply convinced of the necessity of religion, and engage earnestly in prayer, and in attendance on other means of grace. Now while so many are affected, but few may be truly converted; and no human wisdom is adequate to discern between those who are savingly wrought upon, and those who are only the subjects of the common operations of the Holy Spirit. The tree which is covered with blossoms often produces little fruit. The wind which agitates the whole forest, may tear up but few trees by the roots. Thus there may be great and promising appearances, and yet very little fruit. Temporary believers may use the same language, and exhibit to others precisely the same appearance as true converts. This consideration should be sufficient to prevent the practice lately introduced, of admitting persons to the communion of the church at the very meeting at which they were first awakened. There may be cases in which well instructed persons of known good character, may be



received to the Lord's table, as soon as they profess a hope of acceptance with God, but these should be considered exceptions to the general rule. Often the impressions produced at a public meeting, where strong excitements are applied to awaken the feelings, are as evanescent as the morning cloud or early dew. And many of those who become truly pious, entertain for a while, hopes, which they afterwards are convinced to be unfounded; and to pronounce such persons converted at once, and hurry their admission to the Lord's table, would be the most effectual method of preventing their saving conversion. There may be an error on the other side, of too long a delay, and of discouraging real believers from approaching the table of their Lord; but the error is on the safest side. As to apostolical precedent, it is just as strong for a community of goods; and after all, there is no undoubted case of any convert being immediately received to the Lord's supper. They were baptized instantly on their profession, but this in our view is a different thing; for we admit infants to baptism, but not to the other sacrament. And the fact is, that in every part of the world, the plan of placing young converts in the class of catechumens, to be instructed even prior to their baptism, was adopted. God often leaves his servants to find out by experience what is most expedient, and does not teach every thing by inspiration; as in the case of Moses in judging the people of Israel. And if experience has uttered her monitory voice clearly on any point, I think she has in regard to this; and I have no doubt that future experience will fully corroborate the lessons of the past.

“3. A real work of the Spirit may be mingled with much enthusiasm and disorder; but its beauty will be marred, and its progress retarded by every such spurious mixture. Thus also, individuals who are the subjects of special grace, may

for a while, be carried away with erroneous notions and extravagant feelings. We must not, therefore, condemn all as deluded souls, who manifest some signs of enthusiasm. But under the same revival or general excitement, while some are renewed and ingrafted into Christ, others may be entirely under the influence of error, spiritual pride, and delusion. When the Son of man sows good seed in his field, will not the enemy be busy in sowing tares? And doubtless it often happens, that by the rashness, fanaticism, and extravagance of a few persons, especially if they be leaders, an ill report may be brought up against a work, in which the Spirit of God has been powerfully operating. *The opinion that it is dangerous to oppose fanaticism, lest we hinder the work of God, is most unfounded. We cannot more effectually promote genuine revivals, than by detecting and suppressing fanaticism ; which is their counterfeit, and injures their reputation among intelligent men more than all other causes.*

“ 4. Often also, there may be much error mingled with the evangelical truth which is preached in times of revival ; and while God blesses his own truth to the conversion of men, the baleful effects of the error which accompanies it will be sure to be manifest. It may be compared to the case, where some poisonous ingredient is mingled with wholesome food. I might here, perhaps, refer to some sections of our own church, where the truth is not clearly inculcated ; and it might be shown that there is danger of error on both extremes. But I choose rather to refer to those churches, which we all think to be erroneous in certain points. No denomination among us has had more frequent and extensive revivals than the Methodists, and we have no doubt that multitudes have been truly converted under their ministry ; but the effect of their errors is manifest to an impartial observer. The same remark holds good respecting the Cumberland

Presbyterians, who greatly resemble the Methodists in their doctrines, and modes of promoting and conducting revivals. And as an example from the opposite extreme, I would mention that portion of the Baptist church, which is tinged with Antinomianism. They have revivals also, but their mode of treating the subjects is widely different from that of the sects last mentioned.

“5. But I come now to speak of genuine revivals, where the gospel is preached in its purity, and where the people have been well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. In a revival, it makes the greatest difference in the world whether the people have been carefully taught by catechising, and where they are ignorant of the truths of the Bible. In some cases revivals are so remarkably pure, that nothing occurs with which any pious man can find fault. There is not only no wildness and extravagance, but very little strong commotion of the animal feelings. The word of God distils upon the mind like the gentle rain, and the Holy Spirit comes down like the dew, diffusing a blessed influence on all around. Such a revival affords the most beautiful sight ever seen upon earth. Its aspect gives us a lively idea of what will be the general state of things IN THE LATTER DAY GLORY, and some faint image of the heavenly state. The impressions on the minds of the people in such a work are the exact counterpart of the truth; just as the impression on the wax corresponds to the seal. In such revivals there is great solemnity and silence. The convictions of sin are deep and humbling: the justice of God in the condemnation of the sinner is felt and acknowledged; every other refuge but Christ is abandoned; the heart at first is made to feel its own impenetrable hardness; but when least expected, it dissolves under a grateful sense of God’s goodness, and Christ’s love; light breaks in upon the soul either by

a gradual dawning, or by a sudden flash ; Christ is revealed through the gospel, and a firm and often a joyful confidence of salvation through Him is produced : a benevolent, forgiving, meek, humble and contrite spirit predominates—the love of God is shed abroad—and with some, joy unspeakable and full of glory, fills the soul. A spirit of devotion is enkindled. The word of God becomes exceedingly precious. Prayer is the exercise in which the soul seems to be in its proper element, because by it, God is approached, and his presence felt, and beauty seen : and the new-born soul lives by breathing after the knowledge of God, after communion with God, and after conformity to his will. Now also springs up in the soul an inextinguishable desire to promote the glory of God, and to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth, and by that means to the possession of eternal life. The sincere language of the heart is, ‘ Lord what wouldst thou have me to do?’ That God may send upon his church many such revivals, is my daily prayer ; and many such have been experienced in our country, and I trust are still going forward in our churches.

“6. But it has often occurred to me—and I have heard the same sentiment from some of the most judicious and pious men that I have known—that there must be a state of the church preferable to these temporary excitements, which are too often followed by a deplorable state of declension, and disgraceful apathy and inactivity. Why not aim at having a continuous lively state of piety ; and an unceasing progress in the conversion of the impenitent, without these dreadful seasons of deadness and indifference? Why may we not hope for such a state of increasing prosperity in the church, that *revivals* shall be no longer needed : or if you prefer the expression, when there shall be a *perpetual revival*? Richard Baxter’s congregation seems for

many years to have approximated to what is here supposed ; and perhaps that of John Brown of Haddington, and Dr. Romaine of London. And in this country, I have known a very few congregations in which a lively state of piety was kept up from year to year.

“ 7. We cannot, however, limit the HOLY ONE, nor prescribe modes of operation for the Spirit of God. His dispensations are inscrutable, and it is our duty to submit to his wisdom and his will ; and to go on steadily in the performance of our own duty. If He, the Sovereign, chooses to water his church by occasional showers, rather than with the perpetual dew of his grace ; and this more at one period, and in one continent, than at other times and places, we should rejoice and be grateful for the rich effusions of his Spirit in any form and manner ; and should endeavour to avail ourselves of these precious seasons, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the body of Christ. In the natural world the cold and barren winter regularly succeeds the genial and growing seasons of spring and summer ; and there may be an analogy to this vicissitude in the spiritual world. One thing we are taught, that believers stand in need of seasons of severe trial, that they may be purified, as the precious metals are purged from their dross in the heated furnace. Paul says, ‘ For there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest.’

