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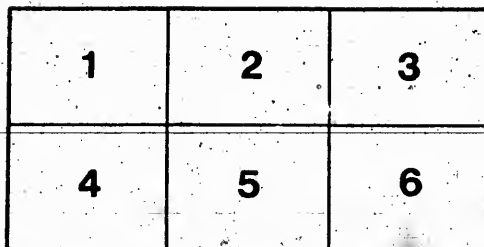
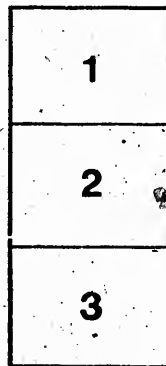
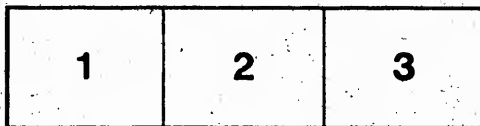
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# AN APPEAL TO METHODISTS

ON THE SUBJECT OF

# METHODIST UNION.

BY REV. A. A. BROWN.

AND THE GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE GIVEN THEM; THAT THOU  
MAY BE ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE. — JOHN XVII. 22.

OTTAWA:

PRINTED BY T. E. LEWIS, LITTLE SUSSEX STREET.

1865.

NOV 4 1965

## PREFACE.

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In presenting this work to Methodists of all denominations, there are, doubtless, due from us a few words of explanation.

Our only apology is the heart-rending divisions which now exist in the Methodist Family in Canada. In writing this work, we have been actuated only by feelings of kindest sympathy and brotherly affection toward all Methodists, whatever may be their name or distinguishing feature.

We have been asked why we did not include the Wesleyan Methodists in the list of names of denominations which we would propose to unite. The reason is simply this: we did not consider the subject ripe for Union between them and the other Methodist bodies in this Province. Had we thought otherwise, we should certainly have included them. Since the agitation on the subject commenced, an article appeared in the "Christian Guardian," the organ of the Wesleyan Church, which served to establish us more fully in our opinion, as above, that the time for Union with them has not fully come. However, we shall be happy, indeed, to find that we have misjudged in this matter, and that our Wesleyan brethren are ready to embrace a fair and equitable Union. We hope we may be able to say of the article in the "Guardian," above alluded to, as the Apostle Paul said to certain brethren, that he did it ignorantly. We hope to see the day when all Methodists will be one in name, as well as doctrine. There are other minor branches of Methodists in Canada, whom we

have not mentioned, for the simple reason that we have not a sufficient acquaintance with them to enable us to investigate fairly the differences which may exist between them and us. However, if any should feel ready to enter into the compromise proposed, we shall hail them with the greatest joy. We hope none will decline the proposed Union, who have a heart to it, merely because they are not especially named in this proposal. No doubt some may find fault with this being written by a person of only six or seven years' standing in the Conference. Our justification is, that no other seemed willing to undertake the work, and if they should, the prejudice of old men, engendered by passing through the commotions which have originated these divisions, would, in a great measure, unfit them for the task.

We have previously published a portion of this work in the "Canada Christian Advocate," over the signature of Americus. At the time we commenced writing, we only intended a series of newspaper correspondence, but subsequently concluded to give the matter its present form. Finally, we commend the work to the careful perusal of all Methodists, asking them to weigh well its several arguments, and suggestions, and with unbiassed minds to decide on the course best to be pursued.



# UNION OF METHODISM.

## SECTION I.

### ITS DESIRABLENESS AND ADVANTAGES.

WHAT we believe to be the unnecessary divisions in Canadian Methodism, have for a long time engrossed our attention. We have been patiently waiting for some one, more able than ourself, to undertake the agitation of the subject, but as no such person appears, we have resolved to do what we can. With the present elements combined in Canadian Methodism, we can see no reason for there being four or five separate denominations. It is the reproach of Methodism, that it is divided into such a variety of sects, with no difference in doctrine, and no essential difference in polity. There is no better way for Methodism to lose its self-respect, than to perpetuate these denominational differences. If these differences in name, were founded on differences of opinion on any of the essential doctrines of Christianity, such as divide Methodists from other denominations, they might be tolerated; but as it is, they are deplorable. That christian men should think differently on points of church polity, is not to be wondered at; but that they should allow their differences on non-essentials, to cause them to become separated in name and heart, is to be deprecated. We would recommend to all advocates of division, a careful perusal of Wesley's views on heart and church divisions. But some may enquire, what can be done to mitigate the

