



A

LECTURE ON METHODISM,

IN CONNECTION WITH

THE GREAT IRON WHEEL,

BEING

*A Brief Review of the Same.*

BY

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Nashville, Tenn.:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR  
BY STEVENSON AND OWEN.  
1856.

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PRINTED BY A. A. STITT,  
SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, NASHVILLE, TENN.

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## A LECTURE ON METHODISM.

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IT is quite generally known that a book styled "The Great Iron Wheel," published by J. R. Graves, of Tennessee, contains numerous charges of a very serious nature against the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; involving not only the character of her government, but also that of her members, both clergy and laity, male and female. It is further known that several associations of the Baptist Church, and many Baptist ministers, have recommended this work to the people at large, advising the reading and promoting the circulation of the same. It is also known that the Cherokee Baptist Convention, held at Cedar Town, in the bounds of my circuit, have passed a resolution recommending this Iron Wheel. Thus have the foes of Methodism yielded, virtually at least, their hearty support to the author of this book, and pronounced his charges just and valid.

These circumstances are such as to entitle this book to our notice; and, considering my relation to the Church and to society, as a minister of the gospel, I should do violence to my most honest convictions of duty, were I not to open my eyes to the subject before me, nor open my mouth in defence of our Church. The defence which I make may be feeble, but my circumstances and position, moving as I do from day to day among our people, allow me to know what our enemies are doing, and how they should be met; and whether or not my own feeble effort avails any thing to oppose the flood of slander and falsehood that has been turned loose through our land against an innocent and unoffending people, I shall nevertheless feel that I have discharged my duty to myself, to my Church, and to God—a duty to our wives, our mothers, and daughters, whose virtue and purity have been wantonly as-

sailed by laymen and ministers of a respectable Church. Nor do I speak thus unadvisedly, guided and excited by sectarian zeal and a vain enthusiasm, as some may suppose who have not all the circumstances and facts of the case before them. Having read the Iron Wheel, and examined it closely, I am prepared to give it justice.

We therefore propose an examination of most of the leading points of Mr. Graves's book.

As this, however, has been done in previous lectures at Cedar Town, Cave Spring, Ga., and several other places within my circuit, the present examination will be brief.

In order to make our argument as fair as possible, and to meet Mr. Graves on his own ground, we shall use the old edition of our Discipline invariably during this discussion, as Mr. Graves resorted to that edition for all his extracts, as a basis on which to build his arguments.

And now at the outset we remark, as before on other occasions, we make no war upon the Baptist Church: we humbly trust a majority of that Church never have and never will endorse that slanderous book. To those who do not endorse, recommend, or circulate the book; who, in the name of virtue, innocence, and truth, have repudiated the book; to such we feel closely allied by every sentiment of our common Christianity: a thousand ties, sacred as love, dear as life itself, bind us together. Some of you whom I know, with whom I have conversed, and prayed, and rejoiced, will be remembered by me during my earthly probation; yea, I will remember you at home, and abroad, and at the family altar, and will ever bear your names to a throne of grace, with those that are dearest and best. But notwithstanding my attachments for friends of any denomination, such attachments, however dear, shall never be more sacred than duty, and the general claims of truth and society.

Without further remarks, let us proceed to the investigation. Mr. Graves charges that Methodism is Antichrist, a mock Church, a rival of and designed to supplant the apostolic pattern of Church organization, a traitorous fold, etc.

These inferences are drawn mostly from the axioms he lays down on pages 175, 176, of his book.

We submit to you his own words: "Can a Methodist minister say that Christ is his only master? he would assert

falsely. Let him look at his oath : he has solemnly abjured Christ, and taken men for his masters—the presiding elders and bishops. Are not Methodist ministers, then, in the most odious sense, men-servers ? They are to do the will of their masters, the bishops, in every respect, whatever, wherever, and whenever it may be. A consolidated, clerical despotism ; a hierarchy of the most effective and powerful kind ; it is Antichrist : I unhesitatingly pronounce it *Antichrist*.

“The Catholic priest must reverence as well as obey his superiors : so must a Methodist. But the Catholic is required to reject the Bible as the only rule of his faith and practice, and to swear his adhesion to the traditions, ordinances, discipline, and rules of his father the Pope, and his councils. This we also consider impious. But Methodist ministers are solemnly bound to do the same thing—to reject the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and put the Discipline, the Statute-book, the laws and traditions of the bishops and the Conference, in its place. He is sworn, for he takes a solemn oath, to place the Discipline above the Bible, as the Catholic does the decisions of the Pope and his councils. See his Discipline, page 50, and remember a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline ; therefore you will need all the sense and grace you have.

“The Discipline is made, and he vows to make it, his Bible. It is above the word of God to him. He is to obey the Discipline in preference to the Bible. It is not for him to care what Christ commands, for, above reading and prayer, he is to do what his chief ministers command him.

“It is not for him to seek to please God, but his bishop and clerical masters. Nor is he to be concerned for the glory of God, but for Methodism. He may safely preach that there are many non-essentials in the New Testament, but he must hold and teach that there are none in the Discipline ; for he is pledged to observe every point, great and small, in it.” See Iron Wheel, pages 175, 176.

Again, on page 177, Mr. Graves declares we are bound to obey ; and to obey, is to serve ; and to serve, is to worship. “Hence, to obey the commands, behests, and arbitrary dictates of spiritual masters and rulers, called chief ministers, is to serve them, to worship them ; yielding that homage, reverence, and obedience due to Christ alone.”

The following are the leading propositions embraced in the foregoing :

1. That Methodist ministers have solemnly abjured Christ, and taken men for their masters.

2. That they are sworn to reject the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and to put the Discipline in place of the Bible.

3. That they are bound to worship the bishops.

Now, it becomes Mr. Graves to establish the foregoing premises ; and if he fails to do so, of course the inferences from them have no force whatever. Has he succeeded ? We will see.

He introduces, on page 172, a clause of the ordination-vow, which he is pleased to style a solemn oath. The bishop asks : " Will you reverently obey your chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you ; following, with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions, submitting yourself to their godly judgments ? Answer : I will do so, the Lord being my helper." See Discipline, page 138. But this is only a promise to take such advice, given us by our more experienced brethren having the charge over us, as is consistent with the word of God. " Godly admonitions : " not one word is said of abjuring Christ, rejecting the Bible, or worshipping the bishop ; nor is such an inference legitimate from the above quotation. But Mr. Graves says, "*to obey is to serve, and to serve is to worship.*" Then it follows that children are commanded to *worship* their parents, servants to *worship* their masters, all of us to *worship* those that have rule over us, and especially should wives *worship* their own husbands. But he cites us to Discipline, page 50 : " And remember, a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline : you will therefore need all the sense and grace you have." This is advice given to preachers, when received into full connection in the Annual Conference, and signifies simply that preachers should be careful to observe all the rules of the Church, which is the duty of all Christians, of whatever order they may be ; and it is remarkable that this is *all* the evidence he even pretends to bring in support of his propositions ; and from these alone he infers the *anti-Christian and anti-scriptural character and tendency* of our Church.

Indeed, if the above premises are true, his conclusions *are*

correct; but we affirm them to be false in every particular, and, in fact, they must be considered false until proven true; which has not been done, nor has the least shadow of testimony touching the case been brought forward. But as they are of a serious nature, we will present the matter in its proper light, and prove them false.

In regard to the first item, we call your attention to the 1st, 2d, and 3d articles of our religion, found on pages 11, 12, of our Discipline. We quote but the first:

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and in the unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

Here you find that, so far from having solemnly abjured Christ, he is declared to be of one substance, power, and eternity with the Father; and in the second article Christ is declared to be very God.

In regard to the second item, that we reject the Bible as our only rule of faith and practice, we refer you to the 5th article of our religion, (Discipline, page 12:) “The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”

Again, page 26, Discipline: “These are the general rules of our societies, all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice.”

Once more, Discipline, page 137. We quote from the ordination-vow, which Graves pronounces a solemn oath: the bishop asks, “Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrines required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures? Answer. I am so persuaded, and have so determined, by God’s grace.”



It is clearly evident now to every candid mind that the premises of J. R. Graves, in the above instance, are false in every particular; and our proof of the fact is from the highest and best authority—our Articles of Religion; our General Rules, which are a part of our Constitution; and our ordination-vow, or, according to Graves, our “solemn oath.” And here it is remarkable that a portion of that vow has often been quoted by Mr. Graves, but the part above given has not been adduced by him in a solitary instance; for the evident reason, it would have confuted his arguments, condemned his book, and consigned its author, with itself, to merited disgrace, infamy, and contempt. But even as it is, his deception and perfidious management must blast for ever the book and its author. To have referred to the above clauses of Discipline, would have been to sap the very foundations of his arguments, overturning the whole structure he had built on false assertions and assumptions, and showing too plainly to the world his decided proclivity to *slander* and *falsehood*: hence he passed them by unnoticed. But, alas for the shameless sophist! his treachery is detected, his book is doomed to early destruction, and the name of its author will soon become a memento only of shame and of folly.

His miserable trickery and cunning may spare him the name of a fool; but who will not be forced to the conviction that he is guilty of the meanest knavery, and, in the politest language of Webster, of the basest and most malicious perversion of truth?

But we proceed. Mr. Graves declares that Methodism is “*anti-American, anti-republican, dangerous to religion and the religious liberty of this land, death to all the institutions for which Washington fought and freemen died: a consolidated clerical despotism of the direst type.*”

These conclusions, with many others, he bases on certain leading assumptions, which we propose to notice as we come to them, giving you the pages of the Iron Wheel and the Discipline. And first, on page 186, Iron Wheel, Graves says, “I have said the authority of the bishop is supreme, and his power despotic: every part of Methodism is contrived to give the bench of bishops an all-controlling, overwhelming power over the whole system, to give it any direction they please, as much as the despotic Emperor of Russia has over

the Greek Church or over his own army." Again, on pages 189, 190: "Can a more perfect centralization of power in the hands of one man be conceived of, and that man responsible to no one for the use of his authority? He elevates and degrades when he pleases, and no one on earth has a right to say, Why doest thou so?" The above amounts to this:

1. That the bishop has all power, as a despot, without any control from men, constitution, or laws.

2. That there is no tribunal before whom a bishop can be brought to account for his actions.

These premises Graves affirms to be true: we affirm them to be false.

Without bringing any proof of his assertions whatever, he proceeds to argue the anti-American tendency of our Church government, and to show its dangerous operation to our political freedom. But let us see, in the first place, whether or not the bishops are accountable to any tribunal for their conduct, as all depends on this point.

We refer you to Discipline, pages 84, 85:

"Question. To whom is a bishop amenable for his conduct? Answer. To the General Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary."

Here we find not only a tribunal to whom the bishop is accountable for his conduct, but,

1. That the very ministers whom he is said to govern so oppressively, form that very tribunal; and their judgment determines the character of each offence.

2. That they have power to *expel* the bishop, even for improper conduct, for which a lay member must first have private reproof, and may never be expelled, unless he wilfully continues to violate our rules; whereas, the oppressive bishop may be expelled even for the first offence.

3. That the bishop, when expelled, has no right of appeal: a matter worthy of remark, which cannot be said of another individual in all Methodism.

Thus we find Mr. Graves's assertion, so extreme and unqualified, is without support, and is shamefully *false* and *unjust*. The position of the bishop, far from having safeguards thrown around it to protect him in the arbitrary exercise of power, has fewer immunities than the private membership; and here let me add, that no bishop in our Church,

from its organization to the present day, has ever been censured, even for immoral conduct, by the General Conference—a fact that speaks volumes for the wisdom, virtue, and piety of our bishops, as well as the wisdom of our system of government. But Mr. Graves, speaking of bishops, says, on page 223 of his book, plainly committing a *felo de se* upon his own arguments:

“I know that you can *be disciplined* by the General Conference alone, and I suppose that persons must belong to the jurisdiction or government that can discipline them.”

Again, on page 310, he says: “In the Methodist Episcopal Church, the sovereignty resides in the whole body of travelling preachers in full connection. There is no limit to their powers in the government of the Church, except what their own sense of expediency, under the laws of the land, may impose.”

Now, we ask, can the sovereignty reside in the whole body of travelling preachers in full connection, there being no limit to their powers, the bishops being disciplined by the General Conference, and yet the bishop be a despot, without control from men, constitution, or laws? It seems to us, to say nothing of the plain and positive testimony from the Discipline, that Graves has said enough in the last two instances to utterly confute all his former statements in reference to bishops. But it clearly shows the little regard, if any, he has for truth, and the criminal recklessness of the man. As we have now proven his propositions false in regard to bishops, first by the Discipline, and secondly by his own testimony, we now proceed to examine him in regard to presiding elders, as this is the next basis on which he endeavors to build the *anti-republicanism* of Methodism. We refer you to Iron Wheel, pages 195, 196:

“The presiding elder is the servant of the bishop. He peculiarly belongs to the bishop as no other minister does. He is chosen solely by the bishop; holds his office during the pleasure of his master; can be dismissed at his master’s pleasure, for no reason except the royal pleasure of his lordship; and his business is not to preach, to serve God; by no means; that is not reckoned among his duties; but to serve the bishop in the character of a sub-overseer, as a spy and informant upon his brethren; and he is, for this exalted service,

allowed to share in the authority of his master during the recess of Conference, and to be judge in the Quarterly Courts of Appeals. This officer, from the very nature of his office and work, is the most irresponsible character of any, in our estimation, in the whole society.

