

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

THIRTEENTH DAY—SEPT. 22nd. METHODIST UNION.

Rev. W. Williams moved the adoption of the following:—Your Committee, having carefully considered the whole subject, in view of the desirability of a united Methodist in Canada, would venture to earnestly recommend that the General Conference adopt the above resolutions. He said personally he had nothing to say on the question now; but so far as union was concerned the matter ought to be considered, and was well worth the attention of the General Conference. The Primitive Methodist and the Board of Christian Missions were committed to ask for one lay representative from each district to the Annual Conference. At first they had a led for equal proportions of laymen and ministers, but they had given way to the point he had indicated. They merely asked for this so that the principle would be admitted. Then as to the question of the general superintendency. He might say, however, that the representatives of the churches desiring lay representation expressed themselves as only desiring it so as to give them good reasons on which to go before their people, in order that they might secure the general concurrence of the people to union and avoid an evil worse than remaining separate. So then it they did not wish to block union at the outset they ought to concede the principle, and it is from these considerations that the Committee decided to recommend the Conference to accept the clause. He could say further in this connection, that even in regard to lay representation they did not wish to push the movement upon the attention of the people or the Conference, as there was a very strong desire that it should be deliberated upon, and that no conclusion upon it should be hastily reached. In the first place there was the whole principle for the General Conference now to discuss, then it could be remitted to the quarterly meetings for them to discuss and vote upon; the district meetings would next vote upon it, and finally if it met the views of the preceding, the Annual Conference would decide and debate on the question. This was fully understood by all in the United Committee. He did not think that they ran any risk in adopting this principle now for the sake of union. He would mention that it had been decided at the time by all the delegates that the Stationing Committee should not be considered as one of the Church committees, and that it should be accepted that the laymen were not to be present in the Annual Conferences during the time that the ministerial character was under investigation. It was argued that as the minister had to undergo this and the layman did not, there would be no equality if it were allowed.

Rev. S. F. Huestis said a good many questions might be asked. Suppose they were to adopt the whole report would they be committed to all these questions? The President said this was only a preliminary step, and committed them to nothing. Rev. S. F. Huestis said he did not see how any principle could be accepted with no definite information before the Conference. How could they be in a position to decide upon the advisability of union till they knew what it was going to cost? How could they calmly consider it till they had the principles before them and facts on which to work?

Rev. Dr. Sutherland moved as an amendment, "That having considered the Report of the Committee on Union, this Conference affirms the desirability of organic union of the various Methodist Churches, and while it is not aware of any general desire for lay representation in the Annual Conferences, yet agrees to concede the principle in order to procure union, provided no change is made in regard to the examination of ministerial character and the position of the Stationing Committee." He thought that his resolution was preferable to that of the Committee, because the latter seemed to commit the Conference to lay delegates and a general superintendency. If they passed the recommendations of the Committee they could not, he thought, discuss clauses 1 and 2. Perhaps there might be some in the Conference who would vote for lay representation who could not vote for a general superintendency. He would rather discuss these two points on their merits at the proper time. Now the resolution simply affirms the desirability of organic union among the various Methodist bodies. This is a point that did not admit of argument or comment in the judgment or the good-will of the members of this Conference. In fact, when they looked at the other side of the question it was impossible to justify to any sensible man the position in which they now were. He could not justify the church before the Christian world for standing apart from the others, as there were no divergencies of doctrine, in matters of usage or polity. In fact the Church of Christ could see nothing that divided them except these two points under discussion, on which some concession was asked from them by the other bodies. His motion simply guarded what they considered essential, and definitely declared what understanding they had on the points. He thought they were running no risk by affirming the general principle, and he further thought that they should not do less than affirm that if they wanted to stand fairly before the Christian public, they must

promise themselves that, if they went into the Union, they would have to enter into detail when the matter came before the lower courts of the Church.

Mr. John Macdonald said a question had been asked at an early stage of their meeting whether or not this Church had declared in favour of the Union. He would just point out that the Union Committee appointed by this General Conference had had before it a large number of references from district meetings and quite a number from Annual Conferences. He would just read a word or two from one of the Toronto Conference:—"That there is a general desire on the part of both ministers and laymen to see the several bodies of Methodists in this country brought into more intimate friendship."

Resolutions of earnest yearning from fourteen quarterly conferences had been received on this subject. He would simply ask was the Toronto Conference sincere in this. (Yes, yes.) The Committee on Union appointed deliberately to consider these things laid before them resolutions from three other Conferences of Methodists desiring to be organically one, and the Committee had been approached in the most kind and generous spirit by the Methodist Episcopal Church, which had through its delegates agreed to relinquish the life episcopacy, the presiding eldership, the diaconate, all for the sake of union. What could the Committee do? Could the Committee have them come in as serfs or as brethren? The Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians also came in the kindest possible way. They said, "We don't come as paupers; if we come among you we are able to put down dollar for dollar. Every man having a claim upon us shall stand precisely on the same platform as yours." This was the generous spirit in which they had been met. They had stated that in regard to Church property they were not any worse off than the Methodist Church of Canada. They claimed that it was worth \$400,000, and the debt upon it was not more than \$50,000, and it was for the case they were far better off than his (the speaker's) Church.