evil. Let those denominations follow the noble example of the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, and the work is done. In advocating Union, we shall not stoop to that narrowness which requires all to unite with us, and to give up all that is peculiar to themselves, and endorse all that is peculiar to us; but we shall advocate the consummation of Union, by entering into a mutual adjustment of all our differences in polity and usage, adopting that which is best and wisest in each. We purpose to speak, at present, of but three of those bodies above referred to, viz.: the New Connection, the Primitive Methodist, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. These bodies are alike liberal in their forms of Church Government, and have nothing to lose, and every thing to gain by Union; and we believe the time has fully come when the subject should be thoroughly ventilated. The M. E. Church being the largest body, we believe it to be her duty to commence the agitation, and to carry it on in a manner which will show that she seeks an honorable adjustment of all differences. To propose Union on terms which would require either of the parties to sacrifice its independence and honor, would be to increase the separation which is already too great. Whatever the cause might have been which originated these denominations, we believe they form no barrier to a present Union. With the enlightenment and experience of the present day, and the wisdom of the leading men of these Churches, both in the laity and ministry, no doubt all differences could be adjusted, and, we think, all that is required is an honest effort. No doubt there are narrow-minded men in each of the above named Churches, who will oppose all efforts at reconciliation; but should this discourage us? or should it not rather stimulate us to greater zeal in this noble work? We expect opposition, also, from office-seekers, in all of these denominations, for they will conclude that to increase the number of men in

the ministry, would increase competition, and thereby decrease their chances of success. We hope, however, that this class of men is exceedingly small, but agitation will, doubtless, reveal a few opponents, even of this class. But are these the bone and sinew of the Church—the men who toil and labour for her interests, by whose tears she is watered, and by whose prayers she achieves her victories? That some imaginary sacrifices will have to be made we are free to admit, but, in return, an amount of real benefit will be derived, which will a thousand times compensate for all that is lost. The advantage to be derived from Union would be indeed great. There is hardly an interest but would be enhanced. As we proceed, we shall try to set forth those advantages in as clear a light as possible.

The first, and one of the most important benefits, would be the removal of petty misunderstandings, which, in many instances, exist between them, and at the same time to remove all possibility of their again occurring. They occupy, in many instances, the same territory—more or less mingle with each other; and the anxious feeling of all, for the prosperity of that particular branch of the church to which each belongs, originates jealousy. From this ensues almost endless misunderstandings, which militate seriously against the cause of Christ—giving infidelity and skepticism an opportunity of gainsaying the doctrines of the Cross. Although these divisions and misunderstandings are no evidence of the falsity of Christianity, but rather of human weakness and human frailty, yet the sophisticating skeptic weaves from it an argument, and as the human mind preponderates to evil, by weaving in a few false syllogism, the weak are won to infidelity. We know that it is confidently asserted that these misunderstandings are not necessary, but that Christians of all denominations should live on terms of intimate friendship with each other. This may do for a

have but little happiness in communion with such a brother; so has our communion with our brethren of the several Methodist bodies, such as it has been, yielded us but little real happiness and comfort. We long to see the day when such a state of things shall cease—when brother shall again meet brother, feeling that no separating walls or denominational chasms are dividing us. We shall then feel that flow of love, that bond of Union, which is experienced alone by those who are cemented together by the ties of spiritual kindred. We are sometimes drawn out to contemplate the scene which will be presented at the consummation of Union, between the denominations under consideration; for Union there will be, sooner or later. In our imagination, we have often been led to the scene of the first meeting of these societies as one, after so long a separation; and we have been reminded of the occasion, when Joseph met his brethren after so long a separation from them: when, after having restrained his feelings for so long a period, he made himself known, in the use of that simple, yet touching language—"I am Joseph; does my father yet live?"