“The presiding elder is of course selected as one of the most pliant tools that can be found among all the ministers; one that has the least principle, the least sense of honor or shame, or he would scorn to become the sweep, the very serf of the bishop or of any man—scorn to become the spy and informant upon his brethren in the ministry; scorn to exercise the mastery over them, so hostile to the express letter and the very spirit of the gospel.

“He is accounted to rule over the Gentiles of his district; and, like the under-rulers our Lord referred to in the text, he exercises an insolent and oppressive lordship over the preachers under him, as every circuit-rider can testify, if he happens not to be as pliant and crouching as his mighty lordship desires.

“I am aware that it becomes me to prove this. I have said the presiding elder is the sole creature and servant of man, the bishop; depending on him alone for his appointment and continuance in office, and is responsible to the bishop alone for his official conduct. Proof: ‘It shall be the duty of the bishop to choose the presiding elders, to fix their stations, and to change them when he judges it necessary.’ Discipline, page 38. No one is permitted to nominate the candidate, nor, when elected, can all the preachers in the Conference control his acts, or suspend him from the exercise of his office for any crime: to his own master, the bishop, he standeth or falleth. He can be dismissed at the bishop’s pleasure, for no crime, for no fault, and that without any reason being given; nor has he the right to ask a reason. Suspension, removal, or deposition from office in the Methodist Episcopal Church is summary; *i. e.*, despotic; without accusation, trial, or formal sentence.”

In the foregoing, there are two points we design to notice, as they are leading propositions, and involve matters of vital interest:

1. He affirms that a presiding elder is responsible to the bishop alone; that all the Conference cannot control his acts,

or suspend him from the exercise of his office for any crime.

2. That the bishop may suspend or depose him in a despotic manner, without accusation, trial, or formal sentence.

He affirms both these points to be true : we pronounce them *truly* false, and utterly untenable as all the rest of his vain assertions, which in *this* case he says he is aware it *becomes him to prove* ; as if, indeed, all the former postulates he lays down were self-evident truths ! It is a matter of wonder that the infallible, truth-telling expositor of Methodism—the great oracle of the nineteenth century—the guardian of American liberty and republicanism—is aware that proof is demanded for any of his promulgations ; and in this case we conclude that it is a sheer matter of grace that he deigns to give us evidence at all. We acknowledge the favor ; but let us see if his peculiar idiosyncrasy does not appear. He refers us to Discipline, page 38 :

“It shall be the duty of the bishop to choose the presiding elders, to fix their stations, and to change them when he judges it necessary.”

This clause simply shows that, according to our economy, the presiding elders are selected by the bishops, appointed by them as other travelling preachers, and may be changed by them when there is sufficient cause ; that is, when the bishops believe that a minister can accomplish more good in another field of labor ; but not a word is said about suspension for crime, deposition from office, depriving of clerical orders, or expulsion : it simply shows that travelling preachers, while the Conference regards them as acceptable preachers, may be appointed to their fields of labor by the bishop, that authority being delegated to him by the Church.

And this is all the proof that Graves has brought forward to establish the foregoing charges, with many others of a similar character.

Now if you will turn to Discipline, page 86, you will find the law in the premises :

“Question 4. What shall be done when an elder, deacon, or preacher is under report of being guilty of some crime expressly forbidden in the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory ? Answer : Let the presiding elder, in the absence of the bishop, call as

many travelling ministers as he shall think fit, (at least three,) and, if possible, bring the accuser and the accused face to face. If the person be clearly convicted, he shall be suspended from all official services in the Church till the ensuing Annual Conference, at which his case shall be fully considered and determined. But if the accused be a presiding elder, the preachers must call in the presiding elder of the neighboring district, who is required to attend and preside at the trial."

And yet Mr. Graves affirms that all the preachers in the Conference cannot control the acts of an elder, or suspend him for any crime!

See also Discipline, page 88: "When any member of an Annual Conference [presiding elders are members of the Annual Conference] shall be charged with having so conducted himself as to render him unacceptable to the people as a travelling preacher, it shall be the duty of the Conference to which he belongs to investigate the case; and if it appear that the complaint is well founded, and he do not give the Conference [not the bishop] satisfaction that he will amend or voluntarily retire, they [not the bishop] may locate him without his consent."

In the foregoing we find that, so far from the presiding elders being beyond the reach of all power in the Conference, even in the commission of crime, that one other presiding elder and three travelling preachers may suspend him, and the Conference may expel him, in despite of all the bishops of the Church; or the Conference may locate him simply for not being acceptable to the people; not, however, without a trial or formal sentence.

Now see Discipline, page 29, speaking of the powers of the General Conference, the highest authority in our Church: "They shall not do away the privilege of our ministers or preachers, the right of trial by a committee, and of an appeal, neither shall they do away the privileges of our members, the right of trial before the society, or by a committee, and of an appeal."

Here we see not only a law forbidding suspension, deposition, or expulsion, without accusation, trial, or formal sentence, but a law guaranteeing unto all members of the Church the privilege of an appeal, and, further, a constitutional prohibition of the repeal of such laws.

Now, is it not truly astonishing that any man, with our Discipline in his hand, and the smallest amount of common sense in his head, and the least particle of grace in his heart, (a very doubtful hypothesis,) can make such unfounded assertions, and proceed to argue them so zealously? How else can it be accounted for but in view of his utter destitution of moral principle, virtue, truth, and honor? and how may it be excused but in view of his fool-born (not wilful) ignorance? The inference naturally drawn from his argument in the above case is this: A bishop can depose or suspend at pleasure a presiding elder, however intelligent, useful, or pious; and let an elder be never so wicked, oppressive, and tyrannical, the Church must submit; and hence he argues our government is despotic, anti-American, dangerous to religious liberty, and a consolidated clerical despotism. But we trust all his propositions, arguments, and inferences are satisfactorily demolished.

Again. Direct your attention to this same beautifully revolving Wheel, evolving, as it rolls along, so much truth and justice: surely it is a wonderful wheel—built in so much order and harmony of parts and proportions! See page 208: “The following are the degrees through which a candidate for the preachers’ Church in full connection with the Annual Conference must pass. He must obtain privilege from his society or class-meeting to exhort: this is of easy accomplishment, and, mark it, this is the only instance in the life of a Methodist preacher when his name comes before the laity. They are simply allowed to permit him to exhort, but this act is not saying that he may be a preacher, or their ruler during his life. It is also claimed by Methodist preachers that they are the representatives of the laity—their duly elected representatives. When? when the laity merely allowed them to exhort, nothing more?”

Here Mr. Graves affirms that the laity have no authority to even recommend proper persons for license to preach.

Secondly, he affirms that a Methodist preacher’s name never comes before the laity: arguing therefrom that preachers are not the representatives of the laity; that the laity have nothing to do in Church regulations, but that our government is a clerical despotism.

Now to the law and the testimony: he has failed to produce

any; see Discipline, page 39: "The Quarterly Conference shall have authority to license proper persons to preach, and renew their license annually, when, in the judgment of said Conference, their gifts, grace, and usefulness will warrant such renewal; to recommend suitable candidates to the Annual Conference for deacons' or elders' orders in the local connection, for admission on trial in the travelling connection; to try, suspend, expel, or acquit any local preacher in the circuit or station against whom charges may be brought: Provided, that no person shall be licensed to preach without a recommendation of the society of which he is a member, or a leaders' meeting."

Here we find a law not only forbidding any person being licensed to preach without a recommendation from the laity, but a law giving authority to the Quarterly Conference (which is composed mostly of the laity, for all are of the laity except such as are consecrated to the service of God by due ordination—see Webster's Unabridged Dictionary) to license proper persons to preach, after their being thus recommended: then to recommend them for admission on trial in the travelling connection. See also Discipline, page 89: you will there find a law forbidding any person in the local connection being elected to deacons' orders without a recommendation from the Quarterly Conference; and on page 45 of Discipline you will find that no preacher can be received even on trial in travelling connection without recommendation from the Quarterly Conference, most of whom, as we have seen, are of the laity. In addition to this, the name of a preacher, either local or travelling, comes before the laity four times in each year, during his life; the question invariably being asked, Are there any complaints? if not, it is taken for granted they are acceptable with the people. Again, you will find in Discipline, page 88, that a travelling preacher may be located against his will, simply for not being acceptable with the people or lay members.

And yet Mr. Graves says their names never come before the laity after being recommended for license to exhort; and asks where and when they were elected as the representatives of the people.

I answer, 1. When the laity recommended them for license.



2. When the laity licensed them. 3. When they recommended them to the Annual Conference as suitable persons, not only to preach, but to administer discipline. 4. When they acknowledge them from year to year, and from quarterly meeting to quarterly meeting, preferring no charges against them, either as preachers or as administrators of discipline; thereby declaring that they are not only their representatives, but *acceptable representatives*, as well as preachers.

From the above testimony, it will be seen that all the bishops and preachers in the whole Church together cannot license a preacher without the consent of the laity, neither can they receive one into the travelling connection without the consent of the laity, nor elect or ordain a deacon or elder in the local connection without the consent of the laity.

And still Mr. Graves would have us believe that all the powers possessed in our Church are delegated by, and come from, the bishop: see *Iron Wheel*, page 313. This we also deny, and can establish to the contrary.

Now, let us examine this matter. First, where do the bishops receive their authority to preside in the Conferences, station the preachers, etc.?

Answer. From the General Conference, who elected them to that office.

And where did the General Conference receive their authority?

Answer. From the people, who recommended them, and acknowledged them from time to time as their representatives, as we have already seen.

Where, then, are your grounds for the anti-Americanism, anti-republicanism, and absolute slavery of Methodism? They are false and unsubstantial. Such charges and assertions are based in downright falsehood, or, what is more probable, nay, very evident, in a foul and bitter spirit of falsehood and malignity.

But Mr. Graves alleges that travelling preachers can receive into, and exclude from, the Church, whensoever they please, allowing the laity by right no voice whatever in the matter. See *Iron Wheel*, page 235: "You hold and teach that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed alone to the hands of the Methodist clergy; and so the Church of Rome teaches. That, thus empowered, your ministers can re-

ceive into, and exclude from, the Church, whomsoever they please, allowing the laity by right no voice in the matter whatever.

“If this be so, every one will admit it is conferring upon Methodist ministers the most dangerous powers. It makes each preacher an absolute pope during his short reign over the societies in his circuit. He can open, and no man—not all the members of the society protesting—can shut; and he can shut the door, though against *piety*, *virtue*, and *worth*, and all the membership cannot open. Is not such absolute priestly power as this repugnant to every Christian heart, as it is opposed to every teaching of the Saviour or apostles? Ought it not to be as heartily abhorred, frowned upon, and repudiated by American citizens, republican democrats, as the same priestly features are in the Roman Catholic Church? Certainly, if true; but is it not true?”

Here Mr. Graves declares,

1. That Methodist preachers can receive into the Church whomsoever they please.

2. They can exclude from the Church whomsoever they please, allowing the laity by right no voice in the matter in either case: therefore the preacher is the absolute pope, possessing powers most dangerous and oppressive, etc.

Both of these propositions we oppose, and affirm to be false. Let us see.

In regard to receiving members into the Church, you will find the law in Discipline, page 71: “Let none be received into the Church until they have been recommended by a leader [and he is a member] with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall, on examination by the minister in charge, before the church, give satisfactory assurance both of their correctness of faith, and of their willingness to observe and keep all the rules of the Church.” Here is a law, first forbidding a member’s reception into the Church without a recommendation from the leader; and, secondly, requiring such applicant to give satisfactory assurance of his correct faith, and of his willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church; and *this is to be done before the church*.

Now, we ask how a minister can receive a member into the Church, when the members of the society express their dis-

satisfaction in regard to the applicant's correctness of faith, or his willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church? But it is said by some that the applicant must give the above satisfactory assurance to the preacher, and not to the church. If so, why must the examination be conducted in the presence of the church?

The truth is, the preacher is simply required to conduct the examination, and the assurance is given to the church. True, some of our bishops "recommend that membership should not depend upon a vote, but that if there are objections to the reception of a member, the case should be postponed until private measures are adopted to reconcile the parties, and secure the peace of the Church."

But in no case should a preacher receive a member into the Church when the majority of the members are opposed to it; and should he do so with the above law before him, he is certainly guilty of mal-administration, and may be made to atone for his conduct.

The law in the premises forbids such a course; and should a minister so far mistake his duty and authority as to take a member against the vote of the majority, it would be the duty and privilege of such aggrieved members to prefer a complaint against the preacher, at the ensuing Quarterly Conference, where the evil may be corrected, and satisfaction obtained. Hence, we see, in regard to the first point, Mr. Graves's assertion is unfounded and false.

The next assertion we design to notice is, that the ministers can exclude from the Church whoever they please, allowing the laity no voice in the matter whatever. By reference to Discipline, page 96, you will find the law in the case, as follows:

"Question 2. How shall an accused member be brought to trial? Answer. Before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher, in the following manner: Let the accused and the accuser be brought face to face; but if this cannot be done, let the next best evidence be procured. If the accused person be found guilty by decision of a majority of the members before whom he is brought to trial, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the word of God, and sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace

and glory, let the minister or preacher who has the charge of the circuit expel him."

The above law makes it the duty of the preacher in charge of the circuit to preside in the trial of an accused member, and he is, by virtue of his office, a judge of law points; but even then an appeal may be taken from his decision to a higher tribunal.

But the Discipline gives him no authority to judge of the guilt or innocence of the accused person. This is left wholly to the society, or a select number as a committee. The vote of the majority determines the guilt of the offender, and the voice of the society, not the preachers alone, expels him from the Church.

