A

DEFENCE OF "OUR FATHERS,"

AND OF THE

ORIGINAL ORGANIZATION

OF

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

AGAINST

THE REV. ALEXANDER M'CAINE

AND OTHERS.

WITH HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES OF EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM.

By JOHN EMORY, D.D.

Multum refert ad retinendam ecclesiarum pacem, inter ea quæ jure divino præcepta sunt, et quæ non sunt, accurate distinguere.—Grotius.

When men have caused such lamentable divisions in the Church, by their several parties and factions, it concerns them to condemn all others besides themselves, lest they most of all condemn themselves for making unnecessary divisions in the Church of God.—Stillingfleet.

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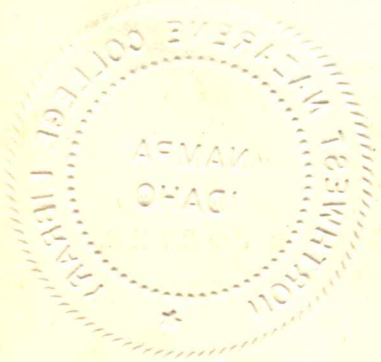

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PREFACE.

The "fair" and "honourable" fame of "our fathers" is a treasure committed to our common trust; in which all who bear their name ought to feel an interest; and to defend which is our common duty. The best construction of which their conduct and motives are susceptible was due to them even while alive, with opportunities and means to explain, and to defend themselves. Much more is it due in instituting an inquiry into their history, now that they are silenced in the grave, and incapable of self-defence. As we would that men should do to us, when death shall have sealed our lips, and stricken from our hand the ready pen, let us do even so to them. For the measure which we mete to others, in the just retributive visitations of Heaven, will be meted to us again. We should take heed, then, how, with rash and wanton rudeness, we trample upon the ashes of deceased fathers.

In the present discussion, however, we ask not for charity, in the cold sense of that abused term; nor that pity shall turn the scale of judgment. We demand simple justice,—sheer justice. By that balance we agree that our fathers shall be tried. In that crucible we consent that both their acts and their motives shall be tested. All that we ask for them, in passing the ordeal, is, the allowance of the frailty inseparable from humanity; and from which, with the purest and best intentions, the wisest and the holiest mortals have never been exempted.

The representation which Mr. M'Caine has given of the account of the Methodist Episcopal Church, published in Buck's Theological Dictionary, as it regards myself, is wholly unfounded. The editor of that work never was indebted to me for that account: nor was I aware that it had been imputed to me, till I saw Mr. M'Caine's statement. It had actually been published in a former edition of Buck's Dictionary, and attributed to another hand, before I was "Book Agent," or "Publisher for the Methodist Episcopal Church" at all. This circumstance alone might have rendered the imputation of it to me at least "suspicious." In some other cases Mr. M'Caine has not deemed it a sufficient warrant for the assumption of facts, that he has merely found them stated in print. Had he been equally suspicious in this instance, it might have led him to farther inquiry; in which case the means of correct and certain information were easily and perfectly within his reach.

A communication from my friend, the Rev. N. Bangs, explanatory of that publication, and of his book on "Methodist Episcopacy," will be found in the Appendix. And in justice to him, as Mr. M'Caine has attacked that book, it ought to be known that Mr. M'Caine himself was one of the committee to whom it was submitted, before its publication, and by whom its publication was recommended. The recommendation stands on record, attested by his own hand. And whatever responsibility may exist for its doctrines, or for its official acceptance and publication "for the Methodist Episcopal Church," this "reverend gentleman," I conceive, is as much concerned in that matter as the author himself.

The work here presented to the reader is not a party work. It is an attempt to wipe off the foul stains which have been cast on us, through the aspersion of our founders. If Mr. M'Caine's book be true, it is impossible that any Methodist, who is a real friend of the church, and of our fathers, can otherwise than feel himself disgraced. To such, a satisfactory refutation of it cannot fail to be acceptable. Whatever may be the claims of the respective questions of ecclesiastical polity agitated among us, let them stand on their own bases. To attempt to promote any of them by personal attacks on the dead, is an unworthy resort; and, with the judicious and reflecting, can only be regarded as indicating a deficiency of better argument.

In the little leisure allowed me by other extensive and pressing engagements, I might perhaps be excused for craving some indulgence from the reader, in replying to a work in the preparation of which several years were employed. This, however, I trust, is not necessary. All that is asked is a candid examination of the *whole* of the following pages, in their consecutive order. This is the more necessary, as the various sections have a mutual connection and dependance;—subsequent ones assuming what had been established in the preceding; nor was it found convenient in all cases, to keep the matter of the respective titles entirely distinct.

In preparing this Defence the Divine assistance has been asked:—In sending it abroad, the Divine blessing is now implored.

J. EMORY.

New-York, November, 1827.

A

DEFENCE OF OUR FATHERS

Section I.—*Episcopacy.*

Mr. M'Caine's first inquiry is, "What views do ecclesiastical writers give us of an episcopal form of church government?"

In answer to this inquiry, he quotes certain authorities in support of the following positions, viz.:

That "Episcopalians, in the strict sense of the word, are those who maintain that episcopacy is of apostolic institution, or that the church of Christ has ever been governed by three distinct orders, bishops, presbyters or priests, and deacons;—that no one has a right to execute the ministerial office without having previously received a divine commission;—and the exclusive right of granting this commission is vested in the bishops as successors of the apostles."

That "it is a principle universally established among Episcopalians, that a succession from the apostles in the order of bishops, as an order superior to and distinct from presbyters, is a requisite without which a *valid Christian ministry* cannot be preserved; and that such bishops alone possess the power of ordaining and commissioning ministers to feed the flock of Christ."

That "since the distinction of bishops and presbyters has been of divine appointment, it necessarily follows that the power of ordination, which is the chief mark of this distinction, was reserved to the bishops by the same appointment."

Mr. M'Caine adds, "We have here some of the most

prominent features of an episcopal church, as laid down by writers of great celebrity. We would now ask our brethren who say Mr. Wesley recommended the episcopal mode of church government, if there is in any of the letters which he wrote a single line that would lead us to suppose that he held any one of the foregoing particulars? Nay, did he not positively say he did not hold them? What kind of an episcopal government then must it be that has not in it a single feature of episcopacy as described by ecclesiastical writers?"

But did not Mr. M'Caine know that there are "ecclesiastical writers" who describe "episcopacy" with *other* features? If he *did not*, his want of information is greater than we could have imagined. If he *did*, his argument is not ingenuous. We can scarcely believe that it can have imposed on himself: and it is certainly too glaringly fallacious to be imposed on others.

"It ought to be understood," says Dr. Samuel Miller, "that among those who espouse the episcopal side,—there are three classes.

"The first consists of those who believe that neither Christ nor his apostles laid down any particular form of ecclesiastical government to which the church is bound to adhere in all ages. That every church is free, consistently with the divine will, to frame her constitution agreeably to her own views, to the state of society, and to the exigencies of particular times. These prefer the episcopal government, and some of them believe that it was the primitive form; but they consider it as resting on the ground of *human expediency* alone, and not of *divine appointment*. This is well known to have been the opinion of Archbishops Cranmer, Grindal, Whitgift, Leighton, and Tillotson; of Bishops Jewel, Reynolds, Burnet, and Croft; of Drs. Whitaker and Stillingfleet, and of a *long list* of the *most learned and pious divines* of the Church of England, from the reformation down to the present day.

"Another class of Episcopalians go farther. They suppose that the government of the church by *bishops*, as a superior order to *presbyters*, was sanctioned by apostolic example, and that it is the duty of all churches to imitate this example. But while they consider episcopacy as necessary to the *perfection* of the church, they grant that it is by no means necessary to her *existence;* and accordingly, *without hesitation*, acknowledge as true churches of Christ many in which the episcopal doctrine is rejected, and presbyterian principles made the basis of ecclesiastical government. The advocates of this opinion, also, have been numerous and respectable, both among the clerical and lay members of the Episcopal churches in England and the United States. In this list appear the venerable names of Bishop Hall, Bishop Downham, Bishop Bancroft, Bishop Andrews, Archbishop Usher, Bishop Forbes, the learned Chillingworth, Archbishop Wake, Bishop Hoadly, and many more.

"A third class go much beyond either of the former. While they grant that God has left men at liberty to modify every other kind of government according to circumstances, they contend that one form of government for the church is unalterably fixed by divine appointment; that this form is episcopal; that it is absolutely *essential* to the *existence* of the church; that, of course, wherever it is wanting, there is no church, no regular ministry, no valid ordinances; and that all who are united with religious societies not conforming to this order are 'aliens from Christ,' 'out of the appointed way to heaven,' and have no hope but in the 'uncovenanted mercies of God.'

"It is confidently believed," continues Dr. Miller, "that the two former classes taken together, embrace at least *nineteen parts* out of *twenty* of all the Episcopalians in Great Britain and the United States; while, so far as can be learned from the most respectable writings, and other authentic sources of information, it is only the small

remaining proportion who hold the extravagant opinions assigned to the third and last of these classes."

If we may rely on the researches of Dr. Miller, then, it is so far from being true, that "it is a principle universally established among Episcopalians, that a succession from the apostles in the order of bishops, as an order superior to and distinct from presbyters, is a requisite without which a *valid Christian ministry* cannot be preserved; and that such bishops alone possess the power of ordaining and commissioning ministers to feed the flock of Christ;" that at least *nineteen-twentieths* of all the Episcopalians in Great Britain and in the United States hold no such sentiments.* Neither, as we shall show, were they the sentiments of Dr. Coke, or of Mr. Asbury, any more than of Mr. Wesley: nor do we believe that they are entertained by a single individual among Methodist Episcopalians, either in the ministry or in the laity.

The Irenicum of Dr. Stillingfleet, subsequently Bishop Stillingfleet, will be admitted to rank among the productions of "ecclesiastical writers" of distinguished "celebrity." From this work we shall exhibit a view of episcopacy somewhat different from that of Mr. M'Caine.†

"I assert," says Dr. Stillingfleet, "any particular form of government agreed on by the governors of the church, consonant to the general rules of Scripture, to be by divine right; that is, God, by his own laws, hath given men a power and liberty to determine the particular

* Gisborne also asserts that they are not the sentiments of the Church of England.—*Survey*, p. 254.

† The object of Stillingfleet, in this work, was to discuss and examine the divine right of the different forms of church government, according to the principles of the law of nature, the positive laws of God, the practice of the apostles and the primitive church, and the judgment of reformed divines; in order to lay a foundation for the peace of the church, and for the accommodation of the differences which then existed. His aim was to moderate the extravagant pretensions of *high churchmen*, on the one side, and the intemperate zeal of those, on the other, who were for destroying episcopacy altogether. With what ability, and excellent temper, and moderation, he performed this task will appear in the sequel.

form of church government among them. And hence it may appear, that though one form of government be agreeable to the word, it doth not follow that another is not, or because one is lawful, another is unlawful; but one form may be more agreeable to some parts, places, people, and times, than others are. In which case, that form of government is to be settled which is most agreeable to the present state of a place, and is most advantageously conducible to the promoting the ends of church government in that place or nation." *Irenicum*, pp. 9, 10, 2d edit. Lond. 1662.

"Matters of fact and mere apostolical practice, may, I freely grant, receive much light from the records of succeeding ages; but they can never give a man's understanding sufficient ground to infer any divine law, arising from those facts attested to by the practice or records of succeeding ages." *Ibid.*, p. 151.

In relation to arguments drawn from the testimony of antiquity, before their authority can be admitted in this controversy, Dr. Stillingfleet affirms, "these things must be manifested:—*that such things were unquestionably the practice of those ages and persons; that their practice was the same as that of the apostles; that what they did was not from any prudential motives, but by virtue of a law which did bind them to that practice.* Which things are easily passed over by the most eager disputers of the controversy about church government, but how necessary they are to be proved, before any form of government be asserted so necessary, that without it there can be no true church, any weak understanding may discern." *Ib.* p. 152.

"The *reason* of apostolical practice binds still, though not the *individual action;* that as they regulated churches for the best conveniency of governing them, so should the pastors of churches now." *Ib.*, p. 181.

"Any one particular form of government in the church is neither expressed in any direct terms by Christ, nor can

be deduced by just consequence; therefore no such form of government is instituted by Christ." *Ib.*, p. 182.

"But though nothing can be inferred from hence as to the necessity of that office to continue in the church, which Timothy and Titus were invested in; yet from the superiority of that power which they enjoyed over those churches, whether as evangelists or as fixed bishops, these two things may be inferred: *First*, That the superiority of some church officers over others is not contrary to the rule of the gospel: for all parties acknowledge the superiority of their power above the presbyters of the several cities; only the *continuance* of this power is disputed by many. But if they had any such power at all, it is enough for my present design, viz., that such a superiority is not contrary to the gospel rule: or that the nature of the government of the church doth not imply a necessary equality among the governors of it. *Secondly*, Hence I infer that it is not repugnant to the constitutions of churches in apostolical times for men to have power over more than one particular congregation. For such a power Timothy and Titus had; which, had it been contrary to the nature of the regiment of churches, we should never have read of in the first-planted churches. So that if those popular arguments of a necessary relation between a pastor and a particular people, of personal knowledge, care, and inspection, did destroy the lawfulness of extending that care or charge to many particular congregations, they would likewise overthrow the nature, end, and design of the office which Timothy and Titus acted in; which had a relation to a multitude of particular and congregational churches. Whether their power was *extraordinary* or no, I now dispute not; but whether such a power be *repugnant to the gospel* or no, which from their practice it is *evident* that it is not." *Ib.*, pp. 186, 187.

The foundation of this power was laid in the power which the apostles were invested with, which was ex-

tended over many, both churches and pastors. "If it be said, *The apostolical power, being extraordinary, must cease with the persons who enjoyed it;* I answer, *first*, What was *extraordinary* did cease; but all the dispute is what *was* extraordinary, and what was *not*. *Secondly*, By ceasing may be meant either ceasing as to its *necessity*, or ceasing as to its *lawfulness*. I say not but that the necessity of the office, as in their persons, for the first preaching and propagating the gospel, did cease with them; but that after their death it became *unlawful* for any particular persons to take the care and charge of diocesan churches, I deny. For to make a thing *unlawful*, which was before *lawful*, there must be some *express prohibition, forbidding* any farther use of such a power, which, I suppose, men will not easily produce in the word of God." *Ib.*, pp. 194, 5.

"The *extending* of any ministerial power is not the appointing of any *new office;* because every minister of the gospel hath a relation in *actu primo*" (primarily) "to the whole church of God; the restraint and enlargement of which power is subject to positive determinations of prudence and conveniency,—and therefore if the church see it fit for some men to have this power enlarged, for better government in some, and restrained in others, that *enlargement* is the appointing *no new office*, but the making use of a power already enjoyed for the benefit of the church of God. This being a foundation tending so fully to clear the lawfulness of that government in the church, which implies a superiority and subordination of the officers of the church to one another; and the church using her prudence in ordering the bounds of her officers, I shall do these two things: *First*, Show that the power of every minister of the gospel doth primarily and habitually respect the church in common. *Secondly*, That the church may, in a peculiar manner, single out some of its officers for the due administration of ecclesiastical power." *Ib.*, p. 195.

"The officers of the church may, in a peculiar manner, attribute a larger and more extensive power to some particular persons, for the more convenient exercise of their common power—grant to some the *executive part* of that power, which is originally and fundamentally common to them all. For our better understanding of this, we must consider a twofold power belonging to church officers, *a power of order*, and *a power of jurisdiction*." *Ib.* p., 197.

Under this distinction he shows, that though every presbyter, primarily and inherently, as to *order* possesses a capacity for the highest ministerial acts, yet "some farther authority is necessary in a church *constituted*" (or organized) "besides the power of order; and when this power, either by consent of the pastors of the church, or by the appointment of a Christian magistrate, or both, is devolved to some particular persons, though *quoad aptitudinem*" (as to the capacity or fitness) "the power remain in every presbyter, yet *quoad executionem*, (as to the actual discharge or execution of it,) "it belongs to those who are so appointed. And therefore Camero determines that ordination doth not belong to the power of order, but to the power of jurisdiction, and therefore is subject to positive restraints, by prudential determinations. By this we may understand how lawful the exercise of an *episcopal* power may be in the church of God, supposing an *equality* in all church officers as to the power of *order*. And how incongruously they speak, who, supposing an equality in the presbyters of churches at first, do cry out that the church takes upon her the office of Christ, if she *delegates* any to a more *peculiar* exercise of the *power of jurisdiction*." *Ib.*, pp. 197, 8.

"Before the jurisdiction of presbyters was restrained by mutual consent, in this instant, doubtless, the presbyters enjoyed the same liberty that the presbyters among the Jews did, of ordaining other presbyters, by that power they were invested in at their own ordina

tion.——In the first primitive church, the presbyters all acted in common for the welfare of the church, and either did or might ordain others to the same authority with themselves; because the *intrinsical* power of order is equally in them, and in those who were after appointed governors over presbyteries. And the collation of orders doth come from the power of order, and not *merely* from the power of jurisdiction. It being likewise *fully acknowledged* by the *schoolmen*, that bishops are *not* superior above presbyters, as to the power of *order*." *Ib.*, p. 273.

"It is evident *Jerome* attributes the first original of that *exsors potestas*," [delegated power, or power given by choice,] "as he calls it elsewhere, in the bishop above presbyters, not to any apostolical institution, but *to the free choice of the presbyters themselves:* which doth fully explain what he means by *consuetudo ecclesiæ* before spoken of, viz., that which came up by a voluntary act of the governors of churches themselves.—— To which we may add what Eutychius the patriarch of Alexandria saith, in his *Origines Ecclesiæ Alexandrinæ*, published in Arabic by our most learned Selden, who expressly affirms, *that the twelve presbyters constituted by* Mark *upon the vacancy of the see, did choose out of their number one to be head over the rest, and the other eleven did lay their hands upon him, and blessed him, and made him patriarch.*" *Ib.*, p. 274.

"Antonius de Rosellis fully expresseth my meaning in this;"—(in the first period of the church.) "*Every presbyter and presbyters did ordain indifferently, and thence arose schisms:* thence the liberty was restrained and reserved peculiarly to some persons who did act in the several presbyteries, as the נשיא or *Prince of the Sanhedrin*,——both parties granting that in the church such a restraint was laid upon the liberty of ordaining presbyters: and the exercise of that power may be restrained still, granting it to be radically and intrinsically in them.

So that this controversy is not such as should divide the church. For those that are for ordinations only by a superior order in the church, acknowledging a radical power for ordination in presbyters, which may be exercised in case of necessity, do thereby make it evident, that none who grant that, do think that any positive law of God hath forbidden presbyters the power of ordination; for then it must be wholly *unlawful*, and so in case of necessity it cannot be valid. Which doctrine I dare with some confidence assert to be a stranger to our Church of England,—on the other side, those who hold ordinations by presbyters *lawful*, do not therefore hold them *necessary*, but it being a matter of liberty, and not of necessity—this power then may be restrained by those who have the care of the church's peace, and matters of liberty being restrained, ought to be submitted to, in order to the church's peace." *Ib.*, p. 276.

"In the matter itself, I believe upon the strictest inquiry Medina's judgment will prove true, that Jerome, Austin, Ambrose, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, were all of Aerius's judgment as to the identity of both name and order of bishops and presbyters in the primitive church; but here lay the difference. Aerius from hence proceeded to separation from bishops and their churches, because they were bishops. And Blondell well observes, that the main ground why Aerius was condemned was for unnecessary separation from the church of Sebastia; and those bishops, too, who agreed with him in other things,—— whereas Jerome was so far from thinking it necessary to cause a schism in the church, by separating from bishops, that his opinion is clear, that the first institution of them was for preventing schisms; and therefore, for peace and unity, he thought their institution very useful in the church of God." *Ib.*, pp. 276–7.

"When the apostles were taken out of the way, who kept the main power in their own hands of ruling their

several presbyteries, or delegated some to do it, (who had a main hand in planting churches with the apostles, and thence are called in Scripture, sometimes fellow-labourers in the Lord, and sometimes evangelists, and by Theodoret *apostles*, but of a *second order*,) after, I say, these were deceased, and the main power left in the presbyteries, the several presbyters enjoying an equal power among themselves,—the wiser and graver sort considered the abuses following the promiscuous use of this power of ordination, and withal having in their minds the excellent frame of the government of the church, under the apostles and their deputies, and for preventing of future schisms and divisions among themselves, they *unanimously* agreed to *choose one out of their number* who was best qualified for the management of so great a trust, and to *devolve the exercise of the power of ordination and jurisdiction* to him; *yet so as that he act nothing of importance without the consent and concurrence of the presbyters*, who were still to be as the *common council* to the bishop. This I take to be the *true* and *just* account of the *original of episcopacy* in the primitive church according to Jerome: which model of government, thus contrived and framed, sets forth to us a most lively character of that *great wisdom* and *moderation* which *then* ruled the heads and hearts of the primitive Christians, and which, *when men have studied and searched all other ways*, (the abuses incident to this government through the corruptions of men and times being retrenched,) *will be found the most agreeable to the primitive form, both as asserting the due interest of the presbyteries, and allowing the due honour of episcopacy*, and by the *great harmony of both*, carrying on the affairs of the church with the greatest unity, concord, and peace. *Which form of government, I cannot see how any possible reason can be produced by either party why they may not with cheerfulness embrace it.*" *Ib.*, 281–2.

"Thus we have once more cleared Jerome and the truth together; I only wish that all that are of his judgment for the practice of the primitive church, were of his temper for the practice of their own; and while they own not episcopacy as necessary by a divine right, yet (being duly moderated, and joined with presbyteries) they may embrace it, as not only a lawful, but very useful constitution in the church of God. By which we may see what an excellent temper may be found out, most fully consonant to the primitive church for the management of *ordinations* and *church power*, viz., BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE BISHOP AND THE CONCURRENCE OF THE PRESBYTERY." *Ib.*, p. 283.

"All that I have to say then, concerning the course taken by the apostles, in settling the government of the churches,—lies in these three propositions,—viz., *That neither can we have that certainty of apostolical practise, which is necessary to constitute a divine right; nor*, secondly, *is it probable that the apostles did tie themselves up to any one fixed course in modelling churches; nor*, thirdly, *if they did, doth it necessarily follow that we must observe the same.*" *Ib.*, p. 287.

"In this place, lib. 4, cap. 43, he" (Irenæus) "not only asserts the succession of presbyters to the apostles, but likewise attributes the SUCCESSIO EPISCOPATUS" (*the succession of the episcopate*) "to these very presbyters." Whence comes then the community of names still, that those who are said to succeed the apostles, are called bishops in one place, but presbyters in another; and THE VERY SUCCESSION OF EPISCOPACY ATTRIBUTED TO PRESBYTERS?" *Ib.*, p. 307.

"And great probability there is, that where churches were planted by presbyters, as the Church of France by Andochius and Inignus, that afterward, upon the increase of churches and presbyters to rule them, they did from among themselves choose one to be as the bishop over them, as Pothinus was at Lyons. *For we*

nowhere read in those early plantations of churches, that where there were *presbyters already*, they sent to *other* churches to desire *episcopal ordination* from *them*." *Ib.*, p. 375.

"It is a known instance, that in the ordination of Pelagius, first bishop of Rome, there were only two bishops concerned and one presbyter; whereas, according to the fourth *canon* of the Nicene council, three bishops are absolutely required for the ordination of a bishop: either, then, Pelagius was no canonical bishop, and so the point of succession thereby fails in the church of Rome: or else a presbyter hath the same intrinsical power of ordination which a bishop hath," [even in ordaining a bishop,] "but it is only restrained by ecclesiastical laws." *Ib.*, p. 380.

"I believe there will, upon the most impartial survey, scarce be one church of the reformation brought which doth embrace any form of government, because it looked upon that form as only necessary by an unalterable standing law; but *every one took up that form of government which was judged most suitable to the state and condition of their several churches*." *Ib.*, p. 384.

"I doubt not but to make it evident, that the main ground for settling episcopal government in this nation," (England,) "was not accounted any pretence of *divine right*, but *the conveniency of that form of church government to the state and condition of the church at the time of its reformation*." *Ib.*, p. 385.

"The first who solemnly appeared in vindication of the English *hierarchy* was Archbishop Whitgift: yet he asserts that *no kind of government is expressed in the word, or can necessarily be concluded from thence*: and again, *no form of church government is by the Scripture prescribed to, or commanded the church of God*." *Ib.*, p. 394.

"That great light of the German church, Chemnitius, asserts the churches' freedom and liberty as to the orders and degrees of those who superintend the affairs of the

church; which he builds on a three-fold foundation:— 1. That the word of God nowhere commands *what* or *how many degrees* and *orders* of ministers there shall be. 2. That in the apostles' times there was not *the like number* in *all* churches, as is evident from Paul's epistles. 3. That in the apostles' times, in *some* places, *one person* did manage the *several offices* belonging to a church. Which three propositions are the very basis of all our foregoing discourse.—The sum is, it appears by the practice of the apostolical church, that the state, condition, and necessity of every particular church ought to be the standard and measure what offices and degrees of persons ought to be in it." *Ib.*, pp. 397, 398.

Zanchy, an eminent Presbyterian divine, "asserts it to be in the church's power and liberty to add several orders of ministers, according as it judgeth them tend to edification; and saith he is far from condemning the course of the primitive church, in erecting one as bishop over the presbyters, for better managing church affairs." *Ib.*, p. 399.

Fregevil, a divine of the French church, (whom the English bishop Hall calls "wise Fregevil, a deep head,") in his "Politic Reformer," says, "When the apostles first planted churches, the same being small and in affliction, there were not as yet any other bishops, priests, or deacons but themselves: they were the bishops and deacons, and together served the tables. These men, therefore, whom God raiseth up to plant a church, can do no better than, after the example of the apostles, to bear themselves in equal authority." *Ib.*, p. 400.

Beza, another eminent Presbyterian divine, says, "He was so far from thinking that the human order of episcopacy was brought into the church through rashness or ambition, that none can deny it to have been very useful as long as bishops were good. And those that both will and can, let them enjoy it still.—And elsewhere professeth all reverence, esteem, and honour

to be due to all such modern bishops, who strive to imitate the example of the primitive bishops, in a due reformation of the church of God according to the rule of the word. And looks on it as a most false and impudent calumny of some that said as though they" [of Geneva] "intended to prescribe their form of government to all other churches; as though they were like some ignorant fellows who think nothing good but what they do themselves." *Ib.*, p. 406.

To invalidate the authority of Stillingfleet's Irenicum, it has been objected by some extravagant asserters of the apostolical succession of episcopacy, that it was an indigested work, written when the author was young, and was subsequently retracted. How far this representation is correct, the following facts will show. —After being several years engaged in the composition of that work, the author published it in 1659, at the age of twenty-four. Three years afterward, in 1662, he published a second edition; and the same year he gave to the world his Origines Sacræ. Soon after these publications he met his diocesan, the celebrated Bishop Saunderson, at a visitation. The bishop, seeing so young a man, could hardly believe it was Stillingfleet, whom he had hitherto known only by his writings; and, after having embraced him, said, He much rather expected to have seen one as considerable for his *age*, as he had already shown himself for his learning. See the Life of Bishop Stillingfleet, pp. 12–16, as quoted by Dr. Miller.—"When a divine of acknowledged talents and learning," adds Dr. Miller, "after spending several years in a composition of moderate length, deliberately commits it to the press; when, after reflecting on the subject, and hearing the remarks of his friends for three years longer, he publishes it a second time; and when, after this second publication, he is complimented for his great erudition by one of the most able and learned dignitaries of the age, there seems

little room for a charge of haste or want of digestion.' Letters, pp. 270, 271, *n.*

"The truth seems to be," continues Dr. Miller, "that Dr. Stillingfleet, finding that the opinions of a number of influential men in the church were different from those which he had advanced in this work; and finding also that a fixed adherence to them might be adverse to the interest of the established church, in which he sought preferment, he made a kind of vague and feeble recantation; and wrote in favour of the apostolical origin of episcopacy. It is remarkable, however, that this prelate, in answer to an accusation of inconsistency between his early and his latter writings on this subject, assigned another reason besides a change of opinion, viz., that the former were written '*before the laws were established.*' But in whatever degree his *opinion* may have been altered, his *reasonings* and *authorities* have undergone no change. They remain in all their force, and have never been refuted, either by himself or by others." *Ib.*, p. 271.

