

Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada  
Not in session

# BISHOP'S ADDRESS.

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*To the Delegates of the Annual Conferences and of the Lay Electoral Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, in General Conference assembled:—*

**DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :—**We are met under the authority of our Constitution and Discipline, and in pursuance of this resolution of our regular General Conference, in session in the city of Hamilton last autumn :—

*Resolved,—*That when this General Conference shall adjourn at the close of its final session it shall stand adjourned to meet, provided a Basis of Union shall have been agreed upon, in special session, at the call of the Bishop and Secretary of this General Conference, to receive the report of the said Committee, and take such action thereon as may be deemed necessary; and further to attend to any unfinished business, provided such call be made previous to the meeting of the ensuing Annual Conferences.

All are aware that your Committee on the Union of our Church with the Methodist Church of Canada, the Primitive Methodist Church of Canada, and the Bible Christian Church of Canada, met the corresponding Committees of those Churches in joint session, first in the city of Hamilton, in September last, and subsequently in the city of Toronto, in November and December, for the purpose of ascertaining whether a Basis of Union could be found on which the Churches might with any propriety be called upon to deliberate and decide. All are further aware that these Committees agreed upon a Basis which they think worthy of the consideration of the Churches concerned; wherefore the officers of your General Conference entrusted with the power of call felt it incumbent on them to convene the General Conference under the authority of the resolution cited above. And it was thought best to convene at as early a date as practicable that the General Conference might first pronounce upon the Basis of Union and thereby save the Church, well as might be, from agitation and distraction. As Episcopal Methodists we hold as one of our fundamental principles the supremacy of the General Conference, especially in the settlement of questions of law; and maintain that the unity and authority of the Church are in the General Conference, while it remains plainly within the powers and prerogatives given it in the Discipline. Since important questions of constitution and law were likely to transpire an early call was all the more desirable. In this case the General Conference had marked out for itself and for the Church a plain path clearly within its constitutional functions. It had confided an important interest and subject to a Committee, which Committee was under instruction to report to the General Conference at the earliest practicable date, and full provision was made for the consideration of the report and proper action upon it.

It seems, therefore, to me, believing as I do in law and constitutional procedure as necessary and central to Episcopal Methodism, that it would be, to say the least, premature and quite irregular for any Annual or Quarterly Conference, or any official person, organ or body in the Church to step athwart the action of the General Conference, or in any sense or degree hinder or bias its decisions.

M. P. W. P.