Again: the society must determine the nature of the crime; and when, therefore, a majority of the society, or the select number before whom his case is brought, after hearing and weighing the testimony, believe that the accused is, in the first place, guilty of the alleged crime, and, secondly, that the crime is expressly forbidden in the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, then, and not till then, may the preacher in charge expel him, or pronounce the sentence of expulsion, as a judge in a civil court of law pronounces sentence against a convict pronounced to be guilty by the verdict of a jury.

This is the law; and without fear of successful contradiction, we remark that the above construction of the law is proper and just; and, if so, no preacher can exclude a member contrary to the wish of a majority of the members before whom the case is brought. So far from the assertion being true that a preacher can exclude whomsoever he pleases, it is quite the reverse: a preacher in charge has not even a vote in the case, and if the church should tie in voting, even in that case the Discipline gives the preacher no right to give the casting vote.

On page 301 of *Iron Wheel*, Mr. Graves charges that we "deny the right of challenging the jury." The Discipline may nowhere give directly that privilege to the accused member, but it nowhere denies the right of challenging, if there are sufficient reasons; therefore this assertion is false and futile. Our Discipline proceeds upon the ground or supposition that they who have charge of circuits will be impartial, and, as

far as possible, see that equal and impartial justice is administered; and if a preacher should knowingly select a committee of prejudiced men to try any case, he would be guilty of mal-administration. If sufficient reasons are shown why a person should not serve on such committee, and yet the preacher places him there, he is not a judicious administrator; and in all such cases complaints may be, and ought to be, preferred against the preacher at the next Quarterly Conference, or at the Annual Conference, where the evil may be remedied.

We do not allow the accused to choose his own jury, neither do our civil courts; but we do practically allow them the right of challenging a jury, provided sufficient reason be shown for such procedure. Therefore we see no point where exceptions can properly be taken to our manner either of receiving or trying members, more especially as it is known that any expelled member has guaranteed to him the right of an appeal to the Quarterly Conference, a tribunal composed of unprejudiced and pious men, where, in nine cases out of ten, impartial justice is administered; but as this objection is meant to apply to our written law and not to our practice, we think a sufficiency has been said to satisfy any reasonable mind of the invalidity of Mr. Graves's argument in reference to this point.

In connection with this matter, however, there is yet another objection urged against our economy which calls for a few words of explanation. I allude to that clause of the Discipline found on page 97, which authorizes the preacher in charge (provided he differs with a majority of the society or committee in regard to the guilt or innocence of the accused) to refer the case to the next Quarterly Conference. This does not, however, legally invest the power of expulsion or acquittal in the Quarterly Conference; for this, as we shall see, would be unconstitutional. But it is simply a petition to the Conference for a new trial, and the Conference may grant or reject such petition as they may think best, when they shall have heard the testimony in the case.

This view of the subject will explain the matter in question: namely, if the preacher in charge thinks the society or select number have erred in regard to the guilt or innocence of the accused, (as it is sometimes the case in all churches, through prejudice or some other motive,) he may refer the

case to the next Quarterly Conference, presenting all the facts in the case before that body; and if they concur with the preacher in opinion, then may the case be remanded for a new hearing.

But in no case should the Quarterly Conference proceed to expel a member who had been acquitted before the society, as this would be a violation of the great constitutional law of our Church. See Discipline, page 29, speaking of the General Conference: "They shall not do away the privilege of our ministers or preachers, viz., that of trial by a committee, and of an appeal; neither shall they do away the privilege of our members, viz., of trial before the society or a committee, and of an appeal."

But if a member is tried before the society, and is acquitted, and his case is referred to the Quarterly Conference, and he is then expelled, certainly he is then denied the right of an appeal.

Therefore such a construction of discipline would doubtless be unconstitutional; but should the society err in the first instance, we can see no impropriety in remanding the case for a new trial; and if the accused be then expelled, he may appeal to the Conference, as in other cases.

We have now seen, in the first place, that a preacher cannot receive into the Church any member, without the consent of the Church.

Secondly, that he cannot expel a member without a majority of the Church or select number giving their consent, and deciding the guilt of the accused person.

Thirdly, that we practically allow the accused the right of challenging the committee or jury, provided sufficient reasons can be alleged for such challenge.

And fourthly, that the right of appeal is guaranteed to all our members, not only by law, but a constitution forbidding the repeal of such law.

Hence, I unhesitatingly declare that there is as strong a safeguard thrown around the membership of our Church as there is in any Church upon earth: hence, the assertion of Mr. Graves that we, like the Roman Catholic Church, hold and teach that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed to the Methodist clergy, is utterly false and unfounded, not having any testimony to sustain it, but, on the contrary,

*proven* false by sufficient testimony, and that testimony sustained by the universal practice of our Church.

Therefore, all the *grave* inferences Mr. *Graves* has so *gravely* drawn from the foregoing assertions, will be received by all thinking and good men of every profession as a standing proof of his decided and *prepollent gravitation* of mind and heart towards misrepresentation, sophistication, slander, and falsehood.

Once more we refer you to that rotation of abomination, Iron Wheel, page 251. There Mr. *Graves* affirms, first, that "Methodist ministers determine the creed, the doctrines, Methodists must believe;" and, secondly, "they can change them when they see fit." And again, on page 252, he declares that we "do not allow the laity the shadow of any thing that resembles the exercise of private judgment."

From these declarations, he infers the oppressive tendency of our economy upon the laity, and unblushingly declares that we "make the damning sin of to-day the virtue of to-morrow."

And, furthermore, he argues the similarity of our Church to that of the Roman Catholic, showing, by the changeableness of our doctrines, in connection with our refusal to allow the laity the exercise of their own private judgment, the *instability* of such a system, as well as the evils of its tendency. But before we proceed to look at his conclusion, as we acknowledge we are not very far-seeing in the "*manifest destiny*" of our system, let us first examine the medium through which to look—the horoscope through which the great Alpha and Omega of the Iron Wheel sees the final catastrophe of the Methodist system.

Let us look at the first points in his proposition, and see if they be true or false; and, if they appear false, as we may very reasonably anticipate, we shall not trouble you with the latter part of the subject, nor excite any fears in regard to our uncertain future.

And, first, who determines the doctrines Methodists are to believe? *Graves* says, Methodist ministers: we deny it. His view is established by no proof. For ours, we refer you to Discipline, page 12, art. 5: "The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of

any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

Then the doctrines to be believed by Methodists were determined, not by men, but by the Almighty, and set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

But perhaps he means that the Methodist clergy first drew up the articles of religion to which we all subscribe. This we also deny: they were drawn up long before John Wesley was born, who was the founder of Methodism: see Articles of the Church of England.

But Mr. Graves affirms that Methodist ministers can change them whenever they see cause. This is denied also. See proof, Discipline, page 29: "The General Conference [the highest authority in our Church; termed the great outer wheel by Mr. Graves himself] shall not revoke, alter, or change our articles of religion, nor establish any new standards of doctrines."

By reference to the next page of Discipline, you will find that even two-thirds of the General Conference, with the concurrence of three-fourths of all the Annual Conferences, cannot change them. The truth is, our doctrines were ordained of God, set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, are unchangeable for ever. And, should the Methodist Church so far apostatize as to change any of our established doctrines, that moment she would cease to be a Methodist Church. It would be a disorganization of the Church; a severing of every tie that binds us together. And yet Graves tells us that the clergy "can change them when they see fit;" "can make the damning sin of to-day the virtue of to-morrow!"

Next, he charges that we "do not allow the laity the exercise of private judgment."

Now, look at the condition of membership, Discipline, page 23: "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies—a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins; but wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desires of salvation, 1. By doing no harm. 2. By doing good. 3. By attending upon all the ordinances of the Church," etc.



Here we see that the condition of membership is a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins; but this desire is to be manifested by doing no harm, doing good, attending the ordinances of the Church, etc.

It is here worthy of note, that on page of his book 115, Graves, endeavoring to condemn our terms of admission, takes exception to them upon the ground that we allow them to believe any thing; that we do not require of them any particular opinions whatever.

In the language of Inskip, he says, "Let them be Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, it is no obstacle. The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian; the Independent or Anabaptist may use his own mode of worship; so may the Quaker, and none will contend with him about it: they think and let think." A little farther down, on the same page, Graves remarks, "Unconverted men, then, skeptics, Universalists, and infidels, if they wish their souls saved, were as properly entitled to membership in ancient Methodism as was Mr. Wesley himself. By referring to Discipline of Methodism, South, page 23, you will find that a profession of religion is not a condition of membership in a Methodist society to-day."

Now look at it: just examine the above, and then remember that J. R. Graves has declared that we, the clergy, do not allow the laity the shadow of any thing that resembles the exercise of private judgment. Not only has he declared it, but made it the basis of argument. Here we have another beautiful specimen of Graves *versus* Graves. When he wishes to make our terms of membership unscriptural, he tells us that Universalists, skeptics, and even infidels, if they wish their souls saved, can be admitted; that *we think and let think*. Then, when he wishes to make our economy and polity oppressive, he tells us the clergy do not allow the laity any shadow of the exercise of private judgment, etc. What shall we say of these things? What admirable consistency! Surely the incrassation of error, envy, and prejudice is so deep about the brain of Graves, that reason cannot perform her functions. What an unfortunate idiosyncrasy he presents! One would almost suppose, judging from the literary, intellectual, and moral manifestation of the man, to see him, in persona, some horrible or uncouth distortion of nature; if not

having two faces, one before and one behind, like the Roman Janus, at least having a convenient number of mouths, the one not knowing what the other says, and a tongue for any thing. If not an object of contempt, he certainly demands our sympathies, as one who is "born into this breathing world before his time," or as one whose brain, sick with the fever of religious bigotry and intemperate zeal, is given to delirious aberrations, or, more properly, as one manifesting the feebleness and imbecility of an old man, such as we sometimes see, who scarcely recognizes his own identity, and very seldom the identity of other persons, calling them sometimes by one name, and sometimes another.

So it is with Graves in reference to facts and things in connection with Methodism, as he views them through different media, his eyes darkened by the films of invidious bigotry and excessive prejudice.

On pages 295-7 of Iron Wheel, you will find the following propositions:

1. That the Methodist clergy are a moneyed monopoly, and possess far more temporal power than the Catholic clergy of this country.
2. That we deny the people the right to hold the meeting-houses built with their own money.
3. That bishops hold the keys of all the Methodist chapels and meeting-houses in America; that they can lock them up to-morrow, so that no one can open them.

From these premises, Mr. Graves again argues the great strength of the Methodist clergy in point of influence, and the danger of that influence to the republican institutions of this country; and proceeds to denounce our plan of operations in the most bitter terms, declaring that the bishop can cast the entire vote of Methodism upon any one man; showing there is more danger from the Methodist polity, the influence of her clergy, to civil and religious liberty, than may be apprehended from Roman Catholicism.

But first let us examine his propositions: perhaps it may save us some dread and uneasiness.

1. "The Methodist clergy are a moneyed monopoly, and possess by far more temporal power than the Catholic clergy in this country." This we deny; and, as Mr. Graves has produced no evidence to sustain his position, our assertion

ought to countervail his, provided we have the same reputation for truth and integrity. But though we feel we might safely rest the proposition on this basis without presumption or vanity, we prefer to remark that whatever amount of Church property may be owned by the Methodist Church, it is not possessed by, nor is it under the control of, the clergy. See Discipline, page 167: "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 of said circuit or station, and shall be required to present a report of its acts during the preceding year." Here we find that the property of the Church is not only held by the laity, (trustees appointed for that purpose,) but that these trustees are responsible to a body, most of whom are of the laity, for their acts; so the trustees who hold the Church property are nearly all of the laity, and accountable to the Quarterly Conference, most of whom are, as we have seen, laymen. But some may say, Mr. Graves referred to the Book Concern, and that the profits arising therefrom may be disposed of for political purposes, as the clergy may think proper. This we also deny. See Discipline, pages 29, 30:

"They [the General Conference] shall not appropriate the proceeds of the Book Concern, nor of the Charter-fund, to any purpose other than for the benefit of the travelling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children."

Hence, whatever amount of Church property is owned by the Methodist Church, it is either in the hands of the laity or the hands of trustees appointed by the General Conference, (as the Book Concern;) and here we have not only a law forbidding the disposal of it at the pleasure of the clergy, but a constitution forbidding the repeal of said law.

In reference to the other two propositions of Mr. Graves, it is not necessary to produce further testimony, as the law we have already referred to covers all the ground; and so far, we have proven that Church property is held and controlled by the laity: therefore the clergy do not control it. If the trustees hold the keys of all our meeting-houses, chapels, and places of worship, the bishops do not hold them.

However, we refer you to "Deed of Settlement," com-

mening on page 162 of Discipline; and the curious inquirer, if not fully satisfied, may examine the records of all deeds of Church property in the clerks' offices in the several counties most convenient to him, and know for himself.

Thus we may see there is but little danger to American institutions from the moneyed monopoly of the Methodist Church, North or South. I may here remark, in connection with the above, that there is a thousand times more danger to civil and religious liberty to be apprehended from the sectarian bigotry of Mr. Graves, who, either through ignorance or malice, seems determined to unchurch any and all other denominations of Christians; styling them harlots, and abominations of the earth; endeavoring to dismantle them of all the purity, virtue, and integrity which he vainly envies; as vainly seeking, with all the bitterness of his envenomed nature, to disparage their fair fame by falsehood and slander: more danger from such a man, whose heart is ever full of wormwood, whose tongue rolls in bitterness, whose mouth is full of guile, whose "ear rapacious" hears the clink of mammon's coin above the calls of charity and the gospel's claims; more danger from such a despiser of worth, "whose joy is woe—the woe of others," whose praise is reproach, whose peace is strife, a moral plague in the Church, a pestilence in society, than from all the abuse of power, or the possession of wealth, that ever may mark the annals of a Christian Church.

