

all engage in ordaining and governing, after the manner of a democracy of the presbyters: that is Presbyterianism. Or they may elect one or more of their number to ordain, and clothe him or them with powers of government more or less; that is Methodist Episcopacy; Presbyterian Episcopacy; a limited monarchy of Episcopacy over the democracy of Presbyterianism. If they govern and ordain by Presbyteries and Synods, that is Presbyterianism, and the connexional bond is comparatively weak. If they govern and ordain by overseers elected and authorized by the Supreme General Conference in which reside the unity and authority of the entire Church, these overseers being the agents of that General Conference and therefore of the united Church, that is Episcopal Methodism;

#### THE CONNEXIONAL BOND IS STRONG,

the succession sound, and the oversight secure. This view and this alone vindicates the Fathers, and explaining their fundamental maxim that the

#### METHODIST BISHOP IS FIRST AMONG EQUALS ;

first in office, but equal in orders. And as John Wesley recommended his Episcopacy to the American Methodists,—though he of all men denounced the use of the name Bishop—to give them a united Church government in the supremacy and unity of the General Conference as it then was, and thereby secure to the people the purity of the doctrines and perpetuity and regularity of the sacraments, all under the care of the General Conference and the supervision of its authorized agents; and as these things and these principles and methods are secured in the proposed Basis, I am free to express my conviction that the Methodist Episcopacy is

#### BY NO MEANS DONE AWAY

in the Basis of Union. Its principle, spirit and method are there in a very good sense preserved.

But when we are dealing with the constitutional question and the relations of the General Conference and the Quarterly Meeting Conferences in this important business we must be governed by our own Book of Discipline, and our Constitution as it stands to-day. Our view of our Episcopacy is very clearly set forth in the following question and answer: "If by death, expulsion or otherwise there be no Bishop remaining in our Church, what shall we do? The General Conference shall elect a Bishop; and the Elders or any three of them who shall be appointed by the General Conference for that purpose, shall ordain him according to our form of ordination." From this it is plain enough the succession and authority are not in a papacy or even an Episcopacy, but in the Elders, and they can erect an Episcopate out of the Presbytery; they can elect and ordain, or, as the Discipline otherwise puts it, consecrate a Bishop; but all must be done under the Constitution and by and with the authority of the General Conference. The Methodist Episcopacy does not come down from above by a superior order, but lives in the parity of the Presbyters and their action. And yet to show us the perfection of this parity or equality the normal method of constituting a Bishop is "by the election of the General Conference and the laying on of the hands of three Bishops, or at least of one Bishop and two elders." Now what constitutes our Bishoprick? Is it the life-term? I find no such requirement in our Discipline. Is it in the possession of certain powers? We have always been changing the powers from greater to less, or less to greater. It is, as I understand it, the election by the General Conference, the consecration or setting apart to the office, and the clothing with certain powers, greater or less, at the will of the Conference of Elders. No one will pretend that the General Conference may not change its mode of election or alter the ritual of consecration at pleasure. Our Discipline further provides that in the absence of a Bishop to preside in the Annual Conferences, and in default of his appointment of a President to act in his place, the Conference shall elect a President from the Presiding Elders who shall perform within his Conference all the duties of a Bishop, ordination excepted.

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