

Religious Intelligence.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is still discussing affairs of moment as we go to press. Perhaps the chief of these is the matter of federation with the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Plan of Federation already in vogue contemplates the transfer of ministers between the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with the same facility with which they are now transferred from one Conference to another.

Unfortunately, however, there is still a large percentage of the Church too prejudiced for this most reasonable and needed reform. The matter of episcopal supervision is also being discussed. It is suggested that the same Bishop remain in the same district for a term of four years. The removal of the time-limit in certain cases is advocated. Says a Methodist organ of the down-town churches of large cities:

"Experiment proves that the institutional church is the most effective for the reaching and holding of a transient population. Not every man is adapted to this character of work; and when we find one, would it not be well to make his tenure of longer duration than four years? In his case would it not be wise to remove the limit?"

A further very important matter is the plea for the consolidation of Church papers. Seventeen Conference papers are published by the Southern Church, with a membership of 1,600,000.

There can be no doubt of the wisdom of reducing the quantity to improve the quality. Other considerations are the union of Women's Societies, Foreign Missionary and Home Missionary, and the creation of a Board of Home Missions and Church Extension.

THE CHURCH AND THE LABOR QUESTION.

The relation of the Church and the laboring man is a problem that demands attention. It was a distinct advance along practical lines when in 1903 the Presbyterian General Assembly in the United States created a new department

in its organization in the interests of "labor problems." It put in charge of this work a man who, as a boy of eight, had stripped tobacco leaves in a New York basement, and from that start had risen steadily in the ranks of labor, from newsboy to machinist, until finally, entering the ministry, the Rev. Charles Stelzle became the head of a famous working-men's church in St. Louis.

Mr. Stelzle says in an article in the Sunday-School Times:

"Thousands of employers are being deluded by the vain hope that if they can abolish the labor union they will have solved the labor question. They forget that the labor union is not the labor question. If every labor union in existence were to be wiped out to-day, the labor question would still be with us, and possibly in a more aggravated form.

"It is interesting to note that while social conditions were infinitely worse in Christ's day, He did not advocate another social system. He struck at sin—at evil. He tried to change men rather than methods. The principle of Jesus Christ was ideal. He knew that the system which might meet the needs of the first century would be inadequate for the needs of the twentieth. He taught the principles which will be applicable to every century.

"The remedy that Christ proposes is not in emphasizing the rights of the poor, but in thrusting in upon the employer the thought that in the treatment of his men he is to follow the law of love and brotherhood.

"Human rights will never suffer if human duties be performed. The time has come when duty must be emphasized. The duty of the mistress to the maid, of the maid to the mistress. The duty of the employer to the employee, of the employee to the employer."

Certainly the day has come when men must recognize that "Britons never will be slaves," that one class cannot submerge another into a sort of serfdom of toil unrelieved by books, music, means of culture as well as ordinary material comforts. The "Welfare" organizations, the "Garden Cities," and other altruistic endeavors are all manifestations of the spirit of the Golden Rule.