

The men that have accepted appointment by their brethren to this General Conference have accepted an honor and a dignity, to be sure; but they have accepted as well a weighty responsibility and a solemn trust, and they should not feel themselves at liberty to trifle for one minute with the interests committed by God and His Church to their hands, or turn easily aside from the business that here occupies them to worldly cares and studies, or consume holy, precious time in needless harangues and heartlessly protracted discussions, or go away from the Conference and from their weighty, sacred obligations in the Committee Room and on the floor, except upon the plainest justification and heartiest approbation and consent of the brethren sharing with them these responsibilities. If we are not going to find a sense and proof of Christian honor and obligation in a body like this, where are we to look for it? But, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you,* and of you all, though we thus speak. You have not left it to this hour to prepare for this work. We are persuaded that you all have come up to this Conference with much thought and study and prayer, and that we all are fully aware of our own insufficiency without divine aid; all are deeply impressed with a sense of duty, and amid the diverse and conflicting opinions that must arise, extremely anxious to reach the best solutions, decisions, and results; and we are wholly purposed in our hearts to ask aright of God the gift of His Holy Spirit, that all our work in this Conference may be begun, continued, and ended in Him, to the good of His people and the praise of His glory. In utter self-renunciation, in leaving ourselves entirely in the hands of God, in entire consecration and faith, we shall seek to walk in the light and feel the cleansing blood applied. We shall be able to plead the exceeding great and precious promises to the Church of God. Our personal and individual experience and attainment have very much to do with our collective and corporate wisdom, vigor, courage, and success. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. Our last General Conference, which was the first General Conference of this Methodist Church, was in session in the City of Belleville this month three years ago, viz., in September, 1883; but the General Conference passed an interpreting clause to the effect that the words "four years"—the statutory "four years" of the Basis and Discipline—"shall be understood as meaning the term from one regular General Conference to another." Then the General Conference distinctly ordered "that the next General Conference of the Methodist Church be convened in the Metropolitan Church, City of Toronto, on the first Wednesday in September, 1886." In pursuance of which order we are now assembled. Since the General Conference of 1883 one of the General Superintendents then elected, the Rev. Samuel

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