Dr. White, now Bishop White of Pennsylvania, was of opinion that that learned prelate, Stillingfleet, was most probably not dissatisfied with that part of the Irenicum which would have been to his (Dr. White's) purpose; and which of course, as we shall presently show, is to our purpose. Burnet, the contemporary and friend of Stillingfleet, says, (History of his Own Times, anno 1661,) "To avoid the imputation that book brought on him, he went into the humours of a high sort of people beyond what became him, perhaps beyond his own sense of things." "The book, however," Bishop White adds, "was, it seems, easier *retracted* than *refuted*: for though offensive to many of both parties, it was managed, says the same author, [Burnet,] with so much *learning* and *skill*, that none of either side ever undertook to answer it." See "The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered," page 22.

"Luther, and the leading divines of his denomination, supposed that a system" [of church government] "embracing some degree of imparity" [among ministers] "was in general expedient; and, accordingly, in proceeding to organize their churches, appointed *superintendents*, who enjoyed a kind of pre-eminence, and were vested with peculiar powers. But they explicitly acknowledged this office to be a *human*, and not a *divine* institution." Miller's Letters, p. 237.

The Lutheran churches in Sweden and Denmark are episcopal. See Mosheim, vol. iv, p. 279. Yet all ecclesiastical historians agree that when the Reformation was introduced into Sweden, the first ministers who undertook to ordain were *only presbyters.* Miller's Letters, p. 240.

"It is equally certain that in the ordination of a *bishop*, if the other bishops *happen to be absent*, the more grave and aged of the ordinary pastors supply their place, and are considered as *fully invested with the ordaining power.*" *Ib.*, p. 241.

In case of necessity, the same power is recognised by the Methodist Episcopal Church, as fully invested in her body of presbyters. Yet, if by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there should at any time be no bishop remaining among us, even in this case the remaining presbyters would not themselves directly ordain new presbyters, but would first set apart another general superintendent, or superintendents, as their constituted organ for this purpose.

SECTION II.—*Sentiments of Bishop White.*

IN the year 1783 a pamphlet was published in Philadelphia entitled, "The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered." This work has always been considered as the production of Dr. White,

now Bishop White, of Pennsylvania. Dr. Miller, in his Letters, published in 1807, p. 270, attributes it to him by name; and we have not understood that its authenticity has ever been denied. A new edition of it has recently been published in Philadelphia, by William Stavely, publisher of the Philadelphia Recorder, a paper edited by a distinguished clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

It will be seen from this work with what ability Dr. White argued the case of the Episcopal churches in the United States at that period; and how equally strikingly his arguments were adapted to the state of the Methodist societies at the same period.

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

Again; "The conduct meant to be recommended,— is to include in the proposed frame of government *a general approbation of episcopacy* and a declaration of an intention to procure the succession as soon as conveniently may be; but in the meantime *to carry the plan into effect without waiting for the succession.*" *Ib.*, p. 15.

"But it will be also said," continues Dr. White, "that the very name of '*bishop*' is offensive: if so, *change it for another;* let *the superior clergyman* be a *president*, a *superintendent*, or in plain English, and according to the literal translation of the original, an *overseer*. However, if *names* are to be reprobated, because the powers annexed to them are abused, there are few appropriated to either civil or ecclesiastical distinctions which would retain their places in our catalogue." *Ib.*, p. 17.

"The other part of the proposal" of Dr. White, "was an *immediate execution of the plan without waiting for the episcopal succession.* This is founded on the presumption that the worship of God and the instruction and reformation of the people, are the principal objects of ecclesiastical discipline—." *Ib.*

"It will be said, we ought to continue as we are, with the hope of obtaining it" [the succession] "hereafter. But," continues Dr. White, "are the *acknowledged ordinances* of Christ's holy religion to be suspended for years, perhaps as long as the present generation shall continue, out of delicacy to a *disputed point*, and that relating only to externals?—All the obligations of conformity to the divine ordinances, all the arguments which prove the connection between public worship and the morals of a people, combine to urge the adopting of some *speedy* measures, to provide for the public ministry in these churches. If such as have been above recommended," [viz., ordination by the president clergyman, in conjunction with other clergymen appointed by the body,] "should be adopted, and the episcopal succession afterward obtained, any *supposed* imperfections of the intermediate ordinations might, *if it were judged proper*, be supplied, *without acknowledging their nullity* by a *conditional* ordination resembling that of *conditional baptism* in the liturgy." *Ib.*

But if the "succession" had never been "afterward obtained," there can be little doubt that Dr. White would have maintained the validity of the ordinations on his plan, without the succession. For, as he very justly argues in another place, "If even those who hold episcopacy to be of divine right, conceive the obligation to it to be not binding when that idea would be destructive of public worship, much more must *they* think so, who indeed venerate and prefer that form as the most ancient and eligible, but without any idea of divine right in the case. This the author believes to be the senti

ment of the great body of Episcopalians in America; in which respect they have in their favour *unquestionably* the sense of the Church of England, and, as he believes, the opinions of her most distinguished prelates for piety, virtue, and abilities." *Ib.* p. 25.

To make any particular form of church government, though adopted by the apostles, unalterably binding, Dr. White maintains, "it must be shown enjoined in positive precept." *Ib.* He remarks farther, "that Dr. Calamy having considered it as the sense of the church," [of England,] "in the preface to the ordinal, that the three orders were of divine appointment, and urged it as a reason for non-conformity; the bishop [Hoadly] *with evident propriety*, remarks, that the service pronounces *no such thing;* and that therefore Dr. Calamy created a difficulty where the church had made none; there being 'some difference,' says he, 'between these two sentences—bishops, priests, and deacons, are three distinct orders in the church *by divine appointment*,—and—*from the apostles' time* there have been in Christ's church, bishops, priests, and deacons."—"The same distinction," says Dr. White, "is *accurately drawn* and *fully proved* by Stillingfleet in the Irenicum." *Ib.*, p. 22, and *note*.

"Now," continues Dr. White, "if the form of church government rest on no other foundation than ancient and apostolical *practice*, it is humbly submitted to consideration, whether Episcopalians will not be thought *scarcely deserving the name of Christians*, should they, rather than consent to a temporary deviation, abandon every ordinance of positive and divine appointment." *Ib.*

The reader will please to observe, that, at the period when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, if we had not acted independently of the alleged apostolical succession, we must necessarily, for a long time at all events, have abandoned ordinances of positive and divine appointment. Mr. Wesley, also, as it had been

proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America, expressly states: 1. "I desired the bishop of London to ordain one only, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceeding; but the matter admits of no delay." Dr. White was of the same opinion in relation to the Episcopal churches; and was in favour of carrying his plan of ordination, "without waiting for the episcopal succession," into immediate "execution."

"Bishop Hoadly says, The acceptance of *reordination* by the dissenting ministers, *would not be a denial of that right, which* (as they conceived) *presbyters had to ordain.*" *Ib.*, p. 23.

The learned Hooker also admits, that, in "*the exigence of necessity*," or "*the necessity of the present*," episcopal ordination, in the line of succession, is not indispensable." *Ecclesiastical Polity*, *book* 7, *sec.* 14.

"Had Mr. Hooker," says Dr. White, (p. 26,) "been asked to define '*the exigence of necessity*,' could he have imagined any more urgent than the case in question?" —the case of the Episcopal churches in this country at that time.—"Or had he been inquired of concerning the '*necessities of present times*,' could he have mentioned any in the cases to which he alludes (those of Scotland and Geneva) so strongly pleading for the liberty he allows, as those now existing in America?"—at the period of writing and publishing that pamphlet. The reader has only to change the name, and the just and solid argumentation of Dr. White is as exactly applicable to the case of the Methodist societies in America, at that period, as to "the case of the Episcopal churches."

"What necessity was there," continues Dr. White, "of the 'reformed churches abroad' equal to ours? Is not an *immediate imitation* of the ancient usage '*impracticable?*' Would not such a plan as has been proposed," (viz., ordination by a clergyman chosen as a permanent

president, in conjunction with others appointed by the body,) "be conforming, as far as circumstances allow, to our ideas of 'the apostolic model?" *Ib.*, p. 27. After quoting Archbishops Usher and Cranmer, with the highest eulogies, in support of this plan, Dr. White thus concludes the argument:—

"On the credit of the preceding names, the author rests this the last part of his subject; and if his sentiments should meet with an unfavourable reception, he will find no small consolation from being in a company so respectable." *Ib.*, p. 29.—So say we; especially since we have now added the name of Dr. White. More than forty years have elapsed since the publication of that pamphlet, yet we are not aware that it has ever been retracted. If it had been, we presume that some notice would have been given of it in the new edition just published, in the lifetime of the bishop, and at the place of his own residence. And, in any case, we might well say of this production, as Dr. White so appositely remarked of Stillingfleet's Irenicum,—it would be "easier RETRACTED than REFUTED."

SECTION III.—*Mr. Wesley's Opinion.*

"As to my own judgment," says Mr. Wesley, "I still believe the episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical: I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles. But that it is *prescribed* in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of, ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's Irenicum. I think he has unanswerably proved, that neither Christ nor his apostles *prescribe* any particular form of church government; and that the plea of *divine right* for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in

the primitive church." Wesley's Works, London edit., 1813, vol. xvi, p. 26.

So far as the judgment of Mr. Wesley is concerned then, it is, on the one hand, decidedly in favour of "the episcopal form of church government;" and, on the other, as decidedly against the high church pretensions.

The above extract will also serve to show the opinion which that great master of logic entertained of Stillingfleet's Irenicum.

SECTION IV.—*Ordination.*

WITH the preceding principles and authorities before us, it only remains to consider the origin and force of *ordination*, and we shall then be prepared to enter into an examination of the original organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Their custom of ordination," says Dr. Stillingfleet, "was evidently taken up by the Christians from a correspondency to the synagogue.—That under the synagogue was done by laying on of hands.—A twofold use I find of this symbolical rite, beside the solemn designation of the person on whom the hands are laid. The *first* is to denote the delivery of the person or thing thus laid hands upon, for the right, use, and peculiar service of God. The *second* end of the laying on of hands was, the solemn invocation of the Divine presence and assistance to be upon and with the person upon whom the hands were thus laid.—Thence, in all solemn prayers, wherein any person was particularly designed, they made use of this custom of imposition of hands. From which custom Augustine speaks, *Quid aliud est manuum impositio nisi oratio super hominem?*" [what is imposition of hands but prayer over a man?] "Thence when Jacob prayed over Joseph's

children, he laid his hands upon them; so when Moses prayed over Joshua. The practice likewise our Saviour used in blessing children, healing the sick, and the apostles in conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and from thence it was conveyed into the practice of the primitive church, who used it in any more solemn invocation of the name of God in behalf of any particular persons. But the most solemn and peculiar use of this imposition of hands among the Jews, was in the designing of any persons for any public employment among them. Not as though the *bare imposition of hands* did confer any power upon the person—but with that ceremony they joined those words whereby they did confer that authority upon them.—This custom being so generally in use among the Jews, in the time when the apostles were sent forth with authority for gathering and settling the churches, we find them accordingly making use of this, according to the former practice, *either in any more solemn invocation of the presence of God upon any persons*, or *designation* and *appointing them for any peculiar service or function.* For we have no ground to think that the apostles had any *peculiar command* for laying on their hands upon persons in prayer over them, or ordination of them. But the thing itself being enjoined them, viz., the *setting apart some persons* for the peculiar work of attendance upon the necessities of the churches by them planted, they took up and made use of a laudable rite and custom, then in use upon such occasions. And so we find the apostles using it in the solemn designation of some persons to the office of deacons;—afterward upon an occasion not heard of in the synagogue,—for the conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost. But although the occasion was extraordinary, yet the use of that rite in it was very suitable, inasmuch as those gifts did so much answer to the שכינה" (*Shekinah*) "and the רוח הקודש" [the Holy Spirit] "which the Jews conceived did rest upon those

who were so ordained by imposition of hands. The next time we meet with this rite was upon a *peculiar designation* to a *particular service* of *persons already appointed by God for the work of the ministry* which is of Paul and Barnabas by the prophets and teachers at Antioch; whereby God doth set forth the use of that rite of ordination to the Christian churches." Iren. pp. 264–271.

"Ordination is the solemn setting apart of a person to some public church office." Westminster Assembly of Divines; examined and approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.—Neal, vol. v. p. 357; appendix.

Mr. M'Caine has taken pains to show that the validity of Presbyterian ordination was established by Mr. Wesley, and is the principle of the ordination of the British Conference. But who ever denied this? Is it not expressly and fully declared in our Book of Discipline, in answer to the following question:—"If by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there be no bishop remaining in our church, what shall we do?"

The answer is;—"The General Conference shall elect a bishop; and the *elders, or any three of them, who shall be appointed by the General Conference for that purpose*, shall ordain him, according to our form of ordination." Chap. i, sec. 4, quest. 2. And this answer shows both the good sense of those who framed it, and their acquaintance with ancient ecclesiastical usage. For, as Stillingfleet, above quoted, says, "Great probability there is that where churches were planted by presbyters," (as the Methodist Episcopal Church was,) "upon the increase of churches and presbyters, they did, from among themselves, choose one to be as the bishop over them.—For we nowhere read in those early plantations of churches, that *where there were presbyters already*, they sent to *other* churches to desire episcopal ordination from *them*."—It is also in exact accordance

with the practice of the church of Alexandria, which would not suffer the interference of foreign churches in consecrating their bishops, and of which the patriarch Eutychius, as quoted by Stillingfleet, "expressly affirms that the twelve presbyters constituted by Mark, upon the vacancy of the see, did choose out of their number one to be head over the rest, and the other eleven did lay their hands upon him and blessed him, and made him patriarch."

When Mr. M'Caine asserts, that "neither are the ordinations which he" (Mr. Wesley) "conferred, viewed by writers among the English Methodists—as favouring our title of episcopacy," he stops short of the phraseology used by the very writers whom he quotes. Their language is, "He" [Mr. Wesley] "gave up episcopal ordination *as understood by high churchmen.*" So do we. And so does our Discipline, clearly and unequivocally.

Section V.—*Ordination of Dr. Coke.*

Having thus cleared our way, we shall now take up the ordination of Dr. Coke.

"If," says Mr. M'Caine, "Mr. Wesley ordained Dr Coke a bishop, in the common acceptation of that term, then did he create a church officer greater than himself, and of consequence he brought himself into subjection to Dr. Coke, by making the doctor his superior." Again, "If the doctor was constituted a bishop," ["*in the common acceptation of that term,*" is here dropped,] "he was raised to a rank above a presbyter, and invested with superior powers. In that case he that was sent was greater than he that sent him"—and "then Mr. Wesley, who was only a presbyter, and consequently inferior to a bishop, assumed the prerogative to send his superior to do a work, in his name, which he himself could not

go to do."—And again: "If the doctor, by the imposition of Mr. Wesley's hands, is created a bishop, then the objection of the bishop of Norwich lies in full force —'If a presbyter can ordain a bishop, then the greater is blessed of the less,' " &c.

We have already seen what Mr. M'Caine represents to be "the common acceptation" of the term bishops, (which, by the way, we have shown is *not* the common acceptation,) viz., an order of ministers distinct from presbyters *by divine appointment*, to whom the power of ordination is reserved *by the same appointment*, and is the chief mark of their distinction:—and in whom, as successors of the apostles, is vested the *exclusive* right of granting the divine commission to execute the ministerial office.—See *History* and *Mystery*, pp. 9, 10.*—Now *if* Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke in no such sense;—*if* he pretended to no such thing;—*if* neither our bishops nor the Methodist Episcopal Church have ever pretended to any such thing,—what then? Why then it follows that all the smart sayings on this transaction, which have been repeated and copied from my lord bishop of Norwich down to Mr. M'Caine, are wholly wide of the mark, and are shaken both from Mr. Wesley and from us, as "the lion shakes to air the mists shed on his mane."—They may serve to mislead the ignorant, and such as may be captivated by sound more than by sense. But as to the argument they are perfectly nugatory.—If, say Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Moore, Mr. Wesley's position be true, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, the bishop of Norwich should have first overthrown this position, if he could, to have established his own.

But says Mr. M'Caine, "as Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke

* One of Mr. M'Caine's authorities is Archbishop Potter, who was the champion of the *High-church* party; while Dr. Hoadly, bishop of Winchester, with great judgment and eloquence, advocated principles of greater moderation.

were of the same order,—the doctor had as good a clerical right to ordain Mr. Wesley a bishop, as Mr. Wesley had to ordain the doctor."—As good a *clerical* right;—Mr. M'Caine seems to have felt here that his argument was lame. He knows well that the true question is not as to the mere *clerical* power of ordination, *abstractly;* but whether in the circumstances then existing, as to acknowledged *jurisdiction*, and the exigency of the times, Dr. Coke had as good a right to ordain and send Mr. Wesley to superintend the American Methodists, as Mr. Wesley had to summon a council and to ordain and send him? And whether it was so regarded by the Methodists of that day, either in Europe or in America?

The Methodist societies in America, although under the spiritual direction of the Rev. John Wesley and his assistants, whom, under God, they regarded as their father and founder, yet previously to the revolutionary war were religious societies within the Church of England, without any provision among themselves for the administration of the ordinances. From that church they were separated, let it be carefully observed, not by any *schism*, or *faction*, or any species of misconduct on their part; but by the acts of Providence, and by circumstances wholly beyond their control. The Church of England had *ceased to exist* in America, and the Methodists here were absolutely compelled either to provide for themselves, or to live in neglect of the positive ordinances of Christ. Their case was clearly that of "the exigence of necessity," agreeably to Hooker himself; and most undeniably so agreeably to the principles then advocated by Dr. White. Our societies had suffered long, as sheep without shepherds. They had endured the privation of the ordinances till the patience of many had been exhausted, and a serious disunion was threatened; if not dissolution. A portion of the preachers and societies in the south had resolved on measures for the administration of the ordinances among

themselves. This step was strenuously resisted by the conference which met at Baltimore in 1780. That conference unanimously disapproved of the measures adopted by their brethren in Virginia, and resolved that they would not regard them as Methodists in connexion with Mr. Wesley, till they came back; and Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garrettson, and William Watters were appointed a committee to attend the Virginia conference, and inform them of these proceedings, and receive their answer. On that occasion Mr. Asbury exerted his utmost influence to effect a reunion, and, in conjunction with his colleagues, happily succeeded. The proposal by which it was accomplished, after much discussion and distress, *originated* with him. (See Mr. Snethen's Reply to J. O'Kelly, p. 8, and Lee's History, p. 73.)* It was, that they should consent to bear their privations yet longer;—to write to Mr. Wesley, and lay their situation before him, and take his advice. This proposal was agreed to; a division was prevented; a happy union was restored; and the preachers departed with thankful hearts, to persuade the people to unite with them in longer forbearance.

Yet it was not till several years after this;—not till the Church of England in America was confessedly extinct by the acknowledgment of our independence, and all hope of supplies from that quarter in any reasonable time, if ever, had utterly failed, that Mr. Wesley resolved on the adoption of the measures which, from his relation to the Methodists (under the true Head of the church,) and their urgent solicitations, he had long before believed himself fully authorized to adopt; but which, *for peace' sake*, he had many years forborne. On

* Mr. Watters says this proposal was made "by one of their own party." This apparent discrepancy is explained by Mr. Snethen in his "Answer to J. O'Kelly's Vindication." Mr. Asbury originally made the proposal to John Dickens, to whom Mr. Watters alludes. John Dickens reduced it to writing, and proposed it to the conference.

the same principle, *for peace' sake*, he had desired the bishop of London to ordain only one preacher for America, but could not prevail. Driven to this extremity, with all his societies and preachers in America, he summoned a council of grave and pious presbyters. These were, in conjunction with him, *our body of presbyters*, and with their advice he acted. The venerable Fletcher was one of the council, though not present at the subsequent ordinations. Mr. Wesley's scruples were now ended, and he resolved, with the aid of other presbyters, to exercise that authority to which he believed himself called *by the providence of God*, and *by the "necessities of the times."*—Now if the episcopacy of the Church of England, (and consequently of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country,) rest on no other foundation than ancient and apostolic *practice*, we humbly submit, (in language similar to that of Bishop White on another occasion,) whether Methodists would scarcely have been deserving the name of Christians, if, rather than consent to a temporary (or even to a permanent) deviation from that line of episcopacy, they had abandoned every ordinance of positive and divine appointment.

Bishop White states, as quoted by Mr. M'Caine, that a union of the Methodists in this country with the Protestant Episcopal Church, was proposed by Dr. Coke in 1791, the terms of which, on the doctor's part, as stated by Bishop White, all will admit were sufficiently humble. Why did that proposal fail? It is stated, on the same authority, that it failed in consequence of the proceedings of the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, before whom the subject was laid in 1792. The Rev. Dr. Wyatt of Baltimore published, in 1820, a similar statement. If this statement be correct, then the responsibility for the rendering of our deviation from that line of episcopacy *permanent*, rests on *them*. The proposed union by which our "*temporary* deviation" might have been cured, according to Dr. White's

plan of *conditional* ordinations, on the principle of *conditional* baptisms, was rejected by *them*. Is it then for *them* now to reproach us with this deviation, which had been adopted, clearly, in the "exigence of necessity," and which *they*, as much as in them laid, thus contributed to render permanent? This would be both cruel and unchristian. It is not, we think, in the power of the acutest disputant to impugn the ground on which we stand without equally impugning that assumed by Dr. White in "The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered:" nor to *refute* this without refuting that. We shall have occasion to revert again to the statement respecting Dr. Coke's proposal to Bishop White, and shall only add here, that, from what we have said, it must plainly appear that the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church affords no colour of pretext or of countenance to any leaders or authors of schism, faction, disorganization, or disunion. The proceedings of "our fathers" partook of no such character. Nor can the precedent of their example be pleaded by the instigators or abetters of any such disorders.

The following is a copy of the letters testimonial delivered by Mr. Wesley to Dr. Coke, after his ordination, agreeably to the advice of Mr. Fletcher. It was taken by Mr. Drew from the original, in Mr. Wesley's own hand-writing, preserved among the papers of 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 doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's 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 superintendent, 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 that great 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."

This document leads us to remark; 1. Mr. M'Caine says, (p. 21,) it is not a letter "of ordination," but of "appointment."—Why? Because "the *term* 'ordination' is not found in it." And is the term "appointment" found in it? If it be good logic that because the term "ordination" is not found in it, *therefore* it is not a letter of ordination; surely it is equally so that because the term "appointment" is not found in it, *therefore* it is not a letter of appointment. According to this logic, it may be questioned whether Mr. M'Caine himself has ever been either *ordained* or *appointed* an *elder;* for we suspect that neither the term ordained nor appointed will be found in his credentials. On Mr. M'Caine's principles of *verbality*, this document should be called a letter of "*set apart!*" for these are the *words* used by Mr. Wesley. This is a specimen of Mr. M'Caine's logic in the management of documents. A similar one will be found when we come to the term *bishop*.

2. If this were not an ordination, we should be glad to be informed what constitutes one. It was performed as ordinations usually are; with the usual solemnities; —by "imposition of hands and prayer;" with the assistance of "other ordained ministers;" and "under the protection of Almighty God." If it was not intended as an ordination, it was certainly a very solemn mockery;—a trifling with sacred things, to charge Mr. Wesley with which would be loading his memory with "obloquy" indeed.

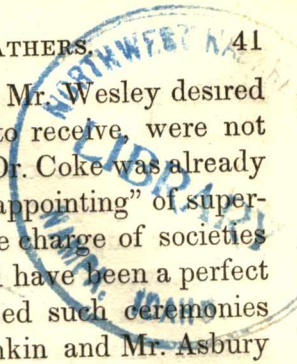
3. With what *office* did Mr. Wesley, by these solemnities, and by this instrument, intend to invest Dr. Coke? Not with the *episcopal* office, says Mr. M'Caine. Why? —Because the term "episcopal" was not used. Let us take the words then that were used. Dr. Coke, who was already a presbyter, was "set apart" by Mr. Wesley, assisted by other presbyters, "as a *superintendent*"—"*to preside over the flock of Christ*," or, as he expressed it in his letter "to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury," &c., dated a few days subsequently, "*over our brethren in North America*," —to superintend, and preside over, the whole body of the Methodist preachers on this continent, with hundreds, if not thousands of congregations, and tens of thousands of members:—to ordain other ministers, and to exercise all the powers usually considered episcopal. Indeed, the allegation has usually been that the powers with which our superintendents were confessedly invested from the *commencement*,—and *with Mr. Wesley's sanction*, were too great even for an episcopacy. And will Mr. M'Caine, then, yet contend, that Mr. Wesley did not intend that the *office* of our general superintendents in America should be an *episcopal* office in *fact*, though under the title of superintendents? Will he so far jeopard his reputation both for understanding and for candour? To waste time on such a question would really seem to us to be trifling both with ourselves and with our readers.

4. Mr. Wesley says that those who desired his advice and help "adhered to the doctrine and *discipline* of the Church of England," and were "greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments—*according to the usage of the same church.*" Were not the "discipline" and the "usage" of that church *episcopal?* And does not Mr. Wesley, in this instrument, plainly declare his intention to follow that discipline and usage, so far as he could, without entangling us again with the English hierarchy?

Mr. M'Caine, indeed, would make out that Mr. Wesley's intention was that we should continue connected with the Church of England. But the contrary is plain. The wide difference between the case of the Methodist societies in England and those in this country, in consequence of the revolutionary war, Mr. Wesley himself clearly defines. "The case," he says, "is widely different between England and North America. Our American brethren are now *totally disentangled*—from the English hierarchy—*we dare not entangle them again.* 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.*"

5. Mr. Wesley, in this document, assigns as one of the grounds of his proceeding, precisely that basis of "the exigence of necessity," in which both the *propriety* and the *duty* of a similar proceeding on the part of "the Episcopal churches," even at an earlier period, had been so ably advocated by Dr. White. "And whereas," he says, "there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers."—He had, for peace' sake, previously applied to the bishop of London to ordain one only, but could not prevail. And if the English bishops would even have consented, he knew the slowness of their proceedings; and the matter admitted of no delay.*

* In 1783, and we think earlier, Dr. White maintained that this "exigence of necessity" then existed in "the Episcopal churches." Yet they



6. If the "*fuller powers*," which Mr. Wesley desired Dr. Coke to meet him in Bristol to receive, were not *episcopal* in *fact*, what were they? Dr. Coke was already a presbyter; and as to the mere "appointing" of superintendents, in a lower sense, to take charge of societies as Mr. Wesley's *assistants*, it would have been a perfect novelty in Methodism to have used such ceremonies barely for that purpose. Mr. Rankin and Mr. Asbury had both been superintendents in America, in this sense, as Mr. Wesley's *assistants*, without any such ceremonies. And, as a conclusive argument against such a view of this transaction, we add,—if Mr. Wesley, by setting apart Dr. Coke, and investing him with "fuller powers," meant barely to "appoint" him a superintendent, as his *assistant*, in the sense in which he had ordinarily used this term, then it would have been utterly inconsistent with his known principle to have associated Mr. Creighton, Mr. Whatcoat, and Mr. Vasey, with him, in making the appointment.

7. If Mr. Wesley's preferring the title "superintendent," proves that Dr. Coke, under that title, was not intended by Mr. Wesley to be a bishop in *fact*, it equally follows that his preferring the title "elder" proves that

did not succeed in obtaining ordination from the English bishops till 1787; and even then not until it was authorized by an act of parliament. Dr. Seabury had previously succeeded in obtaining ordination from the nonjuring bishops of Scotland, though he could not from the English bishops. But even this was not till after the ordination of Dr. Coke as a general superintendent. When some young gentlemen went to England, after the revolution, to obtain episcopal ordination, the archbishop of Canterbury was of opinion that no English bishop could ordain them unless they took the oath of allegiance. Mr. Southey says they then applied for advice and assistance to Dr. Franklin, who was then our minister in France. He consulted a French clergyman, and found that they could not be ordained in France, unless they vowed obedience to the archbishop of Paris; and the pope's nuncio, whom he consulted also, informed him that the Romish bishop in America could not lay hands on them unless they turned Catholics. Franklin therefore advised them, either that the Episcopalian clergy in America should become Presbyterians, or that they should *elect a bishop for themselves*. So true it was, as Mr. Wesley said, he knew the slowness and the entanglingness of their proceedings; and such was Franklin's advice in the case.

he did not intend Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey to be priests, or presbyters, in fact. The argument is as good in the one case as in the other. The forms of ordination prepared for us by Mr. Wesley, for setting apart our superintendents and elders, as we shall hereafter show, were merely an abridgment of the forms of the Church of England for setting apart *bishops* and *priests*. And as he substituted the term superintendent for bishop, so he also substituted the term elder for priest;—clearly intending substantially the same ecclesiastical officers in each case, but not the same titles.