“ 8. As genuine revivals are favourable to truth and orthodoxy, so spurious excitements furnish one of the most effectual vehicles for error and heresy. The church is not always benefitted by what are termed revivals ; but sometimes the effects of such commotions are followed by a desolation which resembles the track of the tornado. I have never seen so great insensibility in any people as in those who had

been the subjects of violent religious excitement ; and I have never seen any sinners so bold and reckless in their impiety as those who had once been loud professors, and foremost in the time of revival. If I had time, I might illustrate this remark by a reference to the great revival of the west, which commenced about the close of the year 1800 in the south part of Kentucky ; and by which the Presbyterian church in that region was for so many years broken, distracted, and prostrated—but I must forbear. When people are much excited, their caution and sober judgment are diminished ; and when preachers are ardently zealous in revivals, serious people do not suspect them of holding errors, or of entertaining the design of subverting the truth. It is also a fact that the teachers of false doctrine, do sometimes artfully associate their errors with revivals, and by continually insinuating or openly declaring, that revivals only take place in connection with their new theology, they succeed in persuading those who have more zeal than knowledge, that all who oppose their errors, are the enemies of revivals. This artifice has often been played off with much effect ; and they have sometimes gone so far as to deny the genuineness of great revivals which occurred under the ministry of those holding opinions different from their own ; or who neglected to bring into operation all the newly invented apparatus of revivals.

“ You may, perhaps, expect me to say something respecting what are called *new measures* ; but as I am out of the way of witnessing the actual operation of these means, I will not venture on a discussion which is both delicate and difficult, farther than to mention some general results, which from a retrospect of many facts, I have adopted, in regard to revivals of religion. On each of these I might largely expatiate, but my prescribed limits forbid it.

“ All means and measures which produce a high degree of excitement, or a great commotion of the passions, should be avoided ; because religion does not consist in these violent emotions, nor is it promoted by them ; and when they subside, a wretched state of deadness is sure to succeed.

“ The subjects of religious impressions ought not to be brought much into public notice. It ought not to be forgotten, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and that strong excitement does not prevent the risings of pride and vain glory. Many become hypocrites when they find themselves the objects of much attention, and affect feelings which are not real ; and where there is humility and sincerity, such measures turn away the attention from the distinct contemplation of those subjects which ought to occupy the mind.

“ On this account, I prefer having the anxious addressed and instructed as they sit undistinguished in their seats, rather than calling them out to particular pews, denominated *anxious seats* : and if the pastor can visit the awakened at their houses, it would be better than to appoint meetings expressly for them. But as this cannot be done, when the number is great, these meetings may be necessary ; but instead of attempting to converse with each individual, let the preacher address suitable instruction and advice to all at once ; and if any are in any great trouble and difficulty, let them come to the minister’s house, or send for him to visit them.

“ All measures which have a tendency to diminish the solemnity of divine worship, or to lessen our reverence for God and divine things, are evidently wrong ; and this is uniformly the effect of excessive excitement. Fanaticism often blazes with a glaring flame, and agitates assemblies as with a hurricane or earthquake ; but God is not in the fire, or the wind, or the earthquake. His presence is more commonly

with the still small voice. There is no sounder characteristic of genuine devotion, than reverence. When this is banished, the fire may burn fiercely, but it is unhallowed fire. Fanaticism, however much it may assume the garb and language of piety, is its opposite: for while the latter is mild, and sweet, and disinterested, and respectful, and affectionate, the former is proud, arrogant, censorious, selfish, carnal, and when opposed, malignant.

“The premature and injudicious publication of revivals, is now a great evil. There is in these accounts often *a cant* which greatly disgusts sensible men; and there is an exaggeration which confounds those who know the facts; and it cannot but injure the people concerning whom the narrative treats. But I must desist.

“I am respectfully and affectionately

“Yours,

“A. ALEXANDER.

“REV. W. B. SPRAGUE, D. D.”

## LETTER

FROM THE REVEREND SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New-Jersey.

“REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,

“The pious and devoted Mr. *Baxter* somewhere remarks, — ‘The Word of God is divine; but our mode of dispensing it is human: and there is scarcely any thing we have the handling of, but we leave on it the prints of our fingers.’ The justness of this remark we shall probably all acknowledge. And although the contemplation of the fact which it expresses, ought by no means either to discourage the Christian, or lead him to depreciate the real importance of human instrumentality in extending and building up the



church; it ought to lead us all to 'cease from man' as an ultimate guide in divine things; to 'search the Scriptures daily;' to walk with a scrupulous care in their light; and to pray fervently and unceasingly that both those who administer and those who receive the ordinances of God, may constantly go 'to the law and to the testimony' for guidance in every thing.

"As the remark in question applies to every department of sacred things, in which men act; so it may be considered, perhaps, as applying particularly to REVIVALS OF RELIGION. In those precious seasons, so dear to every pious heart, and so much to be desired by every one who loves the prosperity of Zion;—when the graces of Christians are revived; when many who have been slumbering in sin are awakened for the first time to a sight of their guilt and danger; when the awful realities of eternity begin to be revealed to the minds of multitudes who never saw them as realities before; when human sympathies and passions as well as gracious feelings, are called into exercise, and sometimes into very powerful and morbid exercise; and when those who are yet 'babes in Christ,' and who, of course, have no experience, are ready to listen to every suggestion which may indicate some new method of 'winning souls,' and of extending the Redeemer's kingdom;—can it be wondered, that, in such a season of deep interest, and powerful excitement—feeling should often predominate over judgment; and enthusiasm, fanaticism, and various forms of spurious emotion, mingle with genuine exercises; and, in the view of superficial observers, throw a suspicious appearance over the whole work? In many instances, there can be no doubt, that genuine effusions of the Holy Spirit, by means of which large additions have been made to the Church of Christ, have, in their progress, been tarnished by human management, and

unhallowed mixtures ; and, in not a few cases, arrested by transactions and appearances, which pained the hearts of intelligent Christians ; disgusted and alienated serious inquirers ; grieved away the Spirit of God ; left the state of the population thus graciously visited, perhaps less favourable than it was found ; and greatly strengthened the hands of the enemies of the revival cause.

“ This is so far from being a rare occurrence, that it is presumed an extensive and strongly marked revival of religion has seldom occurred, in any age or country, and even under the ministry of the most prudent and pious pastor, in the course of which some things did not take place adapted to grieve the enlightened friends of the cause of Christ. Public services, perhaps have been, with the best intention, so inordinately multiplied as, in a measure, to defeat their own object. Means have been resorted to, in the fulness of ardent feeling, which scriptural wisdom and experience could not justify. Irregularities and excesses have insensibly crept in, which, though meant for the best, and promising, at the time, to be useful, proved far otherwise in their influence. Expression has been given, in public and private, to feelings, which, though sincere and unaffected in those in whom they were first witnessed, were by no means of a similar character in all subsequent imitators. A few, perhaps, who were deeply impressed with the importance of religion, and with the danger of the impenitently wicked, began, without permission, to give vent to their honest zeal in warm and public addresses. Those whose zeal and knowledge were less, and whose vanity was greater, soon imitated their example ; until lay-preaching became prevalent, and extravagance and folly were the most prominent features in the scene. Meetings for prayer were protracted to an unseasonable hour. Judicious and sober-minded Christians were

grieved to see plans adopted, and practices indulged, which, though intended for good, were by no means adapted to promote it. Many who saw and lamented these evils were backward to oppose them, lest they should be thought unfriendly to what was really excellent and commendable in the passing scene. Thus revivals have lost some of their lustre with all; have been altogether discredited in the eyes of many; and have, perhaps, been succeeded by long seasons of prevailing carelessness, and even of hardened opposition to the special work of the Holy Spirit.

