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[Published by Request.] The Elements and Means of Church Prosperity.

The Introductory Sermon of the Flat River Association, delivered at Mt. Moriah, Orange county, N. C., Aug. 10, 1855, by R. I. DEVIN. Published by request of the Asociation.

"And the word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." Acts 6 : 7.

The Christian Church is a peculiar organi zation. It is not like any other society on earth. It was instituted by its great head to spread the gospel over the earth, and multiply the number of disciples. Believers are to be built up in their most holy faith, and sinners are to be converted to God ; and the church is

ied and searched, if we would understand its great and sublime truths. If church members would be qualified for usefulness,-able to dofend truth and vanquish error, they must have a familiar and practical acquaintance with the Scriptures It is the sword of the Spirit-the weapon with which our enemies are to be subdued, and the world conquered to Christ. 3. Again ; love and union among the members of a church, are necessary to its advance. ment and prosperity. It is the command of Christ that his followers should love one another. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Mutual love is the peculiar characteristic of real christians The early christians manifested so much affection for each other that it called forth expressions of admiration and as-tonishment. "See how these christians love one another, and how they are ready to die for each other." No church can flourish, unless its members are united in love. Union is indispensable to the welfare of Zion. The aposthe Paul sensibly felt its importance, when he penned the last message he ever sent to the Co-rinthian brethren " Be of one mind, live in peace." The directions to the Ephesians, were, "endeavor to keep the unity of the spi-it in the bond of peace" David exclaimed, "Brhold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." One of the principal causes of the great success which attended the preaching of the gospel at Jerusalem, and the large accessions to the church, was that believers were of one heart and of one mind. Brethren, you are bound in the most solemn

The Bible is a book that must be read, stud-

covenant obligations to labor for the prosperity of Zion. That union which you should strive to maintain, should not be an empty name .--Truth must never be sacrificed There should be no compromise between truth and error -While we seek to promote harmony among brothren, we must, at the same time, contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. One of the most serious bindrances to the progress of the gospel, is the divisions among prof ssing christians. We have heard it represent d as a blessing, that the christian world was divided into various denominations. branches of the church! so that every boly may be suited. If this church does not correspond with your views, there is another, and another, and you will find one at length, that will answer ! How strange ! Did Christ organiza various antagonistic churches to suit the whins of dep aved m n ? Our blessed Savior praved that all his people might be one. John 17; 11, 21-23 I he apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthian church, says, "Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." In order that a church be flourishing, the members must have one interest and one feeling-" One Lord, one faith, one baptism." of Material indiand on a salaros

From the South Western Baptist.

Devoted to Religion, Morality, Literature, Agr culture and General Intelligence.

"HE "SUN" AND " MOON" OF "OUR EPIS-COPACY" SLIGHTLY ECLIPSED-AN INTER-ESTING ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO WINGS OF THE "TERRIBLE ARMY WITH BANNERS"-ESTIMATED LOSS UPON EACH SIDE-MORE ABOUT THE " DEMOCRATIC ELEMENT."

Methodist Church Property Case.

"Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault mong you, because you go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded."-1 Cor. vi. 7.

" Money is a defence."-Solomon.