8. That in such an "exigence of necessity" as then existed, and at the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church it was admissible for a body of presbyters to constitute a *bishop* in *fact*, in our acceptation of the term, with the title of superintendent, president, inspector, or overseer, as they judged best, we have already supported by abundant evidence.

9. When Lord King lays it down as the primitive usage that there was "but one supreme bishop in a place," he uses the term expressly in relation to "the proper pastor or minister of a parish, having care of the souls of that church or parish;" though in some cases there were other ministers subordinately connected with him, and assisting him. In *this* sense we admit that there ought to be but one bishop, or minister having the pastoral charge, in one place. And this is *our* usage. But that in the apostles' time there were individuals travelling extensively as superintendents, bishops, inspectors, or overseers, in a larger sphere, and setting in order the things that were wanting in multitudes of churches, is undeniable. Whether such church officers were *extraordinary*, or no, as Stillingfleet says, we now dispute not: but whether they be repugnant to the gospel or no;—which, from their practice, as he adds, it is evident that they are not. That what was *extraordinary* in the apostolic oversight, and in that of Timoth

and Titus, did cease with them, may be admitted. But the question remains, what *was* extraordinary, and what was *not?* For surely not every practice and usage of the apostles was intended to cease with them. For then the office of preaching itself must cease, for this was their main office. Besides, by *ceasing*, may be meant, either ceasing as to its necessity, or as to its *lawfulness*. And to make a thing *unlawful*, which was before *lawful*, there ought to be some express prohibition of it: which, in this case, we suppose, with Stillingfleet, men will not easily produce in the word of God. And admitting the *lawfulness* of *our* practice in this respect, the expediency and utility of it must be judged by those whose concern it is. That such an itinerant and extensive oversight as was practised by the apostles, and by Timothy and Titus, fell greatly into disuse very shortly after their decease, is true. But surely it cannot be conclusively inferred from this that it is *unlawful* to *revive* a similar superintendency in churches which may desire it, and believe it to be both practicable and useful. Such an episcopacy, as Mr. Wesley says of "the episcopal form of church government," we believe to be both Scriptural and apostolical. We mean, as he adds, "well agreeing both with the practice and with the writings of the apostles."

That "plain John Wesley, the fountain of our episcopal authority," should be "improved into *father* Wesley" is made by Mr. M'Caine, p. 53, a matter of ridicule. But when he wrote this, he probably forgot that, when it suited his purpose, he had himself used the same language. "Mr. Wesley," he says, p. 23, "considered himself, under God, the *father* of all the Methodists in Europe and America." And again, p. 43, when he wished to represent it as odious in our fathers not to have implicitly obeyed the wish of Mr. Wesley on a particular occasion, then he is careful himself to

improve "plain John Wesley," into "the *father* of the Methodist people."

This relation, however, Mr. Wesley did himself expressly claim; and the claim was recognised by the whole body of Methodists, both in Europe and in America. "You," said he to Mr. Asbury, "are the elder brother of the American Methodists. I am, under God, the *father* of the whole family. Therefore I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore I, in a measure, provide for you all." And in the *secondary* sense of Theodoret, Fregevil, and Stillingfleet, we do not hesitate to denominate him the *apostle* of the whole Methodist people, obnoxious as that term is to Mr. M'Caine; and even to assert, that he did in *fact* claim and exercise episcopal authority among them; and that both he and they believed that in all this he acted in the order of Divine providence.

Mr. Wesley did himself assert that he believed himself to be "a Scriptural επισκοπος, *episcopos*, as much as any man in England or in Europe." Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 280. And he asserted this with direct reference to his "*acting* as a *bishop*," in reply to the remarks of his brother Charles. If by *episcopos* he did not mean to aver himself a *bishop in fact*, and entitled to "act as a bishop," in our acceptation of the term, then his reply did not meet his brother's objection, but was a mere evasion; and one too shallow, though mantled in Greek, to deceive, or to satisfy, so good a scholar as his brother Charles. That he meant that he was an *episcopos*, merely in the sense of being the proper pastor of a particular congregation or parish, cannot be: for such he was not. Yet, although he did believe himself entitled to exercise episcopal authority among the Methodists; as much so as any bishop of the Church of England—in the Church of England, it should be carefully noted that for peace' sake, he refrained from the exercise of it with respect to ordina-

tion, till imperiously urged to it by the "exigence of necessity;" and until, if he had refused longer, he must have permitted his numerous societies in America, who were loudly calling on him for advice and help, to live in the neglect of imperative ordinances of Christ's positive institution. In any reference to the precedent of Mr. Wesley's example, then, we shall do him great injustice, if we are not careful always to combine all these various views, relations, and circumstances. In relation to the general church, or to the Church of England, Dr. Coke and Mr. Wesley, as presbyters, were undoubtedly equal in order. Yet that their acknowledged jurisdiction, in relation to the Methodist societies, was vastly different in Dr. Coke's own view, and that he knew it to be so regarded by the Methodist people, is manifest from the following extract of a letter which he addressed to Mr. Wesley previously to his coming to America.

"HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

"The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me that the power of ordaining others" [having reference to the ordination to be established for the Methodists in America] "should be received by me from *you*, by the imposition of your hands; . . . . . an authority formally received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people; and my exercising the office of ordination without that formal authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any other account. I could therefore earnestly wish you would exercise that power in this instance, which I HAVE NOT THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT, but God hath invested you with, for the good of our connection." Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 276.*

* Yet, in the face of this broad declaration, Mr. M'Caine repeatedly endeavours to make out that Dr. Coke *was* doubtful of the validity of his own ordination.

Section VI.—*Dr. Coke's Letter to Bishop White.*

In a letter to Bishop White of Pennsylvania, dated 24th April, 1791, Dr. Coke says, Mr. Wesley "did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority." On this phrase, "as far as he had a right so to do," Mr. M'Caine declaims with great self-gratulation. And connecting with it what he calls Dr. Coke's "proposals to Bishop White, to have the preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church reordained by Bishop White, and himself and the gentleman connected with him, consecrated for the episcopal office," he exults in these figments, as if he had convicted Dr. Coke out of his own mouth, that he *did* doubt the validity of his own ordination, and consequently his right to ordain others; although Dr. Coke constantly affirmed that he *did not* doubt it, nor had a *shadow of a doubt* of it; and was in the constant practice of ordaining others.

Mr. M'Caine has been careful to collect into his pamphlet the stale objections of the enemies not only of our episcopacy, but of our whole ministry and order—and, if we are to be governed by his authorities, his own ordination as an *elder* is not one whit more valid than the episcopal ordination of our bishops. If the reader will turn to p. 10 of "History and Mystery," &c., he will find a passage, which we have already quoted, commencing thus: "It is a principle universally established among Episcopalians," &c. Mr. M'Caine marks that passage as a *quotation*, yet gives no authority for it; although *in every other instance under that head* he names his authority. Why did he not name it in this? Was it not because he was himself ashamed of it? Because it was taken from an avowed and personal enemy of our whole order; who denied the

validity of every gospel ordinance as administered by us; and who, with all the effrontery of Rome, asserts in the very next paragraph to that which Mr. M'Caine cites, that "no true church can exist without a true episcopacy, and that no episcopacy can be a true one but that which is derived from the holy apostles in the order of bishops as superior to, and distinct from, the order of presbyters?" The author of that pamphlet, after having *separated himself* from the Methodist Church, exerted what skill he had to prove us guilty of schism, and destitute of every valid gospel ordinance. From *that* pamphlet, if we may judge from their correspondence, Mr. M'Caine has drawn his materials on the subject of this section; but has not had the candour to inform his readers that there has ever been any *refutation* of that author's aspersions.

The laboured declamation of Mr. M'Caine on this subject, as, indeed, a large portion of his book, is founded on an entire misconception or misrepresentation of Methodist episcopacy. Mr. Wesley invested Dr. Coke with "episcopal *authority*" in relation to the Methodists in America. In relation to *other* churches, Dr. Coke had no "episcopal *authority*;" nor did Mr. Wesley claim a right to give him any. In this respect his language was considerate and precise. Neither have the bishops of other churches any "episcopal authority" in relation to us, nor could they confer such authority among *us* on any individual without *our* act.

Had Dr. Coke, for the sake of union with the Protestant Episcopal Church, consented to submit to a second episcopal ordination, or "consecration," it would by no means have proved that he therefore acknowledged, or even doubted, the validity of his prior ordination. It is well known that some Methodist presbyters, who have joined other churches, have *submitted* to a second ordination, *not for their own satisfaction*, but for the satisfaction of *others*, and because it was required

of them in order to the union. The case would have been analogous, had Dr. Coke submitted to a second episcopal ordination, for the sake of union with the Protestant Episcopal Church. *With his views at that time* of the probable effects of such a union, he might not have considered it wrong, in such circumstances, to submit to a reordination. That such were the principles by which he was actuated, we have his own positive declarations. An authenticated copy of a letter which he addressed to Bishop Asbury on the subject is now before us, dated, "Near Leeds, Feb. 2, 1808." In this letter he states that he had heard that there had been a paper war concerning a letter which he wrote, in the year 1791, to Bishop White. He acknowledges that when he wrote that letter he did then believe that the union which he proposed would have a good effect. And particularly that "it would very much enlarge our field of action, and that myriads would, in consequence of it, attend our ministry, who were then much *prejudiced* against us." He adds, however, that he had no idea of "deciding" on any thing;—that such an idea, without the concurrence of Bishop Asbury and of the General Conference, would have been absurd, and that what he did was intended to ascertain the sense of the Protestant Episcopal Church, preparatory to the General Conference; but at the same time he expressly declares, "I never applied to the convention for reconsecration. I never intended that either you or I should *give up* our episcopal ordination. My proposals secured our *discipline in all points.*" And afterward adds, "But I *now* see that the failure of my plan, which was laid down from the purest motives, was for the best." The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper has in his possession an original letter from Dr. Coke to himself, of the same import.

Bishop White states that one of the outlines of Dr. Coke's plan, as to "the Methodist ministers," was "*their continuing under the superintendence then existing,* and on

the practices of their peculiar institutions." This coincides with Dr. Coke's statement. Bishop White adds, "There was also suggested by him a propriety, but not a condition made, of admitting to the episcopacy himself and the gentleman associated with him in the superintendence of the Methodist societies." This suggestion, so far as we can discover, is not to be found in Dr. Coke's letter. It is true, Bishop White says in another place, as quoted by Mr. M'Caine in a *note*, "*Or it may have been* the consecration of himself," [Dr. Coke,] "and the gentleman connected with him, for this measure was hinted in a conversation that afterward took place between us." The very terms of this note show doubt on the face of it. And as we shall presently demonstrate that Bishop White mistook the import of Dr. Coke's *letter*, it must be admitted to be possible that he might at least equally have misapprehended a *hint* in conversation. But why does Mr. M'Caine commence his quotation from Bishop White's letter of Sept., 1806, in this broken manner, "*Or* it may have been," &c.? What went before "*Or?*" and why was it not quoted? If we examine the *preceding part* of that paragraph in Bishop White's letter, the reason is obvious. It did not suit Mr. M'Caine's purpose. Bishop White was *conjecturing* by what means Dr. Coke had probably contemplated the removal of a difficulty on the part of some of the preachers in rising up to ordination, if it were left dependent on the then bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church. That difficulty respected those preachers who were not acquainted with the learned languages. "What was his intended mean of removal of this difficulty," says Bishop White, "does not appear in the letter. *It may have been* a promise, on the part of the bishops, that the ordination of the persons in question should not be prevented by that circumstance. *Or it may have been*," &c., as quoted by Mr. M'Caine. The *whole passage*, taken together, shows that it was *conjec*

tural. As such we leave it. The propensity of the human mind to conjecture what is most accordant with its own habits of thinking, or what is best calculated to support its own views, is too well known to require discussion here.

But even admitting that Bishop White may have been correct in his impression, that Dr. Coke did hint in conversation the propriety of admitting to the episcopacy himself and the gentleman associated with him, in case of union with the Protestant Episcopal Church, it may be easily accounted for on Bishop White's own principles, without supposing Dr. Coke by any means to have intended to admit *the nullity of his former episcopal ordination.* Dr. Coke might, *at that time*, have thought it expedient, if a union took place, in order to gain the more, and to enlarge our field of action, to accommodate himself to the *prejudices* of those who deemed what they termed the "succession," of importance. This was precisely what Bishop White himself had proposed but a few years before, in "The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered."—"If," said he, "such" [measures] "as have been above recommended should be adopted," [viz., admitting to the ministry by a clergyman elected as permanent president, in conjunction with other clergymen,] "and the episcopal succession afterward obtained, any *supposed* imperfections of the intermediate ordinations might, *if it were judged proper*, be supplied *without acknowledging their nullity*, by a *conditional* ordination, resembling that of *conditional baptism.*" P. 17.

But *we* conjecture if Dr. Coke did hint or suggest the propriety of admitting to the episcopacy, in union with the Protestant Episcopal Church, himself and the gentleman connected with him, he either meant that they should be so admitted *without reconsecration;* or, if with reconsecration, then it was that he would submit to this for the sake of being *more extensively useful*

among those of the Protestant Episcopal Church, who might deem it of importance, in case of such a union, and not at all because he deemed it of any sort of consequence,—much less of necessity, either for himself or for the Methodists.

But we have said that Bishop White mistook the import of Dr. Coke's letter, and may possibly have equally mistaken the import of what he considered a hint in conversation. It remains to show this.

In his letter of July, 1804, Bishop White says, "The general outlines of Dr. Coke's plan were a reordination of the Methodist ministers," &c. In the letter of Sept., 1806, he expresses it thus: "His plan" [Dr. Coke's] "was, that all the ordained ministers then in the Methodist connection should receive episcopal ordination." Now let us turn to Dr. Coke's own language, as contained in his letter to Bishop White, dated April 24, 1791. "Our ordained ministers," says Dr. Coke, "*will not,* OUGHT NOT, to give up their *right* of administering the sacraments." Here their then existing "*right*" to administer the sacraments is expressly asserted, and also their *obligation* NOT *to give it up,* being a "*right*" of a sacred character, *already vested.* The *validity* of their ordination is, in this passage, unequivocally averred. Yet Dr. Coke adds, "I don't think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would *refuse* to *submit* to a reordination, if other hinderances were removed out of the way." Now we ask, in the name of candour, if there be no difference between saying it was *Dr. Coke's plan,* —as if it had been *proposed* by him as a thing deemed necessary by himself, that all the ordained Methodist ministers should be reordained,—and his averring that they ought not to give up the "*right*" which they *previously* possessed of administering the sacraments; though he did not think that most of them, perhaps none of them, would *refuse* to *submit* to reordination, if their *compliance* in that respect should be the only remaining

hinderance to a union?—The difference to us is clear. And we believe it will be equally plain to every impartial and candid reader.

But we will go farther, and say, had it even been Dr. Coke's "plan" that all the ordained Methodist ministers should be reordained, in case of a union with the Protestant Episcopal Church, it could not have been because he admitted the nullity of their existing ordination, unless he palpably contradicted himself in the same breath. The principle of such a proposal, had it been made, could have been no other, from the evidence before us, than that above stated, viz., a willingness, for the sake of more extensive usefulness, to accommodate himself to the prejudices of others, when he did not believe that his doing so would be sinful. The justifiableness, and even the expediency of such a course, without admitting the nullity of former ordinations, had been previously to that time amply vindicated by Bishop White himself, in the case of the Episcopal churches. That pamphlet Dr. Coke had no doubt seen, and it is highly probable that that very work had a principal influence in inducing him to approach Bishop White particularly on that subject.

We have only to add here that whatever Dr. Coke did in this matter was his own individual act; and was neither approved of nor known by his colleague, Bishop Asbury, nor, as far as we are acquainted, by a single other Methodist minister in the United States. And that Dr. Coke himself lived long enough to see, and with his characteristic candour, to *acknowledge* that the failure of his scheme had been for the best.*

* That Dr. Coke was ardent in his temperament, and sometimes hasty and precipitate in his measures, his best friends will admit. But his candour, when convinced of an error, was a trait in his character not less predominantly striking.—At some periods of his life there is no question that he would have been willing to make even *undue sacrifices* for the sake of accomplishing a union between the body of Methodists and the Protestant Episcopal Church; and also with the Church of England. In addition to the prejudices of his

A statement on this subject, similar to that of Mr. M'Caine, was made by the Rev. Dr. Wyatt, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in a sermon published by that gentleman, in Baltimore, in the year 1820. From the correspondence of their materials, it seems pretty evident that they both drew from the same fountain; which, however, they seem to have been equally ashamed to own. That Dr. Wyatt drew from it, we think there can be little doubt: for he *adds* to the story a remarkable fabrication of his author, which we believe never before appeared any where else; and which it might have been well for Dr. Wyatt to have given that author credit for; since, in not doing so, he has taken upon himself the responsibility of asserting as a *fact* what we peremptorily deny to be such.

The author to whom we allude asserts that Dr. Coke's proposal to Bishop White was made "*with the sanction, if not actually by the order, of Mr. Wesley.*" Dr. Wyatt merely varies the phraseology a little, and asserts it was "*with the approbation, if not direction, of Mr. Wesley.*" In either shape we *deny* the statement, and demand the proof. The fact is that Mr. Wesley at that time was *dead.* And if the communication to Bishop White had been made by Dr. Coke with his approbation, and much more if by his direction, there can be

education, as a clergyman of the Church of England, it is highly probable, too, that, at the time of writing to Bishop White, neither his mind, nor perhaps, as he supposed, Mr. Wesley's, had entirely recovered from the influence of the proceedings of the Conference of 1787, in relation to the appointment of Mr. Whatcoat, and the leaving of Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes. This state of things, according to Dr. Coke's views, may serve to account for several expressions in his letter to Bishop White, both in relation to Mr. Wesley and to Bishop Asbury. The transactions of that period of our history we shall presently explain more fully. It is sufficient to add here that whatever unfavourable impressions respecting Mr. Asbury had been produced abroad, previously to that time, he outlived them all. The affectionate assurances of confidence and union which passed between Dr. Coke and him, at the General Conference of 1796, are well remembered by several now living, who were then present. And Dr. Coke's letter to him, of Feb. 1808, quoted above, abundantly attests the same fact.

no doubt, from the open manner in which Dr. Coke unbosomed himself to Bishop White, and from the use which he *did* make of Mr. Wesley's name, that he would not have failed to mention so very important a circumstance, nor Bishop White to communicate it. In fact, justice, in this case, would have required it in Dr. Coke's defence. And we respectfully submit it to the Rev. Professor of Theology in the University of Maryland, whether attempts in this way to wound so large and respectable a body as the Methodist Episcopal Church, on *such authority*, be not more disparaging to his own sacred and elevated character than to them.

In one colouring of the matter, however, neither Mr. M'Caine nor Dr. Wyatt seems to have had the hardihood to follow up his author. That author says: "It was a *society* applying for readmission into the church, and not two equally independent bodies that were to be considered as negotiating."—"The society could and did acknowledge the church she applied to," &c. Now, as it respects any application on this subject from the *society*, as he here calls the Methodist Episcopal Church, all this is wholly false. Though, in our opinion, there is just as much truth in it as in the assertion of the same author that Dr. Coke's proposal was made with the sanction, if not by the order, of Mr. Wesley.—And this tale, we apprehend, will gain but little additional credit when it is known that it originated with one who had deserted the Methodist Episcopal Church, and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church; and after pronouncing upon that church the most fulsome and high-toned eulogies, subsequently abandoned it also, and went where all who hold such principles as he had avowed, to be consistent with themselves, ought to go—to the Papists. And thence, no doubt, looked down on Dr. Wyatt, and the whole "*schismatical*" Protestant Episcopal Church, with as much contempt as he had before arrogated to himself the right to bestow, with so much bitter haughti-

ness, upon the Methodist Episcopal Church. We mean the Rev. Mr. Kewley. And this gentleman is one of the "writers" passed off on his readers by Mr. M'Caine, among his ecclesiastical writers of "*great celebrity!*"*

Dr. Wyatt asserts, farther, that "it has been the faith of the *universal church, without exception,* until the period of the reformation, that to the order of bishops alone belongs the power of ordaining ministers: and that an ordination performed by the hands of a priest, deacon, or layman, or by any number of either, would be devoid of every degree of validity and efficacy, in conferring spiritual office and power." By bishops in this passage we understand Dr. Wyatt to mean diocesan bishops, in the high-church sense. And as he thought proper to apply his remarks to the "Methodist denomination" by name, whom he acknowledges to be "zealous and devout," whilst he excludes our whole order from any part or lot in the Christian ministry, he will excuse us for saying a few words in self-defence. *Agitur de vita et sanguine Turni.*

Dr. Wyatt has not even excepted the "exigence of necessity," which even Hooker says may "constrain to leave the usual ways of the church." The same Mr. Hooker adds, "Where the church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution hath given *oftentimes*, and may give,

* Dr. Bowden, another high-church writer, in his letters to Dr. Miller, affirms that John Wesley was evidently persuaded by Coke, and two or three others, to take the step of ordaining bishops for America; and that it did not originate with himself. This will be sufficiently refuted in our section of "Testimonies of English Methodists." Dr. Bowden asserts also that Coke offered to Bishop White "to give up their spurious episcopacy," and insinuates that John Wesley acted "absolutely in contradiction to his own conviction." Dr. Bowden, however, wrote evidently in too great wrath to treat even the names of John Wesley and of Coke with common decency. Nor will the reader be surprised at his saying any thing that suited the purpose of abusing the Methodists, when informed that he copied Mr. Kewley, whose authority he had the prudence to cite.—Mr. Kewley adopted the maxim, "Throw dirt enough and some will stick:" and Dr. Bowden followed his example.

place. And therefore, we are not simply *without exception*, to urge a lineal descent of power from the apostles by continued succession of bishops, in every effectual ordination. Ecclesiastical Polity, book vii, sect. 14.

The authority of Mr. Hooker has always been ranked in the first class by high churchmen themselves; and Dr. White, as we have before shown, asserted that the necessity of the churches in this country, about the close of the revolutionary war, was even greater than the exigence of those foreign churches to which Hooker alluded

In the reign of Edward VI., about the year 1547, a very grave and learned assembly of select divines was called by the king's special order, for debating the settlement of things according to the word of God, and the practice of the primitive church. It consisted of Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, the archbishop of York, and many other prelates and divines of the first distinction. The account of their proceedings Dr. Stillingfleet assures us he took himself from the authentic manuscript of Archbishop Cranmer, then first published. To the questions propounded to the assembly by order of the king, those eminent divines gave in their answers severally, on paper; which were all accurately summed up and set down by the archbishop of Canterbury himself. The following were some of the questions and answers.

Quest. 10. "Whether bishops or priests were first; and if the priest were first, then the priest made the bishop?"

Ans. "The bishops and priests were at one time, and were not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion."

Quest. 13. "Whether (if it fortuned a prince Christien, lerned, to conquer certen domynyons of infidells, having none but the temporal lerned men with him) it be defended by God's law, that he and they should preche and teche the word of God there or no, and also make and constitute priests or no?"

Ans. "It is not against God's law, but contrary *they ought indede* so to do, and *there be historyes that witnesseth* that some Christien princes and other laymen unconsecrate have done the same."—Observe, "*there be histories that witness*"—certainly before "the reformation," which was then but just begun.

Quest. 14. "Whether it be forfended by God's law, that if it so fortuned that all the bishopps and priests were dedde, and that the word of God shuld there unpreached, the sacrament of baptisme and others unministred, the king of that region shulde make bishoppes and priests to supply the same or no?"

Ans. "It is not forbidden by God's law."*

Iren. pp. 386–393.

"If we may believe the great antiquaries of the Church of Scotland, that church was governed by their *culdei*, as they called their *presbyters*, without any bishop over them, for a long time.—*Johannes Fordonus* (De gestis Scot. lib. ii, ch. 2,) is clear and full as to their government from the time of their conversion about A. D. 263, to the coming of Palladius, A. D. 430, that they were only governed by presbyters and monks. Ante Palladii adventum habebant Scoti fidei doctores ac *sacramentorum ministratores presbyteros solummodo*, vel monachos ritum sequentes Ecclesiæ primitivæ." *Ibid.* p. 375.

"It is no way sufficient," says Stillingfleet, "to say that these presbyters did derive their authority from some bishops—if they had any they were only chosen from their *culdei*," (as they called their presbyters,)

* Of Archbishop Cranmer, Dr. Warner, as cited with approbation by Bishop White, says, "His equal was never yet seen in the see of Canterbury, and I will take upon me to say that his superior never will."—The two last questions and answers above are cited by Bishop White also, who adds respecting them, "The above may be offered as the opinions of not only Cranmer, but also of most of the eminent bishops and other clergy of that period." Episcopal Churches Considered, p. 28.

"much after the custom of the church at Alexandria, as Hector Boethius doth imply. And if we believe Philostorgius, the Gothic churches were planted and governed by presbyters for above seventy years; for so long it was from their first conversion to the time of Ulphhilas, whom he makes their first bishop." *Ibid.*

For another instance, about the year 390, see Irenicum, p. 379,—and others in the year 452, after stating and arguing which, Dr. Stillingfleet thus concludes:—"It appears then that this power" [of ordination by presbyters] "was restrained by the laws of the church, for preserving unity in itself; but yet so that in case of necessity what was done by presbyters was not looked on as invalid." *Ibid.* p. 381.

We have already referred to the practice of the church in Alexandria in making their bishops, for more than two hundred years. The mode in which some high-church writers attempt to explain Jerome's account of that matter we are not unapprized of. It would be easy to show that their explanation by no means deprives us, in this case, of the authority even of Jerome: and those learned doctors, to use the language of Stillingfleet, who would persuade us that the presbyters did only make choice of the person, but the ordination was performed by other bishops, would do well *first* to tell us who and where those bishops were,—especially while Egypt remained but one province under the Præfectus Augustalis. But in proof of the correctness of our understanding of the case, we adduce the testimony of the patriarch of Alexandria himself, who expressly affirms, as we have before quoted, "That the twelve presbyters constituted by Mark, upon the vacancy of the see, did choose out of their number one to be head over the rest, and *the other eleven* did *lay their hands upon him* and *blessed him*, and *made him patriarch*." The patriarch, or bishop of Alexandria, who states this, was Eutychius, whose *annals*, with several other productions of his

learned pen, are still extant, and whom Mosheim mentions as the chief example of those Egyptian writers of the tenth century, "who in genius and learning were nowise inferior to the most eminent of the Grecian literati." Mosh., vol. ii, 383, 404.

Stillingfleet understood this case as published by the most learned Selden, precisely in the same sense; and it is evident that Archbishop Usher did also; for when he says King Charles the First asked him at the Isle of Wight, whether he found in antiquity that *presbyters alone ordained any*, he replied, Yes; and that he could show his majesty more, even where presbyters alone *successively ordained bishops*, and brought, as an instance of this, the presbyters of Alexandria choosing and making their own bishops, from the days of Mark till Heraclas and Dionysius, a space of more than 200 years.

But after all that Dr. Wyatt has said, it is not a little remarkable that he recognises the Lutheran Church of Sweden as a regular and valid *episcopal* church; although, if Dr. Miller be correct, it is notorious that the first ministers who undertook to ordain in Sweden, after the introduction of the Reformation, were only presbyters; and the Lutheran church does not scruple to admit the ordination even of *bishops* by presbyters, and indisputably disclaims any pretence of an apostolical and "divinely protected succession" of bishops, for the validity of episcopacy.

The burden of *proof* in this matter was not properly incumbent on *us;* yet we have now adduced cases sufficient to form at least some *exceptions* to Dr. Wyatt's sweeping universal affirmative. When he shall have satisfactorily disposed of these, we may perhaps produce more.

SECTION VII.—*The Prayer Book of* 1784.

