

## IS THE EPISCOPACY DONE AWAY?

It may be greatly modified; but what we want to know to guide our constitutional action is, is it abolished?

Methodist Episcopacy is not Roman Episcopacy, or High Church Anglican Episcopacy, boasting itself to come down from St. Peter, and bring down some wonderful charm with it. It makes no pretensions to carry with it a sacramental efficacy indispensable to salvation, or an exclusive right to government by divine authority. No Church on earth more than the Methodist Episcopal Church repudiates prelacy, papacy, hierarchy, sacerdotalism and everything that savors of them. We utterly reject prelacy because when it says that Episcopacy is that form of Church Government in which one order of Ministers is superior to another, it plants something in our Episcopacy that neither Paul the Apostle, nor John Wesley the Revivalist, nor Coke the Missionary, nor Ashbury the Bishop ever claimed or allowed; that very thing which Paul calls the "mystery of iniquity"—the man of sin, and which grows into the Archiepiscopate the Patriarchate and the Papacy. We have no sympathy either in belief, practice or discipline with them that teach the clergy are divided into three general orders, Bishops Priests and Deacons; much less with them that proceed to say there are other orders subordinate to Bishops, as Deans, Archdeacons, prebendaries, canons, &c., and some go down to the acolytes.

## OUR EPISCOPACY

has no kinship to such a prelacy, even at his beginnings. Nor in the mind of its founder and the spirit of his true followers, does it savor in the least of sacerdotalism that it should convey in its own restricted line an efficacy of sacrifices and sacraments, and a virtue of ordinations necessary thereto, traceable under magic touch from hand to head and head to hand, back through we know not what labyrinths to the Holy Apostles themselves, and owing all merit and power to the security of the descent. Others may hold such an Episcopacy: but Methodists, never. If I understand the mind of John Wesley and our own Book of Discipline, we hold first that the sacred Ministry is called out of the laity to be a special order, to secure the preaching of a pure Gospel, and especially the orderly administration of the Holy Sacraments. We hold further that in this order of the Holy Ministry there is the probationary, graduating and transition order of of the diaconate; and that when a candidate is ordained Elder or Presbyter he has all the functions the ministry can give him. These are the ORDERS. There may be *offices* in these *orders*, but the Presbyter is complete in *orders*. He can baptize, solemnize matrimony, bury the dead, and preach the word which we make the functions in the order of Deacon; and he can consecrate the elements, administer the Holy Sacraments, assist to ordain and set apart ministers, govern in the Church of God, and if necessary consecrate a Bishop, which we make the additional functions in the order of Presbyter or Elder. Or the body of Elders may delegate ordaining and governing functions to overseers whom we call Bishops. This is our Bishop;

## THIS IS OUR EPISCOPACY,

and this ordaining power in behalf of the presbyters and this governing power as the Presbyters may direct are certainly in the General Superintendancy of the Basis. It is not so much a question through what grades, offices or orders the man has come, as what are his authority, functions and powers? The two orders Deacon and Elder or Presbyter as we hold them, graduate the one into the other, the less being included in the greater. To talk of a Bishop being an order over the others is rampant prelacy: is what I never was taught, learned or accepted. The Ministerial

## SUCCESSION IS IN THESE PRESBYTERS.

Here is the succession in all its powers, offices and functions. These Presbyters may