

MINUTES

OF THE TRIAL AND CONVICTION

Thos OF *Thompson*

A PRISONER:

REPORTED

BY S. PATTON.

JONESBOROUGH, TENNESSEE:

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JONESBOROUGH, JUNE, 1843.

NOTE BY THE PRINTER.—The manuscript copy of the following pages, though in as fair a hand-writing as usual, and prepared with as much care as is common, was nevertheless all written out and furnished for publication, by the author, while he was unavoidably absent, on other business—leaving the correction of the proof alone to the Printer. This statement is here made, as an apology for any mistakes, or misprint, that may be made, should any appear, as in all probability some unimportant errors may occur. For, however good a proof-reader a Printer may be, and however careful he may be to avoid errors, it will be apparent to all, that no one can so readily understand the writer, as the writer himself. This explanation is given, in justice both to the *Printer* and the *Author*.

TO THE READER.

As we have neither time, paper, nor words to throw away, we will briefly state the causes which led to this publication—principally a compilation.

a
A Pamphlet, written in the form of "questions and answers," and professing to be "explanatory of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church," &c., has been recently circulated in various parts of Western Virginia. The paternity of this pamphlet is claimed by "Wm. B. Evans & J. H. Honour." It abounds in misrepresentations, caricatures, and falsehoods, manifestly designed to proselyte members of the M. E. C., to the ranks of "reform." And as we do not know any person either minister or member of the "Methodist Protestant Church" in this country, (East Tennessee and Western Virginia) whom we are exactly willing to charge with circulating this pamphlet, knowing its character, we have chosen to ascribe personality and agency to the pamphlet itself, which we have arraigned in the character of a prisoner.

In accordance with this design we have ascribed personality to certain moral principles, operations, and dispositions. But we have not taken the liberty to depart from what we deem rigid moral truth. Of this the reader will judge when he examines the charges against the prisoner and the testimony on which they rest.

a
If our brethren of the M. P. C. would attend to their own appropriate work—the work to which they profess to be called, we would rejoice in the good which might be done through their instrumentality.—But when they spend their strength in an effort to create dissatisfaction among the members of the M. E. C. by misrepresenting facts in her history, caricaturing her administration, and aspersing her ministers, we think they deserve a rebuke.

We were conversant with many of the circumstances which led to the secession of "reformers," partly through the medium of the press, and partly by personal observation. We were in the general Conference of 1823, when a strenuous effort was made on the part of "reformers" to effect some important changes in the economy of the M. E. C. Numerous petitions were presented, praying for "changes," but numerous petitions were likewise presented praying against the proposed "changes." No changes took place, and the "reformers," preceded with a great out-cry about "persecution, tyranny, oppression,

&c." And why? Either because they were not permitted to remain in the bosom of the Church "sowing dissensions" and disturbing her peace by "inveighing" against her discipline; or because a comparative handful of "reformers" could not control some 600,000 ministers and church members, and bring them over to the doctrines of "reform."

"Reformers" had a right to think, and to speak, and peaceably to withdraw from the church if they chose; but they had no right to remain in her bosom disturbing her peace and quiet; neither had they any right to control the great body of her ministers and members who were of a different opinion.

We have not at hand, the statistics of the M. P. C., at the time of her organization; but we distinctly remember having made a calculation of the ratio that seceded, and the result was the proof that a fraction less than one for every seventy-two of the members at that time in the M. E. C., went with the "reformers." And yet, these are the persons who cry out "equal rights, republicanism," &c.

The M. E. C. believes that no *specified* form of church government is required by the New Testament; but that the Church of Christ exists under various forms. She believes that the government of the church may be different in some important respects under different circumstances. And while she prefers her own modification of the Episcopal form, and believes it to be the nearest model, she freely accords to all who differ from her, the right of judging in these matters. But she cannot allow persons to remain in her embrace, and disturb her peace by warring against her institutions:—This is the head and front of her offending.

But it may be said—the misrepresentations of "reformers" have been often corrected, and the oft repeated and often published slanders, both of the living and the dead, to which some "reformers" have lent themselves, have been often refuted. True, but they are new to many, and the corrections, and refutations, are generally contained in works which are in the hands of comparatively but few in the Western counties of Virginia, and the upper counties of East Ten. And our design has been, to put copies of original documents, from the pens of Mr. Wesley and others, into the hands of many who have never seen them.

We have not had access to some two or three of the authorities quoted on the trial; but have taken the quotations from the "defence of our fathers," &c., by Dr. J. Emory.

The limits prescribed for this publication, forbid our entrance into the arguments defensive of the economy of Episcopal Methodism in detail.

We do not think it essential to a man's salvation that he embrace our views of church government; neither do we think that our ecclesiastical economy is a system of perfection; but we do think it the best adapted to the end proposed in its institution, i.e. to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." If others think otherwise, we have no quarrel with them, nor do we have any objection to their embracing a different form if they prefer it. Hence it will be seen, that we have meddled in but one instance with that part of the pamphlet of "Evans & Honour," which concerns the gov. of the M. P. C., altho' we think it exceedingly defective. But if "reformers" are satisfied with it, we do not object. But why do they keep up an incessant out-cry, about church government? Do they believe the form of their choice can save souls? or that there is any merit in it? or is it merely to give vent to a splenetic effusion? or rather for proselytism? We know the place, and where, (when the door was opened for the reception of members into the M. P. C.) the officiating minister *kindly* informed the people that he would "receive members from other churches." What condescension!

Men professing to be teachers, should be competent to give instruction, and whatever else they may know or be ignorant of, moral honesty requires that they should understand what they profess to teach. If those who are concerned in circulating the Pamphlet of "Evans & Honour," understand the subject with which they are meddling. They are guilty of harsh and censorious judging * * * * * We will leave unsaid those other words, which were almost at our pen's end. If they do not understand those subjects, then, in so far as their teachings on those subjects have influence, they are "blind leaders of the blind." And in proportion to the importance of subjects on which they mislead their adherents, the cause of truth and righteousness suffers by them. In either case, the ground which they occupy is not enviable.

We think we have fully sustained the charges alledged against the Pamphlet, not by assertions and dogmatism; but by the testimony of witnesses who understand what they say, and whereof they affirm. We have chosen to present our strictures, somewhat in the form of a criminal prosecution. But the reader must remember that our court is a moral tribunal, and therefore we have not been particular to conform the report to the forms of a legal process. We have furnished the counsel for the prisoner with such testimony as is relied upon by the authors of the pamphlet, and have put such arguments in his mouth as are used by "reformers," with the addition of a thought or two, which we are aware they would disown; but which, if the charges against the pamphlet are sustained, very well become the advocates of the attack upon Episcopal Methodism. The abstract reasonings of writers in the

"mutual rights," as quoted by "Evans & Honour," do not affect the question. "Facts are stubborn things." We submit the whole to the examination of the candid reader, and will cheerfully abide the decision.

S. PATTON.

SPRING GROVE, MAY 15, 1843.

MINUTES OF THE TRIAL AND CONVICTION OF A PRISONER.

As we do not wish to implicate the innocent, or to report the trial of the wrong prisoner, we will describe the accused. He is then, a nine-penny pamphlet, to which we have ascribed personality and agency—a compound of "questions and answers," professing to be "explanatory of the Government of the Methodist Episcopal Church." "Interspersed with questions and answers explanatory of the government of the Methodist Protestant Church," &c.

The Court consists of his Honor, Judge Justice, Chief Judge, Judge Truth, Judge Honesty, and Judge Candor, associate Judges. Mr. Fairdealing, is Attorney for the commonwealth of Brotherly-love, and Mr. Hategood, a wry-face, grim looking fellow, is counsellor for the Prisoner. The case was set for hearing, in the State of General Information, and in the Township of Enlightened Public Sentiment.

Mr. Fairdealing opened the case somewhat in the following manner, to-wit:

May it please this Honorable Court, our business here is not to discuss the principles of Church government. The Prisoner at the bar is not arraigned for a difference of opinion in matters of Church polity; but on certain grave charges, the investigation of which comes legitimately before this Honorable Court.

We charge that the Prisoner is guilty of many and heinous offences against the peace and dignity of society, and especially against a highly respectable denomination of Christians, to wit: the Methodist Episcopal Church. But that we may not be tedious, we propose for the present, to pass by many of his unrighteous doings, and moral outrages, and to put him upon his trial for *a few* of his most flagitious crimes.