MR. M'CAINE says, "The distinction between bishops and presbyters being the foundation of the episcopal form of government, and this distinction having no existence in fact, nor in Mr. Wesley's creed, our episcopal superstructure falls to the ground," p. 19. Now we have abundantly proved, according to ecclesiastical writers of the most distinguished celebrity, that an episcopal form of government is perfectly consistent with the admission that bishops and presbyters were primamarily and inherently the same order. And we have especially proved that this was Mr. Wesley's view in particular. It was ten years after he was convinced that bishops and presbyters were the same order, that he declared that he still believed the episcopal form of church government to be Scriptural and apostolical; that is, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles. So far as this argument is concerned, therefore, our "episcopal superstructure" may still stand.

In another place, p. 14, Mr. M'Caine says, "It is upon the *prayer book* our episcopal mode of government is made to rest, and this is the *only* authority which is *attempted* to be produced for it." Were we disposed to adopt Mr. M'Caine's language, and to give our remarks a "serious moral bearing," we might ask, Is *this* TRUTH?

"But although it is very far from being true that the prayer book is the only authority which is at least attempted to be produced for our episcopal mode of government, yet, so far as Mr. Wesley's recommendation is concerned, we shall probably make a little more out of the prayer book than the silly witness "brought into court" by Mr. M'Caine, who was careful both to choose his witness, and to put such answers into his mouth as were to his own purpose. Such a

process a *good* cause cannot need. A bad one it might serve.

Dr. Coke's letters of ordination as a superintendent were dated Sept. 2, 1784. Mr. Wesley's preface to the first edition of his abridgment of the prayer book was dated Sept. 9, 1784, and his letter "to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America," bore date Sept. 10, of the same year. These documents, therefore, so nearly synchronous, are to be regarded, with the prayer book, as parts of one whole; and as constituting together the "little sketch" which Mr. Wesley says he had drawn up in compliance with the desire of some thousands of the inhabitants of these States. This "sketch" had direct reference to the "ecclesiastical authority" to be exercised among "our brethren in North America;" where, as he says in the sentence immediately preceding, no one then "either exercised or claimed any ecclesiastical authority at all."

Mr. M'Caine admits that the prayer book of 1784, entitled "The Sunday service of the Methodists in North America, *with other occasional services*," was printed at Mr. Wesley's own press, and sent to us by the hands of Dr. Coke. We ask, then, was not the abridging, and printing, and sending this book to us a "recommendation," even if it had contained no preface, and the *term* "recommend" had never been used? And was it not a recommendation of those "*other occasional services*," as well as "the Sunday service?" And for what were those other occasional services sent to us, if not to be used as a pattern in the *ordering* of our ministry? To be able to answer these questions satisfactorily, it will be necessary to observe carefully what those "other occasional services" were. It is not necessary here to name those for baptism, matrimony, the burial of the dead, &c. The following are sufficient for our purpose. At page 280 we find the forms for ordaining our ministers thus headed: "The form and

manner of making and *ordaining* of SUPERINTENDENTS, ELDERS, and DEACONS."

The first office following is entitled, "The form and manner of making of DEACONS." And the running title at the head of the page is, "*The ordaining of deacons.*"

The second office is, "The form and manner of ordaining of ELDERS." The running title is, "*The ordaining of elders.*"

The third is, "The form of ordaining of a SUPERINTENDENT." The running title is, "*The ordination of superintendents.*"

On these facts we remark:—1. It is a fair presumption that when Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey were set apart as *elders*, and Dr. Coke as a *superintendent*, the same forms were used by Mr. Wesley himself which he abridged for us.

2. He himself expressly calls these acts "ordaining," and "ordination." The reader will notice that Mr. Wesley undeniably intended that *our* setting apart superintendents in America should be called "*ordaining*" superintendents; and "the *ordination* of superintendents." Yet when Dr. Coke was solemnly set apart by *him*, assisted by three other presbyters, Mr. M'Caine thinks we ought not to call it an ordination, and that Mr. Wesley meant no such thing!

3. If the setting apart of *superintendents*, as such, was not intended by Mr. Wesley to establish the ordination of such an order of ministers among us, neither was the setting apart of *deacons* and *elders* intended to establish *those* orders. Similar forms and solemnities were recommended for the former as for the latter. In this case, if Mr. M'Caine's arguments be conclusive, it follows as clearly that Mr. M'Caine's *eldership* has been "saddled" upon the people contrary to Mr. Wesley's intention, as that our episcopacy has been. We assert with confidence that any intelligent, candid, and impartial man, who shall examine this prayer book, will say,

either that Mr. Wesley intended to establish the ordination of an order of superintendents, to act as bishops in *fact*, though with the title of superintendents; or, that he did not intend to establish the ordination of any orders of ministers at all; and that "our fathers" utterly mistook "the whole affair."*

4. The preceding remark is confirmed by this fact. The forms recommended to us by Mr. Wesley for "ordaining of *superintendents, elders*, and deacons," are precisely similar to those used by the Church of England, and by the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, for ordaining of "*bishops, priests*, and deacons." The only difference is, that Mr. Wesley somewhat abridged the forms, with a few verbal alterations, and substituted the title "superintendent" for "bishop," just as he did that of "elder" for "priest." So that it is plain, if by "superintendent" he did not mean that order of ministers denominated by those churches "bishops," neither by "elder" did he mean that order of ministers denominated by those churches "priests."

5. In whatever sense distinct ordinations constitute distinct orders, in the same sense Mr. Wesley certainly intended that we should have three orders. For he undeniably instituted three distinct ordinations. All the forms and solemnities requisite for the constituting of any one order, in this sense, were equally prepared and recommended by him to us for the constituting of three orders. The term "*ordain*" is derived from the Latin *ordino*, to order, to create or commission one to be a

* Mr. M'Caine's proceeding reminds us of the old Greek apologue of the eagle, which we will give in an ancient English version.

> "The eagle saw her breast was wounded sore:
> See stood, and weeped much, but grieved more.
> But when she saw the dart was *feather'd*, said,
> Wo 's me! for my own kind hath me destroy'd."

But had the eagle known that it was not only her own "kind," but her own offspring, who for the sake of winging a dart to wound his parent, had actually plucked himself to death, she would doubtless have weeped and grieved more.

public officer.—And this from *ordo*, order. And hence persons *ordained* are said to be persons in "holy orders." And the degree of ordination stated in the "commission," or letters of ordination, shows the degree of the orders. At the same time we maintain that a third degree of ordination is perfectly compatible with the doctrine of two orders, if the term "order" be used as implying *divine right*. This Mr. M'Caine admits. And it will appear still more clearly if we consider the nature and origin of ordination, as above stated. Lord King maintains that bishops and presbyters, in the primitive church, were the same order. Yet he expressly says that the bishops, when chosen such from among the presbyters, were *ordained*, as *bishops*, by imposition of hands. *Constitution and Discipline of the Primitive Church*, p. 49. In this respect, both Mr. Wesley's usage and ours exactly correspond with that of the primitive church, according to Lord King, even on the principle of two orders.

6. The extension of the jurisdiction of the bishop, in consequence of the extension of the church, is not the creating of any new office, as we have shown from Stillingfleet, and certainly cannot make it less proper that he should be solemnly ordained by imposition of hands, and furnished with suitable credentials. The revival of such an itinerant, extensive personal oversight and inspection is the *revival* of the apostolic practice, and, as Mr. Wesley says, *well agrees* both with their practice and with their writings.

7. 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 superintendent, 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; and all of them by us, and by all others, both in those and in other churches, who admit the validity of ordination by presbyters in such an exigency as that in which Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey were ordained such.—It is to be remembered also that Dr. Coke was afterward authoritatively and unanimously received in this office, 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 advice 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 unanimous reception. These church officers, after they were thus 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 superintendents of our own, agreeably to his own advice; yet Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury could. We shall hereafter prove that Mr. Wesley did not reserve to himself even the appointment of our superintendents; and that neither did the General Conference of 1784 so understand him; nor was he, in consequence of any act of theirs, thereafter to exercise this power.

We turn now to the *preface* of this prayer book.

This preface is signed "JOHN WESLEY," and dated, "Bristol, Sept. 9, 1784,"—only seven days after the ordination of Dr. Coke; and was plainly intended as a preface *to the whole book*. In the first paragraph Mr. Wesley speaks in high terms of the "*Liturgy*," or "Common Prayer of the Church of England." He then states that he had made "little alteration" in this edition

of it, except omitting most of the *holy days* so called; shortening the service of the *Lord's day;* omitting some sentences in the offices of *baptism*, and for the *burial of the dead;* and leaving out many of the *psalms*, and parts of others. The enumeration of these particulars proves that by his edition of the "Liturgy" or "Common Prayer," he meant *the whole book*, with all the *offices* and *forms* contained in it, as well as the *Sunday service* and *psalms*. With this evident meaning, he says, "The following edition of it I recommend to our societies in America." Now this edition contained a form for "the ordination of *superintendents*" among us, in the same manner as *bishops* are ordained in the Church of England; with the same *solemnities*, and for the same *purposes;* viz., to *preside* over the flock of Christ, including the *presbyters* and *deacons;* and to *ordain* others. Now does it comport with good sense to say, that Mr. Wesley recommended the *form*, but not the *thing* which that form imports? And will any intelligent man pronounce that that thing is not an *episcopal* order of ministers, and an *episcopacy* in *fact*, by whatever names they may have been called? This point is so plain that we are really ashamed to dwell on it.

That we are not mistaken in the comprehensive import of the terms "Liturgy," and "Common Prayer," as above asserted, will appear from the following language of the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, by which the liturgy of that church was ratified, on the 16th of October, in the year 1789; and also from the language of Bishops White and Brownell.

"This convention, having in this present session set forth 'A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND OTHER RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH,' do hereby establish said *book:* and they declare it to be THE LITURGY of this church; and require that it be received as such by all the members of the same."

"The principal act of this session," says Bishop White, in his Memoirs of the Church, "was the preparing of the *Book of Common Prayer*, as now the established *Liturgy* of the church."

"At the convention of 1808," (says Bishop Brownell, in the introduction to the 'Family Prayer Book, or Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church,') "thirty hymns were added to the *Book of psalms and hymns*. Since which time no changes have been made in our *Liturgy*." All which proves that by "the Liturgy," is to be understood the whole Book of Common Prayer, with all the forms, rites, ceremonies, orders, offices, and administrations therein set forth and recommended.

A writer in another work lately suggested an inquiry whether our articles of religion also were not "surreptitiously" introduced originally, and imposed on us by the bishops. We have not the work at hand to quote verbatim, but give the sentiment as we recollect it.

If our brother will look into this prayer book of 1784, he will find our articles of religion, abridged from the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England by Mr. Wesley, printed and recommended by him in this book, and adopted, as Mr. M'Caine admits this edition of the prayer book was, by the conference of 1784. It is true the articles are not *named* in the preface. But will any one contend that *therefore* Mr. Wesley did not mean to *recommend* them to us, although they are a part of the *book* which he prepared, and printed, and sent, and recommended? Yet most certainly it would be just as rational to assert *this*, as that he did not mean to recommend to us the institution of an episcopal order of ministers, although he did prepare, and print, and send, and recommend to us a solemn form for the setting apart and ordaining of such an order.

In this prayer book, however, but twenty-four articles

will be found; whereas we now have twenty-five. The additional one, inserted by the conference of 1784, is that now numbered the twenty-third, "Of the rulers of the United States of America." In the Sunday service Mr. Wesley inserted the form of "a prayer for the supreme rulers of these United States." But it is probable that he did not consider himself sufficiently well acquainted with our civil institutions, at that early period, to frame an "article" under this head; and hence the addition of this article, by the conference of 1784, in conformity with the prayer of the Sunday service.

That no investigation of this sort, however strict, if conducted with a spirit of candour and fairness, can ever bring any stain on the fair escutcheon of our fathers, we are well persuaded. But if, coming from such sources, the challenging of such inquiries be connected with darkling insinuations of imposition and fraud, it cannot fail to furnish occasion to the ignorant, the disaffected, the bigoted, and the malevolent, who seek occasion against the defenceless manes of our venerated fathers; at whose feet, while on earth, it would have been an honour to any of us, their sons, to sit; and may yet be in heaven. On this ground, and on this only, the time, and place, and manner of these things, we cannot but regret.

The prayer book of 1784 was brought to America in *sheets*. In those copies of it which have come under our inspection, the *Minutes* of the General Conference of 1784 are bound with it. The proper place and weight of those Minutes, in this argument, will be considered in the ensuing section, in which we shall discuss the prayer book of 1786.

SECTION VIII.—*The Prayer Book of* 1786.

THIS prayer book is entitled, "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in the United States of America, with other Occasional Services." It was printed London, 1786, at the press of "Frys and Couchman." In this edition we find the twenty-five articles of religion, including that of "the rulers of the United States of America;" and also, "The General Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America."—Those Minutes were first printed in Philadelphia, by Charles Cist, in 1785, and were bound up with the volume of the prayer book which was brought from England, in sheets, in 1784. But in the edition of 1786 they are regularly printed *as a part of the book.* It is demonstrable on the face of the book, that the Minutes, as they appear in this edition, could not have been printed in America, and the rest of the book in England. This any printer will attest.

We have now before us a small volume, entitled "Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others, from the year 1744 to the year 1789.—*London;* printed by G. Paramore, North Green, Worship-street, and sold by G. Whitfield at the Chapel, City Road, and at all the Methodist preaching-houses in town and country, 1791." By a careful comparison of these Minutes with those of the General Conference of 1784, it will be found that the latter are nearly a copy of the former, so far as they had then been drawn up and published by Mr. Wesley; with some occasional alterations adapted to our circumstances in this country; together with the insertion of some few original minutes. There is plain internal evidence in the two publications, that the Minutes previously prepared by Mr. Wesley were made the basis of those of the General Conference of 1784, and that the latter were drawn up from

the former, with such alterations, abridgments, modifications, or additions, as that conference thought necessary. And such, we are informed, was the fact. These Minutes, thus prepared from Mr. Wesley's, were the groundwork of our "Form of Discipline."

The General Conference of 1784 commenced its session on the 24th of December; and closed on the 1st of January, 1785. On the 3d of January Dr. Coke left Baltimore. From the 8th to the 19th he was in Philadelphia, and there published the Minutes of that conference, the title of which was, "The General Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America." And in the answer to the third question, it was declared that they had formed themselves into an "episcopal church." See Dr. Coke's Journal of the above dates, and January 22, 1785. On the 2d of June following, Dr. Coke sailed from Baltimore for England, and was present at the ensuing British Conference, which commenced in London on the 26th of July of that year. His name is signed first to an instrument which was drawn up at that conference, and which bears date July 30, 1785, and may be seen in the British Minutes of that year. Mr. Wesley was also present at that conference.—Now let the reader put all these facts together, and then candidly consider the following questions:—

1. If Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury were conscious that they had been guilty of duplicity, imposition, and fraud, or of violating Mr. Wesley's instructions, in the organization of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, is it probable that they would immediately after have printed and published these Minutes with this title, and with an explicit statement of what had been done, and thus have exposed their acts in the face of Mr. Wesley, and of the world? Is it probable that Dr. Coke, particularly, who had the Minutes printed, would have done this, knowing that he was so soon to return to England?

2. Is it not rationally presumable that a copy of these Minutes had reached Mr. Wesley, in the interval between their publication in the middle of January and the last of July of that year, before the close of the British conference?

3. Is it not at least certain that Mr. Wesley must have felt sufficient interest in this matter, to have required from Dr. Coke a particular account of what had been done in America?

4. Is it not presumable that Dr. Coke carried with him a copy of the printed Minutes?

5. Is it not presumable that Mr. Wesley would have inquired of him whether minutes were not taken, knowing our custom to take minutes at all our conferences, and also have requested to see them?

6. Could Dr. Coke have declined to show them, or have concealed from Mr. Wesley what had been done, without the grossest duplicity and positive falsehood?

7. Is it probable that Dr. Coke was not only so knavish but so stupid, as to hazard his reputation, character, standing, and even his salvation, thus cheaply and foolishly, when he must have anticipated with certainty that Mr. Wesley would at some future time obtain a knowledge of what had been done, if he did not then?

8. If Dr. Coke could have been guilty of such baseness, is it not probable that Mr. Wesley would have received information of it from some other quarter; at least before his death, which did not take place till nearly six years afterward?

9. If Mr. Wesley had ever discovered that Dr. Coke had so grossly betrayed his trust, and imposed both on him and on us, could he have continued afterward so highly to esteem and honour him, as he notoriously did, even to the day of his death?

We know that Mr. M'Caine has represented that Mr. Wesley did punish Dr. Coke for his proceedings at this period by leaving his name off the Minutes for one year

But this is an entire mistake. At this very conference of 1785, Dr. Coke's name appears in the British Minutes in London, next after John and Charles Wesley themselves. In 1786 he was appointed by Mr. Wesley, as Mr. Crowther and Mr. Myles both state, to visit the societies in British America. And his name appears in the *Minutes published by Mr. Wesley* in the Arminian Magazine for that year, under the head "*America.*" The reason why it did not appear for that year in London, as usual, was probably because it was not expected that he would return to England till the ensuing conference, as we know he did not. Yet previously to his leaving England for America, he attended and presided in the Irish conference in the year 1786, by Mr. Wesley's direction, and *as his representative.* See Myles's Chronological History. Does this look like being then "under censure?"

In 1787 and 1788 he was again stationed in London with John and Charles Wesley. In 1789 his name was left off the Minutes; but for reasons, as we shall hereafter show, which had no shadow of connection either with his proceedings at the conference of 1784, or with his assuming the title of bishop, as Mr. M'Caine asserts. In 1790 he was again stationed in London with John and Charles Wesley; and in 1791, at the conference succeeding Mr. Wesley's death, Dr. Coke stood first in London.

In February, 1789, Mr. Wesley made his last will and testament. In that will he constituted five important trusteeships, in all of which he named Dr. Coke *first*, except one, and in that he named him second. That will Mr. Wesley kept by him for two years, and left it unaltered to the day of his death. It is surely needless to say more to prove the high estimation in which, to his last moments, he continued to hold Dr. Coke. Nor could any testimony be more honourable to the memory of Dr. Coke than such a one as this, from

a man of so much intelligence, and close and accurate observation as Mr. Wesley; and who had means of *knowing* Dr. Coke certainly ten thousand times more ample than Mr. M'Caine has ever had.

10. If Dr. Coke, on his return to England in 1785, had succeeded in deceiving Mr. Wesley, and in concealing from him the proceedings in America, is it at least probable that he would have hazarded his own exposure and utter disgrace, by *reprinting* in London the Minutes of the conference of 1784, only one year after his return, and while Mr. Wesley was on the spot? Yet this he did do, retaining in those Minutes the title of "The Methodist Episcopal Church," and declaring that our societies here had been formed into an "*episcopal* church." Our question here is, not whether Mr. Wesley ever did actually see these Minutes, or not. This we will consider presently. But whether Dr. Coke, on the supposition that he had so grossly imposed on Mr. Wesley, as above stated, could have been both so daring and so stupid as even to *hazard* his seeing them, by causing them to be republished in London during Mr. Wesley's lifetime?

11. Is it probable that this edition of the prayer book, with these Minutes in it, after being thus published in London, should have continued in existence five years, till the death of Mr. Wesley, without ever coming to his knowledge? Such a complicated machinery of fraud and villany must have been kept in operation on the part of Dr. Coke; such a combination and collusion of all parties against Mr. Wesley must have been carried on for so long a time; and such surprising ignorance must have existed on his part, for the accomplishment of all this, as is, we must confess, beyond the reach of our highest credulity.

Under all these circumstances we feel warranted in asserting that Mr. Wesley must have been acquainted with these Minutes, and consequently did know that the

societies here had been formed into an "episcopal church," with the title of "The Methodist Episcopal Church." And if he did know it, and did not promptly and explicitly state his disapprobation of it, as we affirm he never did, we have a right to regard it as conclusive proof of his sanction.

But there is yet stronger proof. In the Arminian Magazine for 1785, published by Mr. Wesley himself, we find the following minutes: "An extract from the minutes of a conference held at London, July, 1785, between the Rev. John Wesley and others." In this extract, after giving the stations of the preachers in England, Mr. Wesley, in a distinct place, adds the stations in America. In these Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury are mentioned as superintendents; and the names of all the *elders* who had been elected and ordained *at the conference of* 1784 are then severally stated, together with those of Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey.

In connection with these Minutes, and in answer to the question, "What is the state of our societies in North America?" Mr. Wesley inserted also in this place the letter "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America;" as showing their state; and on doing so, makes this remarkable note:—"If any one is minded to dispute concerning diocesan episcopacy he may dispute; but I have better work." See Arminian Magazine, vol. viii, pp. 600–602. From the terms and connection of this note it is highly probable that he had been charged with having instituted such an episcopacy in America, and refused to *dispute* about it; preferring rather to go on with his *work*. But if he knew that he had done no such thing, and intended no such thing;—and much more, if he had been indignant at such an idea, as Mr. M'Caine would represent, he would simply and flatly have denied the charge, and repelled the statement. And with this charge against him too, there

is the greater certainty that it was then known there through Dr. Coke, or the minutes of the conference of 1784, that such an episcopacy had actually been established in America.*

Assuming the fact then that Mr. Wesley did, at some time and in some way, become acquainted with the acts and proceedings of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, and of the conference of 1784, in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we ask, Where is the evidence that he ever disavowed them? or ever declared that in so doing they had gone contrary to his instructions? Where is the evidence that he ever objected to that title of the church, or to the terms "episcopal" and "episcopacy?" Where is the evidence that he ever protested or remonstrated against either of these, or against our adoption of the "episcopal" form of church government, under the direction of superintendents, elders, and deacons? If Mr. Wesley knew that all this had been done "surreptitiously" and fraudulently; and much more, if he knew that it had been imposed and "saddled" on the societies against his intentions, and under the cloak and sanction of his name, would he not have declared it? Would it not have been his *duty* to declare it? and may we not be well assured that he would have done so, from the plainness and decision with which we know that he was accustomed to speak; and particularly at a time when he was personally charged and pressed by his brother Charles and others, for having thus "acted as a bishop," as we know he was. Yet we deny that one syllable of such evidence has ever yet been produced. To the terms "episcopal" and "episcopacy,"—to our being called the "Methodist Episcopal Church," or having adopted the "episcopal" form of church government, Mr. Wesley never did

* A diocesan episcopacy is simply an episcopacy extending beyond the superintendence of a single congregation. A diocess is a circuit or a bishop's jurisdiction, whether large or small.

object; and we challenge the production of one particle of testimony to show that he ever did.—What Mr. M'Caine has said with regard to his letter to Bishop Asbury respecting the title "bishop," we shall distinctly discuss in another place, and shall prove that it does not in the slightest degree impugn what we have now asserted.

But Mr. M'Caine says, p. 17, "The circumstance" of this edition of the prayer book "being printed by Frys and Couchman, and not by Mr. Wesley, renders the whole affair suspicious." That "it was printed for somebody—perhaps for Dr. Coke, who in 1786 was under censure by Mr. Wesley for the address he presented to General Washington,"—"and contains an article of religion not contained in Mr. Wesley's prayer book."

It is really surprising with what uniformity Mr. M'Caine persists in the plainest errors; familiarizing his mind with "suspicion" in the utter absence of proof; withholding circumstances which would explain what he wraps in "mystery;" and exposing himself to a severity of criticism from which, did justice to our subject and to the dead permit, we would fain forbear.

The address to Washington we shall notice hereafter. The article of religion contained in the prayer book of 1786 which was not in that of 1784 is that now numbered the 23d,—"Of the Rulers of the United States of America," which had been adopted by the General Conference of 1784, and was most properly inserted in the ensuing edition of the prayer book of 1786. Had Mr. M'Caine stated this, all mystery respecting the addition of this article would have been dissipated.—It was not necessary that this prayer book should have been printed at Mr. Wesley's press. It was not printed for Mr. Wesley, nor for the Methodists in England; but for those in the United States, of whom Dr. Coke was a superintendent. Dr. Coke was possessed of an ample

fortune, and with a liberality amounting almost to profuseness, devoted his fortune to such expenses, and to any others which he believed calculated to serve the cause in which he was engaged. He had procured the printing of the Minutes previously in Philadelphia, and now published another edition of this prayer book, with the minutes and articles of religion included, for the Methodists in America. Frys and Couchman had been in the habit of printing for Mr. Wesley, and were the printers of the second volume of the Arminian Magazine. And we can perceive nothing in this whole affair calculated to render it in the least degree "suspicious" to any but a mind habituated to a suspiciousness which spares not the characters even of men who have been among the brightest ornaments of the Christian church, and as distinguished for their high sense of honour and propriety as for their liberality and deep devotion.

Mr. M'Caine adds, "After the publication of the prayer book of 1786, a rule was passed in the conference that no book should be sold among his societies" [Mr. Wesley's] "which was not printed at his press. But whether this rule was passed with special reference to the prayer book of 1786, or not," he adds, "we cannot say." That is, a prayer book for the Methodists "in the United States of America," with a prayer for "the Rulers of the United States of America," and an article of religion acknowledging these rulers, and Mr. M'Caine could not say whether it was not intended for sale among the societies in *England;* and whether Mr. Wesley and the British conference did not find it necessary gravely to pass a resolution prohibiting the sale of it there!

But on this point Mr. M'Caine has suffered his speculations to carry him beyond his mark. He "cannot say" that this resolution was not "passed with special reference to the prayer book of 1786." If it were,

Mr. Wesley must have had knowledge of that prayer book. And if he had, then all the inferences which we have drawn above are amply confirmed and stand in full force.

SECTION IX.—*Bishop Asbury.*

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 circumstances, to use even too strong an expression.

That his letter to Mr. Asbury, on suffering himself to be called bishop, contains expressions too severe, will be admitted, we think, by his warmest friends. Mr. M'Caine, indeed, rejoices over it as one who has found great spoil. He seems delighted with it. Yet the discerning reader will perceive that, after all, in summing up in his "conclusion," he has wholly misrepresented its import. "Let the name of bishop and the episcopal office as it now exists among us," says he, "be put away for ever. In doing this, we shall comply with Mr. Wesley's advice to Mr. Asbury. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this." To what?—To "the episcopal *office?*" We deny that Mr. Wesley ever advised any such thing, or ever meant, or intended so to be 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 "episcopal." The office was of his own creation, and he intended it to be perpetuated. And will Mr. M'Caine contend that if the "office," as it now exists, or was originally instituted, had been con-

tinued from the beginning, as it was for several years, with the title of superintendent, that the church would have been any less episcopal, in form or in fact, or its superintendents any less bishops? The logic by which this should be made out would be a curiosity.*

That our views of this letter correspond with those of Mr. Wesley's biographer, and his intimate companion and friend, the venerable Henry Moore, who gave publicity to the letter, will appear from the following quotations.

"Mr. Wesley," says Mr. Moore, "well knew the difference between the *office* and the *title*. He knew and felt the arduous duties and the high responsibility which attach to the one, and the comparative nothingness of the other." Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 278.

"He gave to those Επισκοποι," [*episcopoi*, bishops,] "whom he ordained, the modest, but highly expressive title of *superintendents*, and desired that no other might be used." Ibid., p. 280. His objection to the title "bishop," Mr. Moore adds, "arose from his hatred of all display."

Mr. Asbury was of opinion that the "unpleasant expressions" in some of the letters which he received from his venerable friend were "occasioned by the misrepre-

* On Dr. Coke's return to England after the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was attacked by an anonymous writer, supposed to have been Mr. Charles Wesley. In his defence he affirmed, that in his proceedings in America, "he did nothing but by a delegated power which he received from Mr. Wesley." This he affirmed publicly, under Mr. Wesley's eye; and at a time when there is every reason to believe that Mr. Wesley had seen the *Minutes* of the conference of 1784. "On this ground," says Mr. Drew, "it cannot be denied, that his plea of delegated authority is valid, Mr. Wesley and himself being identified together." Life of Dr. Coke, p. 101.

Mr. M'Caine asserts, p. 16, that in the progress of his work "documents will be found, which unequivocally declare his" [Mr. Wesley's] "disapprobation of the proceedings of the conference" [of 1784] "in relation to every thing appertaining to episcopacy." This assertion we wholly deny. Not one such document is found in his whole work. The mere title of bishop, to which Mr. Wesley did object, was not the act of the conference of 1784; nor is it at all necessary to the existence of "episcopacy," which might exist as well without as with it; and did so exist for several years.

sentations of others. Yet he bore them with a meekness which has obtained for him the commendation of Mr. Wesley's own biographer, who was satisfied that Mr. Asbury "was not convinced that he had acted wrong, and lost none of his veneration for his father in the gospel [Mr. Wesley] on this occasion." It is manifest, indeed, that Mr. Moore himself was of opinion that Mr. Wesley, in this affair, had expressed himself too strongly, and rather inconsistently with his former admissions. "But did he not," says Mr. Moore, "upon this occasion, a little forget what he had written in his address to the societies in America after their separation from the mother country: '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 the liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.' But the association in his mind between the assumed *title* and the *display* connected with it in the latter ages of the church, was too strong. He could not, at that moment, 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.