It is proper that we again state the precise question at issue in this discussion. It is important that the reader should have it always distinctly before his mind. The question is this : I. Methodist Episcopacy in its nature and tendencies, anti-Democratic and anti-Republi can? In taking the affirmative of this proposition, we have distinctly stated from the com mencement, that we are not attacking the patriotism of any man or set of men. We have been discussing a principle in ecclesinatical polity, which has in all ages of the world tended to abuse and corruption. We have been attempting to show that there is nothing in the Metho dist complexion of Episcopacy, which has inchined us to change our opinion of its nature and practical results. Its origin and history up to this time, so far as our ideaus of information extend, point unmistakably to the same spiritual and temporal tyranny, which has marked its progress in every age of the world, since it first extinguished the rights of the churches in the third and fourth conturies. And in pursuing our object, we have found it necessary to bring to light some plain and startling facts-all of which has been done with no unkind feeling to a hving soul. That there is a complexion of narrow-minded, religious projudice, which cannot comprehend how plain truths, told in a plain way, in regard to an organic principle of governmental economy, can comport with personal good will and Christian charity, is by no means surprising. But then to yield to such an influence, would be to sacrifice principle to policy-thy authority of God to the authority of man-and practically to declare that every reformation which has ever been attempted in religion, morals and civil government, has been a curse to the word. And this we are not prepared to admit, even out of complaisance of the largest denomination of Christians" in this country. The more extensive and widest read the evil, the greater the cause for alarm. We now propose to examine the "Methodist Episcopal Church Property Case," as argued and decided in the United States Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York, printd and circulated under the au-pices of the M E. Church, South. We shall try and be as brief as possible, so as to dispose of it in a single article, though we assure the reader that a volume could be profitably written upon this single case. And lot us premise here, that if the " democratic element" really exists in the system, it certainly could not have eluded the perception of the learned counsel and court who argued and adjudicated that case. If ever an occasion offered itself in which to clucidate the arcana of "our episcopacy," surely this was the oceasion. The whole history of its establishment and practical workings for nearly three quarters of a century was placed in evid nee before the court, and expounded with distinguished abi ity by most of the learned counsil on both sides. The powers of the clergy, the bishops and trav elong preachers, was the point to be argued and decided before that august tribunal. - We shall recognize the " Property Case," then, as involving an authentic, reliable exposition of Episcopal Methodism. When the ministers of any denomination as some the management and control of its property, they not only adopt the very principle which all civil despots have done to enslave the people, but are guilty at the same time of departing from the great work to which they profe-s to have been called by the Holy Ghost. The tribe of Levi, who were the spiritual teachers of religion, were not allowed to awn one foot of land, or indeed any other kind of property. The Apostles themselves would not so much as consent to disburse the benefactions of the Church at Jerusalem among the poor; but asked the Church to elect seven deacons, a kind of board of managers, to attend to this business so that they "could give themselves entirely to the word of God and prayer." Observe, they did not appoint these descons themselves, but requested the Church to do it. We beg the reader to observe these principles, as we proceed to hua-lyze this " cuse." In 1844, the General Conference assembled in the city of New York. A case was carried up to it from the State of Maryland to this effect: A Mr. Harding, a traveling preacher, had been deposed from the ministry by the Maryland Conference because he was a slave holder. Possessing the right of appeal, he applied to the General Conference for relief. That body, by a very large majority, confirmed the action of the Maryland Conference, in deposing Mr. Harding, Immediately the question recurred if we depose a common circuit rider for being a shave holder, what shall we do with a Bishop

members of the Conference, brought in a solemp protest against the measure as "extra-jadicial." That protest was unswered by a committee appointed on the part of the majority. Dr. Capers, (the late Blshop) introduced a series of resolutions contemplating a peaceful separation of the South from the North, and the organization of a Southern General Conference. These resolutions also ceded to the Southern members, provided they should form such an organization, " all the churches, schools, colleges, cemeteries," &c., lying within their specified territory, and authorized the mangers of the "Book Concern" to negotiate an equitable division of its funds with such commissioners as might be appointed from the South. These resolutions were passed by a decided majority. And here let it be distinctly noted. that the Bishops and clergy at this Conference assumed an absolute propriotorship in " all the churches, schools, colleges, Book Concerns," Re., belonging to the M. E. Church in the United States Time and again the impression has been sought to be made during this discussion, that " with regard to the business in which the laity are equally interested with the ministry-such business as constitutes the sphere of operatious" of Baptist Conventions, State and general, they (the M. E. Church) "have alroady lay delegation, and lay management"--and that it is only "the privilege of scattering" the "ministers to the four winds," appointing them to their respective fields of labor, that the laity have no voice. See Bro. Haunill's third letter, fourth column. Are the laymen of that church " equally interested with the ministry," in the churches, schools, colleges, cemeteries, Book Concern ? &c. Brother Hamill will not deny this. And yet, when the Bishops and elergy in General Conference assembled assert an absolute proprietorship in, and a right to dispose of all this immense aggregation of church property in the United States, not a single layman's voice was ever heard in the council that argued, or the vote that decided the fate of this measure ! Nay turther-in the parcies lifigant in the famous lawsuit we propose reviewing, as appears upon the face of the "Bill," there is not the name of a single lay-