Pursuant to this design, we charge first, that he is envious and jealous—that his envy and jealousy have led him to harsh and unrighteous judging, and to the high crime of evil speaking, directly in opposition to the injunctions of our Lord, and the Apostle Paul. We found this charge on the words of the Prisoner—page 9, where he insinuates that some "members of the M. E. C. are 'influenced' to continue in the Church 'by the argument taken from numbers and popularity,' and that 'others may think they can succeed better in their temporal avocations, and that it will better subserve their secular interests to belong to so large a community.'" The same foul slander is uttered specifically against ministers of the M. E. C. see page 29, but the above quotation is sufficient for our purpose.

We charge secondly, that the Prisoner has suppressed truth, and misrepresented facts, with the design to make a false impression, injuriously to effect others, and that in so doing, he is guilty of bearing

false witness against his neighbor, in direct violation of the ninth commandment. We found this charge on the words of the Prisoner—page 8, where he says concerning the M. E. C., “a few ministers of themselves in the city of Baltimore, in 1784, framed the government without the concurrence or consent of the people.” See also page 18, where he labors to make the impression that Mr. Wesley was opposed to an Episcopal form of government, and to prove it introduces an extract from Mr. Wesley’s letter to Mr. Asbury, dated “London, Sept., 20, 1788.” See also page 13, where he represents the travelling preachers of the M. E. C., as having power to expel members for the “alleged crime of sowing dissensions, and inveighing against discipline,” when such members are “not charged with a breach of the laws of Jesus Christ.”

We charge thirdly, that he is guilty of basely perverting the truth, to the great disgrace of the christian name, and to the great injury of the cause of truth and righteousness. We found this charge on what he says—page 8, concerning the Ministers of the M. E. C., of whom he says that “ever since 1784, they have held with tenacious grasp all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogative.” See also page 12, where, founding a question on a false assumption he asks “By what argument do the travelling preachers attempt to support the assumption of power?” and answers “by their call to the ministry, or because they are ‘divinely instituted,’ and refers to the report of the general Conference of 1828. See also page 21, where he represents the travelling preachers as “claiming the right of property in the M. E. C.,” and as “claiming the power for a difference of opinion, to turn out the society and possess the property himself.” Charges similar to these we now alledge, might be founded on the sayings of the Prisoner on various subjects, especially the “book establishment,” “chartered fund,” and “periodicals,” with the alledged “immense revenue” which he represents as arising from them, all of which seem to have given him great trouble; but lest we should trespass upon the patience of the Court, we decline formal charges further than those already alledged.

The Court enquired of the Prisoner what he had to say to the first charge in the indictment; to which he replied, through his counsellor, that he was not guilty, and put in a plea of Justification, and to sustain this plea, he introduced as witnesses, Mr. Envy, Mr. Jealousy, Mr. Prejudice, Mr. Suspicion, Mr. Tattler, and Mr. Always-wrong.

On hearing the names of these (mock) gentlemen, the court decided that they were not competent to give evidence in the case, as it was on record in the archives of the Court that they had all been declared outlaws—that they had been convicted of high crimes themselves—that they had been cropped and branded, a fact which they vainly strove to hide by unpalled heads, and murky countenances.

The Court decided that no further testimony was necessary on the part of the prosecution, as the introduction of such witnesses as the Prisoner had called in, was of itself, sufficient to convict him of the crime alledged in the first charge. Judge Justice added, moreover, that it was an indignity offered to the Court, for which the Prisoner should be remembered at the proper time.

The Court asked the Prisoner what he had to say to the second charge in the indictment? to which he replied *not guilty* as criminals generally do; and again put in a plea of Justification.

The court enquired if he had any witnesses to sustain his plea in reference to what he had said about “ministers—framing the government,” &c.

Mr. Hategood replied, that his client had heard it said that “a few ministers framed the government, without the concurrence or consent of the people,” and introduced an extract from a private letter of Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury, dated London, September 20th, 1788, to prove that Mr. Wesley was opposed to the episcopal form of government.—Mr. Hategood read from the letter as follows, to wit: “But in one point my dear brother, I am a little afraid you and the doctor differ from me: I study to be little, you to be great; I creep, you strut along: I found a school, you a college; nay, and call it after your own names. Oh, Beware! Do not seek to be something. Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all. One instance of this your greatness, has given me great concern How can you, how dare you suffer yourselves to be called a bishop? I shudder, I start, at the very thought; men may call me a knave, a fool, a rascal, or a scoundrel—I am content. But they shall never, by my consent, call me a bishop. For my sake, for God’s sake, for Christ’s sake, put a full end to this.”—JOHN WESLEY.

And in support of what the prisoner had said concerning preachers having power to “expel persons from the church,” without such persons “being charged with a breach of the laws of Jesus Christ.” Mr. Hategood read from the discipline of the M. E. C., as follows: “If any member of our church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissension in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending shall be first reprovved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the church,” page 90, (late edition 93.)

He also read from the discipline, page 83 (late edition 85) “What shall we do with those members of our church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?”

“Answer. 1st. Let the Elder Deacon, or one of the preachers visit them whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequences if they continue to neglect, viz, expulsion.” 2. “If they do not amend let him who has the charge of the circuit or station, bring their case before the society or a select number before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect, by the decision of a majority of the members before whom their case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for a breach of our rules, and not for immoral conduct.”

Having read the above extracts, the counsel for the prisoner proceeded. May it please the court, my client has been arraigned on a charge of

*Mr. Wesley’s letter has “yourself.”

bearing false witness against his neighbor. in saying certain things, as contained in the indictment by the Attorney for the prosecution. May it please your mighty highness, my client is not guilty. "The people were never consulted at the organization of the M. E. C., they had no representative present."* Methodist bishop must certainly be very bad things, for "they hold the power of stationing all the preachers," and this "places the preachers in a state of dependance on them."† and besides this, the preachers are required in their ordination-vows, to be in subjection to the "powers that be." Now all this is very far from my client's notions of liberty and independence. He is a free man, and as such he disdains those ecclesiastical restraints which are thrown around the preachers in the M. E. C.

The extracts which I have read from Mr. Wesley's letter, and the discipline fully justify my client in what he has said. Mr. Wesley's letter shows that he (Mr. Wesley) was opposed to an episcopal form of government, and the discipline produced in evidence shows that "persons can be expelled" by the "rule" concerning sowing dissensions, &c., without being charged with a breach of the laws of Jesus Christ." "And besides this I think my client's declaration ought to be relied upon. I hope the court will give a verdict in his favor." I cannot however forbear expressing a wish for my client's sake, that his honor, Judge *Blind-to-truth* and Judge *Resist-evidence* were on the bench, for I am aware, that the Attorney for the prosecution can say some pretty strong things. If the court would only admit the testimony of my client and a few others of his family, such as the "mutual rights" and "History and mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," I could prove all I wish, but I must submit to the rules of the court. My client is certainly a clever fellow; but I fear he is not in the good graces of your honors. Hoping for the best I submit the case.

Mr. Fairdealing, the Attorney for the prosecution proceeded to establish the charge against the prisoner as follows, to wit:

May it please this honorable court. We have charged that the prisoner is guilty of suppressing the truth, and misrepresenting facts;—that he is guilty of bearing false witness against his neighbor. His plea, and the evidence on which he relies for a verdict have been heard. We have the most ample testimony to make good the charge in the indictment. The prisoner says "a few ministers of themselves—framed the government without the concurrence or consent of the people," p. 8.—He represents that Mr. Wesley was opposed to an episcopal form of government in the United States, p. 18. These items we shall take together, as they are inseparably connected in the history of the times to which they relate, what then are the facts in the case!