Methodists in the mother country, we see a great want of that fellowship which should exist among Christians of different denominations possessed of the same creed. Each regards the other as essentially wrong, and consequently unworthy of their confidence and fellowship; and what is strangest of all is, that these denominations agree on all points of doctrine, and on many points of church government—the difference consisting only in opinion on a few points of the latter—and still they regard one another, almost as heretics and outlaws.

Divisions in Methodism are the same the world over. In the United States the different Methodist Churches are hostile to each other. Visiting delegates from one to the other is a thing not known, and each seems to regard the other as an antagonist, and, although many profess friendship, it has never taken that form which alone can make it apparent. Among Methodists in Canada we see the same spirit manj-

so foolish as to continue separated so long; and, also, that God has been so kind as to bring them together at last. It will be sublime, indeed, to see old gray haired pilgrims, who have always looked upon each other as only half-brothers at most, because separated in name, now kneeling together around the same altar, responding to the same prayers, having the same aspirations, and called by the same name. You may, perhaps, accuse me of coloring too highly, but all coloring falls below the reality. No Christian, who is a Methodist, can look with candor on the divided state of the church, and not feel that denominationalism has, to a great extent, blinded the eyes of christians, so that it is hard for most men to see any real good outside of his own sect, or to find any person who is a real pattern of piety, except they are such as pronounce his own peculiar sectarian shibboleth. Now, brethren, this ought not so to be. A little more intercourse with other Methodist bodies, will teach us that they have less horns than we really supposed, and that they are really possessed of some excellences, and that even in their mode of church government, there are

cited facts reveal clearly the necessity of Methodist Union; for, in our opinion, they are not an abuse of divisions, but their legitimate result—a result which can only be avoided by removing the cause. Many of the advocates of divisions, tell us that a higher standard of piety would obviate this difficulty; but the most pious Christians of the past, it would seem, have failed to attain to such a standard. The great reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and even the immortal Wesley, failed to reach this ideal position. We are told again, that divisions serve to provoke us to good works; but good works wrought only to serve sectarian ends are worthless so far as the glory of God and the conversion of sinners are concerned. That society or church which labours to outdo its neighbours in matters of religion, merely to advance sectarian interests, will, doubtless, have its reward; but it will probably not be the reward of well done, good and faithful servants: When

should not be confined in our labours to Canada, but we should be able to push our conquests into British Columbia and the Lower Provinces. Just in proportion as we feel it our duty to preach the Gospel to every creature, we should feel it our duty to unite, that, by a careful husbanding of men and means, we may be enabled to send the Gospel to every neighborhood in our own country, and then to foreign lands. The present indebtedness of these societies, not only cripple their operations, but it cripples the Missionaries. They enter upon their missions, with an appropriation just as small as the Committee on appropriations can have a conscience to put it, and struggling hard with want, they get through the year, only to find their appropriation cut down, from twenty-five to fifty per cent, leaving them in debt, and in want, to grapple with the same labour, and the same hopes, and doomed, at the close of the year, to a like disappointment. All of this sacrifice is borne to perpetuate separate interests—which interest and duty would teach us to amalgamate. It is strange what hardships we will endure, and what privations we will put up with,

tions, we claim that they should only exist where the variance in doctrine and polity is such that it cannot be reconciled or amalgamated. Neither would we wish to discourage proper denominational attachment in the membership of any church; but their denominational distinctions should be founded on real, and not on imaginary, differences. That there are some real differences in the form of government adopted by the denominations under consideration, is a fact which we do not wish to disguise, but that they form real barriers to Union, we are not willing to admit. So far from this, we believe, if the subject was once fairly taken in hand, an amalgamation could be formed, which would constitute a government that would be superior to either of the existing ones. We do not underrate the sagacity of the framers of these several constitutions, but, with the extended experience of the present, we see no good reason for concluding that they could not be improved. We believe in Conservatism; but we utterly reject all Conser-