But I speak of principles and character in the abstract, and not of *the man* of the Iron Fabrication—the greatest piece of forgery that ever issued from the furnace of a zealot's brain. It were too much praise to attribute such importance and influence to J. R. Graves. My candid conviction is, that the same spirit which animated the author of "Methodist Despotism," would, if in power, again light the torch of persecution, and exterminate by fire all who refuse subscription to its own peculiar views: it is the consolidation of despotism itself. He who, clad in the habiliments of a priest of God, will defame and stigmatize the character of a million of virtuous and unoffending people, regardless of age, sex, or condition, may claim to be anointed of God, but none but fools will believe it: faith, charity, and love may be written in his creed; but upon his heart there is nothing save "pride, tyranny, and lust of wealth and power."

We next refer you to "*the book*," page 367, where he declares that our Discipline positively forbids the rite of baptism for the space of six months, and argues therefrom the anti-scriptural tendency of Methodism, charging us with assuming prerogatives never given to us by Jesus Christ.

But we submit to you his own words:

"I propound this question: Does not the right to shut a Christian out of the Church six months imply the right to shut him out six years or sixty? Will you say he is virtually in the Church when he joins the society? But he has never been baptized: he happened not to be sprinkled in his infancy; and, having made a consistent profession of conversion, one with which all your preachers are fully satisfied, he applies for baptism at your hands. Will you grant it to him? Will you grant it to him the same day, the same week, or within six weeks or six months? No, sir: the law-book your preachers have solemnly vowed to follow, positively forbids him the rite of baptism for the space of six months."

Now the above assertion we flatly deny, and challenge Mr. Graves and his coadjutors to produce the clause in our Discipline which either directly or indirectly forbids baptism for six months. But, to the contrary, we affirm that a person may be baptized at any time after joining on probation, provided he will take the baptismal vow found on pages 113, 114, of our Discipline; and this we propose to prove. The Discipline declares on page 71 that a person must be baptized before he is received into the Church in full connection; but that does not prove positively that he may not be baptized at any time previous. It is the general custom of our Church to baptize at any time previous to receiving into full connection; and a rule of practice, though it be not written, and conflicts not with written law, is equivalent. But if this is not satisfactory, let us take the authority of "higher law," and turn to Iron Wheel, and introduce the testimony of J. R. Graves, editor of Tennessee Baptist, and author of the volume before us; in which, page 406, you may have his own words, *verbatim*. Hear him:

"I may go farther, and say that, in some sections, not only will persons destitute of religion be received into the class, but Methodist ministers will urge them, after a limited period, to enter into full fellowship by joining the Church. Be it

remembered that uniting with the class is not joining the Church. It is only going into the vestibule or entry-way, while the doors of the main building are closed.

"None can enter the temple until they have passed six months in the court of the Gentiles. *They may be sprinkled, poured, or immersed at any time after joining the class*, and they are expected to attend upon all the ordinances of God, among which is the Supper of the Lord. They must come to the Lord's table for a number of months before they are fit for admission to the Church."

Now, any impartial person, by reading the two chapters from which we have taken the foregoing extracts, will see at once that Mr. Graves designs to misrepresent our polity, and to make a false impression on the public mind.

In the first place, to condemn our practice of receiving members into the Church on probation, he declares we forbid baptism for six months, which, if true on our part, would be assuming authority never delegated to us by Christ.

But, in the second place, he attempts to condemn our practice of administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper to persons who have not been received into full connection with the Methodist Church.

Hence, he argues, first, that we are anti-republican, withholding privileges from probationers; and, secondly, that we are anti-scriptural, in bestowing privileges upon them.

In order to sustain the first, he affirms a positive falsehood: in order to sustain the second, he declares the *first to be false*.

Now look at it; page 367: "The law-book your teachers have solemnly vowed to follow, positively forbids him the rite of baptism for the space of six months." Then on page 406: "They may be sprinkled, poured, or immersed at any time after joining the class;" and "be it remembered that joining the class is not joining the Church."

From the first, he infers that the Methodist Church is anti-American, anti-scriptural, dangerous to religion and to religious liberty; a clerical despotism. From the second, he infers that the Church is composed of sinners, wicked and ungodly men, that it is opposed to the Scriptures, and that it is a proselyting system.

Now, permit us to explain in a few words the subject

which seems to involve Mr. Graves in so much perplexity, and which has again provoked an exercise of his ruling propensity.

First, when we baptize a person, either infant or adult, we initiate him not directly into the Methodist Church, but into the general Church, composed of the whole body of Christians collectively, or of those who profess to believe in Christ, and acknowledge him to be the Saviour of the world.

Now, when a person of such Christian faith, coming to the years of maturity, shall enrol his name as a probationer, we admit him to all the privileges of our Church, class-meetings, love-feasts, sacraments, etc., except the privilege of voting or holding office, which he cannot have, unless he becomes a member in full connection. When his six months' probation has expired, and he has given satisfactory evidence of the correctness of his faith, and of his willingness to observe the rules of the Church, he is admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church, and allowed all its privileges and immunities: he is now a member not only of Christ's general Church, but of a Church consisting of a number of Christians, united together under the same ecclesiastical form of government, having the same creed and the same ritual: for this definition, see Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. But if, at the expiration of six months, such person is dissatisfied with our doctrines or discipline, he may retire; or, if the Church is dissatisfied with him as a member, he may be rejected, and no harm is done to either party.

Thus, when he is baptized, he joins the general or universal Church: when he is admitted into full connection, he joins a particular church, or branch of the same general Church.

But Mr. Graves thinks the prohibition of members coming into full connection at once is anti-American and anti-republican.

Let us see. Although it is a debatable question whether the government of a Church should correspond in every particular with any form of civil government, their objects being materially different in many respects, nevertheless let us examine this matter a little with reference to our own form of civil government, as that furnishes as good a standard, perhaps, as any we may select. When a person emigrates to this

country from England, Ireland, Spain, France, or Russia, he is not permitted to vote in a popular election or to hold office at once. It is true our government will protect him in person and estate, but he must serve out a probationary term of five years, and take the oath of allegiance, before he can be allowed a vote or the privilege of holding office; and even a citizen, born and bred in the United States, coming from any other State to Georgia, for instance, must be here six months before he is allowed a vote in the government of the country at large.

So far, the analogy is good and in favor of our Church discipline, and might be extended still farther upon this basis, and in view of the fact that sinners are *aliens* and *foreigners* from the commonwealth of Israel, and are so represented in the Bible.

We therefore think it both scriptural and republican to require some term of naturalization from those who seek the franchises of a government before they enjoy them, whether that government be civil or ecclesiastical.

We might enlarge upon this point, and give many good reasons for the rule and policy of our Church in this matter; but as the question before us is one of republicanism, we think it unnecessary to go into an argument, *in extenso*, to prove the wisdom of our Church policy, recommended by so many years of beneficial results and established advantages; at least, not until Mr. Graves, the great expounder of Methodist law, the Cromwell of the nineteenth century, "knowing what he would not have, but ignorant of what he would have," the Luther of a new era of civil and religious liberty, standing upon the watchtower of his own conceit, shall infallibly declare that the government of the United States of America is ill-founded, anti-scriptural, and anti-republican.

Before leaving this point, however, we would respectfully advise Mr. Graves to be more careful in future ratiocinations on Methodist or any other government, as a few pages intervening two promptly and positively contradictory assertions, do not affect the contradiction very materially.

We have now satisfactorily proven, we trust,

I. That, as a Church, we receive the Holy Scriptures as the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice; so that we teach nothing as required, of necessity, to eternal salvation, that is not found therein or may be proven



thereby, in the meantime observing and enjoining all things that are clearly set forth therein.

Therefore the Methodist Church is *not* anti-scriptural and anti-Christian.

II. That there is a tribunal before whom a bishop of the M. E. Church may be arraigned, tried, and expelled from the Church.

That the very ministers whom he is said to oppress form that tribunal.

That they may expel him for improper conduct.

That they are the judges of what constitutes such conduct.

That, when thus expelled, he has no appeal.

That what authority he has is delegated to him, and may be taken away when he uses it improperly.

Therefore our government, having republican elements, is *not* despotic.

III. That the presiding elder is not responsible to the bishop for his conduct, but that he may be suspended by another presiding elder and three travelling ministers, and expelled by the Annual Conference for crime, or located, contrary to his will or the will of the bishop, for being an unacceptable preacher with the people.

IV. That the travelling preacher is the representative of the people or the laity.

1. By being recommended by the laity for license.

2. By being licensed by a body, most of whom are lay members.

3. By being recommended by that body as a proper person both to preach and to administer discipline.

4. By his name coming before the laity from time to time, four times in each year, no complaints being preferred against him, either as a preacher or as an administrator of discipline; thereby being acknowledged as their representative from year to year.

V. That the travelling preacher can neither receive into nor exclude from the Church any member, without the consent of the majority of the society or lay members.

VI. That the clergy do not have the control of Church property, but that such property is held by trustees, and that those trustees are responsible to a body, most of whom are of the laity.

VII. That our Church guarantees to all her members the right of trial by their peers, and an appeal, except the bishop.

VIII. That our doctrines cannot be revoked, altered, or changed, either by the clergy or laity.

IX. That we do not forbid baptism for any given time.

Therefore our government, being vested in the hands of the laity, is not an aristocracy; and, having all its elements consonant with the principles of a republic, it is not anti-republican, anti-American; nor is it opposed either to civil or religious liberty, or any of the institutions for which Washington fought and freemen died; but all its powers residing in the laity or Church at large, and in the hands of its representatives, *it is* republican; and, as we have seen that our bishops receive authority from the General Conferences, and the General Conferences from the Annual Conferences, and the Annual Conferences from the collective body of the Church, our government is democratic; is American, as far and as purely as the government of a Church may be like that of a State. Therefore, all the premises of Mr. Graves having been proven false in the above instances in every particular, all the inferences he pretends to draw from them answer no valuable purpose, and serve only to swell the volume of falsehood and defamation, in which appear "ten thousand slanders, all his own;" slanders which, if they do not burn now upon his blushing face and guilty heart, thrown back upon him by a million of injured, innocent, but indignant people, will yet be read upon his impious brow, "in characters of ever-blushing shame," infamy, and woe. The man and his book present a lamentable spectacle: to the man of reason and cold philosophy, a contemptible, mean, and dishonorable spectacle: to the pure-hearted, generous, charitable Christian, a truly lamentable and piteous spectacle; a sad and afflicting demonstration of the unmitigated and extreme corruption of the unregenerated nature of the human heart; of its native tendency to strife, envy, jealousy, hatred; of its deepest self-deception or the grossest hypocrisy, and that under circumstances most favorable to virtue and purity of life. But such demonstrations are many: the present one, however, is a remarkable case of depravity of the deepest dye; the exhibition of a spirit of the profoundest effrontery and abandon-

ment of every redeeming virtue ; a spirit full of vain conceits and love-destroying bigotry, exulting in its art :

“A kind of hellish charm, that makes the lips  
Of truth speak falsehood and deceit ;”

a spirit, moving foul and cruel under the white robes of a Christian profession, desecrating the pulpit, impairing its influence, and abusing the power, station, and functions of a priest of God.

But such prodigies of corruption are doomed to despair and destruction, and their works do follow them.

Superstition, hypocrisy, and false pretension have had their days of success, and adherents in every age ; but their triumphs are short : their overthrow is final, certain, and full of everlasting contempt. And so the Iron Wheel and its fabricator will have their day, but a short and inglorious one, soon to expire amid the shades of Tophet. Graves will have his Iron Wheel endorsers ; but the weight of that wheel shall press his own soul to darkness and infamy ; and the foolish vagaries which have been hatched and fledged in his own idle brain, will be as dust on the wheels of our glorious Methodism, as her car rolls onward, over every opposition, to share the triumphs of the glory of her Lord.

Let us next refer you to Iron Wheel, pages 409, 410 :

“ But the Discipline directly offers the *patronage, suffrage, and money* of the Methodist Episcopal Church to those who will become identified with it, or even *groan* so to be. This, to our mind, is a most monstrous feature, and most corrupting in its influence. To explain my meaning, I call your attention to the following rule : It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation by doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be ; employing them preferably to others ; buying one of another ; helping each other in business ; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only. Discipline, Part I, Chap. ii, sect. 1.

“ What does the Discipline say to a money-loving world ? We Methodists are a powerful, numerous, and wealthy people, and all our patronage and support we pledge to those who will belong to our household of faith, or only groan so to be. To

the laboring men, wealthy undertakers of works, public or private, brickmasons, house-carpenters, etc., we say, If you will become a Methodist, we will employ you. The Discipline requires us to employ Methodists in preference to others. A printer or bookbinder goes to the Book Concern in Nashville and asks for work, and the Agent inquires, 'Are you a Methodist?' 'No, sir.' 'Do you not belong as a seeker, one groaning so to be?' 'No, sir.' 'Well,' says the Agent, 'I cannot employ you then, so long as I can engage Methodists, or groaners; for the Discipline requires me to employ Methodists in preference to others.' Here is patronage offered for a bare profession. The Discipline to mechanics and tradesmen: The Methodists have money, and will buy of you if you will simply join the class, and advocate Methodism in the community. Give Methodists your influence, and they will give you their patronage. To the politician the Discipline virtually says, We have the majority of votes in your district, and we can make you a constable, a sheriff, a judge, a representative, or a senator. Do you go for Methodism, and Methodists will go for you."

