

the experience of eighty-five years in Canada, and the experiments which have been tried, I believe we could compile a better system of Methodism than is exemplified in any one section of it now upon earth, a system which would give all reasonable consideration to the laity, combined with efficiency to the administration of the pastorate ; and a system which would give all reasonable liberty to local courts, in all matters not infringing on connexional authority and unity, and yet would provide for a thorough central authority and supervision, which the exigencies and energy of a Connexion require.

LAY RIGHTS.

With these general principles laid down, I come to the details of their application. As to the *first* of these, a proper consideration to the laity, they should share in all the counsels of the Church, excepting what refers strictly to the work which is peculiarly a minister's, and to the character of ministers, which, so long as the laity are tried by a jury of their own peers, should be canvassed by ministers alone, not prohibiting charges to be preferred by laymen, of course. Personally, I do not attach so much importance to this particular as some, for I would be quite as willing to be tried by laymen as ministers, in expectation of quite as just or lenient a verdict ; but the majority of all the ministers in all the older branches of Methodism do not feel as I do, and regard this point as vital. And it would be unjust and unreasonable to wrest the prerogative from them, so long as they continue to exercise it with the fidelity they have done in the past, especially as they only, in contradistinction from the laity, are subject to an annual examination of character. If all the lay-members of District Meetings and Conferences had the following questions asked about themselves, there would be some reason in making the inquiry reciprocal : namely, "Is there any thing against his moral and religious character? Does he believe our doctrines, and obey our discipline, especially in the matter of reading the Scriptures, maintaining family and private prayer, observing the Lord's Supper, and fasting or abstinence? Has he been punctual in attending all the society meetings, especially prayer and class-meetings? Is he equitable in all his business transactions?"

LAYMEN IN THE DISTRICT MEETINGS AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES.

But this one matter of character conceded, I think it is very unwise in the ministry, whether it be to further unify the body or not, to withstand the claim of a seat to laymen in the District Meeting and the Annual Conference, which is only the District Meeting on a larger scale, on all the questions propounded, [as to the District Meeting] from question "FIFTH," page 40 of the Discipline of the M. C. OF CANADA, to the end, on page 49, except such as may be construed to relate to the character and qualifications of ministers ; and, [as to the Annual Conferences] all from question 3rd, Discipline, page 32, to question 19, on the following page, excepting questions 12, 13, and 14. I do not stop to argue the propriety of this, as it is a necessary concession from the largest body in order to the adhesion of nearly all the others ; and I know of no reason from Scripture, or practical utility, against the lay participation indicated.

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