will be obliged to admit one for the good of the church. They resolve for themselves, and for t temselves alone, as the possessors of ALL ECCLESIASTICAL POWER known to the Methodist Church, to carry out the particular organization authorized by John Wealey, without any other authorized by John Weney, with-out any other authorized by John Weney, with-conviction that the good of the Church deman-ded such a special and particular organization.¹⁷ And still further, on page 329, Mr. J. contin-ues,—" No modicum of power was left elsewhere. The Church was not to look elsewhere for any portion of authority." We could quote much more to the same purpose, but this is sofficient.

Now let us sum up the evidence. Here are two of the first lawyers in the Union, employed by the complainants, the commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to defend their right to an equitable division of " Church property" before the United States Circuit Court, relying wholly upon the evidence which they furnished to their hand declaring what? That the Conference of 1784, composed of sixty traveling preachers, with Messrs. Asbury and Coke at their head, in adopting the doctrines and discipline of that church, admit no consistency-that not one particle of power was left elsewhere-that laymon have had, and now have, no voice in it -- that the ministers compose the Charch-that in a governmental sense " they are the Church "-that it is absolutely an ARISTOCRACY-that it possesses un-limited power "to create," and "to destroy " -that "it could have become Sociatian had it cho-en to do so "-and that it is responsible-to no tribunal on earth but the consciences of those who wield its authority ! All this, and much more of like character, was solemuly pronounced, as already intimated, by two of the ablest lawyers of the United States, before one of the highest judicial functionaries of the country, as an exposition of Methodist Episcopacy, and published to the world under the anspices of the M. E. Church, South ! And yet for during to question its republicanism, we are to be denounced by its patented journals as a demagogue, a bigot, an ignoramus, a legitimate child of the father of lies !