"That our brethren who are in that office," continues Mr. Moore, "are true Scriptural bishops, I have no doubt at all: nor do I wish that the title should be relinquished, as it is grown into use, and is known by every person in the United States, to designate men distinguished only by their simplicity and abundant labours." Life of Wesley, vol. ii, pp. 286, 287.

These extracts are full to our purpose, and surely have as much weight as any thing that has been said by Mr. M'Caine.

At the British conference held in Liverpool, in 1820, we heard the profoundly learned Dr. Adam Clarke, and that most able and eloquent divine, the Rev. Richard Watson, express themselves publicly before the confer-

ence in relation to our episcopacy, to the same effect, as a true, actual, Scriptural episcopacy, of the most genuine and apostolical character.

Mr. M'Caine protests against loading the name and memory of Mr. Wesley with the obloquy of intending the episcopal form of church government for the American societies, while he so strongly opposed the use of the title bishop. But we put the question to every man of candour:—Did not Mr. Wesley recommend and institute for the American societies a general superintendency, by ministers solemnly set apart for the purpose, with imposition of hands and prayer, and all the usual solemnities of ordination, and possessing the powers of ordination, and all others usually considered episcopal? And will any man deny that such a form of government would have been episcopal, and such general superintendents bishops, though the title bishop and episcopal had never been used?

Mr. Wesley's biographer, Mr. Moore, clearly held this view of the subject; and certainly considered the assertion of it as far from loading Mr. Wesley's name or character with obloquy. We aver then that Mr. Wesley did intend the "*thing*" episcopacy, for the American societies, but not the title *bishop*. We do not say he "*secretly*" intended it. This is a term used by Mr. M'Caine, not by us. There was neither secret nor "mystery" in it. Mr. Wesley plainly and openly declared it, and solemnly confirmed it by his act and deed, attested by his hand and seal, and published to the world.*

We have maintained the position that Mr. Wesley did

* When the title "bishop" was introduced into the Minutes, it was sanctioned by the conference, as meaning precisely the same thing with superintendent. Mr. M'Caine says, (p. 38,) "It is somewhat remarkable, that *as soon as Mr. Wesley's name was left out of the Minutes*, the term bishop was introduced into them." Now he had just said, (p. 36,) "his name was left off the Minutes of 1785." Yet the title bishop was not introduced into the Minutes till 1788. Why this inconsistency in the course of two pages?

in *fact* intend and recommend for the American societies the episcopal form of church government. Mr. M'Caine admits that Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our fathers, so asserted. If so, then he must also admit that they so *understood* Mr. Wesley; and in that case they cannot be blamed for acting and speaking according to their understanding. Or, if he will not admit this, then he must charge them either with a "mysterious" stupidity, or with knowingly asserting wilful falsehoods, and "surreptitiously" introducing, for the gratification of their ambition, a form of government, "imposed upon the societies under the sanction of Mr. Wesley's name," though they themselves did not understand Mr. Wesley to intend or to recommend any such thing! Yet Mr. M'Caine says, (p. 56,) that Mr. Asbury "was a great, wise, good, and useful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, having few to equal him." How is all this to be reconciled? And if we believe all that Mr. M'Caine has either directly imputed to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, or plainly enough insinuated, of their fraudulent practices, for the concealment and the establishment of their forgeries and impositions, who can envy either their wisdom or their goodness?

Mr. M'Caine seems determined, in fact, to involve the whole of the proceedings of those times in a charge of disingenuousness and duplicity, irreconcilable with either wisdom or goodness; and such as could spring from nothing but corrupt and bad motives. "Indeed," he says, p. 36, "there is a mystery hanging over the whole of the proceedings of those times, if there is not a *studied* obscurity and evasion in the records of the church." And he does not stop short of insinuating, if not of roundly asserting, that *records* and *dates* were altered and falsified for the accomplishment of the same base purposes.

Alas! what a friend have the venerable dead found in Mr. M'Caine. He has "*great veneration*" for their

memory! Yet, while he salutes, he stabs them. He kisses, and straightway leads them to be crucified.

If by such means they did indeed introduce into the church an "illegitimate episcopacy," hazarding every thing fair and honourable for the sake of the title of "Methodist bishops," they must indeed, to use Mr M'Caine's language, have been "strongly infected with an episcopal mania." And nothing but *mania*, on such a supposition, can afford a solution of their wickedness and folly.

In the conclusion of Mr. Wesley's letter to Mr. Asbury on assuming the title of bishop, Mr. M'Caine thinks there is a "mystery" unintelligible without an explanatory key; which he of course furnishes to suit his purpose. Mr. Wesley says, "Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better." Now, says Mr. M'Caine, "What connection has this sentence with the rest of his letter? We perceive none." But *we* perceive a very plain connection; and one perfectly "intelligible," without any other "explanatory key" than that of a simple attention to the subject, and a knowledge of the views of the Presbyterians in relation to it. The subject was a Methodist minister's allowing himself to be called bishop—Now the Presbyterians do allow this. "In the form of government of the Presbyterian Church the pastors of churches are expressly styled bishops, and this title is recommended to be retained as both Scriptural and appropriate." Miller's Letters, p. 9. "Let the Presbyterians," says Mr. Wesley, "do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better."—Who does not perceive the plain connection?

Again, Mr. M'Caine says, pp. 39, 40, "Mr. Asbury had said he would not receive any person deputed by Mr. Wesley to take any part of the superintendency of the work intrusted to him. Yet neither he nor the conference refused to receive Dr. Coke. Indeed to have

shown the least symptom of opposition either to Mr Wesley or to Dr. Coke, *at this juncture*, would have been to prevent the accomplishment of the most ardent wishes of Mr. Asbury and the preachers. It would have been to dash the cup from their lips when they were upon the very point of tasting its sweets. No opposition, *therefore*, was made. No resistance was offered. Every thing went on smoothly; and whether from prudence or policy, inclination or interest, Dr. Coke was received as a superintendent, and Mr. Wesley's authority acknowledged and respected. But—scarcely had Mr. Asbury begun to exercise the functions of his new office, when Mr. Wesley's authority was rejected, and his name left out of the Minutes."—What ideas Mr. M'Caine attaches to the terms "wise" and "good," we do not certainly know. But how he can call Mr. Asbury wise and good, in the very same work in which he continually paints him in such colours, upon any principles of ethics which we have ever studied, is beyond our comprehension.

When the conference of 1784 said they judged it expedient to form themselves into a separate and independent church, Mr. M'Caine affirms that they meant that they did then "separate from Mr. Wesley and the English Methodists;" and adds, "in accordance with this declaration his name was struck off the Minutes of conference." Yet the fact is, that that same conference acknowledged themselves Mr. Wesley's sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands; and recorded his name on their Minutes with this declaration, and left it so recorded: and in the face of this Mr. M'Caine makes the above assertion.*

* We had imagined that these singular ideas were perfectly novel ones of Mr. M'Caine's; till we discovered the same in one of Mr. Hammett's pamphlets.

It was more than two years after the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church before Mr. Wesley's name was left off the Minutes, in the proper sense of that phrase; and it was not done by Mr. Asbury, nor by the conference of 1784. This will be explained hereafter.

The absurdity of his interpretation of this subject, and the true meaning of the phrase "separate and independent church," as used by the conference of 1784, will farther appear from the following testimonies.

The first native American travelling preacher was the late venerable Wm. Watters. In his memoirs written by himself, under the date 1777, he says, "In fact we considered ourselves at this time as belonging to the Church of England, *it being before our separation, and our becoming a regularly formed church*," p. 57. Again: "Dec. 25, 1784.—We became, *instead of a religious society*, a separate church under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church." *Ibid.*, p. 102.

"From the year 1769 to the year 1784 the Methodists were regular members of the Church of England. *Since* 1784 the Methodists in America have been independent of the English Church, and have had an episcopacy of their own." Rev. Nicholas Snethen's Reply to J. O'Kelly's Apol., p. 61.

Dr. Coke, in the sermon which he preached in Baltimore, on the ordination of Bishop Asbury, expressed the same sentiments, in these terms, "The Church of England, of which the society of Methodists in general have till lately professed themselves a part."—And in his letter to Bishop White he expressly calls the separation spoken of "our plan of separation from the Church of England."

The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper was present at the first meeting of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury in America; one of "the most solemn, interesting, and affectionate meetings," he declares, "which he has ever witnessed." At that meeting the sacrament of the Lord's supper was first administered among the Methodists in this country by their own ministers. At that meeting he first partook of that ordinance, and then first consented to enter into the itinerant connection. And from that time to the present, no man among us, probably, has ever more

studiously and thoroughly acquainted himself with every thing relating to Methodism, and to its origin and history, and especially to the origin and history of the Methodist episcopacy, than Mr. Cooper. It will pro bably be admitted, too, that few, if any, among us are more capable of investigating such subjects; or have had more ample opportunities and means of searching into them critically and closely. We shall, therefore, avail ourselves of his testimony with confidence: and the more so, as it is well known that he did not in all things agree with Mr. Asbury on some points of ecclesiastical polity. Yet he had, notwithstanding, a heart, as well as a head, to appreciate and to honour both his conduct and his motives.

"The conference met," says Mr. Cooper, "Dec., 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*, of which, until then, they had been considered as members." Cooper on Asbury, p. 108.*

"From that time," (14th Nov., 1784,) says Mr. Cooper again, "I have had a particular and intimate knowledge of Francis Asbury, and the manner of his life. We have had a confidential intercourse, an intimate friendship, and union of heart. I am confidently persuaded, to take him all and in all, that no man in America ever came up to his standard. I have known him *well*, and I have known him *long*. Most excellent man; who can but admire him with reverence? His eye appeared to be always single, and his whole body, soul, and example

* It will be observed that what was considered the Episcopal Church, in this country, both during and for some time after the revolutionary war, was still usually spoken of as the Church of England; although, strictly speaking, the Church of England had ceased to exist in the United States from the time of the declaration of our independence. It was in this common acceptation of the phrase that all the writers of those times whom we quote, used it. And even to this day it is known that the Protestant Episcopal Church is sometimes called the Church of England.

full of light. The *purpose* of man is essentially connected with his manner of life. The word *purpose* signifies the design and motive of the heart in our actions. Now what was the design, the motive, the object, the end, or the purpose of the venerable Bishop Asbury? Examine his whole deportment and conduct—retrospect and investigate his public and private life. Look into all his movements and transactions. We have had the most indubitable evidences of the honest sincerity and strict integrity of his soul, and the purity and uprightness of his designs, intentions, and motives. Next to his brother Charles, no man stood higher in the esteem and confidence of Mr. Wesley than Dr. Coke; and in America no man stood so high with him as Mr. Asbury." *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 135.

This is the testimony of no sycophant, flatterer, or dependant. It is the honourable and faithful testimony of one intimately acquainted with the parties; who had nothing to hope or to fear; and who rendered his testimony after their death; whose only object was truth, and justice to the dead; and who was himself well acquainted with the mind of Mr. Wesley, having been one of his correspondents, and received from him the last letter that he ever wrote to America.

Had the conduct of Mr. Asbury been regarded by Mr. Wesley in the serious moral bearing in which Mr. M'Caine has represented it, it is impossible that a man of Mr. Wesley's discernment, and high sense of honour and propriety, could have continued to hold him in the high esteem in which we have the most satisfactory evidence that he did.

Mr. Asbury always believed that some things respecting him had been unfairly represented to Mr. Wesley; and we think that Mr. M'Caine himself has furnished documents (though for a very different purpose) which tend strongly to confirm this impression. He quotes a letter from Dr. Coke to Mr. Wesley, dated August 9,

1784, in which are these words, "Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed, 'that he would not receive any person deputed by you to take any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him, or words evidently implying so much.'" Now we think this account is sufficiently refuted by the unhesitating, the open, and the exceedingly affectionate manner in which Mr. Asbury did receive and welcome Dr. Coke, immediately on his arrival. This has been attested by Mr. Cooper, who was an eye and ear witness. Indeed, Mr. Cooper affirms that so touchingly tender and affecting was the scene, that he can never forget it. It was in full view of a large concourse of people,—a crowded congregation at a quarterly meeting,—and the whole assembly, as if divinely struck, burst into a flood of tears. If all this, on the part of Mr. Asbury, was dissimulation and hypocrisy, concealing under such a show the internal resistance which he felt to the reception of a coadjutor from Mr. Wesley, lest he should "dash the cup from his lips, when upon the point of tasting its sweets," then, indeed, does his memory deserve to be branded with infamy. Mr. Brackenbury doubtless said what he thought,—yet how easily might he have been mistaken in the recollection of the expressions of a letter, when undertaking to recite them from memory at such a distance? How easily might he have mistaken their meaning? Indeed, he himself gives evidence of a want of clearness of recollection as to the exact expressions of that letter; for he adds, "*or words evidently implying so much.*" And we know well that a very small, and even undesigned variation of expression, may very materially alter the sense. We have already seen an instance of this in the case of Dr. Coke's letter to Bishop White. The import of that letter has been clearly misunderstood, though with the letter itself in hand. Had we before us, also, the letter of Mr. Asbury,

to which Mr. Brackenbury alluded, we might perhaps be able to show some equal mistake. We object, therefore, to this parol, third-handed report; and unless the document itself be produced, we protest against the statement.

In another letter, dated Oct. 31, 1789, Mr. M'Caine (p. 47) represents Mr. Wesley as saying of Mr. Asbury, "He flatly refused to receive Mr. Whatcoat in the character I sent him." Now this could not have been.—Mr. Asbury had no power, of himself, to refuse to receive Mr. Whatcoat. It was the *conference* that refused to receive him. If the conference had received him, Mr. Asbury would have been obliged to do so also, or himself to have left the superintendency.*

Again; in this same letter Mr. Wesley is represented as saying, "He" [Mr. Asbury] "told George Shadford, Mr. Wesley and I are like Cesar and Pompey—he will bear no equal, and I will bear no superior." Now let it be remembered that George Shadford left America early in 1778. At that time Mr. Asbury had been in this country himself but a few years, and was then in the most critical and perilous circumstances in the heat of the revolutionary struggle, doubtful of his own safety, and of the fate of the Methodist societies. And can we believe that even then, or at any period still earlier, he seriously made such a speech to George Shadford, declaring himself the rival of Mr. Wesley, and not brooking even his superiority, as Pompey would not brook Cesar's?—Credat Judæus Apelles. It was known and acknowledged, both by Mr. Asbury and every other preacher, that his place and office at that time was not that of Mr. Wesley's equal or rival, but

* That Mr. Asbury *did not refuse to receive Mr. Whatcoat*, we shall, in another place, demonstrate by the most indubitable evidence. It is proper, however, to add here, that it was not from personal objections to Mr. Whatcoat that the conference did not then receive him as a superintendent; but for reasons which will be hereafter stated. They did at a subsequent conference elect him.

of his assistant. Or, if this speech is alleged to have been made before Mr. Rankin left America, then at that period he was not even Mr. Wesley's assistant, but subject also to Mr. Rankin.

But how happens it that Mr. M'Caine has told us nothing more about this letter? Why did he not state to whom it was written, and from what authority he received it? Had he not sufficient ground to be "suspicious" of this "whole affair?" Did he not derive it from one whom he knew to have been an avowed, bitter, and personal *enemy* of Bishop Asbury;—one who laboured to distract and rend our infant church;—who was formally expelled from the British connection; and was directly charged by Dr. Coke with the grossest calumny and falsehood? The documents in proof of all this are in our possession. Yet it is from such sources that Mr. M'Caine has picked up, and, after the parties are all dead, has published calumnies which had been long since silenced and buried in merited oblivion. And we here assert, that if his publication be stripped of the materials which he has derived from such sources, and from the obsolete pamphlets of Mr. Kewley, Mr. Hammett, Mr. O'Kelly, and other separatists, and troublers of our Israel, very little original matter will be found in his whole production; except, indeed, the amplifications and the deeper tincture which their long refuted aspersions have received from his pen; and the advantage which he has taken of the lapse of time and the silence which death has imposed on the accused, to impute to them unheard-of frauds and forgeries, which in their lifetime no man living had the effrontery even to insinuate. The aforesaid noted letter bears on the face of it marks of corruption or of fabrication. And until better authority is produced for it, or the document itself, we hold it unentitled to one particle of credit.

Again, in the letter with which Mr. M'Caine seems to

be so much pleased, Mr. Wesley says to Mr. Asbury, "I study to be *little*, you study to be *great;* I *creep*, you *strut* along. I found a school, you a *college*." It will be recollected that this letter was written in the year after what has been called the leaving of Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes; and at a period when even his great and excellent mind had not, perhaps, entirely recovered from that occurrence. It is known, too, that there were individuals unfriendly to Mr. Asbury, who represented him unfairly to Mr. Wesley. The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper himself intimated to Mr. Wesley the injustice of such representations; and he thinks Mr. Wesley had allusion to this in the last letter which he wrote to him, just before his death. But had Mr. Wesley been in America, and himself witnessed Mr. Asbury's manner of life, from the commencement of his ministry among us to its close, would he have expressed himself thus? We believe he would not. The testimony of the most intelligent, observing, and competent eye-witnesses, who watched him narrowly, and saw him and knew him intimately, in all situations and circumstances, in private and in public, for more than thirty years, is vastly different.

To the testimony of Mr. Cooper, already adduced, we add the following:—

"It is scarcely necessary to mention, what must be so obvious, that in performing his astonishing annual tours, and in attending to all the vast variety of his Christian, ministerial, and episcopal duties and callings, he must have been almost continually on the move. Flying, as it were, like the angel through the earth, preaching the everlasting gospel, no season, no weather stopped him. Through winter's cold and summer's heat he pressed on. He was often in the tempest and the storm; in rain, snow, and hail; in hunger, thirst, weariness, and afflictions. Sometimes uncomfortable entertainment, with hard lodging, and unkind treatment.

'I *soar*,' said Mr. Asbury himself, 'but it is over the tops of the highest mountains.'—Then to the distant and remote settlements, traversing solitary and gloomy valleys; crossing and recrossing dangerous waters; administering the word of life in lonely cottages, to the poor and destitute; sleeping upon the *floor*, or on beds of *straw*, or not much better, in houses of logs, covered with barks of trees, or wooden slabs; sometimes lodging in the wilderness and open air, with the earth for his bed and the sky for his canopy, surrounded by ravenous beasts and fierce savages. He knew how to abound among the wealthy, and how to endure hardship and want among the poor. This was his *manner of life*, to spend and be spent, in going about from place to place, like his Master and the disciples of old, in doing good. He *cheerfully* and *willingly* condescended to men of low estate. Even the poor *African race*, in bondage and wretchedness, were not neglected by him. He attended to their forlorn condition, and taught them the way of life and salvation. When among the great, the honourable, and the rich, he manifested humility in prosperity; maintaining, at the same time, a dignified independence of spirit, *without exaltation*. When among the poor and lower classes of society, he showed a courteous condescension, and manifested content and patience in adversity. He went on through good report and through evil report, among the rich, the poor, the wise, and the unwise:—*at all times*, among *all people*, in *all places*, and upon *all occasions*, his aim was to promote the cause of God; to be instrumental to the good of man, and to the salvation of precious souls."—Cooper on Asbury, pp. 113–117.

Such is the testimony of Mr. Cooper. And who that reads it, and venerates the memory of the departed Asbury, will not exclaim, O, thou man of God, who could so have abused the ear of the aged Wesley, thy venerable friend, as to have induced from him such

reproof? But the meekness of conscious innocence with which Mr. Asbury received it, excites our admiration, not less than the mingled emotions which must be produced in every generous breast at the unkindness with which Mr. M'Caine yet pursues him in the grave.

With regard to the part which Mr. Asbury acted in founding a "*college*," Mr. Wesley was equally misinformed. This matter has been placed in its true light by Mr. Asbury himself, as Mr. M'Caine might have seen in his Journal. After the college was founded, he certainly did all in his power to support it. And when it was burned in December, 1795, he remarks, "Would any man give me £10,000 per year, to do and suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it." But that it was not founded by *him*, he explicitly affirms in these words, "*I wished only for schools.*" It is true, Dr. Coke wanted a college. And the whole head and front of Mr. Asbury's offending is, that he yielded to the wishes of his colleague and his senior in office, and co-operated with him.

Mr. Asbury's favourite plan was that of "*district schools.*" These he recommended to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church: and, in the year 1791, prepared an address recommending them. Mr. Lee represents this address as having been drawn up in 1793. This, however, is a mistake It may be found in the Minutes for 1791, and is dated, "Near Salem, New-Jersey, Sept 16, 1791." Had this plan been generally adopted, the great wisdom and excellence of it would have been felt to this day.

With regard to the naming of Cokesbury College, we believe Mr. Asbury had no hand in it. It was done at the conference held in Baltimore, in June, 1785. When it was proposed to name the college, different names were proposed, such as New Kingswood, and others, after places in England. Some proposed to call it Coke College, and others Asbury College. On which

Dr. Coke, to end the discussion, suggested that they might unite those names, and call it Cokesbury; which was done. These facts we have derived from persons who were present at that conference. He that can make a crime out of them must use his pleasure.

The fact is, that Cokesbury College, so called, was really no more than a school, on the plan of Kingswood. This was the plan agreed on between Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, and is so stated by Dr. Coke in his Journal of Nov. 14, 1784. The institution never was incorporated as a college. This was in contemplation; but before a charter was obtained, the destruction of the building by fire terminated the existence of the whole establishment.

We may well say then with the late Rev. John Dickens: "Mr. Asbury does not bear a character like many others, so superficial as not to admit of examination beneath its surface; but, like fine gold, the more it is *scrutinized*, the more its *intrinsic worth* appears: therefore they who have *most thoroughly investigated* his character, both as a Christian and a minister, admire it most." Remarks on W. Hammett, p. 6.

The following is the testimony of the Rev. Nicholas Snethen:—

"For nearly thirty years, he" [Mr. Asbury] "has travelled, with a delicate and disordered constitution, through almost all the inhabited parts of the United States. Nothing but the wild, uncultivated wilderness could fix his bounds. Wherever there were souls to be saved, he has endeavoured to extend his labours. But they have not been such as are endured by the ordinary minister. He has not only laboured incessantly in the word and doctrine, he has been in perils in the wilderness,—in perils *among false brethren*—in journeyings often—in weariness and painfulness—in watchings often—in hunger and thirst—in fastings often—in cold and nakedness *From the first day he set foot upon*

American ground, unto the present hour, he has never been known to seek the honour that cometh from men; nor can any man accuse him of indulging the flesh, or seeking the pomp and vanity of this world. We have never known him to spend one day more than was strictly necessary in any city or town upon the continent. We have observed that he never waits for a solicitation to visit the *frontiers:* but we have frequently, after we have endeavoured to dissuade him from these painful and hazardous journeys, looked after him with anxious solicitude, expecting never to see his face again. If Mr. O'Kelly and Mr. H. wish to know what it is that disposes the Methodist preachers to give such a preference to this Englishman, we answer: "It is not his native country,—it is not merely because he is a bishop; *we think nothing of bare titles;* but our preference is founded in a knowledge of the man, and his communication. We have tried him in all things, and we have *always* found him faithful to the trust reposed in him by us. In him we see an example of daily labour, suffering, and self-denial worthy the imitation of the young preacher. In a word, we have *every reason* to esteem him as a *father*, and *not one reason* to suspect or discard him as a *tyrant* or *despot*." Reply to Mr. O'Kelly, p. 51.

Section X.—*Testimonies of English Methodists.*

Mr. M'Caine says, p. 31, "Neither are the ordinations which he" [Mr. Wesley] "conferred, viewed by writers among the English Methodists, who wrote in justification of Mr. Wesley's right to ordain, as favouring our title to episcopacy." And in support of this assertion, he quotes a passage from the English Method ist Magazine for 1825, which states that Mr. Wesley

"gave up episcopal ordination *as understood by high churchmen*," and established the "validity of presbyterian ordination." But who ever disputed this? Are not both these propositions as clearly maintained by the Methodist Episcopal Church as by our brethren of the British Connection? That any "contrary statement coming from our book agents" in this country, has ever been made or published, is an assertion wholly unfounded.

On the character of our episcopacy we have already stated the sentiments of Dr. Adam Clarke, and of the Rev. Richard Watson. We have also quoted a passage from the Rev. Henry Moore, the intimate friend of Mr. Wesley, and his faithful biographer, in which he says of our bishops: "That our brethren 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." Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 287.

To these testimonies we add the following, from the Rev. Jonathan Crowther, author of the Portraiture of Methodism.

"Peace being now established with the United States; and Mr. Asbury and the other preachers having been instrumental of a great revival during the war, solicited" [Mr. Wesley] "to send them help. Hence, in February this year" [1784] "he called Dr. Coke into his chamber, and spoke to him nearly as follows: That as the American brethren wanted a form of discipline, and ministerial aid; and as he ever wished to keep to the Bible, and as near to primitive Christianity as he could, he had always admired the Alexandrian mode of ordaining bishops. The presbyters of that great apostolical church would never allow any foreign bishop to interfere in their ordinations: but on the death of a bishop, for two hundred years, till the time of Dionysius, they ordained one of their own body, and by the imposition of their own hands. Adding withal, that he

wished the doctor to go over and establish that mode among the American Methodists.

"All this was quite new to the doctor. The idea of an Alexandrian ordination was at first somewhat revolting to his prejudices. However, being about to set out for Scotland, he weighed the subject for two months, and then wrote his entire approbation of the plan. Accordingly, he was ordained bishop, and brothers Whatcoat and Vasey presbyters." Second English edition, pp. 412, 413.

The same statement is made by the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, an eminent Wesleyan Methodist minister, in his "Short Memoirs of Thomas Coke, LL. D." This work was republished by Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware, in 1815.

But Mr. M'Caine relies on the English Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, and quotes the volume for 1825. Let us see, then, how this work supports him. That same volume contains a "Review of the Rev. Henry Moore's Life of Rev. John Wesley," in which we think we recognise the style of one of the most eminent men in the British connection. The following interesting passages, extracted from it, are as clearly and as fully to our purpose as if they had been written for us.

"The author," says the reviewer of Mr. Moore, "has spent some time in showing that episcopacy, by *name*, was not introduced into the American Methodist society by the sanction of Mr. Wesley, who, though he in point of *fact* did ordain *bishops* for the American societies, intended them to be called '*superintendents*.' To the statement of this as an historical fact, no objection certainly lies; but the way in which it is enlarged upon, and the insertion of an objurgatory letter from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury on the subject,—can have no tendency but to convey to the reader an impression somewhat unfavourable to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, as though they were ambitious of show and title. Mr

Moore, indeed, candidly enough relieves this, by admitting that, *on Mr. Wesley's principle itself*, and *in his own view*, they were true Scriptural *episcopoi*, and that Mr. Wesley's objection to the *name*, in fact, arose from its association in his mind rather with the adventitious honours which accompany it in church establishments, than with the simplicity and pre-eminence of labour, care, and privation, which it has from the first exhibited in America, and from which it could not from circumstances depart. According to this showing, the objection was grounded upon no principle, and was a mere matter of taste or expediency.—Whether the *name* had or had not the sanction of Mr. Wesley, is now *of the least possible consequence*, as *the episcopacy itself* WAS OF HIS CREATING." English Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1825, p. 183.

Clearer testimonies from the most eminent English Methodists, we could not desire: and we cheerfully submit it to the reader whether such men as these were not likely to be as well acquainted with the subject as Mr M'Caine; and whether their judgment be not a sufficient counterpoise to his?