denominations united, one paper would do for all, and, with the united patronage, it would not only become self-supporting, but would yield a handsome revenue, to be applied in support of superannuated preachers, or whatever else is thought proper. It is certain that nearly, or quite two-thirds of the amount paid out by these denominations for newspaper publishing, could be saved in the event of Union. The entire subscription list could not only be amalgamated, but the paper could be so far improved, that the circulation could be greatly increased. It is frequently asked of us, how it is, that among the methodists in Canada, periodicals cannot be made to pay just as well they can in the United States. Now the reason is simply this: they get larger lists of subscribers than we can possibly obtain. The Methodist Episcopal Church is not only numerous, but wealthy, and consequently able to drive such an enterprise with profit. For instance, "The Northern Christian Advocate," published in Auburn, New York, is supported by five patronising conferences, with a membership which, in num-

to God, that these efforts have not been in vain. Thousands of the heathen have been brought to know Christ, and many of them who are now singing the praises of God on high, but for these labours would be lifting up their eyes in torment. Nor has she been less successful at home. To spread the doctrine and practice of holiness, was the avowed object of the founder of Methodism. True to her genius, and persevering in her efforts, she has accomplished more, in the same length of time, to bring about this so much desired end, than any other agency. For more than a century her altars have been crowded with penitents, and her ranks have been constantly augmented by the accession of new recruits, until her membership is computed by the million, and her pulpits and schools are exercising an untold influence in moulding the public mind. She has followed the adventurous pioneer to his home in the new regions of the far west, and where nothing has

having borne with us until his wrath is kindled, will allow us to be *carried into captivity*, only to be restored at the *millennium*. Our denominational schools, also demand our careful attention. As all desire an intelligent piety, it becomes the duty of all to assist in educating the masses. The theory, that education is the exclusive work of the state is, in our opinion, a false one. That it becomes the duty of the state, to educate her subjects, we freely admit; but that it is equally the duty of the church, we steadfastly aver. As the church is engaged to look after the spiritual welfare of the people, and as their welfare is endangered by ignorance, it becomes her absolute duty to engage in, and provide for their education. The evidence of this is clearly set forth in the history of the dark ages. As learning died out, and ignorance began to prevail—the church commenced sliding off into superstition and semi-idolatry. As ignorance increased, superstition also increased, until Christendom was almost entirely darkened, and the institutions of the church turned into unmeaning mummeries. When the reformation of the sixteenth century

look with extreme jealousy on all that would invade them; and believing her practice of requiring her members to observe the outward rules of religious decorum, also to be founded on the precepts of Scripture, we look with equal jealousy on any thing which is likely to hinder the impartial administration of her discipline. Unnecessary divisions in the Methodist Church, doubtless have a tendency to subvert such proper administration, by placing barriers in the way of its accomplishment. It is a fact patent to all candid observers, that to have two or more denominations agreeing in doctrine, and similar in government, occupying the same territory, is, in a great measure, to defeat the ends of discipline, viz: the reformation of offenders, and the peace and purity of the church. Experience teaches us, that to deal impartially with offenders is a difficult task under any circumstances, and more especially so, when denominations come in contact as cited above. If an offender is tried, and expelled from the church by one of



are multiplying on every side, and to her genius, is striving to direct, in a measure, the current of public education. Of the necessity of an educated ministry, there can be hardly any difference of opinion; for if the ministry is to be composed entirely of ignorant men, what guarantee have we, that, like the church in the dark ages of Christendom, we, too, shall not settle into the grossest night. In order to an educated ministry, it becomes a necessity for every denomination to have a school under its own control; for secular schools, in general, exercise no moral restraint upon their pupils, but, frequently, are the nurseries of vice and infidelity. In such schools, the young men of the church are not safe. On the other hand, if they are sent to institutions under the control of other denominations, they are in danger, to some extent, of imbibing sentiments out of keeping with our own view and practices; thus returning to us, if they return at all, more or less biassed in favour of another denomination. For the above reasons, with others, most Christian churches are founding schools to be under their own control. The M. E.