Mr. Drew, the biographer of Dr. Coke, says, "The revolution which terminated in the political independence" of the United States "led to the subversion of the English "ecclesiastical hierarchy"—that "the clergy of the established church abandoned their flocks"—that "when they had forsaken the country, the Methodist societies found themselves destitute of the sacraments—and for their children they could obtain no

*Questions and Answers, page 8. †Questions and Answers, page 16.

baptism," that "for the administration of these ordinances, they applied to the Presbyterians, to the Independents," &c., that "they were refused by all unless they would renounce their connexion with Mr. Wesley"—that "the societies appealed to the preachers, and prevailed on many of them to introduce their case to Mr. Asbury—that in the year 1778, they requested him to adopt some measures for a speedy compliance with their reasonable demands—that Mr. Asbury wrote to Mr. Wesley for a supply of preachers to hasten to the continent with all possible despatch—and pointed out the condition the people were in, being equally destitute of baptism for their children, and the Lord's supper for themselves—that their cases were earnestly recommended to Mr. Wesley's serious consideration." After stating all these facts in the early history of the Methodist societies in the United States, Mr. Drew says, page 62 and onward:

"Mr. Wesley—having made provision for the government of the societies in England after his decease, he thought this a providential call for something of a similar nature to be done for America. Having therefore weighed with much deliberation, the various circumstances in which his Trans Atlantic followers were placed, he was perfectly satisfied that the form of government which he had prescribed for England was by no means adapted to America. And finally it was obvious to him that no form of government could be acceptable unless it included a satisfactory authority vested in the preachers to administer baptism and the Lord's supper. And nothing of this kind could be permanent unless some general superintendant should be appointed in the first instance, from hence to transmit that authority to posterity, by what name soever we might be distinguished."

"To accomplish these purposes, after revolving all the possible forms of church government in his mind, he could find none so well adapted to the exigences of their condition as that which is Episcopal, on this, therefore, he fixed his eye, and proceeded to take measures for executing this resolution."

"Accordingly in the month of February, 1784, he called Dr. Coke into his private chamber and introduced the important subject to him in nearly the following manner:

"That as the Revolution in America had separated the United States from the mother country forever, and the Episcopal establishment was utterly abolished. The societies had been represented to him in a most deplorable condition. That an appeal had been made to him through Mr. Asbury, in which he was requested to provide for "them some mode of church government, suited to their exigencies, and that—he intended to adopt the plan which he was now about to unfold. That he had invariably endeavored in every step he had taken, to keep as closely to the Bible as possible, so on the present occasion he hoped he was not about to deviate from it. That keeping his eye upon the conduct of the primitive churches, in the ages of unadulterated christianity, he had much admired the mode of ordaining bishops, which the church of Alexandria practiced. That to preserve its purity, that church would never suffer the interference of any foreign bishop in any of their ordina-

tions; but that the presbyters of that venerable apostolic church on the death of a bishop, exercised the right of ordaining another from their own body, by the laying on of their own hands, and finally, that being himself a presbyter, he wished Dr. Coke to accept ordination from his hands, and proceed in that character to the continent of America, to superintend the societies in the United States.

"At the ensuing Conference, in Leeds, 1784, Mr. Wesley stated his intentions to the preachers present.

"When the Conference in Leeds in 1784, ended, Mr. Wesley repaired to Bristol, and Dr. Coke to London, to make arrangements for his departure. He had not however, been long in London, before he received a letter from Mr. Wesley, requesting him to repair immediately to Bristol to receive fuller powers, and to bring with him the Rev. Mr. Creighton, a regularly ordained minister.—The Dr. and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol; when with their assistance, he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat, and Mr. Thomas Vasey presbyters for America. And being peculiarly attached to every right of the church of England, did afterward ordain Dr. Coke a superintendant, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal. Of these letters of ordination, the following is a faithful copy, carefully transcribed from the original, in Mr. Wesley's own hand writing, preserved among the papers of the late Dr. Coke:"

'To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College in Oxford, Presbyter of the church of England, sendeth greeting.'

'Whereas, many of the people in the Southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrines and discipline of the church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments or baptism and the Lords supper, according to the usage of the same church; and whereas, there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers,'

'Know all men, that I, *John Wesley*, think myself to be Providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendant, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, a presbyter of the church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for the work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

JOHN WESLEY."

Mr. Drew says "Dr. Coke continued in Bristol, nearly three weeks from the date of the preceding document, making preparations for his departure. It was during this interval that Mr. Wesley wrote the following letter, which Dr. Coke was directed to print and circulate among the societies on his arrival in America:"

"BRISTOL, Sept. 10, 1784.

"To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America.

"1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country, and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them partly by the Congress, and partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice, and in compliance with this desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"2. Lord Kings account of the primitive church, convinced me many years ago, that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

"3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are Bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that, for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lords supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no mans rights by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

"4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke, and Mr. Asbury to be joint superintendants over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lords Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the church of England, (I think the best constituted national church in the world,) which I advise all our travelling preachers to use on the Lords day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesday's and Friday's; and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

"5. If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"6. It has indeed been proposed to desire the English Bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object. 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one; but could not prevail. 2. If they consented we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them now they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally at liberty both from the State, and the English hierarchy, we dare not

entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the scriptures, and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty where-with God has so strangely made them free."—*John Wesley's Works*, Vol. 7, Page 311.

Again: Mr Wesley says in a document dated "Camelford, August 20, 1785," almost a year after the ordination of Dr. Coke, and more than eight months after the organization of the M. E. C., "But since the revolution in North America, these (the Methodist societies in the United States,) have been in great distress. The Clergy (of the church of England,) having no sustenance either from England or from the American States, have been obliged, almost universally, to leave the country and seek their food elsewhere. Hence, those who had been members of the church, had none either to administer the Lords supper, or to baptize their children. They applied to England over and over, but it was to no purpose. Judging this to be a case of real necessity, I took a step which for peace and quietness, I had refrained from taking for many years. I exercised that power which I am fully persuaded, the great Shepherd and bishop of the church has given me. I appointed three of our laborers to go and help them, by not only preaching the word of God; but likewise by administering the Lord's Supper, and baptizing their children."—*John Wesley's works*, Vol. 7, page 314.

Again, Mr. Wesley says "It is in obedience to those laws, (the laws of England,) that I have never exercised in England, the power which I believe God has given me. I firmly believe I am a Scriptural—Episcopos, (Bishop) as much as any man in England or in Europe.—(For the uninterrupted succession, I know to be a fable which no man ever did or can prove.)"—*Wesley's works*, Vol. 7, page 312.

No stronger testimony could be desired to show the designs of Mr. Wesley, both in the ordination of Dr. Coke, and in recommending to the American societies, the Episcopal form of government. But we will show that the preachers under his care, both in England and America so understood him.

The next witness which we shall introduce, is Rev. Jonathan C^rwther, author of "The portraiture of Methodism."

He says "Peace being now established with the United States, and Mr. Asbury and other preachers having been instrumental of a great revival during the war, solicited him (Mr. Wesley,) to send them help. Hence, in Feb., this year, (1784,) he called Dr. Coke into his chamber, and spoke to him in nearly the following manner:—That as the American brethren wanted a form of discipline and ministerial aid,—that he had always admired the Alexandrian mode of ordaining bishops. The presbyters of that great apostolic church, would never allow any foreign bishop to interfere in any of their ordinations; but on the death of a bishop—they ordained one of their own body, by the imposition of their own hands, adding, withall, that he wished the Doctor to go over and establish that mode among the American Methodists. Accordingly he (Dr. Coke) was ordained bishop, and brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, presbyters."—*Second English edition*, p. p. 212, 213.

Rev. Henry Moore, biographer of Mr. Wesley, on pages 280—287—Vol. 2, says "Mr. Wesley gave to those—episcopal (bishops) whom he ordained, the modest, but highly expressive title of Superintendants, and desired that no other might be used," and adds "that our brethren (in the United States) who are in that office, are true scriptural bishops, I have no doubt at all: nor do I wish that the title should be relinquished."

Mr. Crawther and Mr. Moore were both distinguished preachers of the Wesleyan Methodist connexion in England. We will introduce some witnesses from the United States whose history forms a part of the early history of American Methodism.

Rev. Ezekial Cooper says in reference to the organization of the M. E. C. "The Conference met in December 1784. It was unanimously agreed that circumstances made it expedient for the Methodist societies in America to become a separate body from the Church of England. They also resolved to take the title, and be known in future by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They made the episcopal office elective. Mr. Asbury was unanimously elected and Dr. Coke unanimously received jointly with him to be the superintendants or Bishops of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*. From that time the Methodist societies in the United States became an independent church under the Episcopal form and mode of government. *This step met with general approbation, both among the preachers and members.* Perhaps we shall seldom find such unanimity of sentiment upon any question of such magnitude."—*Cooper on Asbury*, pages 108—109.

To this we will add the testimony of only one or two others. Rev. Jesse Lee, author of "History of the Methodists," p. 107, says "The Methodists were generally pleased with our becoming a church; and heartily united together in the plan which the conference had adopted.