“ But not only are the seeds of human infirmity and corruption to which I have referred, quite sufficient to produce, and to explain the evils which have been mentioned:—not only are the honest mistakes, and the remaining imperfections of the best men apt to betray them, in seasons of excitement, into language and plans which will not stand the test of enlightened reflection; but there can be no doubt that the great adversary of souls makes it his constant study, by working on the minds of hypocrites and fanatics, and by leading good men, as far as possible, into his snares, to counteract and to discredit revivals of religion. ‘ If we look back’—says the eminently wise and experienced President *Edwards*—‘ If we look back into the history of the Church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the Devil, to upset a revival of religion, when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then to drive them into excesses and extravagances. He holds them back as long as he can; but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and, if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by this means chiefly, that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings: yea, the principal means by which the Devil was successful, by de-

grees, to overset that grand religious revival of the world, that was in the primitive ages of Christianity ; and, in a manner to overthrow the Christian Church through the earth, and to make way for, and bring on the grand anti-Christian apostacy, that master-piece of all the Devil's work, was to improve the indiscreet zeal of Christians ; to drive them into those three extremes of *enthusiasm*, *superstition*, and *severity towards opposers*, which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian Church. And though the Devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion ; yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that in a time of revival of religion, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it, and he will chiefly exert himself in his attempts upon them to mislead them. One truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more (through Satan's being too subtle for him) to hinder the work, than a hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.\*

“ One would think, at first view, that a single series of mischievous disorders, strongly marked ; exhibited in a day of great public interest ; and distinctly recorded, would be sufficient to instruct and warn the Church in all succeeding times. But, unhappily, this is by no means found to be the case. Human nature being the same in all ages, the tendencies, infirmities and temptations of men are the same. One generation forgets the experience of that which preceded it. Few read the record of that experience, and fewer still are qualified to profit by it. The consequence is, that every few years, the same occurrences take place. Good men are en-

\*Some Thoughts concerning the present Revival of Religion, &c., Part IV., p. 190.

snared and led astray in the same manner. Hypocrites manifest the same arts and unhallowed ebullitions. Similar mistakes are made, and similar irregularities are indulged, without recollecting, or, perhaps, knowing, that they were ever witnessed before, and, of course, without being admonished by the painful instructions of former times. Thus it is that children profit so little by the experience of their fathers. It were well, indeed, if the fathers themselves always profited as they ought by their own.

“The truth of these remarks has been exemplified, in a greater or less degree, in almost every age of the Church, from the day of Pentecost, until the present hour. \*\*\*\*

“While I speak thus candidly on the subject of *Camp-meetings*, allow me to volunteer a word in relation to what are commonly styled *Anxious Seats*. They are connected, and not very remotely, with the subject I have undertaken to discuss. Far be it from me to undertake to pronounce on those brethren who have thought it their duty to countenance them, a sentence of condemnation; or to question that good has sometimes been done where they have been used. But this, I must insist, is not, in all cases, a safe criterion of duty. Men may be savingly benefitted by the instrumentality of means which all would unite in condemning. The decisive question is, can this method of proceeding be considered as the best mode, nay as a really eligible mode, of drawing to a point, and ascertaining the exercises of serious inquirers? Is it the best way of deciding on the digested feelings, the deliberate purpose of persons, whose attention has been aroused, it may be for the first time, and perhaps only a few minutes before, to the great subject of religion? If, indeed, I were called upon to address one or more individuals on a *journey*, as *Philip* was, in the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch;—individuals whom I never expected

to see again, after the passing hour ;—I might, without impropriety, call them to declare their decision *within that hour*, and baptise them, as *Philip* did. Or, if I had occasion to speak to a mixed multitude, the greater part of whom could only remain a few days in the place where the Gospel was preached to them,—as was the situation of many in the city of *Jerusalem*, on the day of *Pentecost*;—it would strike me as proper to call them, not merely to an *immediate decision*—between the claims of God and the world, which indeed OUGHT ALWAYS TO BE DONE BY EVERY MINISTER ;—but also to an IMMEDIATE MANIFESTATION OF THAT DECISION, that they might be conversed and prayed with accordingly, in the few hours of opportunity which they were permitted to enjoy. But it would by no means occur to me as the most judicious way, in ordinary cases, of drawing the line between the careless, and the truly anxious inquirer, to request all who were disposed to think seriously, to rise and present themselves before a public assembly, in the character of persons who had resolved, or were desirous, to devote themselves to the service of Christ,—and this, perhaps, at the close of the very sermon by means of which it was hoped they had, for the first time, begun to feel and inquire about salvation ; and, of course, in a few minutes after they thus began to feel. If I were to make such a request, I should expect to find the persons rising and presenting themselves in compliance with it, to be, for the most part, the forward, the sanguine, the rash, the self-confident, and the self-righteous ; and that many, who felt more deeply, and yet hesitated about announcing themselves so suddenly as anxious inquirers, and, of course, kept their seats, would prove to be the modest, the humble, the broken-hearted, who had a deep impression of the deceitfulness of the heart, and who considered the importance of pondering well the solem-

nity of every step on a subject of such unutterable moment.

“ I am aware that the advocates of the system of ‘ anxious seats,’ urge, with some plausibility, that, in consideration of the natural tendency of the impenitent to stifle convictions, and to tamper with the spirit of procrastination, it is desirable that they should be prevailed upon, as soon as possible, to ‘ commit themselves’ on this great subject. That a decisive step in relation to this subject is *desirable*, and that it ought to be taken *without delay*, is certain. But, at the same time, that it ought to be taken without rashness, with knowledge, with due consideration, and with sacred care not to mistake a transient emotion, for a deep impression, or a settled purpose, is equally certain. Suppose, after a solemn and pointed sermon, an invitation to be given to all present who felt the importance of an immediate attention to ‘ the things which belong to their peace,’ to come forward and take the seats provided for them near the pulpit. Suppose *two hundred* individuals to avail themselves of this invitation, and to present themselves before the church as objects of attention and prayer. And suppose, at the end of three months, *fifty* of these to unite themselves with the professing people of God, on the ground of ‘ a good hope through grace ;’—*fifty* more to take the same step, not because they were satisfied of their Christian character ; but because they had ‘ committed themselves,’ and did not wish to appear fickle, or apostates:—and the *remaining hundred* to return, with greater obduracy than before, to their former careless and sinful course. I say, suppose such steps, and such a result as I have stated to occur ;—would it be deemed, by judicious Christians, a result, on the whole, more favorable for the best interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom, than if, in pursuance of what are called the ‘ old measures,’ in such cases, none but the *fifty genuine converts* had ever

been brought forward to public view at all, and not even these until they had enjoyed an opportunity to bring their exercises to the test of time; to gain and digest the elements of Christian knowledge, and to 'count the cost' of their undertaking?—The Church indeed, in the latter case, might not grow in numbers quite so rapidly; and her movements might not be quite so audible and imposing:—but, methinks, her growth would be more likely to prove healthful. She would be less burdened with spurious members. She would be more likely to escape the multiplied evils naturally arising from the fact of a large portion of her members being hurried forward in such a school of agitation, immature training, and noisy excitement; and much less in danger of placing both the *fifty* who insincerely took upon themselves the vows of Christ, and the *hundred* who 'drew back,' in a state far more perilous than ever, with regard to their final salvation.

“Let it not be said, that inviting 'to anxious seats' is the only effectual method of ascertaining who are under serious impressions, and who are not. Why is it not quite as effectual to give a public invitation to all who are in any degree seriously impressed, or anxious, to remain after the congregation is dismissed, or to meet their pastor the next evening, in some convenient apartment, for the purpose of disclosing their feelings, and of being made the subjects of instruction and prayer. Nay, why is not the latter method very much preferable to the former? It surely gives quite as good an opportunity to ascertain numbers, and to distinguish persons and cases. It affords a far better opportunity to give distinct and appropriate instruction to particular individuals. It prevents the mischief of dragging into public view, and even into the highest degree of publicity, those whose exercises are immature, and perhaps transient. And it avoids the danger, which to many, and especially to young people,



may be very formidable ;—I mean the danger of being inflated by becoming objects of public attention, and by being forthwith addressed and announced, as is too often the case, as undoubted ‘converts.’ Surely the incipient exercises of the awakened and convinced, ought to be characterized by much calm self-examination, and much serious, retired, closet work. If there be any whose impressions are so slight and transient that they cannot be safely permitted to wait until the next evening ; it will hardly be maintained that such persons are prepared to ‘commit themselves’ by publicly taking an anxious seat. And if there be any whose vanity would dispose them to *prefer* pressing forward to such a seat in the presence of a great assembly, to meeting their pastor and a few friends in a more private manner, the Church, I apprehend, can promise herself little comfort from the multiplication of such members.

