

and has come out from them un mutilated in all her fair proportions, and their most important result has been the more conspicuous exhibition of her scriptural efficiency. Whatever project is successful in belittling episcopacy in one country, affects the same form of church government in all lands, because the system is precisely the same. We may therefore very appropriately enquire, on general grounds, Is Methodist Episcopacy scriptural, and compatible with the practice of the primitive Church? And if so, why should the plan be "modified"—as it is called—a word which, as at present used in this connection, means the destruction of a system modelled by the mature and deliberate judgment of Mr. Wesley after the Scriptures and the practices of the Apostolic Church. And for what? In order to gratify a *whim*, or obviate an imaginary tendency to prelacy, by creating some sort of a presidency, based on some political model, or a rotatory episcopacy, subject to the excitement and other disadvantages of constant elections.

In considering the question before us, the first thing to be examined is the orders of the Christian ministry, as presented to us in the New Testament, and accepted and practiced by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

We learn that Deacons were chosen by the Church, and ordained by the Apostles to the sacred office. See the 6th chapter of the Acts. They distributed alms to the poor widows, but they also baptised and preached the Gospel to the people. Their office in relation to the Church is, therefore, clearly defined in the Acts and several of the Epistles. See Acts vi., 5 to 8, also the 8th chapter and 5th verse. Dr. Bangs, referring to 1 Timothy, iii. 8 to 13, and similar texts, observes in regard to the position of Deacons, "This proves that they were not of the same order with Elders, but were inferior to them"—simply in orders. They, however, went everywhere among the dispersed, publishing the glad tidings of salvation. "Allowing the soundness of this conclusion," adds the same writer, that is, that the Deacons were ministers, "It will follow that those churches which admit of no distinction in ministerial order, but reduce all to a level, have *departed* from the apostolic mode. In their intemperate zeal against episcopacy, which broke out with such violence among the Independents of England, in the days of the Stuarts, they seem to have run into the opposite extreme, by introducing a perfect parity of ministerial orders, as well as of jurisdiction, and thus have impaired that beautiful symmetry which we behold in the orders, of powers, and harmonious subordination of the several grades of officers in the primitive Church."

It must be admitted that Deacons, as well as Elders or Presbyters, were ordained to the sacred office by prayer and the imposition of hands in the Apostolic, as well as in the Methodist Episcopal Church; and there is abundant evidence of the importance which