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We do not design to introduce degradie what more humiliating language in regard to the subjects of the despotisms on earth, than that they "or stituents ?" Methodists ! local prescher private members ! lovers of God, of tru private members ! lovers of God, of truth, of liberty, and of your country ! If you have nature in you, bear it not !"--" The travelling preachers comprise the embodi-ment of its power ECOLESIASTICAL AND TEM-PORAL; and when assembled in General Conference, according to the usuge and discipline of the Church represent themselves a HAVE NO CONSTITUENTS !" What more have HAVE NO CONSTITUENTS ''' What more have we ever said ? Why is it, we again ask, that Judges NELSON and BETTS, the Hon. REV-ERDY JOHNSON and his colleagues, have never been held to account for uttering such language as this ? Was it because four hundred thou-sand dollars depended upon the maintainance of these doctrines ? Or rather was it not beeause THEY SPOKE THE TRUTH? Why is it that they have escaped the ecclesiastical lash of the guardians of Episcopacy, religious and po-litical, while "an obscure local organ," to use the very delicate and respectful language of a Methodist cotemporary, for alledging nothing more than this, is to be denounced as guilty of "the lowest piece of demagogueism, and par-row minded bigotry that has yet transpired ?" The United States Court was certainly capa-ble of inflicting a more serious injury upon "our episcopacy" than an "obscure local or-gan." And yet, when that decision was an-nounced, the editors of all the Methodist jour-nals South, congratulated themselves, and their church upon the successful termination of the suit, and accepted the award of the Court cause THEY SPOKE THE TRUTH ? Why is it the suit, and accepted the award of the Court without so much as questioning a single princi-ple upon which it was made. "Our Episcopa-cy? aus 'Our Episcopacy" at one of the high-est judicial tribunals of the country. The par-ties litigant prove to the satisfaction of the counsel and judges, that Bishops and traveli preachers "made the Church"-that the Bis ops and traveling preachers "are, in the go ernmental sense, THE CHURCH"-that "this Church ever has been, and is now ABSOLUTE-LY AN ARISTOCRACY"-that "they And the solemn claim is set up, by these cham-pions. That Methodist Episcopacy, as a dis-tinct form of government, not only harmonizes with, but wonderfully illustrates and strength-ens those great, fundamental principles which constitute the substratum of our glorious Re-public—That all men are created equal—That all power is inherent in the people—and, That the will of the people, constitutionally expressed, is the law of the land !! He that can be lieve it, let him ! All we have to say is, we envy not the huge dimensions of that credulity which can swallow that camel. Such was the engagement between the two wings of this "Terrible army with banners." Let us now survey the fi ld of barrle, att y this "terrible" conflict, and try to cetinate the "loss and gain" upon each side of the combatauts. The Southern wing of the "terril auts. The Southern wing of the "terrible army" lost a circuit rider, Harding, and had a bishop (Andrew) put hors du combat, among the regular officers of the line. The Northern wing lost about four hundred thousand dollars which, of course gained by the Southern wi and which, to that extent compensated for th lo-s of their officers. But now as to the "rank and file" upon either side-the heart sickens at the scene of carnage "If you have tears, prepare to shed them NOW 115 Up to the time of the commencement of this engagement, it was understood by the official organs of the two wings, that the "constitueney," the common soldiers of the "Terrible army" amounted in the aggregate to about one million two or three hundred thousand. But alas! from the dispatches which have reus from the scene of ceuffict, signed and scaled by the proper officers, not one commo dier survives, to commemorate in verse or his tory, the deeds of valor which were performed 'at Phillipi !" The dispatch reads-"THEY HAVE NO CONSTITUENCY !" They had claimed up to that date "a constituenes of between a million and a million and a half. of between a million and a million and a mail. At the close of the engagement, Judge NELSON declares there is none ! no; not one ! Mara-thou, Actium, and Waterloo-Saratogn, New Orleans, and Sebastopol-hide your diminish-ed heads ! Here is a "terrible army with banpers, which, at one fell swoop, ann "constituency" of almost a million and a half ! But look at another aspect of this power claimed for the Bishows and travelling elergy in general conference assembled. Says Mr. Lord one of the counsel for complainants, and of course good authority with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, "If that body (the Gen Con.) had chosen to become SociNAN ; if had chosed to adopt the PREBYTERIAN OF BAT TIST forms, either of government or doctrine, it was in its power to do it." What ! change the whole Methodist denomination in the United States into a Socialian body ? Or in Presbyterian or Baptist organization, both in discipline and doctrine ? Yes, says Mr. Lord There was no limit. They represent the church ; THEY WERE THE CHURCH : admit no constituency," responds Mr. Johnson; "they have no constituency," says the Court! Now so far us we know, none of the organs of

the instrumentality to be employed in this great work. The New Testament, as the perfect standard of belief and practice, points out the particular form of church polity, order and discipline. It designates the character and qualifications of those who may become members. of the church, the officers,-how members are to be received and excluded, and the various laws and regulations by which it is governed.

" The first church at Jerusalem, formed by the directions and under the eye of the Savier. and the apostolic churches, organized by the apostles, are the authoritative models for the fermation of churches for all future tim ." pentecostal times, the Jerusalem church flourished greatly-the gospel had a powerful effect upon the people, and multitudes were converted and added to the number of believers. In the present discourse, we propose to con-

sider the elements and means of church prosper-

First, we will notice several items which c) stitut; some of the essential elements of church prosperity.