“I have just said, that, among those who came forward on such an extemporaneous invitation, I should expect to find the sanguine, the self-confident, the superficially informed and exercised, as a matter of course. On a late occasion, and in a house of worship, not very far distant from this place, when, after a solemn discourse, a request was made that all who were anxious, or resolved to attend to their spiritual interests, should immediately arise and signify their determination ; the *first* person that arose was a young man, in whom the odour of strong drink was very offensive ; who was evidently more than half drunk at the time ; and who never, before or afterwards, manifested any serious concern on the subject. In another place, and on another occasion, when a similar request was made, the *only* person that arose was a woman of very dubious character, who is not supposed, I believe, by any one, to have been, either then, or since, under any thing that deserves to be called real

anxiety of mind. The great Searcher of hearts is my witness, that I do not mention these facts for the purpose of casting any unfair odium on the practice to which I refer ; but merely for the purpose of exemplifying the principles which I wish to inculcate, and of showing that the dangers which I deprecate are not the mere phantoms of a disordered fancy.

“ In fine, I suppose the truth concerning both ‘ camp-meetings,’ and ‘ anxious seats’ to be about this : That however useful they may have *really* been in few cases, of very peculiar character ; and however they may have *appeared* to some honest but ardent minds, to operate favorably in a still greater number of cases ; yet, as means of stated and promiscuous use, or, in fact, as means to be *used at all*, unless in very special circumstances, they are eminently adapted to generate fanaticism ; to give a taste for ostentatious display in the service of the sanctuary ; to favour the rapid multiplication of superficial, ignorant, untrained professors of religion ; and to prepare the way for almost every species of disorder.

“ I have been acquainted with more than one Church in which the extemporaneous mode of introducing members, of which I am speaking, has been extensively practised. And I must say, the result has been in no degree adapted to recommend the practice. The great numbers thus added made a most animating figure in the religious periodicals of the day ; but, after a year or two, a large portion of them were not to be found. ‘ Their goodness, like the morning cloud and the early dew,’ had passed away. They had, in a great measure, withdrawn from the house of God, and from all attendance on sealing ordinances ; and needed as much as ever to be gathered in from the ‘ highways and hedges,’ and to be made the subjects of a new conversion. The truth is, any plan, in the house of God, for separating the precious

and the vile; for drawing a line between the Church and the world, which does not provide for an intelligent and deliberate, as well as serious entrance into the body of Christ; which does not make some good degree of knowledge as well as feeling necessary in the candidate for admission; however it may gratify one whose 'ruling passion' is to multiply professed converts to the greatest possible extent; and however plausibly it may appear in the public journals of the day; will disclose miserable results in the end, as to any genuine building up of the Redeemer's kingdom.

"But I will not run the risk of wearying your patience by farther enlarging on this subject. I shall, therefore, after two or three general remarks, which appear to me to be suggested by the foregoing facts, close this long letter.

"The *first* remark is, that there is a *striking similarity* in the disorders which have attended and marred revivals of religion in all ages. As in *doctrine*, what is thought by many a *new opinion*, is frequently found, upon inquiry, nothing more than the revival of *an error long ago exploded*;—so in *measures* of practical disorder, what wears to many all the attraction of *novelty*, is a repetition—perhaps the *fiftieth time*—of some old contrivance for producing a sudden and strong impression on the feelings of a popular assembly. In fact, as real religion is the same in all ages, so its counterfeits are the same; human nature is the same; and the symptoms and morbid results of enthusiasm, superstition and fanaticism are substantially the same. We need not be surprized, then, to find ancient irregularities so remarkably resembling the modern. We have seen that whenever masses of men became excited, and especially when this excitement seized the minds of those who had been bred in ignorance and thoughtlessness;—as they were brought into a new world; so they were apt to think, as a matter of

course, that some new and bold measures must be adopted ; that exigencies which are as old as human nature, but which appear to them new, call for new modes of proceeding ; and that the counsels of age and experience, like the exploded theories of by gone days, are no longer seasonable or adequate. Hence the inordinate love of novel contrivances for arresting the popular attention, and impressing the popular mind ; the spirit of rash and uncharitable denunciation ; the remarkable fact, that, in all ages, *young, and, of course, inexperienced ministers*, have commonly taken the lead, and discovered the most headstrong obstinacy in commencing and pursuing measures of an innovating character ; a tendency to undervalue the settled order of the Church, and to usurp the functions of the sacred office ; yielding the mind to impulses and enthusiastic impressions ; denouncing all who refuse to concur in these things as graceless formalists ; encouraging *females* to take the lead in social prayer ; calling upon penitents to make *public confession* of their private sins, as indispensable to forgiveness, and spiritual prosperity ; claiming to have a gift, unknown to others, of promoting genuine revivals, to be the only real friends of true, spiritual religion ;—These are some of the fruits of human corruption which attended and marred revivals of religion centuries ago ; and which have appeared every few years since, in similar connection, and with endless repetition. It is an undoubted fact, that most of those well meant irregularities, on which some truly pious people now look with approbation and interest, as means pre-eminently adapted for promoting religion, have been confidently proposed, tried, found in the end to work badly, and exploded, over and over again ;—and yet there are those who still dream that they can be made to accomplish what all experience has pronounced to be impossible.

“The *second* remark which I would make, as the result of the whole, is, that as we may confidently take for granted that *enlightened and stable Christians* will not be shaken, either in their faith or hope, by the occasional and even prominent exhibition of these disorders in connection with revivals of religion; so it is important to put *inquirers* on their guard against ‘stumbling at this stumbling stone.’ Some, when they see what claims to be religion, and even a genuine and precious revival of religion, tarnished by management, or extravagances which they cannot approve, are apt hastily to conclude, that vital piety, and revivals of religion are all a dream. I fear that this fatal delusion is often adopted; and cannot but also fear that the disorders which often attend revivals frequently minister to it. But it *is* a delusion. The very existence of counterfeits, shows that there is true coin. In every department of affairs, temporal or spiritual, in which men are called to act, they discover their imperfection. The Bible teaches us to expect this. And if we did not find it so, the Bible representation of human nature would not be verified. When, therefore, any are tempted to doubt the reality or the importance of what are called by intelligent Christians, revivals of religion, because they have been often tarnished by unhappy admixtures or accompaniments; they adopt a conclusion which does as little credit to their scriptural knowledge, and their historical reading, as it does to their Christian experience. The work of the Holy Spirit, in renovating and sanctifying the heart, is the glory and hope of the Church. That there should be seasons in which this work is made to appear with peculiar lustre and power, so entirely falls in with all the works and ways of God, that the only wonder is, that any one who reads the New Testament, or looks abroad on the face of Christian society, should cherish a remaining doubt. And

although the Spirit is a divine Person, and all his influences infinitely pure and holy ; yet, when we recollect that its subjects are sinful men, who remain, after they become the subjects of his power, but imperfectly sanctified ; and that those who preside over the dispensation of the various means of grace, are also sinful, fallible men ;—though we may mourn and weep, we certainly cannot wonder, that marks—sad marks of our weakness and fallibility should appear in our most precious seasons, and in our holiest services.