We have been thus particular to extract so much of Mr. Graves, that all may see his ready invention, his wonderful skill in warping simple facts and ingenuous statements, in which there is not a particle of evil concealed, and forming new combinations of ideas out of rules and principles extracted from the Bible, descended from God, and based upon our common religious faith, and giving to them a world of hidden and fearful meaning. What a mystery of iniquity, falsehood, and guile! what a weasel-eyed, long-scented artificer in all the arts of malevolence and suspicion. Where will his wonderful sagacity next develop itself in search of some burrowed insect-fault of Methodism? The feature Mr. Graves so abhors in our Discipline, terming it monstrous in itself, and building such a monstrous and ridiculous structure upon it, may be found on page 25 of our Discipline: "By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, [not *our faith*,] or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, and helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only." But does this assert that we are to give preferences in trade to those of the same religious profession; that we are to trade with Methodists, and not with

Baptists, or any other sect of the same general Christian faith? Certainly not: this would be uncharitable, contrary to the word and spirit of the Bible, and intolerant. Who are the household of faith? Not the Methodist, nor the Baptist, nor any other denomination, but all who are orthodox in the faith.

In the above-quoted extract from our Discipline, let it be observed that "the world" is spoken of in contradistinction to the "household of faith;" and this ought to have determined our meaning, and prevented all misconstruction. Now, if Mr. Graves and his people consider themselves as the world, in opposition to the household of faith, opposed to Christianity, and warring against the Church, *loving their own and them only*, then, and not till then, will his misconstruction become a proper construction of our Discipline.

We, as Methodists, never did style any orthodox branch of the Christian Church the world; and although Mr. Graves and his endorsers have been pleased to style us harlots and abominations of the earth, we still acknowledge the Baptists, as a people, to be of the household of faith, and hope they may ever be the firm and zealous defenders of it, as it was once delivered to the saints.

Our Discipline requires us "to do good to all; that is, as far as possible, to all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith, *or groaning so to be.*" Mr. Graves ridicules our Discipline by frequently styling probationers, *groaners*. It had reflected less suspicion upon his own repentance and piety if he had spared to touch with guilty hand these serious and most sacred things. We are to conclude, I suppose, that *he* himself has always sat among the saints, and committed all *his groaning* to the Spirit that maketh intercession for us with *groanings* that cannot be uttered. But he represents seekers as groaning to be Methodists, in order to obtain the patronage of Methodists. Now, any honest-hearted man will not fail to see, by reading the general rules from which the clause is taken which Graves terms so monstrous, first, that we are to be, in every kind, merciful after our power, and *that* to all men: secondly, that the household of faith signifies all the people of God, those who have been regenerated, born again; and, thirdly, that one groaning so to be, is one that is earnestly seeking the joys

of pardoned sin. And if this be true, which all must perceive, Mr. Graves, far from bringing our Discipline into ridicule and contempt, as was his manifest design, has only given another proof of an utter destitution of all large and liberal Christian feeling, and of reckless and determined opposition to all that is not his own.

The section of Discipline which he attempts to ridicule, contains nothing that may not be proven by the Holy Scriptures, properly construed; and he that ridicules that portion of our Discipline, ridicules the Bible and the language and spirit of inspiration: the moral condition and the retributory end of such a man are terribly fearful.

These expositions are but rents in the fair, false, and sanctimonious exterior of a man who vainly and impudently seeks, in the livery of heaven, to hide the ever-scething and fermenting corruption of his wicked and perverted nature.

We therefore earnestly hope and pray that all good-meaning people, desirous to know the truth and to pursue it, will read our Discipline carefully, and in the light of the Bible, before giving their sanction to the Iron Wheel, and endorsing and becoming responsible for the vile and disgraceful slanders of J. R. Graves. Take not up a reproach against your neighbor: be not unwittingly made the heralds of the perpetrated villainies and unmeasured lies of a man who is a common foe to our common Christianity; whose name will blot the records of our common history.

But let us notice still further the manner and character of his misrepresentation. On pages 487, 488, he declares that "Methodists must employ Methodist workmen in preference to Baptists, Presbyterians, or men of the world; must trade with Methodist merchants in preference to all others; take the pills of Methodist physicians, and cast their votes for the Methodist candidate for all civil offices, in preference to all others. Here is the law which the preachers are bound to see their members observe, on pain of exclusion: here is the law that is a disgrace to the name of religion."

Then he quotes the same clause of Discipline, and again, on the next page, he says: "This is commercial and political communion: it is in the power of the bishops and preachers of the Methodist Church to say which of two candidates shall be elected as a representative, or senator, or judge, or governor,

or President of the United States. They can cast the entire vote of Methodism upon any one man."

It seems useless here to make even any comments on the foregoing, much less to attempt to make an argument: it is all idle, silly, and ridiculous deduction from premises which we have already proven false. Wherever Methodism is known, its practical operation is to the contrary of such assertions; and it is truly astonishing that a man pretending to any degree of respectability, and any measure of common sense, would have the audacity to promulge to an enlightened community such humdrum, nonsensical fallacies, hoping to find any so carelessly observant of institutions in their very midst, so destitute of reason, charity, and reflection, that they should be made his miserable dupes.

Surely none will listen to such bamboozling balderdash who know any thing of our history and the character of our membership, unless they, like the arrant, insidious, and scandalous originator of such foolish whimsicalities, are lost to truth and honor, and given over to believe a lie. Society in this age of the world, and in this highly favored land, have too much light, and virtue, and intelligence, and are too wide awake to the operations of all their institutions, and their interests are too united and common, to have failed to see long since the *monstrous* features of our Church system, if any such as Mr. Graves discovers at this late day had ever existed. But they do not and never did exist, except in the brain of Graves, and on the pages of that tissue of falsehood and slander, the Iron Wheel; having their origin in a sordid and foul spirit of prurient and restless ambition, envy, and venality; and to such a spirit's conception there is nothing good, nothing pure, nothing virtuous, as is always the case with the veteran seducer: to him all is corruptible, all is venal, and there is nothing too high for his impudent reach. So Graves estimates public intelligence, honesty, and virtue, picks flaws in our Church government, magnifies molehills to mountains, and hopes to seduce the common mind to the level of his own depravity; but the good, the pure, the reflecting part of society will see and condemn his art. They will not fail to see the glaring inconsistencies, the deep prejudices, the low intrigue of the man, and despise his principles and his motives. He is one of those of whom it may be truly said,

—“*Trifles* light as air  
Are, to the *jealous*, confirmation strong  
As proofs of Holy Writ;”

and of whom all virtuous and high-minded lovers of truth, Israelites indeed in the faith, lovers of our common religion, will undoubtedly say :

“We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud; even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath; but his lies shall not be so.”

We believe that this is the language of God concerning us, that he will avenge our wrongs, and that he will overrule them to our prosperity, causing the arrows of our adversaries to pierce their own souls.

Methodists vote for whom they please, buy of whom they please, sell to whom they please, and are governed in these cases by the general views, principles, and motives that operate in society, except so far as religion ought to modify and regulate such free and liberal principles and motives in the light of the Bible.

In Methodism, the citizen is not merged into the religionist: in the light of the Bible, and the fear of God, he is permitted to go wherever duty, friendship, or interest leads him. The Methodist is still a free and independent citizen.

But Mr. Graves charges, on pages of his book 488, 489, that we are close-unionists in matrimony; that we are opposed to our own people intermarrying with other denominations, etc. On this point we will only remark that our Discipline does not forbid our people intermarrying with other denominations, provided such persons as intermarry with our people have the form and are seeking the power of godliness. See Discipline, pages 79, 80. In other words, we are opposed to our sons or daughters being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. 2 Cor. vi. 14.

If, therefore, Mr. Graves considers himself and his people as infidels, or as the world, opposed to Christianity, not having the form nor power of religion, then ours is an exclusive policy in reference to *them*.

Now, Graves knew that Methodists have a pretty good share of beauty, as well as *money* and *influence*, among them; and it is a wonder that he does not interpret the spirit of our Dis-



cipline here as he did before, and say, "We Methodists are a powerful, numerous, and wealthy people, and have much *beauty* as well as wit and gold among us; and all our patronage, and a reasonable quantity of our influence and money, we pledge to those who seek to become the *husbands of our daughters*, the *heirs* of our property, or earnestly *groan* so to be."

But he complains to Bishop Soule, and charges that our rule is far above the law and the prophets; that we ought not to be so unscripturally contracted and limited. Now, for the benefit of Mr. Graves and his endorsers, if they have any *especial* and *individual* interests in this part of our subject, or have been rejected lovers at our shrine, as we might suppose, we would respectfully inform them that we give no wives to Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, and the worshippers of strange gods, and Mammon especially; and we do not suffer, if possible, the "strange children" of other gods, "whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood," to intermarry among us. This fully illustrates our policy and practice in this matter, and is all the balm we can afford to any who are individually and especially concerned. To Iron Wheel founders and scandal-trundlers it is altogether exclusive, and we hope it may ever be so; but that our Discipline forbids our people to intermarry with those of other Christian denominations, the charge is *false* and *unfounded*. Our preferences in this matter are regulated by the same circumstances and motives which, as we asserted before, govern our political and social relations, and regulate and direct our trade and our influence. We go where friendship, love, and our interests direct us.

We next proceed to examine a few of the leading propositions of Mr. Graves, in which moral character is more particularly involved. Graves has made many serious charges against the character of our people, both the clergy and the laity, male and female. I am aware that this is denied by some, but it is at least a disputable question. But let us see. On page 215, he says:

"Mark the means by which a Methodist preacher can hope for advancement in rank: elevation is alone in the gift of the superior clergy: they confer it only upon their favorites. The aspirant must labor to gain the superior good-will of the pre-

siding elder, and he alone can do this by his zeal for Methodism, and the most extreme subserviency to his wishes.

"Here is a fair field, and the list open for flattery, fawning, and man-worship. There is not one only seeking for good circuits, or town or metropolitan stations, or a cabinet appointment, but scores of aspirants: hence, what rivalry, what canvassing, what *envy*!"

*Envy!* O shame, where is thy blush? Who is this that talks of *envy*? Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon, that Graves dishonors *envy*! Let darkness reproach the night, and sin be judge of Satan!

"But another feature in Methodism. Preachers are *allowed* and *encouraged* to be informants upon one another, and the presiding elder keeps his ears open, and invites evil as well as good reports. *Indeed, it is part of his business to be a general scandal-monger!*"

Worse and worse! Confusion worse confounded! Graves talk of scandal!

—"And still  
It was his earnest work and *daily toil*,  
With slander's tongue, to make the noble seem  
Mean as himself."

Alas! the ingrate repudiates his darling child: the serpent scorns its *reptile-seed*! But again:

"None but those who have *toiled* in the list can understand the pulling and working against and checking each other in every way imaginable, on the part of the rivals. What *depreciations*, *insinuations*, and *misrepresentations*, often, of each other!" Here sin again paints a portrait of itself. Mr. Graves turns state's evidence, and commits himself; and we see him in his true character, *toiling* in the sinks of *depreciation*, *insinuation*, and *misrepresentation*: he has entered the list, and has sustained himself well.

"O wad some power the giftie gie us,  
To see oursel's as others see us!"

"What tales and reports get to the elders' ears! Each known aspirant is under the strictest surveillance of all others. Many a one's popularity is blighted with the presiding elder, and he can discover no trace of his enemy. What

histories of defeated efforts to reach the presiding eldership, circuit-riders might write! What wrongs and injuries received, what partiality and favoritism without merit, could be revealed!"

A liberal paraphrase of this might be, and he might truly have said, "What self-sacrifice, what self-denial, what devotion to God and his cause, what patience, what zeal, what crucifixion of the flesh, what subduing of worldly motives, of worldly ambition and pride, what consecration of self, of mind, of means, of talents, of every thing, to God and religion, is seen in Methodism! What an admirable system of mutual forbearance, charity, and compromise! Surely it is a mystery too high for me: I cannot understand it. It has too much grace and humility in it for me. There is too much union in it, too much love, too much submission for Christ's sake, too much *godliness*! Great is its mystery! There is no congeniality of nature between us. Surely it is a *spiritual* serfdom. I despise it. Amen."

Now, by a strict examination, you will find that all the foregoing inferential conclusions are pretended to be drawn from the following assertions of Graves:

1. That Methodist preachers are allowed and encouraged to be informants upon one another.

2. That the presiding elder keeps his ears open to receive evil as well as good reports; that it is part of his business to be a general scandal-monger.

In regard to the first of these, he does not produce the least shadow of testimony to establish his proposition. It is so low, mean, and contemptible, that it carries falsehood on the very face of it, and our indignation spurns it as unworthy a contradiction; but let us examine our Discipline for a confutation of it.

On page 49, read the following advice given to preachers: "Believe evil of no one without good evidence, unless you see it done: take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing: you know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side. Speak evil of no one, because your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned."

Again, Discipline, page 68: "Take great care not to de-

spise each other's gifts. Never speak lightly of each other. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth. Labor in honor each to prefer the other before *himself*."

Now, we ask, how do Mr. Graves's charges upon the elder, of misrepresentation, insinuation, and depreciation, tally with the above? There is no room for them: they are utterly annihilated, if the Discipline is our law and rule of practice; and Graves himself says frequently, and especially on pages 175, 176, of his *Iron Wheel*, that Methodist preachers have taken a solemn oath to observe every point, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline, to obey it in preference to the Bible, to place it above the Word of God, etc.