In addition to the above, however, we have now before us a London edition of Dr. Coke's Journal, with a preface dated, "City Road, London, Jan. 25, 1790;" accompanied with a dedication "To the Rev. Mr. Wesley." In this dedication Dr. Coke states that he had found in Mr. Wesley "a father and a friend for thirteen years." If we compare this with the period at which Dr. Coke became connected with Mr. Wesley, which was between Aug. 1776 and Aug. 1777, it will just bring us down to the date of the preface; and this date, too, is in that very year [conference year] in which Dr. Coke's name was left off the British Minutes. It is hardly to be presumed, then, that Dr. Coke would, at that period particularly, have published and *dedicated* to Mr. Wesley, as his father and friend, what he knew to

be denied by Mr. Wesley, and to be peculiarly offensive to him. Yet in these very Journals, page 106, Dr. Coke says, *and said it to Mr. Wesley*, "On the 9th of March" [1789] "we began our conference in Georgia. Here we agreed (as we have ever since in each of the conferences) that Mr. Wesley's name should be inserted at the head of our Small Minutes, and also in our Form of Discipline.—In the Small Minutes as the fountain of our EPISCOPAL office; and in the Form of Discipline as the father of the whole work, under the Divine guidance. To this all the conferences have cheerfully and unanimously agreed." Now where is the evidence that Mr. Wesley ever "remonstrated" against this, or expressed the slightest displeasure at it? On the contrary, considering the circumstances then existing, is it not absolutely preposterous to believe that Dr. Coke would have *dedicated* such a statement to him, if he had not had the best reasons to believe that it would meet his approbation? This statement also completely refutes the insinuation that the American conferences possessed any disposition to treat Mr. Wesley with disrespect or "contempt;" much less to "excommunicate" him! It may serve to satisfy another writer, also, what is meant in the Minutes of 1789, by saying that Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and Mr. Asbury exercised the episcopal office "by regular order and succession." The intention was simply to acknowledge Mr. Wesley's *precedence*. To guard against any other construction, a *note* is added to that observation in the Minutes, referring to another place, in which the idea of the fabulous apostolical succession is expressly resisted by the bishops themselves.

Section XI.—*Dr. Coke.*

Mr. M'Caine states that the manner in which the doctor discharged the duties of the new office he was appointed to fill, and the title of bishop which he assumed, in connection with Mr. Asbury in their joint address to General Washington, "president of the American congress," involved him in difficulties with Mr. Wesley and the British conference; and that Mr. Wesley called him to an account for his conduct, and punished him by leaving his name out of the Minutes for one year.

As Mr. M'Caine professes to make the authority of Mr. Drew the basis of his account of this affair, we shall first take it up on his own ground, and shall show, from his own authority, that had he presented the subject fully, as Mr. Drew has done, instead of exposing Dr. Coke to reproach, it would demand for him, from us, both our admiration and our veneration.

According to Mr. Drew, the charge alleged against Dr. Coke in the British conference, was neither "the manner in which he discharged the duties of the new office he was appointed to fill," nor his having assumed "the title of bishop:" but simply, that he, *being a British subject*, had expressed to General Washington sentiments, *in relation to the American revolution*, which, *as a British subject*, they conceived he ought not to have expressed. Mr. Drew, though himself a British subject, has vindicated both the conduct and the motives of Dr. Coke on that occasion, with a triumphant ability which leaves us nothing to add. A few fuller extracts from the same pages from which Mr. M'Caine took his, will place the subject in the fair and candid light in which it is regarded by Dr. Coke's more magnanimous biographer.

"It is well known," says Mr. Drew, "that in the

unhappy contest between Great Britain and America, Mr. Wesley very warmly espoused the cause of England, and reprobated the conduct of the colonists. This circumstance placed the Methodists in a very suspicious light in the eyes of the Americans. The contest was indeed now brought to an issue. But although the tempest had subsided, the agitation which it occasioned still continued, and the waves were occasionally heard to beat upon the shore. The suspicions, therefore, which the Methodists incurred, it was incumbent on them to wipe away. The citizens thought it their duty to rally around the infant government, and to express their approbation of the principles which had been adopted. Among these citizens the different religious sects presented their addresses. Amidst these examples, and under the peculiar circumstances in which the Methodists were placed, it was scarcely possible for them to avoid making a similar acknowledgment without incurring the vengeance of their foes. Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury having assumed the character of bishops, were in the eyes of all the acknowledged head of the American Methodists: and no address could be considered as official unless it bore their signatures, as the organ of the body. Thus circumstanced, an address was drawn up, and signed by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, in behalf of the American Methodists, and presented to General Washington.

"Dr. Coke had both a private and a public consistency of character to sustain. As a subject of Great Britain, tenacious of the consistency of his personal actions, prudence would have directed him not to sign. But as a minister of Jesus Christ, as filling an official station in the Methodist societies, and as a superintendent in America, the welfare of the gospel commanded him to promote its interests, and to leave all private considerations as unworthy of bearing the name of rival. Between these alternatives he made a noble choice, and

acted upon an *exalted principle*, to which none but superior spirits can aspire. He has taught us by his magnanimous example that

'Private respects to public weal must yield,'

and that personal reputation was no longer his when the interests of Christianity demanded the costly sacrifice. By walking on this vast and comprehensive circle, he has encircled his name with wreaths of laurel, which will continue to flourish, when the sigh of smiling pity, and of sneering condolence can be no longer heard. Those who still continue to censure his conduct on the present occasion, now the mists of prejudice are done away, and all the consequences of each alternative appear in their proper bearings, plainly tell us how they would have acted under similar circumstances, if, like him, they had been called to feel the touch of Ithuriel's spear.

"A copy of this address was introduced" [into the British conference] "as a ground of censure against the doctor. It was urged against him, that, as a subject of Great Britain, it was inconsistent with his character to sign the address. That several expressions therein contained, in favour of the American government, implied a severe reflection on our own," [the British,] "and could not justly have been used by a British subject.—That, as a member of the Methodist society in England, and a leading character in the connection, his conduct was calculated to provoke the indignation of *government*, —and finally, that the address itself was *a tacit impeachment of Mr. Wesley's political sentiments*, and tended to place the whole body of Methodists" [in England] "in a very equivocal and suspicious light.

"Dr. Coke heard these charges urged against him IN PROFOUND SILENCE.

"Under these circumstances, as some decisive steps were necessary to be taken in this critical affair, it was

finally determined that the name of Dr. Coke should be omitted in the Minutes for the succeeding year. This prudent resolution had the desired effect, and the business of conference proceeded and terminated in peace.

"But this silent mark of disapprobation, as was evident from the effects which followed, was on the whole more *nominal* than *real*. The doctor *still maintained his rank in Mr. Wesley's affectionate regard, and continued to retain those offices which he had hitherto filled.* At the conclusion of the conference he proceeded as though nothing disagreeable had occurred, travelling through the societies in the same manner as he had travelled before he went to America." Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, pp. 102–145.

Such was the "punishment" then of Dr. Coke. Such the cause that led to it. Such the "profound silence" with which he heard the charge, and the Regulus-like magnanimity and self-devotion with which he acted, for the sake of beloved America and of American Methodists. And shall they forget him; or now remember him only to stain him with dishonour! "O tell *this* not in Gath."

It will be observed that Mr. M'Caine repeatedly asserts that the address to General Washington, by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, was presented in the year 1785. Now in that address they styled themselves bishops. We ask then, according to Mr. M'Caine's dates, why was it that neither Mr. Wesley nor the British conference did *then* object to that title, or censure Dr. Coke for it? Mr. M'Caine, indeed, says his assuming that title in that address was a ground of the omission of his name in the British Minutes. This we deny. It is an assertion wholly gratuitous, and unsupported by one particle of testimony. But if that address was presented to General Washington in 1785, it follows that Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury had taken the title of bishops three years previously to the introduction of it into the Minutes, and without censure. This title was not intro-

duced into the Minutes till 1788; nor was Mr. Wesley's objurgatory letter to Mr. Asbury written till September, 1788. And though Dr. Coke was completely in Mr. Wesley's power during this interval, yet it does not appear that he inflicted on him the smallest penalty. Can Mr. M'Caine explain all this, and still assert that the address was presented to General Washington in 1785?

But, on the hypothesis of Mr. M'Caine's dates, there is something still more curious in this affair. He maintains that the address to General Washington was presented before Dr. Coke left the United States in 1785; that it was published in the newspapers; and that a copy of it was introduced into the British conference, as a ground of censure against the doctor, on his return to England in that same year.

Now, supposing these facts, is it not a singular conjecture that Mr. Asbury or his friends, in order to screen *him* also from "punishment," or with any other motive, should have "changed the date of this address," and published it with an "altered" date, four years later than the true one, if it had been published in the *newspapers four years before* with its true date, carried across the Atlantic, and laid before Mr. Wesley, the British conference, and the world! In other words, that Mr. Asbury or his friends, from any motive, should have committed such a stupid forgery in the falsification of an official document, when both he and they must have known that the means of their exposure were so notorious that their detection and conviction would be inevitable? For it will be recollected that the parties were then all living, and the circumstances all recent; and matters of public notoriety. From what principle so vile an insinuation could proceed, on ground not only so futile, but so perfectly and manifestly absurd, the reader must form his own conclusion.

It will by no means excuse Mr. M'Caine to say that

he does not directly assert "by whom this thing was done." Every reader of his work cannot but consider Mr. Asbury, or his friends, or both, as implicated. The "History and Mystery" of the "Episcopacy" of those days was his subject; and the application is so plain that he who runs may read. Besides, by whomsoever it was done, Mr. Asbury must either have been privy to it, or certainly have known it afterward, and Dr. Coke also. And on this ground, at all events, they stand implicated by this insinuation, in the guilt of having at least countenanced and concealed an act of such criminality and baseness.

SECTION XII.—*Methodist Episcopacy.*

THE following views of our episcopacy were those of the bishops themselves, as contained in the notes of the Discipline prepared by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, at the request of the General Conference.

"The most bigoted devotees to religious establishments (the clergy of the church of Rome excepted*) are now ashamed to support the doctrine of the apostolic, uninterrupted succession of bishops,—and yet nothing but an apostolic, uninterrupted succession can possibly confine the right of episcopacy to any particular church." And "the idea of an apostolic succession being exploded, it follows that the Methodist Church has every thing which is Scriptural and essential to justify its episcopacy." Ed. 1798, pp. 6, 7.

"Nor must we omit to observe" [speaking of primitive episcopacy] "that each diocess had a college of elders or presbyters, in which the bishop presided. So

* Perhaps a few others, who still claim a very near relationship to Rome, ought to have been included in this exception.

that the bishop by no means superintended his diocess in a despotic manner, but was rather the chief executor of those regulations which were made in the college of presbyters." *Ibid.*, 8.

Nothing has been introduced into Methodism by the present episcopal form of government which was not before fully exercised by Mr. Wesley.—But the authority of Mr. Wesley and that of the bishops in America differ in the following points:

"1. Mr. Wesley was the patron of all the Methodist pulpits in Great Britain and Ireland for life, the sole right of nomination being invested in him by all the deeds of settlement.—But the bishops in America possess no such power. The property of the preaching houses is invested in the *trustees*, and the right of *nomination to the pulpits* in the *General Conference*, and in such as the *General Conference* shall from time to time appoint.* Here, then, lies the grand difference between Mr. Wesley's authority, in the present instance, and that of our American bishops. The former, as (under God) the father of the connection, was allowed to have the *sole, legal, independent* nomination of preachers to all the chapels; the latter are *entirely dependant* on the General Conference." *Ibid.*, 40, 41.

"But why does the General Conference lodge the power of stationing the preachers in the episcopacy? We answer, On account of their entire confidence in it. If ever, through improper conduct, it loses that confidence in any considerable degree, the General Conference will, upon evidence given, in a proportionable degree, take from it this branch of its authority. But if ever it betrays a spirit of tyranny or partiality, and *this* can be proved before the General Conference, the whole will be taken from it: and we pray God that in

* With this before our eyes, is it not strange that any candid writer should attempt to excite odium against the bishops, by representing our churches as "bishops' property?"

such case the power may be invested in other hands." *Ibid.*, 41.

"And we verily believe, that if our episcopacy should at any time, through tyrannical or immoral conduct, come under the severe censure of the General Conference, the members thereof would see it highly for the glory of God to preserve the present form, and only to change the men." *Ibid.*, 42.

"2. Mr. Wesley, as the venerable founder (under God) of the whole Methodist society, governed without any responsibility whatever;—but the American bishops are as responsible as any of the preachers. They are *perfectly subject* to the General Conference." *Ibid.*, 42. The words "*entirely dependant*" and "*perfectly subject*" are printed in Italics by the bishops themselves, to invite our particular attention to this acknowledged fact.

After naming one other point of comparison between the powers of Mr. Wesley and those of our bishops, viz., in the entire management of all the conference funds, which he possessed, and they do not; the bishops thus conclude:—

"We have drawn this comparison between our venerable father and the American bishops, to show to the world that they possess not, and, we may add, they aim not to possess, that power which he exercised, and had a right to exercise, as the father of the connection;—that, on the contrary, they are *perfectly dependant;* that their power, their usefulness, themselves, *are entirely at the mercy of the General Conference.*" *Ibid.*, 43, 44.

Now what more can we desire than such acknowledgments and declarations, freely and voluntarily made by the bishops themselves? And with what propriety, in the face of them, can our episcopacy be denominated an "absolute episcopacy;" or the bishops our "masters."

The power of stationing the preachers is certainly a great and weighty power, for the due and faithful exercise of which the bishops should be carefully and watch-

fully held to a strict responsibility. But it is a power vested in them by the preachers themselves, and as liable to be modified, or to be wholly taken from them, whenever the body of preachers shall judge such a measure expedient or necessary. The weight of this power rests upon the itinerant preachers. But surely, they of all men have the least right to complain of it, since the vesting of it, and the continuing of it in the bishops, is their own voluntary act and choice. They have submitted, and continue to submit to it, often, doubtless, with many and great inconveniences and sacrifices, because they have believed it most efficient, with an itinerant ministry, for the spread of the gospel and for the good of the church. And it is believed that our members, with very few exceptions, have always been of the same opinion.

The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church have no control whatever over the decisions of either a general or an annual conference. Whereas the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church have an *absolute negative* in their general conventions, and no act whatever can be passed in their church without the consent of the house of bishops, though it might even be unanimously agreed to, and ardently desired by the whole body, both of the clergy and laity; a power certainly greatly superior to any power possessed by the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Another evidence of the dependance of our bishops on the General Conference is, that if they cease to travel without the consent of that body, they become immediately incapable of exercising among us any episcopal or other ministerial function. In other words, as the bishops in their notes interpret this part of our Disci pline, they "are obliged to travel till the General Conference pronounces them worn out or superannuated;" a restriction which, as they justly remark, is not to be found in any other episcopal church.

Again: a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church cannot ordain a single individual, except in the mode prescribed by the General Conference, by the vote and direction of an annual conference.

In the notes on the Discipline, Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury did indeed claim the right, on their responsibility to God, binding them to "lay hands suddenly on no man," to "suspend the ordination of an elected person,' if such reasons appeared clearly against it that they *could not proceed with a good conscience.* But they, at the same time, acknowledged the necessity and the obligation of great caution in the exercise of this claim. And we are not aware that a single instance of the actual exercise of it has ever yet occurred since the organization of our church. That cases might occur, and that facts might take place or come to light, even after the election of individuals for orders, in which it would be the conscientious *duty* of a bishop to suspend proceeding in the ordination, there can be few persons so unreasonable as not to admit. And how the claim of this right to "suspend" an ordination in such a case can be represented as censurable on the part of the bishops, as it has been by a late writer, we do not understand. It is, in fact, expressly required of them by the Discipline:—"If any crime or impediment be objected, *the bishop shall surcease* from ordaining that person, until such time as the party accused shall be found clear of the crime."—See the form of ordaining both deacons and elders.

The late Rev. *John Dickens,* in his remarks on the proceedings of Mr. Hammett, says, in relation to the superiority of our bishops, as derived not from their "separate ordination," but from the suffrages of the body of ministers,—"Pray, when was it otherwise?"—and "how can the conference have power to remove Mr. Asbury and ordain another to fill his place, if they see it necessary, on any other ground?" Mr. Hammett

had said, "Let your superintendents know therefore,—that their superiority is derived from your suffrages, and not by virtue of a separate ordination. Gain and establish this point, and you sap the foundation of all arbitrary power in your church for ever." Mr. Dickens replies, "Now who ever said the superiority of the bishops was by virtue of a separate ordination? If this gave them their superiority, how came they to be removable by the conference? If then what you there plead for will sap the foundation of all arbitrary power, it has been sapped in our connection from the first establishment of our constitution," p. 31. Again he remarks, p. 32, "We all know Mr. Asbury derived his official power from the conference, and therefore his office is at their disposal." "Mr. Asbury," he says in another place, "was thus chosen by the conference, both before and after he was ordained a bishop; and he is still considered as the person of their choice, by being responsible to the conference, who have power to remove him, and fill his place with another, if they see it necessary. And as he is liable every year to be removed, he may be considered as their annual choice," p. 15. The high standing of John Dickens is too well known to need any statement of it here. He was also the particular and most intimate friend of Bishop Asbury. And the pamphlet containing the above sentiments was published by the unanimous request of the conference held at Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1792; and may be therefore considered as expressing the views both of that conference and of Bishop Asbury in relation to the true and original character of Methodist episcopacy. It may be confidently affirmed then, that the Methodist episcopacy, if preserved on its original basis, as it ever should be, has as little independent power as the episcopacy of any other episcopal church whatever.

SECTION XIII.—*Title Bishop.*

EPISCOPOS, (Greek,)—episcopus, (Latin,)—a bishop, or overseer. The Hebrew paked, as the Greek episcopos, whence the Anglo-Saxon bischop, and our English word bishop,—is any man that hath a charge and office for any business, civil or ecclesiastical. It is derived from επι, (*epi,*) *super*, and σκοπειν, (*skopein,*) *intendere, superintendere*, to *superintend*. And hence *superintendent*, from the Latin, is of precisely the same import as *bishop* from the Greek.—"Inter Πρεσβυτερον, tamen, et Επισκοπον, hoc interest: Πρεσβυτερος nomen est ordinis: Επισκοπος nomen in illo ordine officii." Between bishop and presbyter there is nevertheless this difference. Presbyter is the name of an *order*. Bishop is the name of an *office* in that order. See Leigh's Critica Sacra.

Originally, "the name Επισκοποι," [*episcopoi*, bishops,] given "to the governors of the church under the gospel," was "a name importing *duty* more than *honour;* and not a title above *presbyter*." Irenicum, p. 286.

We say then, with the Rev. Asa Shinn, that "intelligent Christians, before they either vindicate or vilify a simple name, will inquire into its precise signification." We have done so with regard to our term bishop. And the inquiry conducts us to the conclusion, that it may be vindicated, but cannot be justly vilified.

The following is the Rev. Nicholas Snethen's account of the introduction of the term bishop, in addressing our superintendents.

Mr. O'Kelly had asserted that "about the year 1787, Francis directed the preachers, whenever they wrote to him, to title him bishop." Mr. Snethen replies, that among Mr. Asbury's acquaintance the assertion sufficiently refutes itself, and that no one who has ever known the man can possibly give it credit for a moment; and adds,

"Some time after ordination was introduced among us, several of the ministers altered the inscription of their letters to each other from 'Mr.' to 'Rev.' Some were dissatisfied: they thought that it savoured more of pride than of piety; others had more serious scruples, and even doubted whether it were not impious to address men in a style and title given to Jehovah himself, as in Psalm cxi, 9: 'Holy and *reverend* is his name.' In the conference for 1787, this was made a subject of conversation, for the sake of those of scrupulous consciences. The conference advised that every one should use his own choice; and that those who doubted the propriety of *Reverend* might give the simple name, with the official character, as *bishop*, *elder*, or *deacon*. It was not thought proper to expose this little circumstance in print." Reply to James O'Kelly, pp. 10, 11.

The same liberty still exists. No man is obliged to style our general superintendents bishops. Any that choose to retain the original title of superintendent are perfectly at liberty to do so, whether in writing or otherwise. By some the latter title is still most generally used; and by most, if not by all of us, it is frequently used, without scruple, as synonymous with bishop; and not only equally proper but equally respectful. Indeed, according to Mr. Snethen's statement, the conference of 1787 seem to have considered the title bishop less exceptionable to scrupulous consciences than that of *Reverend;* and advised the use of the former by those who scrupled the propriety of using the latter. Yet this title *Reverend*, we have not understood that Mr M'Caine himself has ever declined; nor some other gentlemen of our modern days, who war with titles much less august.

Mr. M'Caine, p. 42, quotes "a writer," who states that, "in 1786 Mr. Asbury proposed to Mr. Wesley three persons to be appointed bishops for the United States, to act under Mr. Asbury." Mr. Wesley's answer, he

says, is worthy to be engraven in characters of gold. It was, he states,—"During my life there shall be no *archbishops* in the Methodist Church. But send me the man of your choice, and I shall have him appointed *joint superintendent* with you." Now, admitting this statement, we ask, in the name of common sense, if what we maintain is not here confessed: viz., that Mr. Wesley himself considered the term "superintendent" as synonymous with *bishop?* Why did he refuse to appoint a superintendent to act *under* Mr. Asbury? Because this would have been making Mr. Asbury an *arch*bishop; that is, a bishop over bishops. Of course the superintendent under him would have been a bishop. According to this statement, then, as *arch*superintendent means *arch*bishop, it necessarily follows, that "*joint* superintendent" means *joint* bishop, and *superintendent* simply *bishop.*

The following extract of a letter from the late Rev. and venerable Wm. Watters, will shed farther light on this subject.

"My Dear Brother,

"That there should be those who through prejudice think the Methodists, since they have had bishops among them, are quite a different people, is not strange. But is it not strange that those who have known them from the beginning should admit such a thought, till they have investigated the matter thoroughly? All must know that names do not alter the nature of things. We have from the beginning had one among us who has superintended the whole work. At first this person was solely appointed by Mr. Wesley, and called the general assistant: at a time when there were none but European preachers on the continent. But why was the name of general assistant ever changed? All that will open their eyes may know why. The Methodists in England and in America formerly did not call them-

selves a particular church; but a religious society in connection with different churches, but mostly with the Episcopal Church. After the revolutionary war the Episcopal clergy became very scarce, and in far the greatest number of our societies we had no way of receiving the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. It was this that led many of our preachers, as you well know, to take upon them the administration of the ordinances. Mr. Rankin, who was our first general assistant, after staying the time in this country he came for, returned home. This was at a time when we had no intercourse with England, and Mr. Asbury, the only old preacher that determined (in those perilous times) to give up his parents, country, and all his natural connections, was finally and unanimously chosen by the preachers (assembled in conference) our general assistant. He continued such until the year 1784, when the doctor came over, and not only the name of general assistant was changed to that of superintendent, but we formed ourselves into a separate church. This change was proposed to us by Mr. Wesley, after we had craved his advice on the subject; but could not take effect till adopted by us; which was done in a deliberate, formal manner, at a conference called for that purpose, in which there was not one dissenting voice. Every one of any discernment must see from Mr. Wesley's circular letter on this occasion, as well as from every part of our mode of church government, that we openly and avowedly declared ourselves episcopalians; though the doctor and Mr. Asbury were called superintendents. After a few years the name, from superintendent, was changed to bishop. But from first to last, the business of general assistant, superintendent, or bishop has been the same; only since we have become a distinct church, he has, with the assistance of two or three elders, ordained our ministers; whose business it is to preside in our conferences, and in case of an equal

division on a question, he has the casting vote; but in no instance whatever has he a negative, as you are told. He has also the stationing of all the travelling preachers, under certain limitations; which power, as it is given him by the General Conference, so it can be lessened or taken from him at any time conference sees fit.* But while he superintends the whole work, he cannot interfere with the particular charge of any of the preachers in their stations. To see that the preachers fill their places with propriety, and to understand the state of every station or circuit, that he may the better make the appointment of the preachers is, no doubt, no small part of his duty; but he has nothing to do with receiving, censuring, or excluding members; this belongs wholly to the stationed preacher and members." Memoirs, p. 103.

Mr. M'Caine, p. 34, reproaches our fathers with entering Mr. Wesley in the Minutes of 1789 as a "bishop," —"after it was known that the very term was so extremely offensive to him." This is not correct. They did enter him as exercising "the episcopal *office*." But they did not entitle him "bishop." The former was not offensive to him. He well knew the distinction between the *title* and the *office*. The latter he did exercise, and asserted his right to exercise it. And we have already shown, from the extract of Dr. Coke's Journals, that the statement of his having been so entered in the American Minutes was published in England in Mr. Wesley's lifetime, and dedicated to himself. This gave him no offence. On the contrary, when pressed concerning his "acting as a bishop," he did not deny, but justified it, and answered, "I firmly believe that I am a

* As our General Conferences were originally constituted, they possessed the power of our whole body of ministers. Whenever the powers of the present delegated General Conference are spoken of in this work, it is of course to be understood agreeably to the principles of the restrictive limitations.

Scriptural *episcopos*, 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." Letter to the Rev. —— on the Church. Works, vol. xvi, English edition.

SECTION XIV.—*Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

OUR argument has hitherto been conducted on the ground that Mr. Wesley did institute, and did intend to institute, under the title of superintendents, an episcopacy for the American Methodists; and that by Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our fathers, it was so, honestly and in good faith, understood. And in this we are well satisfied that the candid and intelligent reader will agree.

But leaving out of view, for argument's sake, the recommendation of Mr. Wesley altogether, we are still prepared, in the circumstances which then existed, to defend the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Had Mr. Asbury been actuated by the dishonourable motives of ambition and self-aggrandizement imputed to him, how easy had it been for him to have accomplished his purpose, and to have organized a church in America, with himself at its head, independently of Mr. Wesley and of the whole European connection. And what plausible pretext or occasion did he want? Early in the revolutionary struggle every other English preacher had fled. He alone, through the contest, devoted himself to American Methodism, at the risk and hazard of every thing dear. Mr. Wesley himself had openly and publicly espoused the royal cause against the colonies. This greatly embarrassed the American Methodists, and

especially the preachers, who were watched, and hunted, and imprisoned, and beaten, as his emissaries; and, through him, as the *disguised* emissaries of Great Britain. The societies, except in very few instances, were destitute of the sacraments. They could neither obtain baptism for their children, nor the Lord's supper for themselves. On this account, as early as 1778, Mr. Asbury was earnestly importuned to take measures that the Methodists might enjoy the same privileges as other churches. He resisted the proposal. Yet so serious was the crisis, that a large number of the preachers, to satisfy the urgent necessities of the societies, chose from among themselves three senior brethren, who ordained others by the imposition of their hands. Among these were some of the ablest and most influential men then in the connection. Surely no man ever had a fairer or a more plausible opportunity than Mr. Asbury then had, to organize and to place himself at the head of the Methodist Church in America, independently of Mr. Wesley. Yet it was he who, with the late venerable Watters, Garrettson, and others, resolutely remained in connection with Mr. Wesley; and rested not till by his indefatigable labours the whole of the seceding body were brought back, to await and to abide by Mr. Wesley's advice. And this is the same man who, after his death, is now charged with the vilest dissimulation and hypocrisy, and with violating the obligations both of "honour" and of "truth," for the sake of organizing a church, separate from and independent of Mr. Wesley, with himself at its head in conjunction with another!

Dr. Coke was appointed and set apart by Mr. Wesley, aided by other presbyters, as a general superintendent of the American Methodists. In that character he was *unanimously received* by the American conference, and with their consent was to exercise episcopal powers among them, and to act as a bishop, though called a superintendent.

Mr. Asbury was unanimously chosen by the same conference, to be a general superintendent conjointly with Dr. Coke. He was first ordained deacon and elder, and then superintendent, agreeably to the unanimous voice of the conference, by Dr. Coke, a presbyter of the Church of England, and Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, who had been previously ordained presbyters by Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and Mr. Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England; with the assistance of Mr. Otterbine, a presbyter of the German Reformed Church.

The intention of the conference was, that Mr. Asbury also should exercise episcopal powers, and act as a bishop, though to be called a superintendent; and the church was then, and thenceforth, called the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Admitting the validity of ordination by presbyters, and that, in such an exigency, they may even ordain bishops, such as are contended for in these pages, as we have shown they may, on what ground is the Methodist episcopacy, thus understood, and thus instituted, in such circumstances to be pronounced "illegitimate," unlawful? It is true Mr. M'Caine persuades himself "that the impartial, intelligent, and pious of other denominations" will so pronounce it. And he has certainly done all in his power to induce them to do so; and not only "the intelligent and pious" of other denominations, but the bigoted and prejudiced of every description, and especially the avowed enemies of the Methodist Church; separatists, and such as have been expelled from her communion; the restless and dissatisfied within it; and the enemies of Christianity in general. To such Mr. M'Caine's book has doubtless afforded a high gratification. But if there be any law, divine or human, prohibiting or proscribing such an episcopacy, let it be produced. Let the edict itself be shown, and let not any man think us impertinent if, in demanding the produc-

tion of it, we require that the terms of the edict be very express and positive.