laxity of discipline, and the readiness of the church, or at least of said local preacher, to receive persons who have been expelled from other branches of the same church. There is, also, a class of persons who are strongly attached to Methodist doctrine, but are unwilling to be governed by the rules of any of the denominations of Methodism. These persons shift about as circumstances may require, carrying discontent, and sowing discord, wherever they go. These persons have a strong attachment to Methodism in general, and did there not exist such favourable opportunities for the gratifying of their speculative disposition, her plastic hand would, no doubt, mould them into useful members of society, and thereby save them to the church, and through her bring them to heaven. But under present circumstances, the reformatory effect of discipline, which should be the first and main effect, is entirely lost. The church should entirely cast off offenders, only when reformation seems to be out of the question—the administra-

independent position as to educational advantages, and our own people, as well as the people at large, would have a degree of confidence in our educational institutions, which cannot be acquired in our present divided state. At present, the Belleville College is groaning under indebtedness, which exceedingly militates against its prosperity. If the New Connection establishes a school of any considerable pretensions, they must run heavily into debt; and the Primitives likewise. So, that for these three denominations to have each a school, which would have any considerable pretensions to respectability, they must all be heavily involved in debt. With this indebtedness, and the limited patronage which each must receive, they must continue to struggle with debts and perplexities which will, for time to come, keep these institutions in an inefficient state. With this inefficiency, the number of students will become yearly less—the running expences will increase the indebtedness, until the institutions are sunk by its awful weight. We do not wish to harp upon dark pictures, but, when we take into account the relative strength of these denominations,

denomination, thereby making the advancement of that particular sect of greater importance than promulgating the glorious doctrines of the Gospel. Indeed, the habit of always looking at the weaknesses of sister denominations of the same creed, can but narrow our Christian sympathies, and lessen our christian zeal; while on the other hand, always doting on our own virtues and superiority, will have a tendency to flatter our pride, and increase our bigotry. Then if we would have large christian hearts, and at the same time have a due amount of denominational humility, it becomes necessary for us to frequently look at the virtues and advantages of our sister denominations—for virtues and advantages they all have, if not in one respect, they have them in another;—and at the same time look at our own denominational defects and disadvantages. For, notwithstanding the high estimate which each may set on his own denomination, doubtless all have their defects and disadvantages, which each might learn better how to remedy, by looking more impartially at the operations of the others. If the oneness of Methodism is destroyed, we may

healing the many breaches which now exist, believe the time at hand, which shall witness the commencement of the return of the several sections of Methodism to that oneness which should characterise her in this country. It seems as though Canada, above all other countries, has been made the centre of Methodist controversy. In no other country of its magnitude, has so many denominations of Methodists appeared. It seems as though every division of the Methodist church in the mother country had been strangely directed to Canada. We know of but one such division, which has not got missions here. It must be, either that these denominations at home, think this to be a wonderful country; or that they think it inhabited by a people of a very degenerated religious state: or perhaps, which is most likely, God has permitted this state of things, in order to bring out of these divisions a more congenial church government for Methodists in this country. Feeling this latter to be the case, we pray for, and expect,

church into an innumerable number of small sects. Thus when any person or persons of sufficient influence, belonging to any of the existing bodies of Methodists, shall think the rules of such society defective, and can get a sufficient number to join them, they may set up for themselves, and the denomination from which they separate has no right to say aught against it. True, they may say there was no just cause for such a course; but who is to be the judge? If it is to be the new faction, they have only to refer to the many precedents as the ground of their justification; and perhaps the denomination from which they are separating owes its own existence to a similar act—for most of the existing Methodist bodies owe their existence to like separations. But if the denomination from which the separation is taking place, is to be the judge, and the separating party is bound to abide by such judgment, no separation would ever take place; for in every instance of secession, it has not only taken place without the sanction, but under the direct protest of the denomination from