Now, is not this another beautiful sample of Graves *anti* Graves? Is it not enough to overwhelm the man with infamy and contempt? Surely every honest mind will condemn the man as well as his book.

But he says it is a part of a *presiding elder's business* to be a general scandal-monger, and what evidence does he produce? On page 199, *Iron Wheel*, he refers us to the 7th item of a presiding elder's duty, found on page 40 of Discipline, viz.:

"To attend the bishop when present in his district, and to give him, when absent, all necessary information by letter of the state of his district."

And this is all he produces to prove the serious charge that the elder is a scandal-monger; and this only requires the elder to afford the bishop the necessary information concerning the state of his district; not the acts of the preachers, but the religious condition of the Church at large throughout the district. In order to prove this construction of Discipline correct, and Mr. Graves guilty again of perversion and falsehood, I need only refer you to the same clauses of Discipline used in confutation of the first proposition, as those clauses are applicable to the case of the presiding elder, he being a travelling preacher and member of the Annual Conference: "Speak evil of no one," etc.

Therefore, all the corrupt, unholy, and slanderous imputations of Graves in the above charges, and their inferences, are unfounded, malicious, and false, having no evidence to sustain them, but being proven false by positive testimony of good

and sufficient authority. And now, let us ask, who *is* guilty of *misrepresentation*, *insinuation*, and *depreciation*? Not Methodism, but her accuser. Nor is he guilty only of these things, but he has a peculiar gift for them, and he has not neglected the gift that is in him. Surely "there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness;" and "envy is rottenness" to the brain and heart as well as to the bones of J. R. Graves.

In reference to social feeling, ties, and obligations of friendship and honor in the ranks of Methodism, her clergy especially, history furnishes no set of men in which there are greater elements of mutual confidence, and love, and Christian attachment, and noble and heroic devotion, adherence, and fidelity; and this is especially true in comparison with the same number from any other Christian Church. That there have been some exceptions, some few cases of detraction from this general truth, we admit; but where may they not be found in any branch of the Church militant? and when have they not existed, from Christ until now? According to our internal policy, as it affects the preachers, there is nothing to operate jealousy, envy, prejudice, or disaffection to any alarming extent. Our economy in stationing preachers may not commend itself to the worldly-minded, high-minded, vain-glorious, and uncharitable man; but to the humble and devoted Christian, seeking the glory of God and not his own, it is a wise, prudent, and equitable arrangement, and there is nothing in it calculated to excite his prejudice or envy. Considered as a *religious* as well as an ecclesiastical system for the propagation of religion, it presents a type, a model of religious character, just what it ought to be: not a consolidated despotism, but a consolidated exponent of individual religious principles; and, as such, there is no real, necessary, essential cause of dissatisfaction, envy, prejudice, or jealousy in it. Those who have entered into it are

"A noiseless band of heavenly soldiery,  
From out the armory of God equipped,  
Invincible to conquer sin. .♦. .

——to drive away

From earth the dark, infernal legionry  
Of superstition, ignorance, and hell:

——Devote to God and truth,

And sworn to man's eternal weal, beyond  
 Repentance sworn, or thought of turning back;  
 And casting far behind all earthly care,  
 All countryships, all national regards  
 And enmities, all narrow bourns of state,  
 And selfish policy: beneath their feet  
 Treading all fear of opposition down,  
 All fear of danger, of reproach all fear,  
 And evil tongues."

This is expressive of the true spirit of Methodism, let others lay such claim to it as they please.

But our system is eminently favorable to love, order, harmony, and union; much more free necessarily from rivalry, insinuations, misrepresentations, and depreciations, than those Churches which choose their own pastors. You may designate Methodism as a wheel, an Iron Wheel of Despotism, if you please; but it is a wheel "builded in wisdom; and by understanding it is established;" a wheel fitly framed, in which there is such admirable adjustment and relative proportion of parts, that, in view of its beauty and harmony of rotation, and its strength, and durability, and power, and effect, as it rolls along year after year, crushing and annihilating the despotism of sin, sin in low places and in high places, that it may well be termed the Iron Wheel; nay, the Great Iron Wheel; the great enemy of sin and wickedness, and a terror to all evil-doers, false prophets, priests of Satan, and saint-deceivers.

Methodist preachers, for I speak in their defence especially, believe the same doctrines, teach the same principles, are governed by the same rules, and enjoy the same religion; and why should they not have the unity of hearts who have the unity of the Spirit? With a very few exceptions, they have been and are always bound together by the indissoluble bonds of brotherly love and Christian affection. They are, for the most part,

"To falsehood, truth; to pride, humility;  
 To insult, meekness; pardon to revenge;  
 To stubborn prejudice, unwearied zeal;  
 To censure, unaccusing minds; to stripes,  
 Long-suffering; to want of all things, hope;  
 To death, assured faith of life to come—  
 Opposing."

Hence, wherever I find a Methodist preacher, at home or abroad, on land or sea, in Christian lands or among heathen tribes, north, south, east, or west; let him be white, black, or copper-colored, bond or free, rich or poor, I find a kindred soul, a *spirit*-brother, and to a brother I give a brother's heart. We have made the same sacrifices, have the same great object in view; and to his care I would not fear to risk my property, my life, my family, my honor, and my earthly all. I know them; I understand them; their home is my home, their sympathies are mine, their sorrows are my sorrows, their joys are my joys, and their God my God.

Away, then, with your false assertions of infernal origin, your slanders steeped in hellish hate, by which you would hold up our Church as an engine of desolation, and the thousands of her heroic, self-sacrificing worthies, heralds of the cross, to scorn and ridicule; while

—“Around them flocking stand,  
Arrayed in white, the people they have saved.”

Their works are seen and read of all men where Methodism has planted her standard; and these declare that Methodism is of God, a child of the skies; and these constitute her glory and her best defence.

Before we leave this part of our subject, we ask—and sincerely hope an unprejudiced and intelligent community will judge between us—Who best fills the bill of a general scandal-monger? the presiding elder, who is to speak evil of no one, and to defend the character of his brethren, as far as consistent with truth? or those who endorse and peddle the Iron Wheel fabrication, circulating it clandestinely, when ashamed to own it before the world, and would not for shame, before an intelligent and virtuous public, dare to assert their adoption of it? There *are* such cases. Come, judge ye “between cattle and cattle.”

As for me, I fear not the decision. There is too much loyalty to truth, fidelity to principle, and love of honor, that I should expect any thing else than a verdict of public condemnation, sending home to the hearts of our adversaries that shame, disgrace, and contempt so richly merited and so basely won.

We now come to consider briefly that part of Mr. Graves's book which has reference especially to the female portion of Me-

thodist society. So far, we have had to deal with general charges, and vague imputations, and indefinite inferences in reference to Methodism, her general system and policy. We now have to consider Graves in opposition to a *particular institution* of our Church; and more especially as the enemy of a particular portion of our Church—the enemy of Methodist band-meetings; and, in connection therewith, the vilifier of Methodist female character, the traducer of Methodist virtue and virginal purity.

One would think it were enough to have poured out his venom upon the male portion of the Church, upon those who are responsible for the origin and perpetuity of the nefarious and heinous institutions of Methodism; but no,

“No plea diverts the fury’s rage:  
The fury spares nor sex nor age.”

All Methodism, from the captains of her hosts to the lowest functionaries in her ranks, men, women, and children, all are summoned to the bar of this second Pilate, this “second Daniel come to judgment.”

In the war he wages there is no mercy, no hesitation: from the very first step, his gait has been firm, fixed, determined. Revenge, treachery, malice, are written in every feature, and cruelty marks every step of his progress. In Methodism he sees nothing good: he looks upon her as an enemy, and treats her as a foe to God, to liberty, to truth, and virtue. Failing and foiled in his attacks on her champions, who do not fear him, but despise him as a Goliath in wickedness, he rushes madly on, reckless and unabashed, and, with the cruelty of a Herod and the murderous spirit of a savage, inbrues his hands in the blood of indiscriminate slaughter, regardless of age, sex, or condition. Such is Graves, and such will the sequel prove him to be.

I am aware that some of the endorsers of the Iron Wheel deny there are any charges, any imputations or detractions on this point in the book; while others admit there are insinuations at least, but that Mr. Graves is not *responsible* for them, from the fact that they are extracts from another author. I will remark here, that some are extracts and some are not; and those which are have the endorsement of Graves, and



therefore he is accountable for them, for the whole. At the close of the chapter, page 402, Graves says to Bishop Soule, "You must also abolish these laws before *I can recognize your societies as churches of Christ.*" What infamous presumption and arrogance! Surely the doom of Methodism is at hand, if this Immaculate cannot recognize us as a Christian Church. Therefore he has endorsed all of the chapter which is not his own, by inserting it in his book as though he believed it true; and then, at the close of the chapter, he virtually declares it to be true, by asking Bishop Soule to abolish those laws. We recommend any person who may have doubts in regard to Graves's assault upon female virtue and character in the Methodist Church, to read the whole chapter, commencing on page 384 of his book, and ending on page 402. I shall only make a few quotations, and then successfully prove the premises false from which he makes his infamous deductions.

See Iron Wheel, pages 186, 187 :

"The objection I have to the Methodist confessional above the Romish, is this: In the former I am required to confess all my sins of deed and thought, as particularly and rigidly as Rome requires, to a preacher and three or four others, who are not forbidden to rehearse my confession throughout the whole community. Then, in return, my thoughts and imaginations are to be freighted with the sins and evil imaginations which otherwise I may have never thought of, and which may give rise to wicked thoughts and imaginings, which I will have to confess at the next band-meeting; for evil communications corrupt good manners.

"But, in the confession instituted by Rome, the solitary penitent confesses to a solitary priest, who is solemnly sworn never to reveal what is told in the confessional.

"No mortal ear but his own hears what is confessed, and he is to give counsel and grant absolution upon satisfactory evidence of repentance.

"The Discipline requires as full a confession as the Missal does, and requires a confession of that which it implies is improper for men to confess before women, or even married men to utter in the presence of the unmarried; and, from females, the confession of deeds and thoughts highly improper for men to hear. If not, why must the bands be composed

either of all married persons, or all unmarried; of all men, or of all women? But what are they required to confess?

"1. What known sins have you committed, etc.?"

"2. What particular temptations have you met with?"

"No specifications. The temptations presented to thought, though mastered and indignantly banished, *must be told*. If any doubt, let them read the last question. What have you thought? Yes, even thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not. I am not only required to confess what I have said, or done, or thought, which I know to be sinful, but what I have thought, even if I am in doubt whether it be sinful. Another thing remarkable about this band-meeting confession is, that the preacher in charge, even if an unmarried man, is authorized to hear confessions of this character from both the married and unmarried sisters of his charge. What if some of their stray thoughts had been concerning himself?" Page 388: "If I mistake, I am misled by the following duty prescribed to the preacher in charge: 'As preachers, have you thoroughly considered your duty, (*i. e.*, as prescribed in the Discipline,) and do you make a conscience of executing every part of it? Do you meet every society, also the leaders and bands?' It is his duty, then, to meet the bands. He is father-confessor to them. It does not make it *his* duty to confess his sins and sinful thoughts in the bands: if so, in what ones? those of the men, or women? It is silent.

"What husband would wish his wife subjected to such an examination as that prescribed in this confession, and what she may have done and thought of one week, made the theme of neighborhood gossip the next? What father would wish his daughter thus catechized by a Methodist circuit-rider, or by any one else, or care to have her head made the receptacle of all the wicked thoughts and imaginations of a whole band? As, at the Romish confessional, the thoughts and hearts of her votaries are corrupted, so nothing could well be better designed than this band-meeting to corrupt the mind and heart of the young, and fill a neighborhood with gossip and scandal.

"I have been told that there are few communities in Tennessee that will permit the institution of the Methodist confessional; and to the honor of the State be it said. The most awful state of things has been brought about in a town

or neighborhood by the confessions made in the band-meetings."

All the above extracts are from Graves's own pen, the leading points of which we shall examine after awhile. We now submit to you a few extracts found in his book, bearing his endorsement, for which he is responsible :

"There is absolutely no question, by possibility, which a Roman Catholic priest may ask, but may be asked by the band-leader. No, not one. The vilest questions to be found in Dens' Theology, and which the priest is required to ask, may be put to every member of a band-meeting, and they have bound themselves to answer."

Again, pages 390, 391 : "The conscience is hardened by it. Confession of sin to God, without contrition, hardens the conscience : confession of sin, then, anywhere else than to God, must harden the conscience in a greater degree. Confession, therefore, in the Roman and Methodist systems, must tend to a callous conscience, and *it is so*. Nine out of ten of the readers of this article will say, if they are not Methodists, 'Yes, it is true.'

"We have often remarked a peculiar insensibility as a characteristic of the Methodist common mass ; (whatever very many exceptions there certainly are, from educational and refined associations in life ;) a peculiar insensibility to moral honor and integrity of character.

"We have not dropped this sentence in hasty writing. We say deliberately it is so : it is so deep and wide, and we are not mistaken in saying so, our readers will respond. Alas ! it is even so. This is, in a great degree, the work of the *class-meeting* system of confessions."

Again, speaking of Methodists, page 399 : "O, what facts would be disclosed, if we had the history of the class-meeting from the beginning ! Alas ! what will be the revelations of the last day !"