If this matter be pressed still farther, we then insist that the unanimous election and appointing of the first Methodist bishops was of itself sufficient, in the circumstances then existing, to constitute a valid episcopacy, according to the judgment of Archbishop Cranmer, and those divines who concurred with him, as stated by Stillingfleet. And let those who maintain that any other authority was indispensable to its legitimacy, produce their warrant. And let them remember beforehand that we are not to be governed by tradition.

If it be objected that those proceedings took place among the preachers only, we answer: This was undeniably in accordance with the original principle on which the Methodist societies had been gathered, and united by the preachers, who determined on what principles of discipline and of administration they would devote themselves to take charge of, to guide, and to serve those who, *upon these principles, chose* to place themselves under their care, and especially upon what principles they could feel themselves at liberty to administer to them the ordinances.

If there were any law of God or man making this "illegitimate," unlawful, on the part of the preachers, let this edict also be produced. In the days of "the *fathers*" and of the *founders* of Methodism, at all events, both in Europe and in America, we hazard the assertion that these were principles recognised and acquiesced in by the Methodist *people* also. That it necessarily follows, however, from these premises, that any modification of this system in all after time, and in any change of circumstances, is absolutely precluded, is what we do not here mean to say. Nor is that a field into which our present subject requires us at all to enter.

But leaving out of view, for the present, any circumstances which might be collected of the divine appro-

bation of the proceedings of the conference of 1784, from the great and signal blessings which followed upon the labours of the preachers, and the special prosperity of the work from that time, we will conclude this part of our subject with an argument which, with some of our opponents, perhaps, may have more weight.

We maintain, then, that the proceedings of that conference in organizing the "Methodist Episcopal Church," with general superintendents, vested with episcopal powers, and intended to act as bishops, were in *fact*, if not in *form*, approved and sanctioned by the people, the Methodist people, of that day. And that the preachers set apart at that conference, in their appropriate and respective characters, as deacons, elders, and superintendents or bishops, were freely and cordially received and greeted by the people as such; and the sacraments gladly accepted, as they had long been urgently demanded, at their hands. Our proofs follow.

"The Methodists were pretty generally pleased at our becoming a church; and *heartily united together, in the plan which the conference had adopted.* And *from that time* religion greatly revived." Lee's History, p. 107.

"25th December, 1784. We became, instead of a religious society, a separate church, under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This change gave *great satisfaction through all our societies.*" William Watters' Memoirs, by Himself, p. 102.

"The conference met 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 to 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 was also unanimously received, jointly with him, to be the superintendents, or bishops, of the *Methodist Episcopal Church.*

From that time the Methodist societies in the United States became an independent church, under the episcopal mode and form of government. *This step met with general approbation, both among the preachers and the members.* Perhaps we shall seldom find such *unanimity* of sentiment upon any question of such magnitude." Rev. Ezekiel Cooper on Asbury, pp. 108, 109.

Of those who were members of the church at that period, very few are now living. And of such as are, these are not they who now complain of that act. That those who have voluntarily united themselves to this church since, knowing it to be thus constituted;—and some perhaps who have left other churches to join it;—or boys of yesterday, who but a few days ago solicited admission into it, thus organized;—that these should now represent the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church as a tyrannical *usurpation* over *them*, is an abuse of language so gross that we marvel how men of common intellect or conscience can allow themselves in it.

The following is a copy of a letter from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury, transcribed from the original. Its contents are in all respects highly interesting. But it is introduced here to show that, though written so recently after the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and at a period when Mr. Wesley could not but have known that event, it does not contain one syllable of censure or of disapprobation. It is dated,

"*Bristol, Sept.* 30, 1785.

"My Dear Brother,—It gives me pleasure to hear that God prospers your labours even in the barren soil of South Carolina. Near fifty years ago I preached in the church at Charleston, and in a few other places; and deep attention sat on every face. But I am afraid few received any lasting impressions.

"At the next conference it will be worth your while

to consider deeply whether any preacher should stay in one place three years together. I startle at this. It is a vehement alteration in the Methodist discipline. We have no such custom in England, Scotland, or Ireland

"I myself may perhaps have as much variety of matter as many of our preachers. Yet I am well assured, were I to preach three years together in one place, both the people and myself would grow as dead as stones. Indeed this is quite contrary to the whole economy of Methodism; God has always wrought among us by a constant change of preachers.

"Newly awakened people should, if it were possible, be plentifully supplied with books. Hereby the awakening is both continued and increased.

"In two or three days I expect to be in London. I will then talk with Mr. Atlay on the head. Be all in earnest for God.

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

SECTION XV.—*Leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes.*

THE meaning of this phrase seems not to have been correctly understood. In some cases Mr. M'Caine asserts that Mr. Wesley's name was left off in 1785; and then expresses surprise that he, notwithstanding, by his letter of September, 1786, attempted "to exercise his authority as formerly, by desiring that Mr. Whatcoat should be appointed a superintendent." In other places he represents this event as having taken place in 1787. The confusion was in Mr. M'Caine's own mind, not in the subject. This is easily explained.

In the Minutes of the conference of 1784, in answer to the second question it was said, "During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands." This minute remained unaltered till the conference of 1787. At that conference it was resolved to omit it. This act, and this only, is what is properly meant by leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes.

With regard to that minute, the conference of 1787 did not consider it in the light of a *contract* with Mr. Wesley. It had no such character. It was a mere voluntary declaration on the part of the conference of 1784, and one which had neither been required of them, nor was unalterably binding on their successors; who were as free to judge and act for themselves as their predecessors had been. If there was any thing improper in that business, Mr. Lee contends, it was in originally adopting the minute, and not in rescinding it. History, p. 127.

The declaration of the conference of 1784 was, that "during the life of Mr. Wesley they were ready to obey his commands *in matters belonging to church government.* That it was not understood or intended, however, from the commencement of our organization as a church, that Mr. Wesley should thereafter *personally appoint our church officers*, is susceptible of clear proof. In the form for "the ordination of superintendents," prepared for us by Mr. Wesley himself, and "recommended" to us in the prayer book of 1784, are these words: "After the gospel and the sermon are ended, the *elected* person shall be presented by two elders unto the superintendent, saying," &c. Again, in the same form: "Then the superintendent and elders present shall lay their hands upon the head of the *elected* person kneeling before them," &c. These passages indisputably prove, that Mr. Wesley himself at that time contemplated the

future *election* of our superintendents, and not that they were to be appointed by him.

On this principle Mr. Asbury acted from the commencement. When the design of organizing the Methodists in America into an independent episcopal church was first opened to the preachers then present, by Dr. Coke and Mr. Whatcoat, at their first meeting at Barratt's chapel, in Delaware, on the 15th of November, 1784, Mr. Asbury frankly declared, "If the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have hitherto done by Mr. Wesley's appointment." Journal, vol. i, p. 376. This frank avowal, at that early period, is a full refutation of Mr. M'Caine's unworthy insinuation that Mr. Asbury hypocritically pretended subjection to Mr. Wesley's authority "at that juncture," lest by doing otherwise he should dash from his lips the cup of sweets. As soon as the plan was opened to him, and not long before his election or ordination, he explicitly stated that if placed in the office of superintendent it must be by the voice of his brethren. When the conference was convened he made the same declaration, and declined to serve on any other ground. Nor was he ordained, nor was Dr. Coke received as a superintendent, until they were severally elected by the conference. This proves that the conference concurred in the same view. It is demonstrable that the conference of 1784 could not have viewed this subject in any other light; for in the same Minutes, in answer to the twenty-sixth question, they expressly said, "N. B. No person shall be ordained a superintendent, elder, or deacon, *without the consent of a majority of the conference.*" In the case of Mr. Whatcoat, Mr. Lee says, "Most of the preachers objected, and would not consent." History, p. 126. This they certainly had a right to do, agreeably to the original Minutes.

It will be observed farther, that the design of organizing the Methodists in America into "an independent

episcopal church," was first opened by Dr. Coke to Mr. Asbury and the preachers present, in the presence of Richard Whatcoat. Now there is every reason to believe that Mr. Whatcoat had a correct acquaintance with the intentions of Mr. Wesley: and when Dr. Coke stated the design of forming the Methodists in America into an "independent episcopal church," if Mr. Whatcoat knew that this was contrary to Mr. Wesley's intentions, it was his duty to express it. The universally admitted character of Mr. Whatcoat is a sufficient guarantee that he would have done so. A man of greater simplicity, guilelessness, and honesty, probably never lived. Mr. M'Caine must therefore involve Mr. Whatcoat also in the guilt of this knavish conspiracy, or else set him down as an ignorant tool. Yet Mr. Wesley, who knew him well, thought him not unworthy, two years after, to be recommended for the office of general superintendent. Such are the consequences continually involved in Mr. M'Caine's hypotheses.

In a letter dated "London, September 6, 1786," addressed to Dr. Coke, Mr. Wesley says,

"DEAR SIR,—I desire that you would appoint a General Conference of all our preachers in the United States, to meet at Baltimore on May the first, 1787. And that Mr. Richard Whatcoat may be appointed superintendent with Mr. Francis Asbury."

The calling of this conference by Dr. Coke, by the direction of Mr. Wesley, at a time and place unauthorized by any previous conference, was the first ground of dissatisfaction in the conference of 1787. The time fixed for it being much earlier than had been anticipated, subjected many of the preachers to considerable inconvenience; and some, in consequence of the derangement of their plans, did not attend at all. Among these were Ezekiel Cooper, and John M'Claskey, who then travelled in Jersey. This proceeding was one of the chief causes which led to the signing of the instru-

ment given by Dr. Coke at that conference, in which he promised not to exercise any government in the Methodist Episcopal Church *when absent* from the United States.

The subsequent part of Mr. Wesley's note does not seem to us at present, however it may have been intended, as an absolute appointment of Mr. Whatcoat. In one place, p. 43, Mr. M'Caine himself says, "It will be seen then that he does not 'appoint' Mr. Whatcoat a superintendent, but simply expresses a 'desire' that he 'may be appointed' one." Yet only one page before he expressly says, "Mr. Wesley accordingly *appointed* Mr. Whatcoat." So that, according to Mr. M'Caine, we have both assertions,—he *did* appoint him, and he *did not*. It is certain, however, that Dr. Coke contended that this letter of Mr. Wesley's was an appointment of Mr. Whatcoat; and that the conference were therefore "obliged" to receive him, in consequence of the minute of 1784 to obey Mr. Wesley's commands in matters relating to church government. And had the conference considered themselves obliged, as Dr. Coke contended, to receive Mr. Whatcoat merely by virtue of Mr. Wesley's authority, they might have been equally required by the same authority to submit to the recall of Mr. Asbury. Considering it therefore as their right, agreeably to the form of ordination, and to the rule adopted by the conference of 1784, to elect their superintendents; and finding that the minute respecting obeying Mr. Wesley in matters belonging to church government, was likely to become a source of contention, and to be construed in a sense which the conference of 1784 never intended, so as to deprive them of that right, they resolved to rescind it; and accordingly did so. But this act did not in any degree proceed from want of personal respect or regard for Mr. Wesley. At the very same time they addressed an affectionate letter to him, expressing their attachment, and their desire, if it were practicable, that he could visit them, and become per-

sonally acquainted with their affairs. For they did not believe it possible for him, at the distance of three thousand miles, to judge as correctly respecting their superintendents as they could who were on the spot. They did believe also that unjust representations of Mr. Asbury had been made to him, by some person or persons unfriendly to Mr. Asbury; and that, if they accepted of Mr. Whatcoat merely by his authority, in these circumstances, it might probably lead to Mr. Asbury's recall. They therefore declined to receive Mr. Whatcoat. But it was the *conference* that declined, as Mr. Lee states, and not Mr. Asbury, as we shall now farther prove.*

As Mr. M'Caine, on this subject, has only revived and new dressed the old charges of Mr. O'Kelly,—to refute them we have only to adopt the former refutation of Mr. O'Kelly by Mr. Snethen.

Mr. O'Kelly had asserted, "Francis was opposed to a joint superintendent."—"For a refutation of this charge," says Mr. Snethen, "see the following testimony."—The certificates of Dr. Coke, of Philip Bruce, and of Mr. Whatcoat himself.

"When Thomas Coke and Mr. Asbury met in Charleston, Thomas Coke informed him that Mr. Wesley had

* One of Mr. M'Caine's unnamed authorities says, "About this time there was a great rumour in London concerning the strides taken by Mr. Asbury for the extent of power, and one elderly gentleman, the Rev. T. R.," [Thomas Rankin, we presume,] "said it would be right to recall a man of that ambitious turn. *Mrs. Asbury*" [the mother of Bishop Asbury] "heard of this saying, and intimated to her son she hoped to see him shortly in England."

Mr. Snethen says also, "Mr. Asbury was the only English preacher that adopted the American country, and was determined to stand or fall with the cause of independence; all the rest returned, and *one at least* was not very well affected toward him: and Mr. Asbury's intentions were questioned, and Mr. Wesley was advised to keep a watchful eye over the great water." Answer to J. O'Kelly's Vindication, page 18.

It appears, too, from Mr. Snethen's account, that a preacher who was expelled in 1792 had been misrepresenting Mr. Asbury, and imposing on Mr. Wesley. Through *his* aid Mr. Hammett endeavoured to stab the character of Mr. Asbury. Mr. O'Kelly used the materials which they had prepared to his hand; and Mr. M'Caine has availed himself of them all, with the addition of Mr. Kewley's productions, but without naming his authorities.

appointed Richard Whatcoat as a joint superintendent, and Mr. Asbury *acquiesced* in the appointment, as did the Charleston conference when it was laid before them. Thomas Coke proposed the appointment to the Virginia conference, and, to his great pain and disappointment, James O'Kelly most strenuously opposed it; but consented that the Baltimore conference might decide it, upon condition that the Virginia conference might send a deputy to explain their sentiments.

"*Jan.* 7, 1796. (Signed) THOMAS COKE."

"I perfectly remember that Mr. O'Kelly opposed the appointment of Mr. Whatcoat; and that Mr. Asbury said enough to him and me to convince us that he was not opposed to the appointment.

"*Norfolk, Nov.* 30,1796. (Signed) PHILIP BRUCE."

"Mr. Asbury *was not opposed* to my being joint superintendent with himself. After receiving Mr. Wesley's letter he wrote to me from Charleston upon the subject. As I have not the letter by me at present, I cannot give the contents verbatim: but, as well as I recollect, the conclusion was: 'And if so, you must meet me at the Warm Springs, and we will make out a plan for your route through the continent.

"(Signed) R. WHATCOAT."*

"How could he" (Mr. O'Kelly) says Mr. Snethen, "publish such an idea? Had he forgotten the conversation which passed between himself and Mr. Asbury, at Dick's Ferry, upon Dan River? in which Mr. Asbury told him it would be best to accept Richard Whatcoat."

* Let the reader compare these certificates with the letter of the 31st of Oct., 1789, which Mr. M'Caine, p. 47, imputes to Mr. Wesley, in which it is stated that Mr. Asbury "flatly refused to receive Mr. Whatcoat." From this comparison it is certain, either that Mr. Wesley never wrote that letter as it is given to us; or if he did, that he had been imposed on by *false information.*

Rev. N. Snethen's Reply to James O'Kelly's Apology, pp. 9, 10.

We may add, also, that Mr. Snethen has as triumphantly vindicated Mr. Asbury from "the smallest blame" in relation to the leaving of Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes. Mr. O'Kelly had asserted that "Francis took with him a few chosen men, and in a clandestine manner expelled John, whose surname was Wesley, from the Methodist Episcopal Church." Mr. Snethen replies,

"Surely an author that will publish such a slander against an innocent man, is but little better than he who would be guilty of the charge. Mr. Asbury has given the compiler a particular detail of every circumstance relative to himself, that had the most remote relation to the leaving Mr. Wesley's name out of the American Minutes; which makes it appear that *Mr. Asbury was not deserving of the smallest blame in the whole business;* and the compiler," Mr. Snethen, "is *certain* that *Dr. Coke* and *all the preachers then living, who were at that time members of the conference*, were *perfectly satisfied* that Mr. Asbury was *entirely innocent* of the charge." Reply to Mr. O'Kelly's Apology, p. 12.*

On the whole, viewing this subject with a candid and affectionate reverence for all parties, we do not say that a gentler and more conciliatory course on the part of that conference, in relation to Mr. Wesley personally, might not have been, perhaps, the more excellent way. But this is submitted with all our added light, and when

* Since writing the above we have seen a statement from Mr. Snethen of the circumstances in which his publications respecting Mr. O'Kelly were compiled.—It does not appear, however, to require any alteration of what we have written. The facts and documents remain the same. We are well satisfied also that Mr. Snethen would never, even as a member of a committee, have published any thing which he did not himself believe. And we are equally satisfied that he always had, and still has, too high an opinion of Bishop Asbury's personal moral worth, to believe for a moment that he would have furnished either documents, or any statement of facts, even in his own defence, which he knew to be either forged or false.

the excitements, the apprehensions, and the embarrassments of that day are wholly gone. Yet we do say, that had we lived in the days of "our fathers," it is highly probable that a majority of us would have felt, and judged, and acted, as a majority of them did; and very doubtful whether we, or their censors, would have done better.

At one time, Mr. Wesley's name, to use the common phrase, was left off the *American* Minutes. At another, *Dr. Coke's* was omitted in the *English* Minutes. And at yet another, (1778,) Mr. Asbury's name also was omitted in the American Minutes. In each case it was done from what were then deemed prudential considerations. With our *present lights* we may doubt, perhaps, the real necessity of either of them. Yet are *we* prepared to assert, with confidence, what might, and would have been the effects, if these measures had not been adopted?*

Mr. M'Caine is also displeased that, at the death of Mr. Wesley, no account was given of him in the American Minutes. We wish this had been otherwise. But if he can believe that the omission resulted from "*con-*

* With respect to the "rejecting of Mr. Wesley," or leaving his name off the Minutes, the following is Mr. Asbury's statement:—

"I was amazed to hear that my dear aged friend, Benjamin Evans, (now gone to glory,) was converted to the new side by being told by J. O'Kelly that I had offended Mr. Wesley, and that he being about calling me to account, I cast him off altogether. But, *quere*, did not J. O'K. set aside the appointment of Richard Whatcoat? and did not the conference in Baltimore strike that *minute* out of our Discipline which was called *a rejecting of Mr. Wesley?* and now does J. O'K. lay all the blame on me. It is true, I never approved of that binding minute. I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley, at three thousand miles' distance, in all matters relative to church government; neither did Brother Whatcoat, nor several others. At the first General Conference I was mute and modest when it passed, and I was mute when it was expunged. For this Mr. Wesley blamed me, and was displeased that I did not rather reject the whole connection, or leave them, if they did not comply. But I could not give up the connection so easily, after labouring and suffering so many years with and for them." Journal, vol. ii, p. 270.

tempt" of Mr. Wesley, we must leave him to enjoy his opinion. The adoption of such a sentiment requires a strong predisposition and desire to believe it.*

The truth seems to be, that, as the deaths of American preachers are not mentioned in the British Minutes, so the deaths of the European preachers are not mentioned in the American Minutes; although, in a general sense, we are all regarded as one body. In the case of Mr. Wesley an exception to this general mode of proceeding might doubtless have been made with great propriety. But that not a particle of any thing like "cold neglect" or "contempt" of Mr. Wesley had place in the mind of Mr. Asbury on that occasion, we have the explicit testimony of Mr. Moore. Even on receiving from Mr. Wesley the letter of Sept., 1788, Mr. Moore says, "Mr. Asbury *lost none of his veneration* for his father in the gospel," Mr. Wesley: and as a *proof* of this he cites the entry which Mr. Asbury made in his journal, on the occasion of the death "of that dear man of God;" in which, after expressing himself in the highest terms of Mr. Wesley's character and attainments, Mr. Asbury adds: "I conclude his *equal* is not to be found among all the sons he hath brought up, nor his *superior* among *all the sons of Adam*." Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 286. With what face, after this, can Mr. Asbury, at least, be involved in the insinuation of treating the memory of Mr. Wesley with "cold neglect, if not contempt?"

Even in the British Minutes the notice of Mr. Wesley's death was extremely short: for the conference declared that they found themselves "utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on that awful and affecting event."

* When the great Fletcher died, the account of him in the English Minutes was contained in *one line and a quarter*. That *line and a quarter*, however, from the pen of Mr. Wesley, expressed, we confess, as much as some of our modern pages.

That Mr. Wesley before his death became satisfied of the continued affection and attachment of the American Methodists, appears from his correspondence.

In a letter to the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, written only twenty-nine days before his death, after mentioning his growing infirmities, he says, "Probably I should not be able to do so much, did not many of you assist me by your prayers. See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue,

> 'Though mountains rise, and oceans roll,
> To sever us in vain,' "

This proves that he did not then consider us as separated from himself, or from our European brethren.

The same sentiment has been since officially avowed both by the British and American conferences. The credentials furnished by our brethren in Europe, either to their ministers or members, are recognised and honoured by us here, as entitling them to every privilege of our church. The credentials which we furnish are also acknowledged by them. And of late years the two connections have mutually exchanged delegates, as the representatives of each other, in our respective conferences. Of this state of unity and affection every friend of this great work will cordially say—May it be perpetual.*

* On the proceedings of the conference of 1787, Dr. Coke in his Journal of that date remarks,—

"Never surely was more external peace and liberty enjoyed by the church of God, or any part of it, since the fall of man, than we enjoy in America: and every thing seems to be falling before the power of the word. What then remained for the infernal serpent, but to sow the seeds of schism and division among ourselves? But, glory be to God, yea, glory for ever be ascribed to his sacred name, the devil was completely defeated. Our painful contests, I trust, have produced the most indissoluble union between my brethren and me. We thoroughly perceived the mutual purity of each other's intentions in respect to the points in dispute. We mutually yielded,

SECTION XVI.—*Mr. M'Caine's Arithmetical Calculations.*

MR. M'CAINE states, page 65, that the "appeal" proposed by Mr. O'Kelly in the conference of 1792 "was the origin and cause of a secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church, of such great extent, that in less than five years the Minutes of Conference exhibit a decrease of 20,000 members."

Now how does he make this out? The conference at which Mr. O'Kelly proposed his appeal was in *November*, 1792. The first return of numbers thereafter was in 1793. The total number of members, white and coloured, on the face of the Minutes then was 67,643. In 1798, five years afterward, the total number was 60,169; making a decrease of only 7,474. Or, if we take it in 1797, four years from 1793, the total number then was 58,663; making a decrease of 8,980. If we make the calculations from 1792, the decrease, according to the Minutes, in 1796 was 9,316; and in 1797 it was 7,317.

But did not Mr. M'Caine, in order to show so large a decrease, go back to 1791? If he did, why did he do so? In 1792 the aggregate numbers on the face of the Minutes was 65,980; and it was *subsequently* to that return that the General Conference of 1792, at which Mr. O'Kelly proposed his appeal, was held. Of course, the numbers as returned for 1791 could not justly be made the starting place for this calculation. Besides, from 1791 to 1792 there was in reality an *increase* of more than 2,000 members; which farther shows the

and mutually submitted; and the silken cords of love and affection were tied to the horns of the altar for ever and ever."

We shall be most truly rejoiced to find that as much purity of intention, and sincerity of affection, and of "the wisdom that is from above," exists among us at the present day, as actuated the hearts of our excellent "fathers."

impropriety of beginning the calculation of a *decrease* from 1791. It happens, however, that in 1791 the face of the Minutes exhibits so very large an aggregate that it suited Mr. M'Caine's purpose excellently well to begin his calculation from that date. But in that aggregate, as exhibited by the Minutes, did Mr. M'Caine discover no mistake? If he did not, his examination was extremely superficial. If he did, it was a great want of candour, and great injustice to his readers, not to state it. On either ground we submit whether this specimen affords us any very great encouragement to rely implicitly on Mr. M'Caine's diligent investigation, and accurate report of *documents?* Whoever will examine the Minutes of 1791 will find that there is an error in the aggregate of the numbers stated for that year of between *twelve and thirteen thousand too many*. The *whole* number, of both whites and coloured, is first given at the foot of the column headed "Whites;" and then the number of the *coloured* is given *besides*, which makes an error equal to the whole number of the coloured members, which must be deducted from the total aggregate of the two columns, to ascertain the true aggregate.

In this calculation Mr. M'Caine is the more inexcusable, as he had before him Mr. Lee's History, in which the increase and decrease are regularly stated from year to year. This might have led any careful investigator to an easy discovery of the error in the Minutes. In 1794 the first decrease took place that had occurred for fourteen years. The largest decrease was in 1795. In 1796 there was still a decrease. But in 1797 there was again an increase, nearly 2,000 having been added to the numbers.

In the simple addition and subtraction of figures, we should have supposed that Mr. M'Caine would have been peculiarly accurate. And if he has so palpably erred in a case so plain, and so perfectly susceptible of investigation and correction, it can be no want of charity

to believe that he may have equally erred in matters much more difficult and intricate, in which he has bewildered himself in the mazes of "mystery," where the certain science of mathematics could afford no aid.

But we have a few other cases of arithmetical logic to propose in bar of Mr. M'Caine's. If the "decrease" stated by Mr. M'Caine, and the "secessions since that period in different parts of the United States," be a fair argument against our "episcopal form of church government," are the *increase* and the *accessions* since no argument in its favour? We put then the following cases for Mr. M'Caine's calculation.

In the year 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was first organized, the number of members in our societies was 14,988. In forty-three years, under our episcopal form of church government, the increase has been 367,009; the total number of members now being 381,997.

In less than five years, at one period, Mr. M'Caine says there was a *decrease* of 20,000 members; though the true decrease, during that period, was not half that number. In *one* year (1827) we have had an *increase* of 21,197.

The secession which caused the decrease which Mr. M'Caine names, soon came to naught: and scarcely a wreck or a vestige of it now remains; while Episcopal Methodism, from which that secession drew off, has been graciously and divinely prospered, to an extent even beyond the anticipations of its most sanguine and devoted friends. Now the answer required is, taking all these cases together, what is the sum of the arithmetical argument;—on which side is the true balance; and to what amount?

SECTION XVII.—*The Address to General Washington.*

OF all Mr. M'Caine's book, those parts which respect the address to General Washington are the most extraordinary. "It is evident," he asserts, p. 46, "that the *date* of this address was altered." That he does not in direct terms charge Mr. Asbury with the alteration, and for the base purposes named, as we have before shown, cannot excuse him. The implication is too clear to be mistaken. If a false date were forged, and imposed on the public, Mr. Asbury could not have been innocent. He could not have been ignorant of the truth in the case, nor of his duty respecting it. We have therefore examined this subject minutely; and the result has amply repaid our pains.*

Mr. Drew does not give the address itself; nor state expressly what its precise date was. He seems, indeed, to have been left in peculiar embarrassment with regard to dates, in consequence of the death of Dr. Coke at sea, before he had arranged his papers in chronological order, for his anticipated biographer, as he had intended. This is intimated in Mr. Drew's dedication. Admitting, however, from the course of his narrative, that it was

* Mr. M'Caine asserts also, pp. 37 and 38, that the *Minutes of Conference* "*were altered*,"—"to make them quadrate with subsequent proceedings." In proof of this, and showing the *application* to Mr. Asbury, he refers to Lee's History. Now Mr. Lee says, "In the course of this year" [1787] "Mr. Asbury reprinted the General Minutes, but *in a different form* from what they were before," p. 127. The Minutes had been printed before in one general body of consecutive questions and answers. Mr. Asbury "methodized and arranged them under proper heads." So also Mr. Lee says in another place, p. 68, "The form of the Annual Minutes was changed this year" [1779] "in a few points; and the first question stands thus, 'Who are admitted on trial?' The first question used to be, 'Who are admitted into connection?'" It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Lee had reference simply to the *form* in which the Minutes were methodized and printed. And has not their form been repeatedly altered since? Has it not been altered, and, as some think, improved, several times within the last few years? If this be deemed any crime, those considered guilty would be much obliged if the accusation may be made in their lifetime, that they may have an opportunity to answer for themselves.

his impression that the address was presented in 1785, this mistake can be much more readily excused in Mr. Drew than in Mr. M'Caine. Mr. Drew was a foreigner, writing in a foreign country. Mr. M'Caine was here on the spot, writing in reference to prominent and well-known events in our history, and where the most ample and accurate sources of information were perfectly open to him. The two dates, 1785 and 1789, were *both* before him. Both were subjected to his deliberate investigation. He *chose* that of 1785; and went so far as to charge that of 1789 with being an "altered" date, and consequently forged. Nothing could be more deliberate, and at the same time more grossly erroneous. Any former publisher might have overlooked an error in the narrative, as a court in the ordinary routine of business, without investigation or argument, or having the attention directed to the points of a case. But Mr. M'Caine's error is that of a court solemnly deliberating, hearing the arguments of counsel, taking time to advise, and then pronouncing a most glaringly unfounded and injurious decision, against all evidence and reason, and all justice and truth.