“ The *last* remark with which I would trouble you, is, that we ought to guard against undertaking to condemn, as of course lacking piety, those who favour some or all of the disorders to which reference has been made. We have seen that one of the characteristics which seldom fail to mark those brethren, is a disposition to anathematize as unfaithful or graceless, all who cannot adopt their views, and pursue their plans. It is important that we guard against imitating this unworthy example. While we avoid, with sacred care, all participation in their faults ; while we bear testimony faithfully and openly against whatever we deem unfriendly to the cause of genuine religion ; let us remember that some zealous and active servants of Jesus Christ ; brethren whose piety we cannot doubt, and whose usefulness we can have no disposition to undervalue or abridge ;—have appeared, for a time, as the patrons of these mistakes. Let us honour their piety, rejoice in their usefulness, forgive their mistakes, and pray that they may be brought to more correct views.

“ That you and I, my dear friend, may have grace given us to love and promote, with our whole hearts, genuine revivals of religion, and to guard against every thing which tends to impede or mar them ; and that we may speedily enjoy the unspeakable pleasure of seeing the power of the

Gospel in its choicest influences pervade our land, and the world;—is the unfeigned prayer of your affectionate brother in Christ.

“SAMUEL MILLER.

“REV. W. B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

“*Princeton, March 8, 1832.*”

I have presented the foregoing extracts and letters on the subject of New Measures, for several substantial reasons. 1. Because it is of the greatest importance that the true character and results of the religious excitements produced by such machinery should be better understood. 2. Because the Methodists mainly rely on them for the propagation of their Arminian religion and for the purpose of making proselytes from orthodox churches. 3. Because, within the last year or two, *other* than Methodist churches in this city have adopted these measures and are now employing them, to the ultimate injury, as we believe, of their true interests and to the damage of the general cause of true Christianity. 4. In order more effectually to vindicate ourselves against the charge of hostility to genuine revivals of religion and to justify more fully our steady and determined refusal to employ the same specious but really destructive apparatus. And I have preferred to exhibit the opinions and experience of the writers whom I have quoted, to show that some of the wisest, most distinguished, pious and useful ministers in our country are equally decided in their disapprobation of such spurious excitements and the measures by which they are effected.

But while we cannot but disapprove of such popular commotions on the subject of religion, produced, not by the Spirit of God, but by the contrivances and expedients of men, we most sincerely and earnestly desire the promotion

of true revivals, and the genuine conversion of our fellow men. And in order to this, all orthodox Christians and churches should be diligent in the use of God's appointed means, and unceasing in their prayers for the quickening, sanctifying, enlightening and renewing influence of the Holy Spirit. It would, indeed, be far happier, if Christians were so to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, and perpetually and increasingly abound in every good word and work, as never to need what are called revivals, and which commonly imply the necessity of their resuscitation from a criminal, shameful and unspeakably injurious state of religious declension, apathy and unfruitfulness. And every Christian church should aim at maintaining such a steady, habitual, and growing state of usefulness and piety. But when individual Christians or churches have fallen into a condition of supineness or spiritual indifference—when their Christian graces have become languid and comparatively dead—when formalism takes the place of spiritual and hearty devotion—and the means of grace cease to edify the people of God, or to effect, instrumentally, the conversion of sinners,—then, surely, there is need—most urgent need, for a real revival of religion ; and both pastor and people should labour and pray with unceasing zeal until it is obtained. In such an extremity, however, let them not seek to be wiser than God ; or dare to add to all their other sins, the enormous crime of contemning the ordinances and means of His appointing. Rather let them confess their past remissness ; and begin, with all diligence, humility, penitence and prayer, to use them in accordance with the will of their Master in heaven. And if they will *thus* employ them, perseveringly, they will assuredly find that they have lost none of their divine efficacy or power—that they are still sufficient, with the blessing of God, to re-animate, strengthen, comfort and ed-



ify believers ; and that they are still mighty, through God, to the illumination, conviction and saving conversion of sinners.

The truth is, orthodox Christians do not do justice either to themselves or to the cause they have espoused ; and hence the contempt into which the scriptural means of grace sometimes fall. These means are used often with such comparative apathy and inactivity—with so little of the spirit of true devotion and Christian zeal—and are accompanied with so little prayer and active personal efforts for the conversion of souls, that it is no wonder they should be regarded by many as inefficient or inadequate. How seldom, for example, do orthodox Christians manifest a tithe of the activity and zeal with which enthusiasts and fanatics ply, from day to day and from week to week, their various human expedients and contrivances ! How seldom do orthodox Christians manifest as much zeal in endeavouring to bring their neighbours to hear the truth expounded and enforced, as many others do in persuading them to hear the truth perverted, caricatured and maligned ! How seldom do they make as earnest efforts to persuade their friends and acquaintances to come to Christ, as some others do to get them to go up to the “ altar ” or “ anxious seat ! ” And if orthodox Christians will continue thus to slight the means of grace which God has wisely and graciously appointed—if they will thus persist in perverting and abusing them, they need not wonder that their souls are unedified and sinners unconverted :—only let them not ascribe these results to any imaginary imperfection or inefficiency in the means themselves, but to their own negligence and wickedness and folly :—let them at once confess and bewail their sins, and begin to use the means ordained of God in the right spirit, with becoming interest, unceasing activity, importunate

prayer, and steady perseverance, and they will soon realize in themselves, and observe in others around them, the happiest results. Is not this our duty? Do we not owe it to God—to ourselves—to the souls of others—to the precious cause of truth and scriptural holiness? O, my brethren, let us not give occasion to any, by our negligence, apathy, and want of enlightened zeal, to undervalue the power of Divine truth or the efficacy of God's appointed means of grace! We profess to be the friends of true revivals of religion, let us then show, by our conduct, that we do earnestly pray and labour for their promotion. We profess to believe that the ordinary means of grace are, with God's blessing, abundantly sufficient for every emergency, let us then evince our sincerity, by practically using and employing them for our own spiritual profit and the salvation of the souls of others. Thus shall we not only experience, and accomplish, by the favour of God, the greatest possible amount of real good, but also most effectually show unto our beloved but erring brethren "a more excellent way."

The observations just made, I would especially commend to the beloved people of my charge. You know that they are in exact accordance with the instructions of my whole pastoral life. I have always endeavoured to guard you against *formalism*, as well as against *fanaticism*—and I again protest against the necessity of being *frozen* to death, because we are averse to being *burnt* to death. I abhor a mere formal and heartless service; and insist upon the necessity of spirituality and zeal in religion. It does not follow, that because we are opposed to *spurious* excitements, we are, therefore, opposed to *genuine* revivals of religion. It does not follow, that because we are hostile to the use of certain measures of man's devising, that therefore we are opposed to the use of any means at all for the promotion of true religion,

or friendly to the negligent or formal use of such as God has ordained. By no means:—It is, by the grace of God, our earnest desire, as it has been our constant aim, to guard your souls against *every* hurtful error and evil practice; and to cultivate within you a steady and healthful principle of spiritual life. I am aware that some, either from culpable ignorance, or selfish sectarian purposes, have endeavoured to disparage your Christian character, as they do in fact that of every church not of their communion. But without saying what might in truth be said in commendation of you as a body, let me rather exhort you, beloved, to continue, by the help of God, *not to deserve* such unjust and uncharitable detraction. Yea, remember, that whatever attainments you may have made, and however useful you may have been, there is, undoubtedly, room for further improvement and increased exertion in behalf of sinners yet unconverted in your midst. I entreat you, by the love of Christ, to increase your diligence in the use of God's appointed means of grace and to abound yet more and more in every good word and work. And this I would have you do, not in the spirit of unhallowed rivalry, or with an unsanctified and fanatical zeal, but with all lowliness of mind, and from a sincere desire to promote the glory of God in your own salvation and that of others.