Rev. Wm. Watters, the first native Methodist preacher in the United States "Dec. 25, 1784. We become instead of a religious society, a separate church under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This change gave great satisfaction through out all our societies."—*Memoirs by himself*, page 102.

Mr. Fairdealing proceeded—We could multiply testimony on the part of the prosecution to almost any extent, and we have detained the court in hearing evidence thus far only "to make assurance doubly sure." So far as relates to the third item, in the second charge, which concerns the power of the preachers, we shall need no other witness than such as may be introduced in the pleadings.

We have proved by the testimony of Mr. Drew and the declaration of Mr. Wesley himself.

1st. That the American Methodists had been importunate in urging Mr. Wesley to send them ordained ministers, and a form of church government.

2nd. That of all the possible forms of church government Mr. Wesley preferred that which is Episcopal, and "finally fixed his eye upon it."

3d. That while he denied what he calls the "fable" of the uninterrupted succession, and believed that the right to ordain was in the presbyters of the church, he "much admired" the mode of ordaining bishops by the hands of the presbyters when the death of the bishop made it necessary.

4th. That he believed this to be the apostolical mode, as it was practiced in the "great apostolical church at Alexandria."

5th. That with the assistance of other presbyters, he ordained Dr. Coke (who was before a presbyter,) a superintendent for the American Methodists.

6th. That he recommended the episcopal mode of government to the Methodist societies in America, and sent Dr. Coke from England to America to establish that mode among them.

We have proved by the testimony of Mr. Cawther and Mr. Moore, that Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke a bishop, and by the testimony of Mr. Wesley & Mr. Moore, that Mr. Wesley called the bishop whom he had ordained; a "superintendent." And by the testimony of Moore that it was Wesley's desire that no other title, but the "modest" and "highly expressive" one which he had given "should be used." And this will fully explain the extract from Mr. Wesley's letter to Mr. Asbury which has been read by the counsel for the prisoner. The entire letter may be seen in the 7th Vol. of Wesley's works, American edition. It closes with the following words "Thus my dear Franky I have told you all that was in my heart, let this show when I am no more seen, how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother."

But what does this letter prove? not that Mr. Wesley was opposed to the Episcopacy of the M. E. C. He had furnished that Episcopacy himself. But it proves that he was opposed to the title of bishop being applied to the superintendants, or bishops, whom he had ordained.—Mr. Moore, already quoted, says, "His (Mr. Wesley's) objection to the title 'bishop,'—arose from his hatred of all display, and he could not at that moment (the moment of his writing the letter to Mr. Asbury) separate the plain laborious bishops of the American societies, where there is no legal establishment from the dignified prelates of the mighty Empire of Great Britain."

Dr. Emory says "Mr. Asbury was of the opinion that the 'unpleasant expressions' in some of the letters which he received from his venerable friend, (Mr. Wesley,) were 'occasioned by the misrepresentations of others,' yet he bore them with a meekness which has obtained for him the commendation of Mr. Wesley's own biographer."—*Defence of our fathers*, page 48

"Our reverence for the name, and for the character of Mr. Wesley, is unfeigned and profound. We have never felt free, however, to claim for him absolute infallibility; or an incapableness of being led on any occasion, or in any circumstance, to use even too strong an expression—that his letter to Mr. Asbury, on suffering himself to be called a bishop, contains expressions too severe, will be admitted, we think, by his

warmest friends." In the extract of Mr. Wesley's letter which the counsel for the prisoner has read, we have these words, "for my sake &c. put a full end to this," and the prisoner has labored to make the impression that Mr. Wesley wished a "full end" put to the episcopal office. "We deny that Mr. Wesley ever advised any such thing, or ever meant, or intended to be so understood. It was to the term 'bishop' solely that he objected from the associations ordinarily connected with it in the public mind, especially in England. To the office he never did object; nor to the terms 'episcopacy' or 'episcopak.'" Mr. Moore says, "he (Mr. Wesley) well knew the difference between the office and the title. He knew and felt the arduous duties and high responsibilities of the one, and the comparative nothingness of the other."—*Life of Wesley*, Vol. 2, page 278.

"The idea that equals cannot from among themselves constitute an officer, who as an officer shall be superior to any of those by whom he was constituted, is contradicted by all experience and history, both civil and ecclesiastical; and equally so by common sense. The contrary is too plain to require illustration. It should be remembered too, that Dr. Coke was ordained a superintendant not by Mr. Wesley only, but by four presbyters;—two of them indisputably acknowledged as such, by the whole of the church of England, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is to be remembered also, that Dr. Coke was afterwards authoritatively and unanimously received in this office (the office of a bishop) by the body of preachers over whom he was to preside; and that all these acts, in the peculiar circumstances in which Mr. Wesley's and help were asked, are to be taken together as investing Dr. Coke with his 'episcopal authority' among us. A similar statement might be made with respect to Mr. Asbury, only substituting his unanimous election for reception. These church offices, after they were constituted, and commissioned were superior as our officers in the actual exercise of certain executive powers among us, to any individual of those by whom they were constituted. Even Mr. Wesley could not actually station the preachers in America, after we had superintendants of our own, agreeably to his own advice, yet, Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, could."—*Defence of our Fathers*, page 39.

May it please the court, we have proved by the testimony of Mr. Cooper, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Watters, that the M. E. C., was organized and the Methodist societies in America, became an independent church in Dec. 1784, according to the plan which had been recommended by Mr. Wesley. And so far was all this from being done without the "concurrence or consent of the people," that it was in compliance with their urgent and often expressed desire, and therefore that "this step met with general approbation, both among the preachers and the members." That they "were pleased with our becoming a church, and heartily united in the plan which had been adopted." That "this change gave great satisfaction through all our societies."

Once more the court will permit us to read an extract from a letter written by Mr. Wesley, dated "London, February 25, 1785," more

**Defence of our Fathers*, page 47.

than a year after the organization of the M. E. C. It is as follows:—
 “Dr. Coke is now visiting the flock in the middle provinces of America, and settling them upon the New Testament plan, to which they all willingly and joyfully conform, being all united, as by one spirit, so in one body. I trust they will no more want such pastors as are after God’s own heart.”—*Wesley’s works, Vol. 7, page 286.*

What now becomes of the prisoner’s foul insinuation that Mr. Wesley was opposed to an Episcopal form of government, and with his false assertion that “a few ministers of themselves—framed the government without the concurrence or consent of the people?”

May it please the court, the counsellor for the prisoner has read the rule of discipline against “sowing dissensions, by inveighing against the doctrines, or discipline of the M. E. C.” The prisoner represents that “persons” can (by power of the preacher,) “be expelled” by this rule, “without being charged with a breach of the laws of Jesus Christ.”

If Mr. Hategood had read the paragraph next succeeding that which he did read, he would have furnished evidence of his client’s guilt.—For according to the rule a “person” must be, 1st. clearly convicted (before his brethren,) of “sowing dissensions in our societies,” &c., he must be in the 2nd place, reproved, and he must be in the 3d place, tried by his peers on a charge of “persisting in such pernicious practices,” and found guilty, before the preacher can “expel” him.

But what does the prisoner understand to be a “breach of the laws of Jesus Christ?” Mr. Webster defines “dissension” as follows, “disagreement in opinion, usually a disagreement which is violent, producing warm debates, or angry words; contention in words; strife; discord; breach of friendship and union.”

He defines “inveigh” thus, “to exclaim or rail against; to utter censorious and bitter language against any one: to reproach.” And “inveighing” thus, “exclaiming against; railing at; uttering bitter words.”

Then according to the prisoner a professor of religion may *utter bitter words—rail at, and exclaim against the doctrines or discipline of his church—may produce warm debates—angry words—strife—discord—breach of friendship and union,* among his brethren, without being guilty of a “breach of the laws of Jesus Christ.” We appeal from the decision of this son of Loyola to the judgment of the inspired Apostle when he says, “Now we beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.—*Romans, 16, 17.*”

But the prisoner says, “persons can be expelled by this rule of discipline—without being charged,” &c., and to prove his assertion, or rather to mislead his reader, he refers to the rule on class-meetings, which shows that a person may be “excluded for a breach of our rules,” when he is not charged with “immoral conduct.” And when this is the case the “preacher” is required in justice to the “excluded person to show” that he is “excluded for a breach of our rules, and not for immoral conduct.” But what has the prisoner gained by the reference?