1. Genuine piety lies at the very foundation of the success of any church. It is the christian's brightest ornament, the secret of his usefulness, and the source of his highest joys. By piety, we mean, spiritual followship with God. or in other words, supreme love to God Numbers, wealth, eloquent preachers, and fine houses of worship, if picty be wanting, will eff:et but little. Outward show and parade cannot advance the cause of pure religion in the world. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom. The true worshippers of God worship him in spirit and in truth. No person has any claims to church membership, but a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of God are a peculiar people.

They have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They know from experience, what it is to repent and believe. Their hearts have been filled with love to God. The more piety the members of any church possess, the belter prepared are they to be useful to their fellow men, and the more good can they accomplish in the cause of Christ. The primitive chris-tians were so perfectly imbued with the spirit. of entire consecration, that they were willing to make any sacrifice, or perform any labor, to advance the interest of the Rodeemer's kingdom. They evinced the depth of their devotion, by the cheerfulness with which they suffered for the name of Christ. Let us, my brethren, catch that holy ardor which animated and nerved the apostles and early christians. Then may we expect the churches to flourish as they did in the early times. If the hearts of christians, were entirely swayed by the love of God, they would be willing to forego any pleasure, make any sacrifice, or endure any privation to glorify God and save sinners.

What the churches need more than anything else, in order, to their real prosperity, is pielydeep toned piety. That will make ber as fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and as terrible as army with banners.

2 Another important element in the prosperity of a church, is an intimate and practical equaintance with the word of God. This is an age of Bibles, but not, it is to be feared, of

That principle recognized in the adage, union is strength, is not more beautifully and forcibly illustrated anywhere, than in the union of christians. We may expect the blessing of God to rest upon that church, whose members are united together in brotherly love and christian affection.

"Our fears, our hopes, our aims, are one Our comforts and our cares."

4. Another cause, as well as the evidence o the success of a church, is the addition of true believers. While it is true, we should not judge of the h althful condition of a church simply on account of numbers, still the influence of a church depends, in a good degree, upon the increase of her membership. The addition of truly converted porsons, gives it. more strength. But the increase of numbers only, without regard to piety, will prove a curse instead of a blessing, to any church. But still no church can be said to be in a flourishing state, when no increase is made to her number. The ways of Zion often mourn, because but few come to her solemn feasts, and her gates are desolate. What an impetus was given to the Jerusalem cource, when three thousand were converted and ad ied to their number. While we should seek for the enling un mt of the churches to which we belong, still the mere item of numbers should have but little weight. The important point is the accession of rea christians. The great question to be settled in the reception of members is, do they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. " The Lord added to the church daily such as should be (were) saved." When any one knocks at the door of the church for admission, the answer returned should be," if then believest with all thy heart thou mayest." (To be continued.)

Dring Thoughts .- What number of souls. says the dying man, there are now in the world in my condition, surprised at the summons to the other world ; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures ; those at suits of law, those at gaming tables ; some on the road, others at their firesides; and all seized at an hour when they thought not of it, fr ghtened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their laman upon either side

But to proceed; After the Conference adjourned, sundry scruples suggested themselves to the minds of the Northern managers of the " Book Concern," as to whether the seceding party, (the Southern division.) could be legitimately recognized as a Methodist Episcona! Church-whother the admission of such a principle would not destroy the unity of the church whether the church had the right to cut itself in twain, and thus commit a kind of moral suieide, &c , &c. They therefore refused to cufar into the negotiation with the Southern commissioners, as directed by the General Conference. Under the leadership of Henry B. Bascomb, than whom they could not have chosen a more chivalrous generalissimo, the Southern wing of the " terrible army with banners" organized its forces, and immediately issued a summons to the Northern wing of the "terrible army with banners," to " meet them at Phil. ippi !" when and where, with "weapons of warfare that" were "carnul," they should decide who was to heir the "images and superscriptions of " Uncle Sam.