## C O N C L U S I O N .

IN view of what has been said, in the foregoing pages, respecting the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is it not obviously important that the attention of the public should be more generally and seriously directed to its examination? It is a perfect anomaly in our protestant and republican country; and is, in our conscientious and deliberate judgment, *dangerous* in its *tendency* to the interests of civil and religious liberty. Other Christian denominations have hitherto occupied themselves, almost exclusively, in defending their respective churches against the incessant and often violent assaults of Methodists; and, in consequence, the system of Methodism itself, is comparatively but little understood by the community at large, and even by multitudes within its own pale. The time has come, however, when that ecclesiastical system *must* be more generally and thoroughly investigated and exposed. Their growing numbers and wealth have served already, in part, to develop the actual tendency of their aristocratical government; and some of them have begun to manifest such a degree of arrogance, as must insure a more general and close examination of the sources of their proud and domineering power. And although in consequence of the piety and patriotism of many of their clergy and laity, the evil tendency of their ecclesiastical system has been, as yet, but partially developed, there is much reason to fear that its deteriorating, corrupting, and destructive influence will increasingly operate, to the imminent hazard, eventually, not only of spiritual piety, but also of civil

or political freedom. It is therefore the duty of every Christian and patriot in the land—and especially of the leading politicians and statesmen of our country—to turn their attention seriously to this subject. Let them remember the inseparable connexion between religious and civil liberty, and recall the mournful lessons of the ages that are past, and they will at once perceive the dangerous tendency of aristocratic Methodism. Let them examine their Book of Discipline for themselves, and say whether the despotic principles of ecclesiastical government, adopted by the clergy of that sect, and imposed upon that people, are not utterly irreconcilable with the character of our free political Constitution and Government, and incompatible with the genius of our republican institutions? Let them answer, after due examination, whether such a degree of irresponsible and despotic power as is possessed by the Methodist clergy, connected as it is with the control of so much and rapidly accumulating wealth, is not highly dangerous, in its legitimate tendency and probable ultimate results, to the civil and religious liberty of these United States? Let them particularly observe, the manner in which the Methodist clergy are *trained*, and the *surveillance* which they have assumed over each individual member connected with their church; and judge what such a system is adapted to effect, in the hands of some such ambitious spirits as have arisen in different ages that are past. To show how well adapted this system is to accomplish the evil purposes of ambition and tyranny, under the direction and control of wicked and designing men, such as have often acquired the ascendancy during the past ages of the church, I will subjoin the following extracts from the series of articles, (referred to in a former part of this work,) on the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the *Christian Intelligencer* of New York.—

*“ The manner of entering the ministry and of ascending into the Episcopal Chair.*

“ We may trace, in thought, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church through the successive stages of his advancement, from his reception into the society, to his investiture with Episcopal authority. He becomes a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church by joining a class. He attends class-meetings and love-feasts, quarterly-meetings and camp-meetings, watch-nights and prayer-meetings, and sings, and prays, and shouts, and while others ‘ fall from grace’ he perseveres, and his fervency attracts the notice of the preacher in charge. The preacher makes him a class-leader; he is placed to watch over souls, to instruct and reprove; in the Quarterly Conference, and on other occasions, he comes in contact with superior authorities. Thus his fidelity, his zeal, his devotedness to the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church are put to the test. The preacher next gives him license to officiate as an exhorter; and he tries his talents at public speaking. By and by, he obtains the recommendation of the Quarterly Meeting Conference, and presents himself for a preacher’s license to the District Conference. In time, he procures a recommendation to the Annual Conference to be received on trial in the travelling connexion. Here he passes a probation of two years; and is then received as a preacher in full connexion, a constituent part of the great itinerant aristocracy.

“ Up to this period, he has been undergoing a preparatory discipline, admirably fitted to secure from him a complete and absolute devotion to the corps.—At any time previous to his being received into full connexion, his progress might have been arrested on the least indication of an insubordinate or revolutionizing spirit. Any symptom of a disposition discordant with the genius of Methodist Episcopacy might

have sufficed to warn the preacher who had made him a class-leader, not to encourage his farther promotion ; or it might have warned the district conference which had licensed him to preach, and the quarterly conference which had known all his manner of life, not to put him forward for the itinerating service. And while passing through his two years' trial for admission into full connexion, any untoward indication of character, might have stopped him there ; for from the beginning the following information was given to him. ' Observe ! taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a preacher into full connection. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong :—otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every one that has the charge of a circuit explain this to those who are on trial.' *Doct. and Dis. of M. E. Ch., chap. I., sec. 8, ed. of 1828.* By going through so long and so strict an apprenticeship, he is trained as well as tested ; he gets thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the corps ; the interests of Methodist Episcopacy become identified with his own ; the idea of being one of the number who govern a large body of people, turning them to what point they please, is blended with every other image in his mind ; and he learns to feel that it is no small thing to participate in the power, which sways all the interests of this great and united denomination.

“ Even at the point of elevation to which we have now traced him, he cannot cease to remember that his power pertains to him, not as an individual, but as an unit in a mighty combination ; and that though while he acts with that combination he can do much, yet if he acts against it or without it, he can do nothing. He cannot but be conscious that any disposition towards independence,—any thing that looks like democracy, any thing that excites suspicion on the part of conference, or bishop, or presiding elder, may easily make

his situation so uncomfortable and so hopeless of progress, that he will be glad to forsake it and locate. But after so long a probation, it is difficult to believe that he can need the pressure of such motives to keep him in his place ; he has the genuine spirit ; he is wholly a friend to Methodist Episcopacy. He passes safely through the successive ordinations by which he is made deacon and elder ; he sits in the conferences annual and general ; he wins the favour of his bishop. He rises to the power of a presiding elder ; he watches over a district ; he inspects and directs the proceedings of preachers and societies or classes ; he presides, perhaps, in an annual conference. In the end, perhaps, he rises to a bishop's chair ; and though he wears no mitre and no robes of greatness ; and though the dignitaries of some other churches may smile at his lack of external splendour, and may despise him for the ' bend sinisters ' in his Episcopal escutcheon ; he wields an actual and effective power which many a right reverend prelate, glorying in the uninterrupted succession of his official genealogy, might be strongly tempted to envy.—*Christ. Spec., num. III.—Doct. and Discip. of Meth. Ch., ed. 1828, chap. I., secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.*

“ What powerful worldly motives are presented to young men of talents to enter the Methodist Episcopal Church? With but few exceptions those who enter the ministry in that denomination, so far from making their pecuniary situation worse, or increasing their hardships, better their conditions, and enter into a circle which they had not access to before, nor never would have had, but for their ministerial character. These considerations being superadded to the overgrown power held by the travelling preachers, present strong temptations to aspiring young men to enter the ministry in that sect, and to enter it too, from other motives than



winning souls to Jesus Christ. We may therefore ask, what kind of moral policy can be expected from such a ministry with such power, when interest shall be involved ?

“ *Classes and Class-Leaders.*

“ ‘ There are about twelve persons in a class.’—‘ There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, a desire to flee from the wrath to come !’ The first six months after a convert has joined a class, are generally considered as so many months of probation in order to full membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church.—During that term he is frequently interrogated by his leader in class-meetings respecting the state of his soul ; and frequent inquiry is made by his leader concerning his walk and conversation. If it appears at the end of his probationary term that his conduct has been moral, and that he has regularly attended religious meetings, and, if, in the opinion of his leader he is pious, the travelling preacher enrols his name with the names of such as are members in full connexion.—As far as we can ascertain, no pains are taken by the itinerant preachers to instruct the members of a class in the government of the church. It is presumed that not more than one person in a hundred who unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church are acquainted, at the time of their reception into it, with its peculiar form of government. The consequence is that many persons, after having enjoyed membership for years, on discovering the nature of the government under which they have lived, become dissatisfied with it, and leave the denomination. The fact, that they have no representation in the Annual and General Conferences, and consequently no voice in making the laws, rules and regulations which are binding on all the members, is disgusting to their minds. Though they are asked and required to contribute of their substance for the support of the itinerancy,

yet they are not suffered to have a representation in the law-making department of the denomination. The principle here involved is the same that sundered the United States of America from the government of Great Britain. Taxation, without representation in the government from which taxation emanated, kindled the indignation of our fathers against the government of George III., and caused them to draw their swords; and they saw their country free and independent, before their swords were sheathed. Is tyranny less odious in ecclesiastical than in civil matters?