Again, page 400 : "Why, Satan himself never, even in Romanism, invented a system more certain to produce a lax morality. Let people talk about sin habitually, especially secret thoughts and emotions, as a prescribed round of duty, whether at the Roman confessional or in the Methodist class or band-meeting, or in a M'Dowel New York Moral Reform Association, or anywhere else, and you break down the na-

tural barriers God has erected in the instinctive shame of human nature. To say nothing of quenching the Spirit, sin lieth at the door, and, under such invitation, must and will come in.

“We repeat, What a school for scandal the Methodist Church would be if the class-meeting system could be made perfect in its motion under the action of the Great Iron Wheel!”

In the above extracts you will recognize the following charges against our people :

1. That they have a peculiar insensibility to moral honor and integrity of character.

2. That Satan never invented a system more certain to produce a lax morality.

3. That Methodism is a school for scandal.

4. That it breaks down the natural barriers God has erected in the instinctive shame of human nature.

5. That it tends to a callous conscience.

6. That our females have bound themselves to answer to the preacher the vilest questions in Dens' Theology.

The above charges, with many others of a kindred nature, are pretended to be properly drawn from the following premises :

1. That a person is required in a band-meeting to confess his sins of deed or thought as particularly and rigidly as Rome requires.

2. This must be done to a preacher and three or four others.

3. The preacher is authorized to hear confessions of this kind from both the married and unmarried sisters of his charge.

4. The vilest questions in Dens' Theology may be asked, and they have bound themselves to answer.

5. Those to whom the confession is made are not forbidden to rehearse it over the country.

In regard to the first item above, Mr. Graves derives it from the following questions in Discipline, page 83, viz.:

1. “What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?”

2. “What particular temptations have you met with?”

3. “How were you delivered?”

4. "What have you thought, said, or done of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?"

Now, in order that we may properly understand the meaning of the above questions, it becomes necessary that we read the whole section or rules of the bands, commencing on page 81, Discipline. We will there find that, before a band was formed, it was necessary for each to have confidence in the others. Then, before any one was admitted into the band, such an one was to have

1. The forgiveness of sins.
2. Peace with God.
3. The witness of the Spirit.
4. The love of God shed abroad in the heart.
5. Having no sin, inward or outward, ruling over them.
6. Desiring to be told of their faults plainly.
7. Desiring that the others should tell them whatsoever they thought or feared about them.

All these important qualifications, evidences of spiritual and practical godliness, were necessary to entitle them even to enter a band-meeting; and what better qualifications could there be for the inspiration of mutual confidence, and what confidence so holy and inviolate as that of Christian hearts, having all the elements of the deepest, and purest, and strongest piety? They were supposed to have the faith that overcometh the world, and that it was not grievous for them to abstain from sin, etc. See Discipline, page 83.

With all the above qualifications, evidences of the highest grade of Christian character, it is perfectly absurd, preposterous, and foolish, nay, it is the greatest dishonor to God, the power of his grace, and the grossest and most uncharitable injustice to his people, to suppose that such foul and iniquitous questions as Graves contemplates would be even *thought of*, much less *asked*.

Band-meetings were generally composed of very few persons, but all were invariably such characters as above described; and it was owing to the high requisitions of faith and practice that these meetings were of small numbers, the mass of professors of religion not having made sufficient attainments in the Divine life; not having the faith that always overcomes the world.

This is the character of such meetings. They are volun-

tary associations of the most pious and devoted members of the Church, whose avowed and open purpose, and whose real desire it is, whatever their degree of Christian excellence may be, still to go on to perfection; to grow in the knowledge of *his* or *her own* heart, and only to know the hearts of others so far as they may be of mutual help to each other in piety and works of righteousness. As sin is only sin when *known* to be a violation of God's will and law, and when *we neglect* to use all the means of acquiring such *knowledge*, it is the object of these associations to afford that knowledge, and to secure obedience accordingly. Call these associations Methodist confessionals, or stigmatize them as you will, their object is good, and their fruits are good; and they have been approved of God, judging by their results. Moreover, their spirit is in accordance with the Bible, and they are founded upon the word of God. The motives which uphold and support them, their objects and influence, are all seen and justified in the following scriptures: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done: hide it not from me." "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." In these texts, and many similar ones, may be found exhortation to confession, and to public confession; confession of such character, and under such circumstances, as band-meetings contemplate. They *invite no confession except such as will glorify God, and tend to the salvation of souls*. And is not the confession of sinful thoughts, and feelings, and passions, and imaginations or contemplations, justifiable by the exhortation to "confess your faults?" What are faults but imperfections and blemishes, and those things which impair moral excellence? Certainly all or any of these are faults, as well as offences against our brethren are faults, to which especially the text may allude. But the advantages of band-meetings have more direct reference to the correction of such evils as might be considered of minor importance relatively, the moral character of which it is hard to determine, and yet about which conscientious persons may have some scruples and fears. The cases and instances of this kind are not a few. How often do we see the members of

the same church, either Methodist or Baptist, differing in opinion with reference to the same thing, and differing conscientiously, and, apparently, one having as much grace and light as the other. All may be justified before God, and yet one may be right and another wrong, according to the gospel standard. It is an error of education, of the mind, of the judgment, and not of the heart.

These errors or faults may be in reference to family government, or to trade, dealing with one another, or they may be faults of habit, intemperance, the drinking of spirituous liquors, and a thousand other things too tedious to mention, but which we know exist and have existed in times past, not having the same general diffusion of light which we enjoy, and in such mixed masses of different degrees of culture and intelligence as Wesley preached to, and the founders of Methodism had to deal with, and as exist now in many portions of our land. The object, then, of our band societies is to throw together the *best hearts* and the *wisest heads*, and to secure the *best counsel* for moral reformation and for continual advancement in grace, in the knowledge of the *human heart*, so desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, and to know *ourselves*, which is the greatest and most important study of man, and to know Jesus Christ as our model and our salvation.

And what more laudable objects for human ambition and Christian zeal and effort, and what better means could be devised, than these we have contemplated? And here let me add, that this confessional system is admirably adapted to the most inveterate cases of sin and wickedness in high places, and in all probability would be of incalculable service to the author of the Iron Wheel—the enemy of Methodism, and the defamer of Methodist virtue and purity.

This is our exposition of the first proposition. Let us now pass to the others, and consider them successively, according to truth, or, more probably, (by inference,) according to their degree of turpitude.

2. These confessions must be made to a preacher and three or four others.

This item of the bill is altogether false, proven so by the above quotations from Discipline. Except the preacher was qualified as above, in compliance with the requisition of Dis-

cipline, which is as binding on him as on any one else, he could not enter a band-meeting; nor could he then, unless complying with all restrictions. He could meet men all single if he was single, or meet men all married if he was married; and not otherwise.

3. The preacher is authorized to hear confessions of this kind from both the married and the unmarried sisters of his charge.

This is wholly and unqualifiedly false. See Discipline, page 84: "Two, three, or four believers who have confidence in each other, form a band; only it is to be observed, that in one of these bands all must be men or all women, and all married or all unmarried."

4. The vilest question in Dens' Theology may be asked, and they have bound themselves to answer.

This is proven false by the quotations produced in the first item, pages 81-83, Discipline. That such questions could not have been contemplated, is satisfactorily shown by the necessary qualifications of the members, by the objects and ends of the meeting, and is further shown by the directions given, pages 83, 84, Discipline. The character of the questions admissible at band-meetings can be seen definitely determined on the above pages of Discipline. They are such as relate to "known sins," particular temptations, the manner of delivery from temptation, sins of thought, word, and deed, and doubtful sins. Though many questions might be asked, these constitute the limits, the bounds of all inquiry. There is no room here for *vileness* and impudence to intrude, and if vile questions were asked, the pious indignation of the catechized would spurn the questions and the questioner alike, rebuking his or her vileness and impudence, as they were allowed and bound to do any other sin. Nor were they bound to answer such questions; for to answer them would be an equal breach of rule, and a grievance to, and denial of, their religious *modesty* and *purity*—the necessary companions of grace and virtue.

5. Those to whom confession is made are not forbidden to rehearse it over the country.

Now, if such questions as are in Dens' Theology are asked in band-meetings, who would voluntarily go into one of them and subject his mind and heart to the scrutiny of others, if



there was nothing more than ordinary confidence, and no bonds of seeresy? This proposition overturns the fourth, or the fourth is a denial of the last, or, it is more reasonable to conclude, Graves was blind with envy, and could not see two propositions at the same time. But this is not reconcilable with one of the main principles of band-meetings, viz., "not to mention the faults of any behind his back, and to stop those short that do:" page 83, Discipline. And yet, according to Graves, the vilest questions may be asked of Methodist females, and all their faults, failures, and delinquencies, if they have any, may be rehearsed over the country. What *reasoning*, or, rather, what blind malignity! But F. A. Ross, whose sentiments Graves endorses, declares himself that the bands are pledged to *seeresy*. See Iron Wheel, page 397: "The members of the band, *it is true*, are pledged to seeresy.—Wesley's Works, vol. v., p. 185."

The above quotation Graves *penned* from the works of Ross, and then *endorsed* it, as before shown; thereby proving *his own statement* false.

But it may be objected still, that the preacher in charge might be the privileged agent of these meetings in circulating slander.

We have already shown, in proposition 2, that he had no privilege in this respect when he met the private bands of male members, and he could meet no others. It was his duty to meet the "general bands" once a quarter, but under the same restrictions. See Discipline, page 48: "To meet the societies, classes, and general bands."

We have now shown clearly and conclusively,

1. No man, either of clergy or laity, was allowed to meet in a band of females.

2. That no such questions as contemplated by Graves, from the nature of the case and the qualifications of the members, could possibly arise.

3. That if any thing be told in a band-meeting that might be termed even a fault, it was forbidden to be told or heard spoken of.

And these are the main points in the case that relate to Methodist band-meetings as a school for slander; and having proven these facts, it is impossible for Graves's propositions to stand; and, false in themselves, all the uncharitable and

impious inferences and deductions drawn from them are false and unfounded.

And who will now say that Graves has not endeavored to stigmatize Methodist virtue, and to disparage Methodist female character in connection with band-meetings? He has not openly declared that they are schools for lewdness, lasciviousness, and systematic debauchery; but in the quotations we have adduced, and in all that he has written on the subject, he has, in letter and in spirit, by positive assertion and inference, too plainly traduced the purity of manners, the modesty, the virtue, the chastity of the women of Methodism. What influence has he ascribed to band and class-meetings, and what effects? "A peculiar insensibility to moral honor and integrity of character;" "a lax morality;" "a prostitution of the natural and instinctive shame [or modesty] of human nature;" "a callous conscience." These are the ideas he associates with our bands, and by which he designs to detract from the virtue of the mothers, and wives, and daughters of Methodism.

But this is not all. He would associate the bands and classes with the most corrupt institutions of the Romish Church. He speaks of Methodist confessionals, and would fain have the world believe that the band and class system is one of absolute *priestly* control, debasing, wicked, and full of *prostitution* and *corruption* as that of the Romish Church. What a volume of base, insidious, foul, and lying slander, lies adroitly half concealed, half open, winking, blinking, insinuating, audacious, cowardly, defamatory, in his imputations! so adroitly, and nicely, and carefully managed, as to accomplish the nefarious purpose of the slanderer, and yet avoid the merited and justly feared doom of the defamer.

What elaborate skill and painstaking it cost him to fabricate the charges, the implications, and inferences contained in this one proposition: "The vilest questions in Dens' Theology may be asked, and they [the women] have bound themselves to answer." Ah, how his eyeballs flamed with infernal joy when the Devil furnished that suggestion; and

"Slander smiled horribly to view  
How wide her daily conquests grew."

Yes, it was comprehensive, extensive, positive, and yet am-

biguous to some extent, just adequate to his earnest, villanous, but cowardly purpose. There was something about the enunciation of it easy and rotund, redolent with bitter hate and scandal, that made it the very vehicle for all his insidious malice and calumnious spleen. Let a correct analysis be made of all Graves has said upon this subject, and unless, as he alleges, we "have a peculiar insensibility to moral honor," he stands before us a *positive, malicious, and dastardly calumniator* of Methodist female *virtue and purity*.