to be derived from Union. That there are other advantages is a fact, but those already enumerated are among the greatest. The general good feeling which would pervade all hearts, on the reception of the news, that the old difficulties, which have so long seemed insurmountable, had been entirely overcome, would animate all of us with a fresh zeal and ardour, which would cause us to work more energetically in the vineyard of our Divine Master. Old barriers being taken out of the way, the love of God would flow more freely, brotherly affection gloriously revive, our communions would become sweeter, and, no doubt, we should step farther out into the pool of salvation than we have been wont to go. Should this result be obtained, we will command the respect and confidence of the public at large to a greater extent than we have ever done. It is our greatest reproach, that we have so long allowed these mere trifles to keep us apart. The world has remarked the utter want of sympathy between us; and the enemies of the cross have rejoiced in

by referring to any of the particular causes which originated existing divisions; whatever those were, they have passed away with their times, and there now exists a greater cause for Union than ever could have existed for separation. We believe that the efficiency of Methodism demands Union--the salvation of hundreds of our fellow men demands it; and we believe that the best interests of the New Connection Methodist, the Primitive Methodist, and the M. E. Church in Canada demand it. Another feature of Union, which would urge its consummation, is the advantage it would give for carrying on the work of evangelization, and spreading the practice of "holiness over these lands." It would remove the necessity of employing a large number of ministers in an almost useless manner, as at present. In many instances, all three of these denominations, together with other Methodist bodies, are occupying the same ground. The number of persons in some of those localities accessible to Methodism is but few, and divided as they are, between these several sections of the church, it gives but very small congregations, and a still

decide to shun such a fate? One of our cardinal doctrines is, that ministers should marry at their own discretion—that deacons and bishops should be husbands, ruling their own houses well—being not only patterns of piety to their flocks, but also patterns of domestic order and virtue. In accordance with this doctrine, most Methodist preachers take wives, and rear families, and as “He that wareth, entangleth himself not with the things of this life,” in order that he may give himself more fully to the work of his calling, he has to depend for support entirely on those whom he serves. With the present divided state of Methodism, he can see before him nothing but privation and want. This might do for himself, but his wife and children must share in his privations and hardships. The Methodist preacher loves his family as well as any other person can; but at present he is compelled, for want of means, to allow his children to grow up with but a partial education, and that ob-

those of the superannuated preachers, and the Missionary Society. Thus united, they would assume a position of influence, to which they never could attain in their present divided state. In each of those several divisions, as they now exist, are to be found men of the right stamp, but not a sufficiency of them to give tone to their several societies. Unite those societies, and you bring these men into contact, and, as Union is strength, we may expect to see them exerting a transforming influence on the united church. In these days, when the enemies of Christ are uniting for our overthrow, it is but reasonable to conclude that our interests demand Union. Our common opponents are influential, both as to numbers and wealth; and if we would secure ourselves against their efforts, let us be united under God, and we shall succeed. Instead of spending a great deal of our strength in unholy rivalry, let us be one, employing our united strength in a common cause against a common enemy, and for the general good—not forgetting to put our trust in Christ, and to preach His Gospel in its purity—

hundred to a thousand dollars per annum. Is it a wonder then, that young men who have the mental calibre, and who are possessed of the ability to qualify them to occupy a prominent place in the ministry, when called to that work, should hesitate to comply, and either go to another church, or another country, or, perhaps, finally decide to choose some other calling. We know that it is argued against this, that we want no one in the ministry who is not willing to sacrifice all for the work. This argument is good when not misapplied, but in the present case it can have but little bearing. If we were labouring to establish a principle which was dissimilar to those taught by all other denominations around us, and we felt that upon this principle depended the future weal of the church, and the salvation of souls, then we would be ready to sacrifice all to this end, and, we presume, those young men referred to, would at once buckle on the armour, and enter the contest. Or if the situation of our country was that of the west, where those pioneers

