

the question had better cease. Wherefore this General Conference before rising will, I presume, in the exercise of its best wisdom make provision for either alternative, the success or failure of Union upon the Basis, that the Church may be preserved from destruction and unrest.

Objections to Union on the Basis all have observed, have come up freely from all the Bodies interested from their various points of view. Two of the Bodies say, "You have infringed on our Lay Delegation, excluding it from the Stationing Committee, the very point of power and the very place we desire its action. The Lay Delegation you have yielded us is but a tease and a fraud." The other two, the larger bodies reply, "We have no Lay Delegation in the Annual Conferences, nor have we desired or sought it, but we conceded this for the sake of Union." The largest body says, "You have invaded our pastoral rights and destroyed the autonomy of our Annual Conferences by introducing laymen on the one hand and imposing upon us the Presidency of the General Superintendency on the other." The other bodies reply, some of them, that "Lay Delegation is with them a settled principle, and must in some effective form be recognized in the Annual Conferences; else so far as they are concerned there is no Union." And we reply, so far as we are concerned, that with us the supremacy of the General Conference and the unity of the Church and its authority in that General Conference are settled principles, and that to secure these things we

. MUST HAVE A GENERAL SUPERINTENDENCY,

and the Presidency of that Superintendency in the Annual Conferences; and that ordinations and all supreme official acts of authority must be done under the authority of the General Conference, that is, of the entire Church, and in its name. Else so far as we are concerned there can be no Union. One contends for the laical interests, another for the pastoral, and another for the connexional and governmental. One says we have invested funds in pastoral and personal interests. The others say, Prove your special investments, and we ask no share of them unless we or our Churches raise amounts proportional to yours. Albeit in Connexional funds, as the Educational and Missions, we are not behind you, and we have no idea that our debts on Church property proportionally exceed yours. One pushes on the Alabama claims, talks of constructive damages, and boasts a giving power. The others say, "From numbers and chances we have done at least as much as you. We are ready to compare notes." Some of them say it is a degradation of the Annual Conference President to be displaced by the General Superintendent. We answer, we would like to see where the degradation comes in, and which is the officer degraded, if degradation it is: an Annual Conference President that yields to a General Superintendent, or the General Superintendent that yields to the Conference President? Who does the yielding? All around they say, The essential points of our Church polity are gone; one side declaring that Episcopacy is sacrificed, others as stoutly maintaining that the iron-handed grip of Episcopacy is all but crushing out their vitality and liberty, some affirming that lay delegation is all given up, and others complaining that they are burdened and almost smothered with lay delegation. Some are fairly shouting, Our finances are well-nigh ruined; others cry aloud, If Union is a money speculation, we want nothing of it, but we are ready for justice in all things. Some insinuate, Our people cannot bear your preachers; the others as tartly reply, We prefer our own men and our own congregations, and should be very glad had you left us undisturbed by this Union agitation. And thus you would think these Methodist people have nothing in common; no common ground of doctrine or usages; no common origin or history; no common heritage or hopes; no common feelings, desires, sympathies, purposes or aims; diversity all, all antagonism. But if we go patiently through all the objections on the one side or the other we will find most of them balanced off closely enough for Christian men, agreeing in doctrine, desiring organic union, and preferring Christ and His cause to worldly honor and emolument, in the name of love, good-will, and increased power for good, to strike the balance to the account of spiritual and eternal profit, unite their energies, affections and resources for God, and trust Him to make up all their lack out of His fulness in Christ.

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