He has manifested great zeal for the Methodist Protestant Church. Let us then suppose that a person having joined that church, wilfully—repeatedly, and constantly refuses to read his bible, or pray—to attend the ministry of the word, or the sacraments of the church. Will the prisoner contend that such “person” ought to be retained in the church, unless he be cured of his negligence? or that he ought to be “excluded?” If the former, what is his discipline worth? If the latter, on what charge ought the delinquent to be tried? A charge of immorality? in the received acceptance of that term, or of neglect of duty? or of “breach of rules” of the church? In either case, will the prisoner say that he is not guilty of a “breach of the laws of Jesus Christ? If so, he takes a different view of “the laws of Jesus Christ,” from that given by our Lord and his Apostles:

But, again: does not all the world know that attendance on class-meetings is a term of membership in the M. E. C., not a term imposed by the preachers, at the organization of the church; but a condition of membership which is co-eval with Methodism itself? has it not been proclaimed upon the housetops from the beginning? And upon record in the discipline? “Let none be received into the church, until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial—and shall give satisfactory assurances—of—their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the church.”

We ask in the name of our common christianity, what kind of church government that would be, which would allow a “person” (who had solemnly pledged himself before the “preacher” and the society, that he would *observe and keep the rules of the church,*) to *wilfully and repeatedly* “refuse” to “observe” them; or to sow dissensions among his brethren, by railing against the very rules, the observance of which was the understood condition of his admission into the church! If such is the organization for which the prisoner contends, let him enjoy it; but let him cease to slander the advocates of a different system. — We could say much, but as brevity is an object, we submit the case to the decision of the court.

Mr. Fairdealing sat down, and the court decided that according to the unalterable principles of truth and justice, the prisoner is guilty of the second charge in the indictment, to-wit: the charge of bearing false witness against his neighbor; every specification having been fully sustained by the prosecution.

After a short respite, the court asked the prisoner what he had to say to the third charge in the indictment. To which, (as the reader would now expect of one hardened in crime,) he replied not guilty—and as usual, put in a plea of Justification.

The court called for witnesses, and Mr. Hategood was in great trouble, not being able to find any testimony to prove the prisoner’s assertions that the “ministers” “held with tenacious grasp, all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogative.”

After a time, however, he read from the Discipline of the M. E. C., as follows: The General Conference shall have full power to make rules and regulations for our church.” Mr. Fairdealing here requested

that the counsellor for the prisoner would read out the sentence, whereupon he read "under the following regulations and restrictions." See restrictive articles—Discipline, page 21. Mr. Hategood also read as follows: "Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of three fourths of all the members of the several Annual Conferences, who shall be present and vote upon such recommendation. Then a majority of two thirds of the general conference succeeding, shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions, excepting the first article.—Discipline, page 22.

And in support of what the prisoner had said about the travelling preachers supporting the "assumption of power" by arguments drawn from their call to the ministry" or because they are 'divinely instituted,' Mr. Hategood read from the report of the General Conference of 1828, as follows: "The great head of the church has imposed on us the duty of preaching the gospel, of administering its ordinances, and of maintaining its moral discipline over those, over whom the Holy Ghost, in these respects, has made us overseers. Of these also, viz: of gospel ordinances, and moral discipline, we do believe that the divinely instituted ministry, are the authorized expounders; and that the duty of maintaining them in their purity, and of not permitting our ministrations in these respects, to be authoritatively controlled by others, does rest upon us with the force of moral obligation."

And in support of what the prisoner had said concerning "preachers claiming the right of property in the M. E. C.," Mr. Hategood read from the discipline as follows:—"We will admit no charter or deed of conveyance for any house of worship to be used by us, unless it be provided—that the Trustees of such house, shall at all times permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the M. E. C., as shall from time to time, be duly authorized by the general conference of the ministers of our church, or by the annual conferences, to preach and expound God's holy word, &c., according to the true meaning and import of our deed of settlement." (See deed of settlement in the Discipline, page 160.) He also read from the deed itself, as follows:—"And in farther trust and confidence that they (Trustees) shall at all times forever hereafter, permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said church, as shall from time to time, be duly authorized by the general conference of the M. E. C., or by the annual conferences, to preach and expound God's holy word therein." Having read the testimony on which the prisoner relied, Mr. Hategood proceeded with his argument in a strain similar to the following:

May it please the court, I think my client is sustained in his assertions; I have proved, by the discipline of the M. E. C., that the general conference has "full power to make rules and regulations" for the members of that church. It is true there are restrictions; but what are they but cobwebs? especially in the hands of men who have "assumed" the power, and hold "with tenacious grasp, all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogative." I have shown by the provisions appended to the restrictive articles in the discipline, that whenever a sufficient number of the preachers are agreed, 'they can alter any of the restrictions, except the first article.' I have proved by the report of the General Conference,

of 1828, that the travelling preachers of the M. E. C., hold themselves to be 'divinely instituted,' and therefore that they "attempt to support the assumption of power" because they are such, "or by their call to the ministry." I have proved by testimony contained in the Methodist discipline, that the "travelling preachers—claim the right of property," and here I might close my argument.

But now Mr. Court, I must say a few things more in behalf of my client. He is an honest man and a great friend to "equal rights," and to "republicanism," yea more than all this, he is a great friend to the dear people; and he believes, as every honest man ought to do, that his church is the best church in the world, because it has no bishops in it. And his benevolence leads him to wish every body in his church. And really, now, may it please your Honors, would it not be better for all the preachers and members of the M. E. C., to come over and join my clients church? They could then enjoy such liberty and independence, and would be so free from the "tyranny" of "bishops" and "presiding elders." This is the object my client has had in view all the time, that is to get the members of the old church to come over on his side, and it is such a good one, that my client, like every other good man, is not very nice about the means he uses, to get at it. We all know that the General Conference of 1828, did put the words 'divinely instituted' in their report. We also know that the right to preach in the meeting houses of the M. E. C., is secured to the travelling preachers, and if all these things don't come exactly up to what my client said, certainly no good man ought to stick at it, especially when he considers the object my client had in view. I think my clients case a very clear one, the doctrine that if a man's object be good, he may gain it by any means he can, has been taught in high places long ago, and it certainly is the true doctrine. Besides all this, don't every body know that the travelling preachers of the M. E. C., make laws for the whole church, and then take in and turn out whomsoever they please. I have heard these things ever since I was born, and surely this honorable court must have heard them too. Where there is so much smoke, there must be some fire. I hope the court will decide this case in favor of my client. I submit the case.

The counsel for the prisoner having closed his argument, the Attorney for the Commonwealth proceeded.

May it please the court, we have charged thirdly, that the prisoner is guilty of basely perverting the truth. First, by asserting that the travelling ministers of the M. E. C. "have held with tenacious grasp, all legislative, judicial and executive prerogative." And secondly, by affirming that they "attempt to support the assumption of power" "by their call to the ministry," or because they are 'divinely instituted.'—And thirdly, by asserting that they "claim the right of property" in the M. E. C. The counsel for the prisoner has read the best evidence he can get to sustain these assertions; but with the indulgence of the court, we will make it appear that the counsel for the prisoner, has not been a less faithful student in the schools of the Jesuits, than his client.

He has read from the discipline, that "the General Conference shall

have full power to make rules and regulations" for the church under certain "limitations and restrictions," and he has shown by a *provisio* appended to the restrictive articles that "when three fourths of all the members of the several Annual Conferences" jointly recommend an alteration, "the ensuing General Conference may alter any of the restrictive articles except the first." Now if the church had no experience of the fruitlessness of an attempt to alter, (in the gentleman's sense of the term,) and there were no received expositions of the doctrines contained in the restrictive articles; what has the counsel for the prisoner proved? Nothing to his purpose. Let us look at these articles.

The first reads thus—"The general conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our articles of religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine, contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine," and the *provisio* appended, does not allow of any alteration in this article, even though all the preachers were agreed to it. They must revolutionize, the church must be subverted, and her very foundations upturn; before any revocation, alteration or change can take place in this article. But does the *provisio* prepare the way for "revoking" any of the restrictive articles? We think not, neither does it prepare the way for revoking the *principles* contained in any one of them. But the travelling preachers, when agreed, may alter any of the restrictive articles except the first, in form, or in any of their details not affecting their vital principles. As for instance, the right of representation in the general conference, is secured to every annual conference, by the terms of the compact. Now, the ratio of representation has on the "joint recommendation of the annual conferences" been "altered" since the organization of the church; but the principle of representation remains unchanged; for whatever alteration has taken place, has been by agreement, and bears equally upon all.

