

ministry in the relation of an *inferior caste*, the effect of which, in spite of all effort to the contrary, would be such a relation, if not (as we think) real degradation, of the ministry, as to destroy its influence to a great—a most fearful extent throughout the South. A practical proscription, under show of legal right, has long been exercised towards the South, with regard to the higher offices of the church, especially the Episcopacy. To this, however, the South submitted with patient endurance, and was willing further to submit in order to maintain the peace and unity of the church, while the *principle* involved was disavowed, and decided to be unjust, as by the decision of the General Conference in 1840. But when, in 1844, the General Conference declared by their action, without the forms of legislative or judicial process, that the mere providential ownership of slave property, in a State where emancipation is legally prohibited under all circumstances, and can only be effected by special legislative enactment, was hereafter to operate as a forfeiture of right in all similar cases, the law of the church and the decision of the preceding General Conference to the contrary notwithstanding, the Southern ministry were compelled to realize, that they were deliberately fixed, by the brand of common shame, in the degrading relation of standing inferiority to ministers, not actually, nor yet liable to be, connected with slavery, and that they were published to the church and the world as belonging to a *caste* in the ministry, from which the higher offices of the church could never be selected.

“To submit, under such circumstances, would have been a practical, a most humiliating recognition of the *inferiority of caste*, attempted to be fixed upon us by the Northern majority, and would have justly authorized the inference of a want of conscious integrity and self-respect, well calculated to destroy both the reputation and influence of the ministry in all the slave-holding States. It may be no virtue to avow it, but we confess we have no humility courting the grace of such a baptism. The higher objects, therefore, of the Christian ministry, not less than conscious right and self-respect, demanded resistance on the part of the Southern ministry and church; and these unite with other reasons, in vindicating the plea of necessity, upon which the meeting and action of this Convention are based, with the consent and approval of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church. The variety of interests involved renders it necessary that the brief view of the subject we are allowed to take, be varied accordingly.

“Unless the Southern Conferences organize as proposed, it is morally certain, in view of the evidence before the Committee, that the gospel now regularly and successfully dispensed by the ministers of these Conferences to about a million of slaves, in their various fields of missionary enterprise and pastoral charge, must, to a great extent, be withheld from them, and immense masses of this unfortunate class of our fellow-beings be left to perish, as the result of church-interference with the civil affairs and relations of the country.

“The committee are compelled to believe, that the mere division of jurisdiction, as authorized by the General Conference, cannot