We wish that time and space would allow as to enter into the fall merits of, this case. We have only time to establish two points which directly hear upon the question we are discuss-

1st. That the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States in its government econmy, is nothing more nor less than the Bishop and travelling cherin.

2ndly. THAT THEY HAVE NO CONSTITUENTS: They are sovereign, and are accountable to no power on earth but their own consciences.

Now for the proof of these propositions Mr. Lord, one of the counsel for the claimants, spoke as follows : " In vain you look into this Methodist system prior to 1808, for any res trictions on the General Conference of that Church. If that body had chosen to become Socialian; if it had chosen to adopt the Presbyterian or Baptist forms, either of government or of doctrine, it was in its power to do it. There was no limit. They represented the Church ; they were the Church. The Church dispersed its light from the preachers. The laity were not known in the governing body. Matters of doctrine, discipline, and everything were in the governing body. If that was so up to 1898, what was that body after that period ? It was the same General Conference."-| Prop. Case, p. 163.

The Hon. REVERDY JOHNSON, who was also represented the Southern commissioners in that ease, spohe thus: "This Church, be it remembered, even unto the present time, and I speak it in no offensive sense, as regards its government, has been absolutely, since the days of Wesley, an aristocracy. Laymen, have had, and now have no voice in it. If there is a layman within the sound of my voice, he knows he has no voice now. Heretofore they have been satisfied with the government. They have acted upon the saying of Pope,-

"For forms of government let fools contest, That which is best administered is best."

They perhaps will be found changing their

opinion, when they find it is not always best administered as a monotone in the care of

But we have higher evidence than all this to sustain our position. After the case was elaborately argued by such men as Johnson, Choate, Lord and Wood, Judge NELSON delivered the opinion of the Court, from which we make the following extract :

2. As to the power of the General Conference to authorize a separation of the Church organization.

The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States was established, in its government, doctrine, and discipline, by a General Conference of the traveling preachers in this communion, in 1784. Down to that time the Methodist Societics in America had been governed by John Wesley, the founder of this denomination of Christians, through the agency of his assistants. During this year the entire government was taken into the bauds of the traveling preachers with his approbation and assent. They organized it, established its doctrines and discipline, appointed the several authorities-superintendents or bishops, ministers and preachers-to administer its polity, and promulgate its doctrines and teaching throughout the land. From that time to this, the source and fountain of all its temporal power are the traveling preachers in this connexion in General Conference assembled. The Liv members of the Chutch have no part or connexion with its governmental organization, and never had. The travelling preachers comprise the embodiment of its power, ecclesiastical and temporal; and, when assembled in General Conterence according to the usages and discipline of the church, represent themselves, and have no constituents : and thus the organization continued until the year 1808, when a modification took place."-[Appendix Prop. Case, pp. 10, 11.

The "modification" to which Judge Nelson alludes, relates to the organization of a General out of the Aunual Conferences, which occurred in 1808. The Judge then proceeds to show that that modification did not affect in slightest degree the principle he had laid down to wit : That the bishops and elergy in General Conference assembled embodied all the power, "ecclesiastical and temporal," known in their governmental economy.

The decision of the Court, then, sustains every position taken by the counsel. We will state these positions again in still fewer words, confirmed by the extract from the opinion of the Court : All the derived power which the Bishops and clergy of the M. E. Church ever had came, not from the Churches, but from John Wesley-they established its doctrines and discipline-created its officers to adminis ter its polity-they are the source and fountain of all its power-laymen have no connection with its governmental organization and never had-and when assembled in General Conference according to the usage and discipline of the Church, represent themselves AND HAVE No CONSTITUENTS! No bill of exceptions was filed to this decision. The Methodist Episcopal Church, Fouth, accepted, the award! Both divisions of the Church stand committed to this decision, as containing a true and faithful exposition of the governmental economy of that church. Why have we never heard these lawyers and Judges denounced as demagogues