Again the third article says "they" the general conference, "shall not alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away Episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our general superintendancy." As matters now stand, the entire board of bishops is responsible for the work assigned to the Episcopacy: but the plan of the general superintendancy might be so altered or modified, as to allow each bishop to have his field of labor assigned him by the general conference, for one, two, three, or four years together, taking care to provide for any lack of service which might be occasioned by death or otherwise. This would be an alteration but the Episcopal form of government would remain unchanged by such alteration. Nor do we allow that Episcopacy can be done away in the M. E. C., without an entire revolution, uprooting the very foundations of that ecclesiastical organization.

But aside from this reasoning, and by way of illustrating the practical results of "checks and balances" between the ministry and membership of the M. E. C., we will introduce a few short extracts from an article in "*The Itinerant*," for Nov. 25, 1829—"Is it possible that the Reformers who have written and said so much about the absolute power of Methodist travelling preachers over the rights and privileges of the people, believe themselves, what they labor so hard to impress upon the minds of others?—They appear to have assumed it as an undisputed

fact, that all the power is in the hands of the preachers, and that the people are the veriest vassals in the universe.—I do not hesitate to say, and my convictions of the fact, must remain unshaken until the reverse shall be made to appear, that the Ministry of the M. E. C., have less power to coerce its members in respect to any of their interests, than those of any other denomination.—Waving for the present all other considerations which might be employed to illustrate this observation, my mind was forcibly struck with a circumstance much to the point.—The circumstance to which I allude, is, the 'Address of the Stewards of Alabama circuit to the Mississippi Annual Conference.'—Those Stewards, three in number—conclude their address as follows:—'We shall use what means we have in our possession to bring you to a sense of your dependance; hereby notifying you, that we shall not support the preachers that you may appoint (if any you send) to this circuit, for the year eighteen hundred and twenty-nine.'

This is the language of men who would persuade the public that they have *no power* to check or control the unlimited and overbearing rule of their preachers.—Now I know nothing of the local circumstances in this case,—or if it were not of a nature to illustrate an important principle in the controversy, I certainly should not have noticed it.—But who does not know that what this board of Stewards did, every other board of Stewards in the United States may do. And if the people concur with them, every circuit and station may carry their decrees into effect. Is there no power or privilege in all this? I ask further, are there any three men in *any other denomination* who have such power to wield, and with such sudden, and impetuous force "to bring" their ministers "to a sense of their dependance?"—'All who understand the structure of our system of government know the "absolute control" the people hold over the preachers in this respect; and knowing this, they cannot be ignorant that the preachers are, and always must be sensible of the importance of living and acting in a way to secure the confidence, and promote the interest of their brethren.'

The ground assumed by the prisoner is utterly untenable in every view of the subject, for if, *first*, the preachers are what they profess to be, and their object what they declare it to be, the people have ample security that they *cannot* do any thing with design that would militate against the interests of the people. But, if, *secondly*, they are "corrupt in their principles" as the prisoner would have us believe, motives of sheer policy (allowing them to be men of common sense) would effectually prevent them from adopting "measures" which would be "oppressive" to the people.

We will introduce a short extract from the report of the General Conference of 1828, a document on which the prisoner affects to rely very much. It contains an official, and published avowal of the views which that body took of the subject now before the court. It is as follows, to wit:

"On this one point we beg, however, that no one may either misunderstand, or misrepresent us. We neither claim, nor seek to be lords over God's heritage. In the sense of this passage, there is but one Lord and Lawgiver. We arrogate no authority to enact any laws of our

own, either of moral, or of civil force. Our commission is to preach the gospel, and to enforce the moral discipline established by the one Lawgiver, by those spiritual powers vested in us, as subordinate pastors who watch over souls as they that must give account to the chief Shepherd. We claim no strictly legislative powers, although we grant that the terms 'legislative and legislature' have been sometimes used even among ourselves. In a proper sense, however, they are not strictly applicable to the General Conference.—Did we claim any authority to enact any laws to affect either life or limb, to touch the persons, or to tax the property of our members, they ought unquestionably to be directly represented among us. But they know we do not.—We certainly then exercise no civil legislation. As to the moral code, we are subject equally with themselves, to the one only Lord. We have no power to add to, to take from, to alter, or to modify a single item of his statutes. "No man is obliged to receive *our doctrines* merely because *we* believe and teach them, nor unless they have his own cordial assent. Neither is any man obliged to submit to what *we* believe to be the *moral discipline* of the gospel, and our duty to enforce, unless he believes it to be so also."

As to "judicial and executive prerogative," we appeal to the entire economy of the M. E. C., which shows definitely and clearly,

1st. "That a travelling preacher never acts in a judicial capacity except on the trial of a travelling preacher, or as a member of a tribunal having appellate jurisdiction.

2nd. That his executive authority consists simply (in so far as the membership of members are concerned) in enforcing the decisions of the constituted tribunals of the church. As to the "assumption of power," and the source whence "arguments" are drawn to "support" it, the prisoner has represented that what is said in the report of the general conference, concerning the "divinely instituted ministry is asserted and claimed for the Methodist itinerant ministry alone.—Nothing can be more false,—the true gospel ministry of every denomination were clearly included, though with a particular view to the ministers of the M. E. C., in their proper pastoral charge, as the subject under consideration." The principles of that part of the report (which concerns the subject before the court) are simply these,

1st. "That the true gospel ministry is a ministry of divine institution.

2nd. "That their business is not to make laws for the church (much less to tyrannise over it) but humbly to obey, and faithfully to administer those already made by our one only Lord and Lawgiver. To preach His gospel, and to administer the ordinances of His institution. And the due performance of these holy functions, is not merely their 'right' but their 'duty':—that a necessity is laid upon them by Him to whom alone they must ultimately answer for it:—

3d. That the ministers nevertheless, have neither right nor power, to oblige, or require any man to receive any thing as a doctrine, or an ordinance, or as its moral discipline, contrary to the convictions of his own judgment.

4th. "That as the ministers on the one hand have no right to control

others in these respects, so, on the other hand, they deny the right of others, *authoritatively*, to control the ministry in *these respects*. In other words, they deny the existence of any just authority, in any body of people, to oblige ministers of the Gospel to preach as Gospel doctrines, what they do not believe to be Gospel doctrines, to administer as Gospel ordinances, what they do not believe to be Gospel ordinances, or as its moral discipline, what they do not believe to be its moral discipline. *

Does the prisoner believe that the ministry of the word is not *divinely instituted*? If so, let him avow it and take his stand among the semi infidels of the age. But if he admits that it is of divine institution, will he contend that the ministry can (consistently with the design of its institution) suffer its ministrations, as to doctrines, ordinances, and moral discipline, to be authoritatively controlled by others? If so, let him openly profess his time-swerving policy, and the christian world will know where to place him.

But whatever of power the ministry of the M. E. C. may be allowed to possess, there is no possible ground for the charge of "assumption." The government of the M. E. C. originated with Mr. Wesley in compliance with the special and urgent request of the people, and the members of the church who were then in existence, "joyfully conformed" to the plan which he had recommended. And those who afterwards become members, voluntarily entered into the association under the regulations which had been made by the ministry. For it must be remembered that "the preachers existed in fact before the people, and the government was originally and of necessity in their hands, and the members were by them, invited to the privileges provided for them in the economy the preachers had instituted." The preachers, therefore, cannot without a perversion of language, and of truth itself, be charged with the "assumption of power." And so far are the preachers from having "assumed" *any* "power" that much of the power which was originally and of necessity with them, was placed in other hands, as soon as a safe deposit could be found for it. The "ministers" retaining only so much as was necessary to the faithful performance of the work assigned them in preaching the gospel, administering its ordinances, and enforcing its moral discipline.

May it please the court, the third specification in this charge can be sustained by testimony equally as strong as that on which the first and second are based. The prisoner says "the travelling preachers claim the right of property" in said church. And his counsel has read extracts from the "deed of settlement" to sustain him in his assertions.

But what would a stranger, unacquainted with the provisions of that deed, and of the temporal economy of the M. E. C., think on hearing the assertions of the prisoner? Would he not suppose that the travelling preachers held the title to the property? or, to say the least of the matter, that they had some personal interest in it? And yet, after all that he has said, and emblazoned to the world, the fact is, that as "preachers,"

* Methodist Quarterly, for Jan. 1830.

or as "travelling preachers," they have no sort of title to a single Methodist meeting house in the United States, with this single exception, that the "Trustees" are bound to let the "preachers" preach in the meeting houses when they choose to do so, and it is made the duty of the preachers in their ordination vows, to preach in said meeting houses. And when said houses are not occupied by the "preachers" the Trustees are at liberty to invite whomsoever they please, to preach in them.

