

**A DISCOURSE ON  
METHODIST  
CHURCH POLITY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649438204

A Discourse on Methodist Church Polity by T. A. Morris

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**T. A. MORRIS**

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CHURCH POLITY**



TWO HOURS' READING.

A DISCOURSE  
ON  
METHODIST CHURCH POLITY.

BY  
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SENIOR BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
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CINCINNATI:  
PUBLISHED BY L. SWORMSTEDT & A. POE,  
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE WESTERN BOOK  
CONCERN, CORNER OF MAIN AND EIGHTH STREETS.  
E. P. THOMPSON, PRINTER.  
1860.

## TO THE READER.

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THE following discourse, in substance, was delivered last spring at the sessions of North Indiana and Pittsburg conferences. Both conferences took action requesting its publication. Many official laymen, some in an associated and others in an individual capacity, have made the same request. To comply at that time was impracticable, as it was not then written. Since, however, doing a little at a time, and persevering for weeks, I have succeeded in transferring it from mind to paper. It embodies my mature thoughts on our

Church polity, or rather an outline of them, after many years of experience and observation. I trust it may help to correct some erroneous impressions, and aid in obtaining a better understanding of a subject interesting to our extended connection.

T. A. MORRIS.

CINCINNATI, AUGUST, 1859.



DISCOURSE  
ON  
METHODIST CHURCH POLITY.

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FOR though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. COLLOSSIANS II, 5.

THIS epistle of Paul is addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse," or to those who not only profess Christianity, but faithfully practice its precepts and experience its saving power. All such are one in spirit. They may differ in speculative theology, in forms of discipline, in modes of worship, and in name, but they are one in heart.

Paul had "great conflict," or fraternal and prayerful solicitude, not only for the brethren who knew him, but also "for as many as had not seen his face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love." That principle which causes people to love those whom they never saw must be of heavenly origin. "God is love." Religion in the Bible sense is love to God and man. Love in the hearts of Church members unites them to each other and to Christ their living head. It is the bond of Christian union in the Church above and beneath. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." Ephesians i, 10. Our text also affords us further illustration

of the unity of all true Christian hearts. While Paul was absent in body he was present with the Colossian brethren in spirit, rejoicing in their faith and order. The Church of Colosse was a model Church, sound in faith and strict in discipline. These are great elements of ecclesiastical power, and when to them is added the love of God shed abroad in the heart of believers by the Holy Ghost given unto them, the Church is in a safe and prosperous condition. Our subject suggests two leading points for present consideration and examination.

#### I. FAITH.

Faith is a comprehensive term, admitting of various definitions and applications. In its less important sense it applies to a man's doctrinal views. What is his faith? that is, to what