“The duty of a class-leader is ‘to see each person in his class once a week at least; in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; and to receive what they are willing to give, towards the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.’ Class-leaders are also required ‘to meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week; in order to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reprovèd; and to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.’ It is made their duty ‘at every other meeting of the class in every place’ to admit no stranger. ‘At other times they may; but the same person not above twice or thrice.’ A strict examination of each class-leader, by a travelling preacher, is to take place ‘at least once a quarter’ ‘concerning his method of meeting a class.’ It is made the duty of class-leaders to ‘converse with those who have charge of their circuits,’ namely the travelling preachers, ‘frequently and freely.’ It is also expected that they shall ‘frequently meet each other’s classes;’ and ‘the most useful’ are enjoined to ‘meet the other classes as often as possible.’—*Doct. and Dis. of M. E. Ch., chap. II., secs. 1, 2, 4, ed. of 1828.*

“Such inquisitorial measures are admirably calculated to secure subordination in all the classes, and amongst all the leaders. There is nothing like them in all the churches that are called Christian, if we except one sect, which it is needless to name.”

In view of the aristocratical principles of church government, adopted by the itinerant clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church—and the peculiar measures employed for the training of their ministerial candidates, and for the subordination of their people,—I ask again,—Is there no danger to be apprehended to the civil and religious liberties of this Republic? They are, as a denomination, rapidly increasing in numbers, wealth, and general influence;—what may not a corrupted and ambitious clergy accomplish, at some future period, with such a system of ecclesiastical despotism?—wielded, be it remembered, exclusively and irresponsibly by themselves!

In thus calling the attention of the public to the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I have no desire to excite *undue* suspicion against the present clergy of that denomination. I have no doubt but that, as yet, the great body of them are both pious and patriotic, and sincerely attached to the republican government and institutions of the country—nor would they knowingly favour any thing inimical to civil and religious liberty. But the ecclesiastical system which they have adopted, and the policy which they have pursued, are unquestionably *adapted* to corrupt, in the progress of time, any body of men in the world. They are not a whit more intelligent or pious than the clergy of former times, who adopted, from equally honest, though mistaken views of duty, substantially the same aristocratical and worldly policy—and like causes will produce like effects, every where and to the end of time. The very facts, that they have from

time to time increased their ecclesiastical power, and adopted such a worldly policy, are proofs that they are far from being above the reach of ambition, pride and avarice—and if we are to believe the testimony of those who know them best, and have known them long, there has been a visible deterioration in the character and spirit of many of them already. And whatever may be the piety and patriotism of the great mass of the present itinerant Methodist preachers, who have been chiefly employed in laying the foundation of the system, there is reason to fear that, as the effects of the system are developed, they, or their successors, will manifest less and less of the spirit of true religion, and more and more of the unhallowed spirit of the world. It is chiefly in view of this legitimate *tendency* of the system of aristocratic Methodism, that we think the public generally, and particularly the leading statesmen of our country, should turn their serious attention to this subject:—and if convinced, by an impartial examination, that its tendency is inimical to republicanism in the state, it will then be their duty to warn their countrymen against its insidious influence; and to persuade their fellow citizens, composing the laity of that denomination, to insist upon a reformation which shall conform their ecclesiastical system to the genius and spirit of our civil institutions.

If we are asked, what concern *we* have in these matters?—we answer, that we have, as Christians, many interests in common—and, as fellow-citizens, our political destinies are bound up together. It deeply concerns us, as members of the Church Catholic, that any portion of our Master's Kingdom should be deprived of its just and unalienable rights;—and, as patriots, we honestly fear the prevalence of despotism in the Church, as inimical to the perpetuation of liberty in the state. We know too well what were the disastrous

results of similar ecclesiastical principles in the early ages of Christianity ; and we have no confidence that the same tree planted now and in this hemisphere will produce any better fruits. It is, therefore, both our duty and interest to endeavour to avert, if possible, prospective evils, in which we, as well as our Methodist brethren, may be unhappily involved.—Can one member of the body of Christ suffer, and not the whole? Can the civil and religious liberties of our common country be impaired, without affecting injuriously the rights and privileges of all?

It is a matter of surprise, as well as deep regret, that the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church should ever have adopted so anti-republican a system of church government and discipline ; and that they should still continue to deprive their people of the right of lay-representation. There are, doubtless, many truly pious and patriotic men among them ; let such be induced to re-examine the fundamental principles of their ecclesiastical system, and inform themselves more fully of the effects of similar principles in ancient times—and resolve, as Christian ministers and consistent patriots, to seek a thorough reformation in the aristocratic government of their church. Why should you continue to adhere to principles which have produced, in other times, consequences so disastrous to the church and the world? Why should you again put to hazard the sacred ark of civil and religious freedom?—and that, too, in a land consecrated to political and religious liberty! Why should you be unwilling to grant your people the rights and privileges that are exercised and enjoyed by all their brethren of other sister protestant denominations in the land? If you never mean to abuse your clerical power—if you have no design to tyrannize over the heritage of God—if it is your purpose to do no wrong to your lay brethren, why exclude the laity from all participation

in the legislation of the church! It seems to us, that the Methodist clergy owe it to themselves, as well as to their people, to grant the laity at least a voice in the making of those laws and the adoption of those disciplinary rules and regulations, to which they are amenable, and by which they are ecclesiastically governed. Let not the excellent men among the Methodist clergy whom we now more particularly address, repel this appeal to their piety and patriotism from any unworthy prejudice. It is the part of wisdom to be willing to be taught even by an enemy—how much more to heed the admonitions of a friend—and he who makes this appeal assures you, that he is actuated, if he knows his own heart, by no other feelings than such as are perfectly consonant with Christian affection and a sincere regard for those interests which are alike common to us all as Christians and men. You may be skeptical as to the alleged injurious tendency of your present ecclesiastical system, and perhaps may smile at the ultimate results predicted;—but remember that the early advocates of prelacy, and the ancient abettors of clerical aristocracy, were equally blind to the remote but certain consequences of the principles which they had adopted and were then favouring. Doubtless, had the Christian pastors of the third and fourth centuries foreseen the ultimate results of the then increasing ambition and power of the clergy—had they been able to descry the horrible corruptions and terrible tyranny of subsequent ages—had they perceived that they were in fact laying the foundation of that awful apostacy—**THE PAPACY**—they would not only have shrunk back from it with horror, but they would have zealously uprooted every thing like clerical aristocracy and prelatical usurpation!

May we not make an appeal, also, to the pious and patriotic among the *laity* of the Methodist Episcopal Church?