And in all this, what peculiar right have the preachers, or what right that is not common to their congregations, except that the preachers are privileged to *stand* and deliver their message, and it is deemed genteel in their congregations to sit, if they have seats? For the correctness of the position we take on this subject, we refer to the "deed of settlement" itself—we need no other witness. And in full view of the examination of that document by every impartial enquirer after truth, in relation to the subject before the court, we hesitate not to affirm that the prisoner has perverted the truth—perverted it *basely*. His assertions convey a wrong idea, and make a false impression on the minds of all who are not better informed.

But the source of the prisoners grief lies behind the curtain. I presume he is a seceder from the M. E. C., and so exceedingly devoted to the doctrine of "rights," that he wished to take with him the meeting house, or houses, in which he had been accustomed to preach.—He was so full of the notion of his own "rights" that in his zeal he forgot the "rights" of others. If he were alone in the world, he would have all the "rights," but since there are others, his "rights" are necessarily limited.

May it please the court, we will suppose a case illustrative of the doctrine of "rights." Thirty men agree to unite their means, and build a Methodist meeting house. They pay one hundred dollars each,—Trustees are appointed, by whom the legal title to the property is held in trust for the use of the church, and the provisions of the deed secure to her ministers the "rights" to preach in said house. But in process of time, twenty of the thirty who built the house, change their relation to the church, they expatriate themselves from her communion, perchance they join the "reformers" and contend that they should take the house with them; or otherwise, that the remaining ten should refund the money which the seceders paid in building the house.—Where is the justice of such a claim? Would not any tyro in casuistry be able to settle the question of "rights" between the twenty and the ten?

Does not the original and understood design in building the house, settle the question of "rights?" not by vesting the "right" of the property in the preachers; but in Trustees, who hold the property in trust for the use of the church. The preachers, as preachers, cannot hold the "right" of the property in the M. E. C., neither can the church, as a church, hold the "right" of property; but the law recognizes the existence of the church, and provides that individuals may hold the right of property for the use of the church, including both her

ministers and lay members. And while the right of preaching in the property is secured to the preachers, that right is only valuable in a moral point of view; and only so long as an equal right to hear the preaching is enjoyed by the members of the church, and by the congregation. But neither the one nor the other, in their individual capacity have the right to the property. Whatever of right they had as individuals, to their money before they contributed it to the building of a meeting house, was surrendered by their own voluntary act, when the contribution was made. The "deed of settlement" is based upon this equitable doctrine of rights. Upon any other theory of the doctrine of rights, contributors to the Bible and Missionary societies, might change their minds, and demand of the boards of managers of those institutions, that they should refund their contributions. Donors to institutions of learning, might avail themselves of the same *rights*.—But it must be remembered that when a contribution is made, or a donation given, the rights of others are involved, and the contribution, or donation cannot be touched by its original proprietor, without *sacrilege*. When a man contributes his money to a given object, he has no right, either natural, legal, or moral, to divert the contribution to a different object, without the consent of those whose interests may be jeopardized by such diversion.

As to the "book establishment" it was originally instituted by the preachers with such means as they had, or were freely given for that purpose. Its primary object was the diffusion of religious instruction to the greatest possible extent within the reach of its means, by fair business transactions with purchasers; and after a sufficient capital to carry on the business was employed, whatever of income might arise from it, was sacredly devoted to the "support of the deficient travelling preachers, and their families, the widows and orphans of preachers, &c."

The travelling preachers of the M. E. C., enter into no stipulations with their congregations, concerning what they are to receive for their labors. The discipline of the church allows each preacher to receive a given salary, provided the amount be collected on his circuit; but it cautiously provides that the claims of a preacher on the people of his charge shall all be cancelled when he leaves his circuit, whether he has received the whole, or half, or nothing towards his salary.

A small amount annually accrues from the "book establishment" and the "chartered fund."

It is well known that the salary of a single man is one hundred dollars, if he can get it. That of a married man two hundred, subject to the same condition. And the small sums accruing from the book concern, &c., are intended to make up deficiencies, as far as they will go towards this object.

It will not be denied that many of the travelling preachers could (if they would lend themselves to party considerations,) make stipulations highly advantageous in a temporal point of view, and many of the more wealthy of their congregations could (by lending themselves to similar interests) secure the services continuously, of the preachers of their choice. But mutually disdaining to stoop to the promotion of interests which contemplate an end less noble than the greatest possible sum,

total of good to man, they mutually forego these advantages, and deliberately embrace the benevolent economy of the Methodist church. And who is injured by her operations? Envy itself might almost sicken at sight of the envenomed gall which could prompt a calumny so foul, and a perversion of truth so base, as those which have marked the pages of the prisoner.

But before we close, we will take the liberty to animadvert upon one other saying of the prisoner, and upon one feature in the system of his choice, (merely to show him what we could do if we were so minded.) He represents that "great inconvenience" arises "out of the power exercised by the preacher in charge" in the M. E. C., that "he can pick a jury" and "turn out and keep in whom he pleases,"—and complains that there is "no right of challenge secured to the accused."—See p. p. 23, 24.

Now we are all perfectly aware that there is no other organization, or system of government on earth, either civil, or ecclesiastical, but may be abused by corrupt administrators. But the prisoners complaint is based upon the supposition that Methodist preachers are deeply wicked and designing; there is no weight in his objection upon any other ground. But how does this view of the subject comport with his professions of friendship and liberality? He says "the reformers have welcomed the old side to their pulpits—lo e feasts—class meetings" &c. "while the old church—with a few exceptions have prohibited reformers from all such religious and friendly intercourse" page 34. It will be remembered that he has represented the "preachers" as "corrupt—in their principles, and oppressive in their measures." page 8,—as cleaving to a "power—insidiously usurped," page 10—as holding with "tenacious grasp, all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogative," page 8, and as exercising powers ("like the popish clergy,") p. 32., "which have been a great grievance to the church."—page 21. And all these things so continuously, and perseveringly, that "secession" became "unavoidable" on the part of "reformers."—page 30. What! invite to his pulpits, men who were so "corrupt—in their principles, and oppressive in their measures," men who were so much "like the popish clergy" that "secession" on his part became "unavoidable"—that "there was only one thing left for (reformers) to do, viz: to form themselves into a new church." page 33. Now to speak in common parlance, he is a choice blade of consistency.—He has furnished to the world the proof either first, that he does not believe his own representations of these men; or secondly, that he is as "corrupt" as he represents them to be, "O consistency what a Jewel thou art!"

But the system of the prisoners choice secures to an "accused" member the "right of challenge"—the right to object to those who may be called to try his case, page 25. Now suppose a "corrupt" and artful member, belonging to the prisoners church, and wishing from motives other than those of a religious nature, to retain his standing in the church, no matter how vicious, or wicked his life; he has only to pounce upon every honest, and upright man, who may be called to sit on his trial—denounce him as an enemy, and object to his being on the committee

of trial; how will the prisoner, on his plan, get such a "corrupt" member out of his church? or are his members all so good that none of them will avail themselves of such advantages? But what right has the M. P. C. to deprive her members of a voice in her Judicial tribunals merely because a "corrupt" and wicked person to screen himself from justice, chooses to denounce them as enemies?

When ministers of the Gospel addressing themselves to the *civil*, and *political* predilections of the inhabitants of a free country become so exceedingly "republican" in their ecclesiastical operations, as voluntarily to deprive themselves of the power to administer the "moral discipline" of the gospel, a "dispensation" of which is committed to them. It may well be asked, "who hath required this at your hands?" The happy medium lies between extremes, and the M. E. C. acts upon the principle that her members have a "right" to a voice in her tribunals, when called to act, until they forfeit that "right" by transgression. Nothing however is more common, than for members to ask exemption from voting, if there is any known hostility to them on the part of the "accused"

May it please this honorable court, we will close the pleadings against the prisoner at the bar. We have not entered the vast field of argument which stands as an impregnable tower in defence of the organization, the economy and the institutions of the M. E. C. We stand only upon the threshold of the fair Temple, and gaze upon her well arranged proportions, we are well aware that the prisoner, standing as he does, in the light which the beautiful edifice of Episcopal Methodism reflects, (if he be not lost to all moral sensibility) must quail before the piercing glance of this Judicial tribunal. With confident reliance upon the court, for a verdict against the prisoner at the bar; we submit the case.