But in his malicious blindness he has not seen the many living witnesses coming from the courts of Methodism, and mingling with other denominations, and with his own, who by example and precept have contradicted his theory; but in an unqualified manner condemns class-meetings and band-meetings alike, as all of a piece, acknowledging, as he is obliged to do, that there are many exceptions to their debasing influence, but condemning them as a source of common corruption and moral devastation in the Church. It is worthy of remark, that many men, greater and better than Graves in their lives and conversation, of every denomination, have testified to the contrary concerning our institutions; and one of these, our "class-meeting," which Graves includes under the band system, has been recently extolled in the highest terms, by one who is greater than Graves, but of the same denomination—a minister of the Baptist Church, and President of Brown University and Professor of Moral Philosophy—Francis Wayland, D. D. His words on this subject are upon record, have been circulated in the public prints, and are highly eulogistic of the Methodist class-meeting system. This is consolatory to us, a commendable instance of the triumph of liberal and enlightened religion over bigotry, and ought to be a withering and profitable rebuke to the blind and bigoted traducers of Methodism. In addition to these *positive proofs*, we might bring many others, to the contrary of Mr. Graves's odious assumptions, as well as proofs by inference. Methodism, in the days of Wesley and Whitefield, was charged with too rigid and strict morality. She is now charged with a "lax morality," when her discipline is the same. History affords as many bright and shining examples of deep and fervent piety among her male membership as any other denomination, according to her numbers, and especially in the ministry; and

history furnishes as much of the female example of piety and good works in her many dutiful and anxious Miriams, her heroic Deborahs, her tender and thoughtful Naomis and noble and pious Ruth-like daughters, her zealous Hannahs, devoting their children to God, and gives us as many a Doreas of deeds and of alms, and Lydias of prayer and hospitality, and helping Priscillas, and Marys, and Marthas, daughters, mothers, and grandmothers in Christ, born and reared in Methodism, and under her most despised institutions, as any other Church upon earth can boast; and, furthermore, it shows as much refined sensibility and tenderness of soul, as much conjugal fidelity and artless simplicity, as much female excellence, and as many patterns of female loveliness in the borders of Methodism, in proportion to her numbers, her means of education, and enlightenment, as any other people under heaven. But enough of this defence against charges and imputations too base in themselves, too worthless in their source, to provoke a noble indignation. But Mr. Graves forgets that, in slandering Methodism, he slanders all with whom she associates: Baptists, Presbyterians, Christians of every name and order, are all so intimately connected with Methodism, by daily contact and all the social relations of life, of marriage, and consanguinity, that if one is *corrupt*, the other is *tainted*; if one is wounded, the other suffers. But such sources of corruption do not exist in the Methodist Church. Society would not tolerate it, and the verdict of reason and of society proves Graves to be the most extravagant, extraordinarily impudent, vile, and shameless calumniator of public morals and virtue that ever breathed the breath of scandal and intolerance. Away with him and his book, and let a virtuous, honest, and indignant people, of every name, unite in the power of a common religion to crush this viper of society, and all his brood of falsehood and reproach, into infamous oblivion; for he deserves not even an infamous notoriety.

Having now proven, both by direct and indirect testimony, that there are no such *sources* of corruption in our Church as Graves contemplates, and that there is no such *real* corruption and depravity as he insinuates; that it is all inconsistent with the facts and fruits of Methodism and the spirit of her religion, and inconsistent with the condition of society and relative

position of Methodism, we ought, in justice to Graves, to contemplate him in the guilt and blood of the slanderer; the slanderer of *one*, of *millions*; and, more especially, in the burning shame of a slanderer of woman; of woman in her collective capacity, it is true—the mother of society—but none the less individual. This, however, would do him too much reverence: we have already been compelled to look into the charnel-house of his heart, until we fain would drop the curtain and forget the loathsome spectacle of moral putrefaction and corruption. We are heartily sick of the sight. For a man of the world, making no religious pretensions whatever, or an infidel, or the vilest and most hardened reprobate and apostate from God to exhibit such a character, to be guilty of such offences, would be a matter of less wonder and astonishment. But the culprit before us is a minister of a Christian Church, in a Christian land; a preacher, and professed exponent of the kingdom which is righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost. O, who can describe his shame? who can declare his guilt? What notes, resounding in the lowest depths of deepest infamy, agony, and woe, are adequate to express the guilt, the pain that conscience must inflict, when God shall light the fires of his wrath, to show the fallen state of such a soul! Truly may it be said, “The mystery of iniquity doth already work in the children of disobedience.”

But in every age, as we have previously remarked, such iniquity prevails to a greater or less extent; and error, superstition, ignorance, and bigotry, all have their adherents. But it seems, indeed, that a particular characteristic of the present day is the popular tendency to the most extravagant fallacies and errors; and the time seems fast approaching, if it be not already come, when the saints themselves, if possible, shall be deceived; when “they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” It hath been well said: “Virtue and goodness: virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful;” but the time has come when these qualities apply also to vice and iniquity; and no man can be found so low that some will not do him reverence: none so wicked and corrupt, but others will be found to praise and magnify him. To them,

“His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,  
 His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate,  
 His tears pure messengers from his heart,  
 His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.”

“But what I say unto you I say unto all—Watch.” Be not carried away by the sleight and cunning craftiness of men.”  
 “Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.”

To those who are the endorsers of Graves, the circulating mediums of his bitter hate and falsehood ; indeed, to all who “give ear with greediness, or wittingly make their tongues heralds to his lies ;” to such let me say, they are no less guilty and responsible than Graves in the estimation of society and of God ; and they must share a common doom.

Remember, God hath declared his will concerning you ; that if you spoil, you shall be spoiled again ; that he who taketh up a reproach against his neighbor, shall suffer reproach. Remember, we are members of the same Christian family : “Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother : thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.” And here read your condemnation : “I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border. Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation : the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts.”

To those who *unwittingly* endorse the slanders of Graves, receiving the opinions and imbibing the prejudices of others, without having given the matter proper investigation and due consideration ; to such let me say, though your ease be not one of such aggravated guilt as the former, you are responsible for your criminal neglect. Read, study, reason, and reflect. Decide for yourself. “Go not forth hastily to strive.” Remember what Moses said to the two contending Hebrews : “Sirs, ye are brethren : why do ye wrong one to another ?”

To those who have taken no part in this war against Methodism, and repudiated it, as we have remarked before, we

extend the right hand of fellowship: for such we feel a peculiar fraternal adhesion, and bid them God-speed in the battles of the Lord against our common adversary. Let us still fight the good fight together, and never turn our arms against each other. Though "we walk in the flesh," let us "not war after the flesh." For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

And, finally, to those whose faith has not been tried, who know nothing of Graves, and as little or less of his book; to such we say, read it if you will, if you distrust Methodism, and her institutions, and her fruits; but read in the light of reason, truth, and the Bible, and we will not fear your decision.

But do not drink of the stream before you contemplate the source of poison and death whence it issues. Look at Graves, the embodiment of envy, jealousy, malice, hatred, strife, and bigotry; a perfect seething-pot of passion, spleen, and contention; regarded so not only by Methodists and Christians of every name, but known to be such by many of his own denomination, and published as such by the religious journals of the country. Hear the opinion of the Western Recorder, a leading Baptist paper of Kentucky. We quote from the Southern Christian Advocate:

"Elder Graves. This, we believe, is the first time we have written the name of this notorious man. Some think that his infamous book should be noticed; but we feel assured that, with every man whose good opinion is worth seeking, it can do no harm. Its falsehood is too glaring. We mention him now to show how the Western Recorder, a leading Baptist paper of Kentucky, speaks of him and his coadjutor in mischief. These Ishmaelites have been stirring up war among the brethren. The Recorder has striven for peace until his patience is exhausted; and now, in taking up the challenge, says: 'Brethren Graves and Pendleton have each taken their position and shown their hand in answer to the call we made upon them to cease fanning the fires of strife in our denomination. Brother Graves, it seems, is to do the fighting, and Brother Pendleton the ridiculing. They both seem determined on war, but each in a different way. Brother G. is furious,

Brother P. witty; Brother G. is boisterous, Brother P. gentle; Brother G. turbulent, Brother P. serene; Brother G. defiant, Brother P. plausible; Brother G. threatening, Brother P. funny; for, strange as it may seem, Brother P. is sometimes a very funny man—funny in his wit, funny in his criticism, funny in his logic, and funny to think of, because he is so funny. But neither of them seems inclined for peace, and they both assume that they are assailed. This we deny. They are not assailed, and have not been, in the Recorder, unless defending ourselves against unjust attacks made upon us by the Tennessee Baptist can be so construed. This we pledge ourselves to prove, and we intend to do it fairly.' ”

The above article is to the point, conclusive, and reliable, and shows the man in his true character. Such evidence is worth more than volumes from other sources; and if such evidence were in general circulation, it might be that the “notorious man” and the “infamous book” above alluded to, could do no harm, as *we* feel assured they will not with those “whose good opinions are worth seeking.” Hence, others, taking the same view as the author above, may differ with me in reference to the prudence and policy of the course I have chosen in defending Methodism against the inroads of her enemies. That prudence is often the better part of valor, I know: that silence and inaction are often the best defence, I am fully aware; and that I may incur the displeasure of many, and the inveterate hatred and malice of not a few, are all known to me, and, to some extent, experienced already. But let it be remembered that the Cherokee Baptist Convention, held in the bounds of my circuit, recommended the book to the community embracing my pastoral charge: let it be remembered, further, that *several ministers*, who are in good standing in their Church, have been from time to time circulating and recommending the book, and that numbers of the people of this community have openly endorsed it.

I, therefore, feeling all the responsibilities that devolve upon me as related to the Church and society, have considered it indispensably necessary to notice and expose at least some portions of a work which, according to my own observation and convictions, would prove an instrument of evil and corruption. Nor have I done this at my own charges: it has been recommended by the prudence and wisdom of others



older and more experienced than myself, and knowing well the local and general circumstances that make it my duty.

Our Church, our clergy, our private membership, Methodism in every department, have been attacked, ridiculed, misrepresented, and grossly slandered. Our wives, our mothers, our daughters, our altars, our homes, have all been directly and indirectly assailed; and shall I, in the charity that "endureth all things," be dumb, and open not my mouth, and let my flock become a prey to every beast of the field? May I not, in better fealty to God, go forth in the charity that "worketh no ill to my neighbor," and "rejoiceth in truth," and oppose the enemies of virtue and of God? Humanity demands it: universal charity itself demands that error be exposed and rebuked, and that her dupes and adherents, of whatever name, for the honor of God and religion, be timely warned and liberated from the powers of darkness, ignorance, and sin.

But there are individual claims upon me, in view of my individual relations, and my earliest, and best, and dearest associations, that call me to duty.

As a son, the recollections of a departed mother summon me to my present position.

As a brother, fraternal affection, virgin innocence, and spotless virtue inspire my heart with a zeal to vindicate her honor.

As a husband, the holiest vows of conjugal fidelity and love inspire me with a noble enthusiasm, and call for protection and defence.

And, lastly, as a minister of God, his unction is upon me, and to him I am responsible.

I well remember when, seventeen years ago, I gave my hand to the Methodist Church. I was then an orphan boy, fatherless, motherless, a hopeless and penniless wanderer amid the cold charities of the world. My father had recently fallen, and my mother had, from my infancy, slumbered in the silence of the grave. Without the advantages of education, and without a chart or compass to direct my course, my feeble bark was launched on the dark, troubled, and treacherous billows of this sea of life. Amid the rocks, and shallows, and storms, and tempests of time, I was left alone to buffet the waves of opposition, and contend with the tides of sin

and wickedness. In this dark and cheerless hour, *Methodism* displayed her beacon-light, came to my relief, and volunteered as pilot to my grief-stricken and desponding soul. Yes : I hail her to-day as the friend in the time of my greatest trials and difficulties in life, the friend of my boyhood, the guardian of my youth ; and around her now the joys and hopes of my manhood affectionately cluster ; cluster around her as the instrument of my salvation for time and eternity. Her ministry, her membership, her ordinances, her class-meetings and love-feasts, her prayer-meetings and sacraments, her helps of counsel and love, are all interwoven with the dearest and happiest associations of my life. Through her instrumentality, by the grace of God, I am what I am. And shall I now desert her ? Shall her foster-child forget the mother who adopted him, and be unmindful of all her benefits ? Never. I have lain my heart, my life, my all upon her altar : come weal or woe, come life or death, poverty or wealth, honor or shame, her destiny shall be mine. Thank God, I can wield an arm in her defence, when duty calls, as well as "in defence and confirmation of the gospel." For her sake, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die." Long as life endures, her cause shall be my cause, her joy shall be my joy, her sorrow shall be my sorrow, her shame shall be my reproach, her people shall be my people, and her God shall be my God.

Methodism ! Why should I not love her ? yea, why should she not be to me dear as the apple of mine eye ? Her government, her policy, her doctrines, her institutions, all make her my friend, as she is generally and especially the friend of the poor.

Her past, her present, her glorious future, all unite to bind her to my heart. When I retrospect the past, and behold her conquests, I enjoy her present fruits ; and when, by the eye of faith, I contemplate her future promised land of success, I am ready to make any sacrifice for her advancement.

But I glory in Methodism, because the favor of God resteth upon her. Let the world read her history and consider her fruits. Not yet eighty years of age, she numbers 1,300,000 in the United States alone. But these do not constitute her chief glory. This is seen in her lives, her deaths, her labors, her toils, her patience, her sacrifices : these are her jewels. Hundreds of thousands have fought the good fight of faith

under her banners, and gone home to their reward shouting victory over death, hell, and the grave. Her reward and her glory are in heaven. Here she is a toil-worn, way-weary pilgrim, "foot-sore with travel." There she is triumphant—a king and priest to God, "the first among the holy." Her lines have gone out into all the earth. Her ministers have carried the story of the cross where other Christian heroes feared to tread. Infidelity, paganism, and idolatry have fled before her standard. There are none so high and noble but Methodism has approached them: none so low and degraded, none so wild and savage, but she has soothed them with the music of her voice. The African, the Indian, the Chinaman, the South Sea Islander, north, south, east, and west, the lost and degenerate sons of Adam, have been waked from the slumbers of their native depravity by the pioneers of Methodism, calling them to enjoy the fruits of civilization, and the hope and liberty of the Christian. And still she is marshalling her thousands out of every land into the armies of her God. Say not, then, that Methodism is a God-dishonoring and man-debasing system. An intelligent world will condemn it: the redeemed heathen will denounce it. Sanctified thousands of the spirits of just men made perfect, will tune their harps to higher praise at such an impious charge. The thunders of the dreadful day that wake the dead, will prove it false. The baptismal and refining fire of God's eternal, sanctifying Spirit, in ten thousand instances, has declared it false.

Hail, then, ye hosts of Israel, and press with courage on. God is our author; his Spirit our guide; the world our parish; the evangelization of the world our mission; heaven our home; and palms, and sceptres, and thrones, and crowns, our glorious and eternal reward!