If we are surprised that the clergy of your church should have adopted such an aristocratical system of church government, we are much more astonished, that *the laymen* of your denomination, should for so long a time have tamely submitted to it! Have you ever seriously and thoroughly examined it? Have you ever reflected upon the corrupting influence of irresponsible power? Have you ever pondered upon the effects of the same principles of clerical aristocracy in ancient times, or thought of the probable results of the same system upon your own clergy or their successors hereafter? Why should you allow yourselves to be disfranchised and unjustly deprived of the right of representation? In these respects you stand entirely alone in this free protestant country—the Papists only excepted—as all other Protestant denominations enjoy these unalienable rights and inestimable privileges. In politics, you are as good republicans as your neighbours, and would resist political despotism as patriotically and as manfully as any. Why, then, should you tamely submit to ecclesiastical tyranny? Why should you allow your clergy to assume, exclusively, all power, legislative, judicial, and executive, without control or responsibility? Why should you submit to a purely clerical government, in which you have no voice and no lay-representation? Would you allow any set of men to deprive you of the right of self-government in your civil or political affairs? Would you intrust, to any set of men, the power of making and executing what laws they pleased, without responsibility to the nation? Why, then, we ask again, do you permit the clergy of your church to retain exclusive and irresponsible power in ecclesiastical affairs?—to deprive you of the right and privilege of self-government in the church? Are you incapable of governing yourselves in ecclesiastical matters?—of taking any share in the government of your church? Are

you less intelligent than any or all of your protestant brethren of other denominations? Are you less virtuous? Why should your clergy be afraid or unwilling to trust you with a proper representation in the government of your church? Do *they* think you too ignorant?—or too vicious? If neither the one nor the other, why should they refuse you rights which are enjoyed by every other protestant church in the United States? I aver that I ask these questions from no disrespect—but for the purpose of eliciting thought—yea, for the purpose of exciting your honest indignation! You are justly entitled to the right of representation, as protestant Christians and freemen; and should, respectfully, yet firmly demand it. It is *degrading* to you to suffer yourselves to be any longer deprived of rights which all your protestant neighbours enjoy. Yea, your continued abject submission will, in all probability, prepare the way for the ultimate slavery of your posterity, not only in the church, but also in the state! “No bishop, no king,” was the shrewd remark of a crafty prince:—and civil liberty cannot long co-exist with ecclesiastical despotism. We grant, that the great body of your ministers are, at present, good men, who would not abuse their ecclesiastical power to the ruin of your political freedom;—but what security have you that their successors will be equally pious and patriotic? Why hazard, in any degree, interests so momentous!—“The price of liberty is eternal vigilance;”—and if you are wise and faithful to your duty, both as Christians and republican citizens, you will never rest, until your ecclesiastical rights are fully obtained from your present aristocratical rulers.

I trust that what I have said, relative to the polity, &c. of the Methodist Episcopal Church, will be rightly understood. I have freely animadverted upon what I consider



the errors and faults of Episcopal Methodism; and have plainly exposed some of the practical evils which have resulted from the practice of many connected with that denomination;—nor have I shunned to declare my honest conviction in regard to the dangerous tendency of the irresponsible power possessed by the clergy of that sect. But I am very far from wishing to disparage, what is truly pious and excellent in that Christian Church; or to detract from the real and extensive good which that denomination has, under God, effected, and is still accomplishing. There are many truly excellent men in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and thousands of truly pious Christians connected with that communion;—and I have no doubt, as I have repeatedly said, that many of the improprieties and excesses to which I have adverted, are not approved of or countenanced by them. They hold, moreover, as a body, the essential doctrines of our common Christianity—and we therefore rejoice in recognizing them as a large and important branch of the church of Christ. And so far as the Methodist Episcopal Church retains the truth as it is in Jesus—so far as she exhibits the spirit of our common Lord and Master—so far as she is instrumental in winning souls to Christ, and in extending the Redeemer's kingdom, so far we give her the right hand of fellowship—pray for her prosperity—and do, yea, and will rejoice in her success.

I have now discharged what has been to me no pleasant task:—and having thus furnished the “PROOF,” which was publicly called for, and repeatedly insisted on, I will now cheerfully submit the whole matter to the judgment of the public. The truth of the statements which I had made, has been established by their own Book of Discipline, and by historical and official documentary evidence which cannot

be disputed or invalidated.—And this evidence has been corroborated by the testimony of several of the most competent and unimpeachable witnesses of different Christian denominations—and by several of the most distinguished *adhering* ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, such as Bishops Coke and McKendree,\* and the Rev. H. B. Bascom. The testimony of the Methodist “*Reformers*,” is, in my judgment, entitled to the highest respect ;—but, let it be remembered, that each of the allegations which I had made, has been fully proven by *other* testimony and proof:—Indeed, *the main points* have been clearly demonstrated,  
 BY THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE ITSELF

“*Last words*,” are sometimes almost endless :—and as I still feel, as I always have felt, a strong repugnance to unnecessary controversy with any evangelical protestant church, I will now request my readers—if what I have written should be further controverted—to *re-examine the proofs and authorities* which have been produced by me in substantiation of the allegations which I had made. It will, I know, be very easy to *deny* their truth, and not very difficult to *mystify* the facts in the case ; but however bold the denial, or plausible the explanation, the public, with the record and evidence before them, will know how to discriminate and determine.

\**Mr. McKendree*, is said to have “*withdrawn*,” from the conference in disgust, but only, as we suppose, on the particular occasion referred to, and temporarily. For he continued to *adhere* to the Church, notwithstanding his alleged denunciation of “*the unwarrantable assumptions of the conference*,”—and was subsequently made one of their Bishops.—Such gross inconsistency shows the blinding influence of ambition, and serves to illustrate the danger of absolute and irresponsible power ; but it does not alter *the truth*, nor change the “*tyrannical (or) despotic*” nature of that ecclesiastical government !

The original object in the preparation of this work will at least be accomplished, viz:—the vindication of myself against the charge, either of ignorant slander, or deliberate traduction!!—I cannot but believe, that even my Methodist brethren, will now be “satisfied” that I had not spoken without some “acquaintance” with their ecclesiastical system; and that the proofs and authorities which have been exhibited are at least sufficient to shield me from the horrible imputation of having deliberately borne “false witness against my neighbour”!!!—For the rest, I have very little personal concern—and only regret that it should have been made necessary for me to say as much as I have said, in self-vindication and defence.

After a *temperate and candid review*, which is the undoubted right of my Methodist brethren, and to which, certainly, I have not the slightest objection,—*if THEY ALSO are so disposed*, we may live together in peace:—and if we cannot promote each other’s welfare, we can at least abstain from all attempts to hinder each other’s success. We differ, it is true, upon some important points; but then, let us “agree to differ;” or, if we must expose what we conscientiously consider erroneous in each other’s views and practices, let it be done in the spirit of the Master. We worship one Lord—acknowledge one rule of faith—and hold in common the great essentials of the Gospel. We have, as sister churches, the same great objects in view—and have in common the same enemies.—Let us then cease our warfare upon each other; and employ our combined strength against our common foes!

*Finally*, I would say to all *Presbyterians*—and particularly to the members of my own pastoral charge—cultivate, as far as possible, a catholic spirit towards all evangelical protest-

ant denominations ; and, at the same time, an intelligent and firm attachment to your own. Never be the aggressors : —but when assailed, *defend* the faith of your fathers with a meek but resolute spirit. “To preserve peace, be prepared for war.” Study more thoroughly the doctrines and order of your own church ; and inform yourselves more fully respecting the principles and practices of other sects. Be always ready to give the reason of the hope that is in you ; and to show, *why* you adhere to your own scriptural standards and liberal form of government and discipline. If, unhappily, your Methodist brethren should still continue to misrepresent, caricature and malign your faith, be ready to meet them, with the Word of God, in vindication of the truth. If they should still continue their sectarian efforts to *proselyte* you to their church, let them know, at once, that you understand their selfish object—and that you are too well acquainted with their Arminian errors, and anti-republican government, to be seduced, by them, from the pure faith and Christian liberty of the gospel you profess. And if they should still persist in disparaging your Christian character, or the reputation of the ministry and church to which you belong, show the injustice of such traduction, by your holy lives and conversation. Yea, let even the sectarian zeal of others, only provoke you to love and good works. Be more faithful, active, and prayerful ; and the God of your fathers will still continue, in spite of all opposition, to preserve, defend, and prosper you.—“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth : whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore,

brethren, **STAND FAST**, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, **COMFORT YOUR HEARTS, AND ESTABLISH YOU IN EVERY GOOD WORD AND WORK.**”—*2 Thess. ii. 13—17.*

**T H E E N D**