Mr. M'Caine repeatedly states that the address was made to General Washington, "President of the American congress." He does this not only when quoting Mr. Drew, but when he has no reference to Mr. Drew. See particularly page 62. Now did he not know, or ought he not to have known, that General Washington never was president of the American congress? and that in 1785 he was in no official situation whatever, but a mere private citizen attending to his farms. In fact Washington was a private citizen during the whole period from the resignation of his command of the American armies in 1783, till his election to the presidency in 1789; except only during the few months in which he was a member and president of the convention for the formation of the constitution of the United States,

in 1787. These facts and dates are contained in our common *school books.*

Mr. M'Caine, however, did know that Washington was not president of the United States till after the adoption of the constitution in 1788. This he states, p. 46. Why then, in the name of consistency, did he still insist that the true date of the address was in 1785? Do not both the address and the answer contain perfect *internal* evidence that their proper date *must* have been after the adoption of the constitution, and the election of General Washington to the presidency? Unless we admit this, we must allege a forgery not only in the *date,* but in the *body* and *matter* both of the address and answer. The address commences thus :—

"To the *President of the United States.*" It then proceeds to express the congratulations of the bishops on the general's "appointment *to the presidentship of these States.*" And in the ensuing paragraph, their most grateful satisfaction at his course respecting "the most excellent constitution of these States."

The president in his reply returns his thanks for their demonstrations of affection, and expressions of joy "on his late appointment." Now can any one tell what "late appointment" General Washington had received in 1785? or how any sense can be made out of this whole business, if its date be fixed at any time anterior to 1789?

But we will not detain the reader longer with reasoning on the subject, though our reasoning alone would be conclusive. We will present him with the evidence of documents which shall put this matter to rest. The following is an

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Thomas Morrell, to the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, dated, "Elizabethtown, N. J., Aug. 26, 1827."

"With regard to the information you request concerning the address to General Washington, I can furnish

you with every material circumstance respecting it, having acted as a sub-agent in the transaction, and having a distinct recollection of the whole business. The history of it is, That Mr. Asbury, in the New-York conference in 1789, offered for the consideration of the conference the following proposal:—Whether it would not be proper for us, as a church, to present a congratulatory address to General Washington, who had been lately inaugurated president of the United States, in which should be embodied our approbation of the constitution, and professing our allegiance to the government. The conference unanimously approved, and warmly recommended the measure; and appointed the two bishops, Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, to draw up the address. It was finished that day, and read to the conference, who evinced great satisfaction in its recital. Brother Dickens and myself were delegated to wait on the president with a copy of the address, and request him to appoint a day and hour when he would receive the bishops, one of whom was to read it to him, and receive his answer. It was concluded that although Dr. Coke was the senior bishop, yet not being an American citizen, there would be an impropriety in his presenting and reading the address; the duty devolved of course on Bishop Asbury. Mr. Dickens and myself waited on the general; and as I had some personal acquaintance with him, I was desired to present him with the copy, and request his reception of the original by the hands of the bishops. The president appointed the fourth succeeding day, at twelve o'clock, to receive the bishops. They went at the appointed hour, accompanied by Brother Dickens and Thomas Morrell. Mr. Asbury, with great self-possession, read the address in an impressive manner. The president read his reply with fluency and animation. They interchanged their respective addresses; and, after sitting a few minutes, we departed. The address and the

answer, in a few days were inserted in the public prints; and some of the ministers and members of the other churches appeared dissatisfied that the *Methodists* should take the lead. In a few days the other denominations successively followed our example.

"The next week a number of questions were published, in the public papers, concerning Dr. Coke's signing the address. Who was he? How came he to be a bishop? Who consecrated him, &c., accompanied with severe strictures on the impropriety of a *British subject* signing an address approving of the government of the United States; charging him with duplicity, and that he was an enemy to the independence of America; for they affirmed he had written, during our revolutionary war, an inflammatory address to the people of Great Britain, condemning, in bitter language, our efforts to obtain our independence; and other charges tending to depreciate the doctor's character, and bringing him into contempt with the people of our country. As I did not believe the assertion of the doctor's writing the address above-mentioned, I applied to a gentleman who was in England at the time, to know the truth of the charge; he assured me the doctor had published no such sentiments in England during the revolutionary war, or at any other period, or he should have certainly had some knowledge of it. And this was the fact, for the doctor had written no such thing. As there was no other person in New-York, at that time, in our connection, who could meet these charges, and satisfactorily answer these queries, I undertook the task, and in my weak manner endeavoured to rebut the charges and answer the questions. A second piece appeared, and a second answer was promptly published. No more was written on the subject in New-York. The doctor afterward gave me his thanks for defending his character.

"Such are the material circumstances that occurred concerning the address to General Washington, and his

reply: which you are at liberty to make use of in any way you think proper,—and if you judge it necessary may put my name to it.

"THOMAS MORRELL."

I certify that the above is a true extract of an original letter of the Rev. Thomas Morrell, addressed to me, bearing the above date, and now in my possession.

EZEKIEL COOPER.

New-York, September 7, 1827.

To this we add the following copy of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Sparks, of Boston, to whom the papers of General Washington have been intrusted, for the purpose of making such selections for publication as he shall deem proper; in which important work this gentleman is now engaged. And for this polite and prompt reply to our inquiries, we here tender to Mr. Sparks our most respectful thanks.

"*Boston, September* 1, 1827.

"DEAR SIR,—Your favour of the 26th ultimo has been received, and I am happy to be able to furnish you with the information you desire. The '*date*' of the address presented by Bishops Coke and Asbury to General Washington is May *twenty-ninth*, 1789. It is proper to inform you, however, that I do not find the *original* paper on the files, but take the date as it is recorded in one of the volumes of 'Addresses.' It is barely possible that there may be a mistake in the record, but not at all probable.

"It is not likely that any address from any quarter was presented to Washington in 1785. I have never seen any of that year. He was then a private man, wholly employed with his farms.

"I am, sir, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"JARED SPARKS."

Mr. J. Emory.

To complete this investigation, we have examined the newspapers published in this city (New-York) in 1789, of which files are preserved in the New-York Library. The address of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury was published in the *Gazette of the United States*, on the 3d of June, 1789; and is dated May 29, of that year; exactly corresponding with the date stated by Mr. Sparks, from the Washington records. The same address may be found in the Arminian Magazine for June, 1789, published in Philadelphia by John Dickens. It is there dated May 19, 1789. This seems either to have been a typographical error of 19 for 29; or, probably, the original draught of an address was prepared about the 19th,—and this date, *then* put to it, was inadvertently left uncorrected when placed in the hands of the printer. This difference of a few days, however, cannot now be of any possible moment, as it is placed beyond all dispute, that the true date of the address, as presented to Washington, was May 29, 1789.*

The visit of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to General Washington, at Mount Vernon, in 1785, was merely to solicit his influence in favour of a petition which they had it in contemplation to present to the general assembly of Virginia on the subject of slavery. They dined with the general, and had a personal interview on the subject, but made no particular address. A circumstantial account of that visit, and the politeness with which the general received them, may be seen in Dr. Coke's journal of May, 1785.†

* At the British conference in 1820 an address was adopted on the occasion of the death of George III., and the accession of George IV. to the throne of Great Britain. The original draught of that address was prepared by Dr. Adam Clarke *previously* to the conference. It was read by him and submitted to the conference on the *first* day of the session, and *dated* on that day, though not finally acted on till some days after, nor presented till still later.

† In the account which Mr. Drew gives of Dr. Coke's and Mr. Asbury's address to General Washington, he states that "various addresses" of other denominations about the same time found their way into the American news-

Since writing the above, we have received a letter rom the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper; of which the following s an extract:—

"*Trenton, N. J., Oct.* 16, 1827.

"*Rev John Emory,*

"DEAR SIR,—I have a book, now lying before me, entitled, '*A Collection of the Speeches of the President of the United States to both Houses of Congress at the opening of every Session, with their Answers.—Also, the Addresses to the President, with his Answers, from the time of his Election.* Printed at Boston, by Manning & Loring, for Solomon Cotton, 1796.' In which book, at pages 133, 134, is the address of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the president, and his answer. The address is dated New-York, May 29, 1789. This agrees with the information you have from Mr. Jared Sparks, as to the time when the address was presented.

"It is now to be hoped that neither the author of the History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, nor his friends or advocates, will be so bold, I am almost ready to say so presumptuous, as to believe the reproachful or slanderous charge of altering the date of the said address, to answer some unworthy and falsely supposed purpose. For in so doing, it will implicate Washington himself, who has left it on record among his papers,

papers, and across the Atlantic; among which, none so much attracted the attention of the English Methodists as that which bore the signature of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury.—Life of Dr. Coke, pp. 147, 148. Of these other addresses, that of the Presbyterian Church was dated May 26, 1789, and presented June 5;—of the German Reformed, June 10, 1789;—of the Protestant Episcopal Church, dated August 7, and presented August 19, 1789. These were all published in the Gazette of the United States of that year. That of the Protestant Episcopal Church was also published in the New-York Daily Gazette. The president's answer to each of them bears no date; except that to the Protestant Episcopal Church, as published in the Gazette of the United States, is dated August 19. But as published in the New-York Daily Gazette this also is not dated. And we believe the president did not usually date his answers to addresses at that period.

that the said address was received by him May 29, 1789. Also Mr. Sparks, who is in possession of Washington's papers, and testifies, in the communication to you that it there stands dated May 29, 1789. And also the compiler or editor of the book before me, above-mentioned, in which the address and answer are published, bearing the same date, May 29, 1789. Surely every one must be fully convinced and satisfied of the false and unworthy charge.

"The answers of Washington to the addresses are generally without date: scarcely an instance of date. Some of the addresses and answers are both without date.

"As to the difference of the date of Bishops Coke and Asbury's address, as published in the Arminian Magazine, May 19, and as published in the above-mentioned book, &c., May 29, it might have been a typographical error, otherwise the original draught might have been written in Philadelphia, where the conference sat the 18th of May—and the conference sat in New-York the 28th. At New-York they probably dated it the 29th, and Brother Dickens might have printed from the draught made in Philadelphia, dated the 19th. The Magazine was published in Philadelphia.

"Yours, &c.,

"EZEKIEL COOPER."*

* We take pleasure in adding, that having had frequent interviews with Mr. Cooper, and free conversations on the subjects of this work, we believe we are warranted in saying that he concurs in our views. To this intelligent and able man, one of the most aged of our itinerant ministry now living, we here also tender our thanks for several interesting facts derived from the treasures of his well-stored memory; and also from some private manuscript notes of his own. The concurrence of Mr. Cooper on the topics here discussed is the more valued, as all who are acquainted with him know that, as no man among us is more capable of forming a correct judgment respecting them, or has paid more minute and constant attention to them, so no one is less disposed unduly to exalt the episcopacy, or would be more free and fearless to expose any imposition or fraud, if discovered.

SECTION XVIII.—"*History and Mystery*" *of Mr. M'Caine's Inconsistency.*

AFTER all Mr. M'Caine's denunciations of the name of bishop, and of the episcopal office among us, he thus concludes, pp. 70–72.

"Let the local ministers and the laity be represented in the legislative department of the church. On the other points which we have mentioned above, we place, comparatively, no stress. We are not tenacious of them. We are willing, if it should be thought best, to relinquish any, or all of them. But representation from the local ministry and laity, by the help of God, we will never relinquish." Now one of "the *other points*" mentioned above was,—"Let the name of bishop, and the episcopal office as it now exists among us, be put away for ever." Yet, founded in falsehood, in imposture, and in fraud, as he represents these to have been, and disgraceful and contemptible almost beyond expression, he is nevertheless "not tenacious" of their being "put away," provided the laity and the local ministry, of whom he is one, may be admitted into a higher state of participation with this base concern! Is Mr. M'Caine sincere? Does he really mean, after all he has said, that if admitted into the General Conference, he would not be "tenacious" of "doing away the name of bishop and the episcopal office, as it now exists among us"—or does he say this, lest by saying otherwise "at this juncture" he might "dash from" *his* "lips the cup of sweets?"*

* This part of Mr. M'Caine's work has been noticed by another writer, in the following terms of strong rebuke :—"We must say, that if he believes all that he has written in the previous part of his book, and would be satisfied with *this*, he offers a base and disgraceful compromise. If we believed, as he asserts, that the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church originated in falsehood, and has been perpetuated by fraud and forgery, we would disdain to make any compromise at all with the authors of it: we would be satisfied with nothing which did not go to overthrow the whole establishment, and wipe from the remembrance of all men, this foul blot on the character of Methodism."—Dr. T. E. Bond's Appeal.

But a still more extraordinary "mystery" of inconsistency remains to be developed. Mr. M'Caine states in his preface, page 5, as one of the reasons for his publication, that he thinks the "exposure" he has made "will tend much to lessen, if it will not totally overcome, the opposition of travelling preachers to representation." That is, to the representation of the local preachers and laity in the General Conference.

Now the reader will please to observe, that for many years past, a large portion of the travelling preachers have been desirous to effect some diminution of the episcopal prerogative, by vesting in the annual conferences some voice in the selection of the presiding elders. This Mr. M'Caine knew. Yet during the very period in which he was engaged in preparing his book, in order, it would seem, to "lessen, if not totally to overcome," episcopal opposition, too, to the representation of the local preachers, he made a communication, in a way to reach episcopal ears, that if he might take the liberty of expressing *all his mind*, the probability would be greater for the *continuance* of the exercise of this prerogative from a *local* representation than without it. And why? Because, in his opinion, *affection* and *veneration* for EPISCOPAL men might, *and no doubt would*, lead a local representation to *support* a measure which they had no immediate and direct interest in opposing! Thus, by "exposure" of episcopacy and of episcopal men, Mr. M'Caine exerts himself on one side, ("candidly" too, he assures us,) to lessen, if not totally to overcome, the opposition of travelling preachers to the representation of local preachers. And, at the same time, on the other side, he endeavours to convince episcopal men that the representation of local preachers will tend to confirm and to perpetuate their prerogative: and this, too, not on the ground of reason or argument, but from the *affection* and *veneration* of the local preachers for episcopal men. So that, in the opinion of Mr.

M'Caine this was the return which those said travelling preachers would, "*no doubt*," receive from those same local brethren who had been labouring to induce them to assist the said local brethren to get into General Conference. On all this we shall leave the reader to make his own comments. The facts, we apprehend will not be denied. But if Mr. M'Caine's opinion be correct, how it is calculated to "lessen, if not totally to overcome," opposition to the representation of local preachers, on the part of those travelling preachers, at least, who have been desirous of effecting some diminution of this episcopal prerogative, is to us, we confess a "mystery."

Section XIX.—*Union Society of Baltimore; Conclusion.*

Mr. M'Caine states, p. 4, that "the result of his investigation was read before the Union Society of reformers in Baltimore, and the writer was requested to print it for the information of his brethren." Of what number or persons the Union Society of Baltimore consists, we are not informed. Some of the individuals who compose it we know. And we are unwilling to believe that they could have deliberately and understandingly sanctioned and recommended such a publication. Our hope therefore is, either that the members of that society were not all present when Mr. M'Caine's manuscript was read;—or they did not hear the whole of it;—or they did not all approve of it;—or they had not a fair opportunity of weighing and examining it, and have thought differently of it since it was printed: but if disappointed in all these hopes, then we persuade ourselves that they will at least give this defence a fair and candid consideration; and if convinced that Mr. M'Caine has

led them into error, that they will frankly and honourably declare it.

Have the Union Society of Baltimore forgotten that the remains of Bishop Asbury were disinterred, and removed from Virginia, and deposited in their city, as a place peculiarly dear to him? Have they forgotten the solemn rites with which, by the joint act of the General Conference, and of the Baltimore Society, they were placed under the pulpit of the Eutaw church, as in a sacred and chosen asylum, where his ashes might rest in honoured peace, under their affectionate and generous protection? With what feelings then could such of our brethren as may have sanctioned the publication of Mr. M'Caine's book stand in that very pulpit, over those ashes, to preach to those whom they know to hold the name of that venerable man in so much filial love and reverence? Can it be supposed that their hearers could avoid the association of the *book* the *preacher*, and the injured "*father?*" And could such an association be either agreeable or profitable? Ought not the ashes of that father first to be taken up and given to the winds: or be sent to the Potter's field, where *strangers* lie in peace? Or at least be returned to their resting place in Virginia, whence they were solicited? And will not a voice from his tomb be otherwise continually reproaching the Union Society of Baltimore; or their proceeding be a standing reproach to him?*

* Since the above was prepared for the press, we have seen a publication in which it is stated that no vote of recommendation to publish Mr. M'Caine's work had passed the Union Society. This is stated on the authority of the president and secretary; and it is added, that Mr. M'Caine also "declared that he had no allusion to a vote of the Union Society." We will not charge Mr. M'Caine with a design to mislead his readers, or to give currency to his book by representing it as sanctioned by the Union Society of Baltimore. Nor will we impute to the officers of that society the littleness of descending to the quibble that no such "vote" passed the society, if the work had been in any manner sanctioned by that body. But that such of Mr. M'Caine's readers as were not in the secret have understood him to allude to the Union Society before whom the result of his investigations was read, as requesting

We have now performed in some respects a painful, in others a pleasurable task. The investigations to which it has led us have occupied our close and prayerful attention. If the result be as satisfactory to others as it has been to our own mind, the Methodist reader will continue to bless God that his name has been associated with those of Wesley, of Coke, and of Asbury; and with the names of those excellent "fathers," through whose labours, and the "institutions received from" them, with the Divine blessing, the foundations were laid of that great work of God which has been spread over these lands. And with regard to our own Asbury, particularly, he will confidently and triumphantly conclude, in the language of Mr. Snethen on the occasion of his death,—"Whatever of scandal may hereafter attach to us, neither we nor our children shall have to bear the reproach of crimes in our human leader. Few among those who have followed in the same track, have excelled him in any of the qualities which constitute a good man;—*in the union of them all* NONE HAVE SURPASSED HIM."

him to print it, there can be no doubt. Indeed we do not see how any other rational construction can be put on the sentence: "The result of his investigation was read before the Union Society of reformers in Baltimore; and the writer was requested to print it for the information of his brethren," page 4. If in this, however, we have been mistaken, and there be no "mystery" in this thing, then our remarks are to be applied, not to the society as such, but to the individuals concerned.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

RESPECTING DR. COKE'S LETTER TO BISHOP WHITE.

HAVING received an extract from Dr. Coke's letter to the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper on this subject, but too late for insertion in the body of this work, we introduce it here.

For two years or more, previously to 1792, Mr. O'Kelly had excited much disaffection in Virginia; particularly in the important and extensive district over which he then presided. It was, indeed, a matter of controversy at that period, whether he and the preachers who adhered to him were in "the union," as he expressed it; although his name was regularly continued on the Minutes as a presiding elder till 1792, when he withdrew. In 1792 our General Conferences were first established. Previously to that time we had none, except that of 1784. Dr. Coke was of opinion that some general and permanent bond of union was imperiously needed. Mr. Asbury was of the same opinion. The "council" was proposed as an expedient; but not being found to answer the purpose it was discontinued, after only two sessions, in 1789 and 1790. In that measure Dr. Coke did not concur. The proceedings of Mr. O'Kelly produced great agitation. Special pains were taken to enlist Dr. Coke in his views, and to produce disaffection between him and Bishop Asbury. Dr. Coke became alarmed for the safety of the connection; and in that state of mind, without consulting his colleague, resolved to ascertain whether a union could be effected with the Protestant Episcopal Church, on such terms as he conceived would secure the integrity and the rights of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was also under an impression, as before stated, that such a junction would greatly enlarge our field of action; and that myriads would attend our ministry in consequence of it who were at that time much prejudiced against us. All these things, "unitedly considered," led him to write to Bishop White in 1791, and to meet him and Dr. Magaw in Philadelphia. This he states in his letter to Mr. Cooper. An extract of that letter is now before us. It is dated "Near Leeds, Yorkshire, Jan. 29, 1808;" and is in the form of an address to the General Conference. The correctness of the extract is certified by Mr. Cooper, as taken by himself from the original, in Dr. Coke's hand-writing. In this letter, after adverting to the circumstances above named, and to the labour and fatigue with which, a short time before he wrote to Bishop White, he had prevailed on James O'Kelly and the preachers who adhered to him, to submit to the decision of a General Conference, Dr. Coke replies to the following question: "If he did not believe the episcopal ordination of Mr. Asbury valid, why he had ordained him?" To this, he says, "I answer:

"1. I never, since I could reason on those things, considered the doctrine of *the uninterrupted apostolical succession of bishops* as at all valid or true

"2. I am of our late venerable father, Mr. Wesley's opinion, that the order of bishops and presbyters is one and the same.

"3. I believe that the episcopal form of church government is the best in the world, when the episcopal power is under due regulations and responsibility.

"4. I believe that it is well to follow the example of the primitive church, as exemplified in the word of God, by setting apart persons for great ministerial purposes by the imposition of hands: but especially those who are appointed for offices of the first rank in the church.

"From all I have advanced, you may easily perceive, my dear brethren, that I do not consider the imposition of hands on the one hand, as essentially necessary for any office in the church; nor do I, on the other hand, think that the repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, when important circumstances require it, is at all improper.

"If it be granted that my plan of union with the old Episcopal Church was desirable, (*which now I think was not so, though I most sincerely believed it to be so at that time,*) then, if the plan could not have been accomplished without a repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, I did believe, and do now believe, and have no doubt, that the repetition of the imposition of hands would have been perfectly justifiable for the enlargement of the field of action, &c., and would not, by any means, have invalidated the former consecration or imposition of hands.

"Therefore I have no doubt but my consecration of Bishop Asbury was perfectly valid, and would have been so even if he had been reconsecrated.

"I never did apply to the General Convention, or any other convention, for reconsecration. I never intended that either Bishop Asbury or myself should give up our episcopal office, if the junction were to take place! but I should have had no scruple then, nor should I now, *if the junction were desirable*, to have submitted to, or to submit to, a reimposition of hands, in order to accomplish a great object: but I do say again, I do *not* now believe such a junction desirable.

"I have thus, simply and candidly, though in few words, told you my whole mind on this subject. I do not consider my solemn engagements to you invalidated by any thing that I have done, or you have done. But I charge you by the glory of God, and by every tie of love, gratitude, and candour, that you take no step which may injure my character. And now I conclude with assuring you that I greatly love and esteem you; that it is a delight to me to pray for your prosperity: and that I am, with unfeigned esteem, your very affectionate brother and faithful friend,

"T. Coke."

We hope, after this, to hear no more of Dr. Coke's "*doubt*" of the validity of his episcopal ordination, or of that of Bishop Asbury; unless our modern race of writers can persuade us that they are better acquainted with the mind of Dr. Coke than he was himself. The assertion is as unfounded as that "the introduction of episcopacy among the Methodists in the United States was expressly disapproved and forbidden by Mr. Wesley;" or that "the formation of the present plan of government among us was the undivulged project of a few, who, meeting in secret conclave, excluded the junior members even of their own body;" or that the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church have ever founded their episcopacy on the ground of "uninterrupted succession from the apostles;" or that the rejection of that doctrine

has ever been "struck out" of our Discipline. Such assertions only serve to show how superficially those who make them have examined the subject; or how servilely they copy others. We should regret that the repetition of them should oblige us to give back the "modest" imputation either of "ignorance, or want of candour."

No. II.

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE REV. N. BANGS.

My Dear Brother,

Having had the pleasure of hearing you read your manuscript in the "Defence of our Fathers," &c., against the attacks of the Rev. Alexander M'Caine, I take this opportunity of expressing to you my views of the orders of our ministry. This I can do the more readily, because I have already published them in my little book on "Methodist Episcopacy," and it will also give me an opportunity of correcting some mistaken opinions which have been circulated, not much to the credit of the authors of them, respecting my views on this subject. Indeed, I have been represented as holding that a third *order* in the church is *jure divino*, or of *divine right*, without which, of course, there can be no valid ordinances. That this is an entire misrepresentation of my views, will appear manifest to every impartial mind, from the following quotations from my book on the subject of our episcopacy.

In chapter ii, which treats of "Elders and of their duty," p. 35, is the following sentence: "I shall undertake to prove that the body of elders, in their collective capacity, had the right of consecrating ministers, and of establishing ordinances for the government of the church." It will be perceived that this sentence contains the main proposition which I set myself to prove and to sustain throughout that chapter; and among other proofs cited in support of this doctrine, is the following from Stillingfleet: "Before the jurisdiction of presbyters was restrained by *mutual consent*, the presbyters enjoyed the same liberty that the presbyters among the Jews did, of *ordaining* other presbyters, by that power they were invested in or with, at their own ordination," p. 40. And the whole reasoning in this chapter is designed to show that consecration by presbyters is Scriptural, with a view to vindicate Mr. Wesley's ordination of Dr. Coke as a superintendent, and others as elders, for the Methodist Episcopal Church. How, then, I may ask, could I have held at the same time that a third order was *essential* to constitute a gospel church? I appeal to every man that has read my book with candour, that has consulted the pieces on this subject subsequently published in the Methodist Magazine, of which I acknowledge myself the author, for the correctness of the above statement.

It is true I did believe, as I believe still, that in the primitive church, in the age immediately succeeding the apostles, there was an order—(I use the word *order* merely for convenience, to avoid circumlocution, meaning thereby nothing more than that they were invested by consent of the eldership with a power to preside over the flock of Christ, and to discharge other duties not so convenient for the presbyters to discharge)—of ministers denominated *evangelists;* that these were itinerating superintendents, (or bishops, if any like the term better,) having a general oversight of the whole church

and that these are very nearly resembled by the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But that these were an order of ministers by *divine appointment*, so essential that there can be no valid ordination or ordinances without them, is a sentiment I neither *now* nor *ever* believed. In proof of this, see "Methodist Episcopacy," p. 56, where are the following words. "It moreover appears highly probable, that whatever authority these itinerating evangelists possessed, they derived it by delegation from the body of presbyters; to whom belonged the *original* right of modifying the government of the church, as they saw it expedient for the benefit of the community, provided they did not transcend the bounds of their authority by transgressing a known precept of Christ."

As to the account of the Methodist Episcopal Church, published first in Martindale's Dictionary, and afterward in Buck's Theological Dictionary, which I prepared under the sanction of the Book Committee before you were associated with me in the Book Concern, I consider it a simple statement of a matter of fact, that the Methodist Episcopal Church acknowledges three *orders* of ministers, deacons, elders, and bishops, which fact certainly no one can contradict, still understanding the word *order*, when applied to bishops, as above defined. If any choose to say that we acknowledge two *orders only*, and a superior minister possessing a delegated jurisdiction, chiefly of an executive character, he has my full consent; I will not dispute about words. That Mr. Wesley did, with the aid of other presbyters, invest Dr. Coke with fuller powers, as a Methodist superintendent, than he did those whom he denominated elders, and that he intended to establish a Methodist Episcopal Church among the Methodists in America, I think you have fully proved; and I heartily wish you success in your undertaking: for I think it a sacred duty we owe to the "venerable dead" to vindicate them against such invidious, unprovoked, and unmanly attacks, as those of the author of the "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy;" a title as *quaint* as the contents of the book are manifestly *unjust* and erroneous.

New-York, Nov., 1827. N. BANGS.

No. III.

THE MINUTE TO OBEY MR. WESLEY.

WE have shown that by leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes, was simply meant the rescinding of the minute of the conference of 1784, to obey him in matters belonging to church government; and also the peculiar circumstances in which that act took place. With regard to the conference of 1787, by whom that minute was rescinded, Mr. Snethen said, if he might be permitted to show his opinion, he should "applaud them for renouncing the obligation." Answer to J. O'Kelly, p. 18.