The pleadings being closed, the court unanimously agreed that every specification in the third charge had been amply sustained, and therefore that the prisoner was *guilty*. Whereupon Judge Justice, the presiding Judge, proceeded to pass sentence upon him somewhat in the following manner, to wit:

"It becomes my duty to pass the sentence of the law upon you, the prisoner, whose proper name I learn by inference, is *Pioneer Proselyter*. You have been convicted of *enviously and jealously speaking evil of your neighbor—of bearing false witness against your neighbor.—And also of basely perverting the truth*. Your conviction has been the result of a fair *moral process*. The Attorney for the commonwealth, who always deals fairly, assures the court that the crimes of which you have been convicted, are only a part of those which have been convicted, are only a part of those which have stained your hands: and indeed there is too much reason to fear (from the developements made before the court) that the element in which you move, is transgression against the peace and harmony of society.

That you have accomplices is manifest, not only from the inscription on your forehead; but also from the fact of your having passed to the "sixth edition."

"It is not ordinarily the province of this court, in the present disordered state of things, in which much allowance is to be made for the unconscious prejudices, and prepossessions of men, as also for the unperceived influences which are brought to bear upon them, to inflict "capital punishments." But this court *ordains* and *decrees* that the following just retributions which legitimately flow from your transgressions, as effects follow their proper causes, shall be inflicted upon you.

1st. "Your associates and accomplices, in any future operations which you may undertake, shall be men who indulge in strong prejudices without any just ground:—and men who are "wiser" and more bigoted in their own opinions, than "seven men that can render a reason;"—men who do not examine for themselves, but take things from others, "on trust," and thereby subject themselves to great errors, and to still greater difficulties.

2nd. "That you shall fall under the displeasure of every good man who understands the subjects with which you have been ignorantly, or maliciously meddling: and if admitted into his library at all, it shall be on the principle on which criminals are brought into company and publicly punished; that is, as a warning to others not to walk into the paths which they have trodden.

3d. "That as knowledge increases, and the common people shall learn more of the history, and understand more of the economy of the M. E. C., and of the scriptural relations existing between *ministers* and *members* of the church; you shall gradually go into disrepute, insomuch that you shall not have friends enough to assist you through the "press" in some future and contemplated "edition."

4th. "And finally; that (great as have been your achievements in war) you shall die "unwept" and "unsung," and be buried without the honors of war; and a dark and impenetrable cloud of forgetfulness shall "brood forever over your lonely sepulchre."

Sentence being passed upon the prisoner, *Sheriff Watchful*, proclaimed that his case was disposed of; and the court was ready to attend to the next cause which might come before it.

[From the Richmond Christian Advocate of May, 1843.]

ECCLESIASTICAL LIBERTY.—In the long controversy waged by the Methodist Protestant against the Methodist Episcopal Church one prominent ground of hostility was the alleged power of the Itinerant ministry. They were represented as holding all the powers of the Church and denounced as tyrants and enemies of the civil and religious liberties of the country. In the pure form of ecclesiastical government that the Reformers were to give to their followers we were taught to look for something well nigh celestial, and certainly vastly superior to any thing that the world has yet witnessed. Many comparisons have been set up by our reformed brethren between their government and ours. In theirs, power was diffused through the whole mass; in ours, it was all concentrated in the hands of an irresponsible itinerant ministry. Under these circumstances we never expected to live long

enough to hear our brethren claim for themselves the right to possess the power they had repudiated, and for which they denounced us and our ministry in the severest and most bitter terms of their vocabulary. But "circumstances alter cases." The last received number of the Methodist Protestant contains the following from the pen of the Editor elect, himself an Itinerant minister. He says:

"Liberty in the M. P. Church does not constitute every one a judge of his brethren, as some have appeared to think. It would scarcely be right to wrest the powers of the Church out of the hand of a large *body* of Itinerants, under the plea of its being too weighty for their strength, and then multiply it indefinitely and lodge it in the hands of each *individual*. Our liberty is to enact Scriptural laws, and to obey them: to think, speak, and act like christians; and if any one be thought to have forfeited his standing and rights, then he may be arraigned before the proper authorities." &c.

Now this is the "liberty" we have always enjoyed; and these are the "rights" we have always claimed for ourselves, and cheerfully yield to others. We publish this change in the opinions of our brethren as one of the signs of the times; and as a reason for believing and hoping that the warfare against us, so long, so ruthlessly and so ineffectually waged by our Methodist Protestant brethren is drawing to a close; and that hereafter we will live in peace and quietness together. May it be even so!

[From Zion's Herald.]

REVIVALS vs SECESSION.—If there be one thing which makes the pretensions of radicalism appear more absurd than another, it is the glorious revival of the present day. If to countenance the church is sin, God must be regarded as the greatest sinner in the universe, as he gives his countenance and blessing to the church beyond all precedent. Were there no revivals in progress, how it would ring through the land. It would be construed into divine displeasure on account of our connection with slavery, and be made an argument in favor of secession. But thank God it is a day of revival. Who ever knew the like? And what do our enemies say to it? Some say nothing. They have too much conscience to deny the genuineness of the work, and to attribute it to God would be to overthrow their groundless pretensions. Others however have the temerity to disparage the work, and attribute it to any cause but the true one. If there be divisions they trumpet them through the land as glorious encouragement to their enterprise. But they have not as yet noticed a single revival among us since their paper was started. No not one.

Other papers publish accounts of revivals in the Methodist Episcopal Church, but the "True Wesleyan," falsely so called, deals in divisions, quarrels, secessions, and all manner of disorder in the old church. Is this the spirit of the Gospel? Is there no partyism, no love of sect here? Is this the fruit of the "great principles" of which our abolitionists boast? Their cry is, "let all secessions be reported for the True Wesleyan;" and they encourage their readers from time to time that

plots are working which will develope glorious results soon. And what adds to the strangeness of their movements is, they say to those whom they have inflamed to contention and mistule, "Holiness is their motto and salvation their end." But in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting wisdom. He knoweth them that are his. Success, we know, is not always the evidence of God's approval. It attended Mohammedanism and Popery. But when a good cause succeeds, and succeeds by good means, it is a sure proof of the divine blessing. Now is not the conversions of souls a good cause, and does not the M. E. Church succeed in this respect? And does she not use the right means for it, the preaching of repentance and faith? If it is not of God it must be of Satan. Will any one say the latter? If not, then it must be the former. And if the former, then God is with us; and are our brethren too holy to fellowship with those whom God communes with?

ERRATA.

The following inaccuracies, though trivial, are deemed worthy of correction. This was anticipated by the publisher, as will be seen by a reference to a note on the first page, where, moreover, the cause is explained.

- Page 3, line 9 *from top*, for caricitures—*read* caricatures.
 " 3, line 11 *from bottom*, for caricituring—*read* caricaturing.
 " 4, line 19 *from bottom*, for nearest moded—*read* nearest to the apostolic model.
 " 5, line 1 *from top*, for prosolytism—*read* proselytism.
 " 10, line 5 *from top*, for bishop—*read* bishops.
 " 12, line 4 *from top*, for proselyter—*read* presbyter.
 " 12, line 10 *from bottom*, for the work—*read* that great work.
 " 14, line 24 *from bottom*, for Episcopis—*read* Episcopos.
 " 14, line 24 *from bottom*, for Jonathan Crowther—*read* Jonathan Crowther.
 " 15, line 2 *from top*, for episcopai—*read* episcopoi.
 " 17, line 13 *from bottom*, for Britaid—*read* Britain.
 " 17, line 8 *from top*, for Engiaud—*read* England.
 " 20, line 21 *from top*, for authoratively—*read* authoritatively]
 " 20, line 13 *from bottom*, for therein—*read* therein.
 " 20, line 4 *from bottom*, for provisio—*read* proviso.
 " 21, line 13 *from top*, for please it your honors—*read* please your honor.
 " 22, line 2 *from top*, for provisio—*read* proviso.
 " 22, line 14 *from top*, for provisio—*read* proviso.
 " 22, line 18 *from top*, for provisio—*read* proviso.
 " 24, line 17 *from top*, for cordiad—*read* cordial.