Dr. Jeffers said as to the question of the desirability of union this had been admitted, but as to the certainty of it that was another matter. He hoped that not one word would be said that would wound the feelings of anybody should union not take place. There were grave economic questions to be considered. There is the matter of finding places for the men. He thought there would be at least one or two hundred men for whom places could not be found. As to lay representatives he did not think that one lay representative for each district would be satisfactory to the people. For his part he believed in lay representation in all the Church courts. Then again, as to the question of a general superintendency, it might mean one thing and it might mean another. In the past it had been the tendency of Methodism to avoid the centralization of power. For in it there was a universal patronage, and if power got in the hands of a clique, then it would bow them down and make life unbearable.

Rev. Dr. Dewart said the minor bodies had shown a very commendable spirit, and they must be met with sincerity; and still he thought there was a little danger of being too precipitate, and it would be more effectual progress if they made haste slowly. He thought that now the question seemed to be ripe, and they might not find such favorable circumstances existing some time hence, yet he would not make very radical changes to effect it, for eight years ago they had made some concessions, and the Primitive and Methodist Episcopal Churches had gone some distance in the direction of union and had drawn back, not from any desire for more changes, but because it was considered that the people were not just ready for union. Unless the thing proposed commended itself to his judgment he should demur to accepting any change merely for the sake of overcoming any opposition on the part of others. There was another phase of the question. They were more extensive as a Church than all the others together in all places, and in some places there were none of the other classes of Methodists at all. And he could scarcely consent to upset the whole work in those parts where they had no particular desire for union.

Rev. Dr. Sutherland's motion was here accepted by the Conference as a clause preceding the following:—1 That the principle of lay representation in all our Church courts be so recognized as to admit laymen into our Annual Conferences to some extent and in some form. Rev. W. Williams now moved the adoption of the above clause. Rev. Dr. Sutherland moved as an amendment that while this Conference is not aware of any general desire for lay representation among the members of the Methodist Church of Canada, it yet agrees, in order to promote union, in our Annual Conferences to concede the principle, provided that no change is made in regard to the examination of ministerial character and composition of the Stationing Committee.

Rev. T. W. Williams said he was willing to concede lay delegation for union, but he did not think that their people wanted it. It had been said that there would be churches on the market, yet he did not think that there was any danger of suffering in that direction. Then there were preachers to be provided for. This could not be a danger to their church for it was now suffering for the want of them. He had gone into the sub-

ject and he did not think that there would be either 200 or 100 to be provided for when the work was rearranged. With these things before them he did not think it unwise to accept the resolution. Believing that it was for the glory of God, he would support the resolution.

Mr. W. Eyles said as he understood the position of the Conference they were considering the subject of lay representation and the amendment of Dr. Sutherland. This, he thought, narrowed the subject down to what was intended. He thought no Committee could formulate a basis of union without instructions, and who could do this so well as the General Conference? He did not think, as a layman, that they were dangerous to the church or to any principle in the church. It was a prudential matter, and the interests of the Church would be subserved by the introduction of laymen into the Annual Conferences. These laymen are elected by their brethren who knew them. He could not conceive of a layman finding his way into the Annual Conference without the sanction and approval of the laymen and ministers.

Rev. Dr. Hunter said that for Union the Methodist Episcopal Church had abandoned many of its distinctive features. The Primitive Methodists had now two laymen on the Stationing Committee to one minister. They had approached the Conference at home in order to get their permission to unite, even if they had to give up this.

Rev. Dr. Burns did not look upon the matter from a pounds, shillings and pence point of view. Nearly all the methods of operations were conducted in much the same way. But even if there were differences had they not grace enough to overcome them? He, somehow or other, believed that men not called Methodists would clasp hands and unite in Jesus Christ. Looking at it from a business point of view, all the other bodies had made concessions. They had yielded nearly all. That clearly showed that they were in Christ the same, and even while they stood lingering they might find that the other bodies would hold out their hands and yield all. If everything were yielded that they were asking, would they agree to unite? He would not believe that they were going to keep apart from financial consideration. Then again, it was said that there were a number of men they could not get to do with; yet two-thirds of the men of the world never heard a Christian sermon. In the city of Hamilton, with railroads to the end of the world, and the Church holding the admission of more men. They feared the admission of more men. With two or three men doing the work which one man could do, and three men starving on what would keep one man well, yet they were hanging back from union. They must remember that the men of the smaller bodies as their Church called them, and as they humbly styled themselves, were the men who would, if any, be laid on the shelf. Some had said that they had no facts to go on. What, after the articles in the magazines giving data as to the cost and indebtedness of churches in the other bodies? He would go out and meet the other churches, hold out a warm hand, and give a firm grip to them.

(Continued on page 4.)

MEMORIAL NOTICES.

STEPHEN PARKER.

Died at Tenny Cape, Hants Co., N. S., September 1st, Mr. Stephen Parker, aged 78 years. Bro. Parker was born at Walton, Hants County, N. S. His ancestors were from Yorkshire, England. In religion they were of the Quaker profession. About forty years ago he became a member of the Methodist Church and continued that connection until his death. It appears that his conversion to God took place at Walton during some revival services held in that place by the Rev. James R. Narraway. We have not now the full particulars of that conversion; a short acquaintance with him however, would soon convince any one that the change he had met with, was real and soul-saving. He was very strongly attached to the church of his choice. He entertained very humble views of himself. His kindness to the ministers of Christ was very praiseworthy and unvarying, as the brethren who have been stationed on this circuit can testify. His house was always a home for them at any time when they might need it. There they were always welcome, both by himself and kind family doing all that could be desired to make them comfortable. One of the last things he said to me, a short time before he died, was that he wished it might be always so. His faith in God was strong. Like the Apostle he could say, "Live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." A length the time came when his loved one must be tested. During the spring and summer of this year he was in a very poor state of health, when at the above date, under great suffering and pain from tumor in the stomach he passed to the reward where they suffer no more. There is only one who can cure and that is Jesus, and he will cure. He beareth all our diseases. The sign as to whether he was happy at last was a presence of the hand of one of his family, which was duly given and the sufferer entered into rest. Rev. xxi. 6 gave him great comfort especially the thought there should be no pain.

He was buried on Sabbath afternoon, Sept. 3rd. The large concourse of people attending the funeral showed the estimation in which Bro. Parker was held. The writer endeavored to improve the occasion by preaching on Eccl. xii. 5. In his death the church on the Mainland circuit has lost a consistent and useful member, the ministers a sincere friend, his aged partner, also a member of the Methodist Church, an affectionate husband, his family of five sons and daughters a kind father. May they all meet in heaven. P. PRESTWOOD.

BREVITIES.

The lady who writes under the name of "Sarah Tyler" is really Mrs. Henrietta Kiddie.

True friends visit us in prosperity only when invited, but in adversity they come without invitation.

Often the grand meaning of faces, as well as written words, may be chiefly in the impressions of those who look on them.—George Eliot.

Let him who expects one class in society to prosper in the highest degree while others are in distress, try whether one side of his face can smile while the other is pinched.

According to Herbert Spencer, Oscar Wilde is an "outrajudicial person who attempted to reconcile idiocy with art and namby-pambyism with sentiment."

La Bruyere says: "When a person of feeling and discernment reads a book, and it excites in him elevated thoughts, he may be sure the work is good, and he needs no other mode of proving it."

A bitter word may make a wound that will never heal. A kind word may win a friend that will never turn. A caution may save a soul; and yet silence is sometimes more soothing, and at other times more soothing, than any word.

A stranger called at forty-eight different houses in Cleveland and asked, "Is the boss home?" There was no man home in any one instance, and yet forty-seven of the women promptly replied: "Yes, sir—what do you want?"

An aged peasant learns that the village doctor, to whom he had advanced some small sums, has just passed away, leaving nothing but debts. "There!" says he to his wife, with delighted chuckle. "If I hadn't had the good luck to have that fit of inflammatory rheumatism two months ago, where would my money be?"—French Fun.

During the year 1881 no fewer than 277 human bodies were found in the Thames, and in more than one-half of the cases coroner's juries were unable to express any opinion as to the cause of death. That undetected murder is the solution of many of these mysteries of the river is a perfectly natural but a very disagreeable reflection.

There are some dispensations of Nature which are not easily comprehended by the casual inquirer, and do not become very much plainer when carefully examined. One of them was remarked upon the other day by a young lady. "It is very curious," she observed, "altogether unaccountable, indeed, that the tortoise, from whom we get all our tortoise-shell combs, has himself no hair whatever."

"Suffering sisters," exclaimed the speaker, energetically shaking the hair-pins from her head in her excitement, "women will never obtain their rights until they display more courage. Let me say to you, in the words of a famous French orator, 'Courage! courage! courage!' At this stage of the proceedings somebody threw a box of caterpillars upon the platform and the meeting broke up in great terror and confusion.

According to the Minneapolis Lumberman, in Australia there has recently been discovered a specimen of *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, or almond leaf gum, which has been accurately measured and proves to be 380 feet up to the first branch, and 430 feet to the top. If placed alongside of Trinity spire (N.Y.) this tree would reach 109 feet above it before the branches spring out, and fifty more to the top. This tree is sixty feet in circumference at "some distance" from the ground.

A few days ago a little child gave expression to an old story in the following manner. It seems that the little fellow had discovered a bee crawling upon his hand. Finally the bee stopped for a moment, and, after remaining stationary for an instant, stung the little fellow. When the cry of pain was over, the little child said to his mamma that he didn't care for the bee's walking about on him, but he didn't like his sitting down on him.—Dayton Journal.

Did you ever climb a spruce-tree after its gum? You probably brought down more gum than you had reckoned for; not only gum in your mouth, but gum on your hands, gum on your trousers, and how it all stuck when you tried to remove it! There are some things in this world that stick worse than gum, and one is the influence of a bad book. How the bad thoughts it suggests will glue themselves to a reader! If they could only be washed out, soaped out, sanded out, and scoured out! But there they are to stick and stay. The best way to manage a "spruce-gum" tree is not to climb it.

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