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by us; and many of those only partially occupied, for want of men and means, could be more thoroughly worked. Opportunities for opening new fields not only exist, but the Macedonian cry is heard from them, and all that hinders their occupancy, is a want of men and means. Now, brethren, we ask in all candor, is it right to pursue longer this course of squandering our Lord's money, when there are so many opportunities to spend it on destitute neighborhoods where the people are perishing for lack of knowledge, can we longer neglect making a single effort to remove the evil. Narrow-minded bigots suggest, that in order to adjust this difficulty, all Methodists should withdraw from the field but themselves, thus leaving them full control. They seem to forget that each of those sections of the methodist family has its friends and interests to consult, and all have an equal right to that which is common ground. With all our desire to remove division from the Methodist Church, we should utterly reject such terms of settlement, and we think every minister,

amount of natural ability, should try to find some place, to labour for God, where he would have less of privations and sufferings—a place where, instead of being deprived of the common necessities of life, he can obtain a share of its comforts and its luxuries. Now who is to blame for this state of things? We answer, the preachers themselves are primarily to blame. They have educated the people in division, by magnifying one another's defects, and underrateing their excellencies. We do not mean to say, that preachers have taught the people to look uncharitably on Christians of other denominations as individuals, but, that with their strong desire to make the members of their own church feel that theirs is the best church organization in the world, they have magnified the denominational defects of their sister churches, and have underestimated their denominational excellencies; while they have covered up their own faults, and extolled their own virtues and excellencies. This unwise course has reverted upon the ministers themselves; by stimulating the people with a strong denominational feeling, thereby perpetuating divisions, which lead, in a natural channel, to the oppressively low sup-

the matter be adjusted? An enlightened christianity answers, all must make common sacrifice by mutual concessions, and come to an agreement in mutual compromise. When an honest effort is made by any one of these bodies, it will have relieved itself of responsibility on this head; and that denomination which can have the hardihood to repel such effort, by refusing to enter into a compromise, will stand out on the page of history as a monument of narrow-minded bigotry. The present times are ominous. All denominations seem to be looking for Union with those of similar creed and government. Public opinion is being rapidly swayed into the track of christian brotherhood; and we think Methodists should, certainly, catch the flame. There is one or two objections which we have heard urged against Union, which it may be well for us to answer in this connection, as they are closely allied to matters under present consideration. The first is, the fear that, in the event of Union, there will be a surplus of ministers, consequently some would have to locate, and they fear lest the lot should fall upon them. As far as we are individually con-

you admit our conclusions to be correct, duty demands that an effort should be made to consummate Union. If we can be of more service to the world united, than we can be separated, then it becomes our absolute duty to go to work to promote this end. As to the fact of our being able to do more good if we were all one, than we can in our present isolated condition, we think no sane person will dispute it. Then let all who think thus, go to work heartily to cultivate feelings of christian charity, and to promote Union. By every possible means agitate the subject as you do that of the sinner's salvation, and give it no rest night or day, until your prayers are answered, and your object attained. What if some do talk discouragingly, or even insinuate that you are disturbing the peace of the church—what reform was ever accomplished without such discouragements. If you feel that to unite these branches of Methodism will promote the ends of the gospel, we would exhort you to do your best, by your prayers and persuasions, to promote this end. Go forward in the discharge of your duty, and God shall direct the aright.

profitable to themselves, and also to the people. Again, many of the present mission fields would become self-sustaining, thereby not only saving the several missionary appropriations, but also returning a handsome amount into the missionary treasury. This would put it into the power of the M. S. Society to open up new mission fields, and, in many cases, to increase the labourers on those already established. It is known to every preacher, who has traveled methodist missions in Canada, that the amount of labour to be performed on most of them exceeds the ability of the number of preachers employed to perform. It is only those ministers who are not employed on missions, that find fault because missionaries have too little to do. With an increase of men, and an increase of means, with which to support them, our missions would become much more effective. The members on them would be encouraged to labour more earnestly for success. On much of our mission work, the support given to the missionary is so illy proportioned to the amount of labour which is expected of him, his



exist between the New Connection, the Primitive, and the M. E. Church, we are free to admit; and difficulties, too, of no ordinary character. But so far from these difficulties arising from the nature of the differences existing between us, we feel them to be in the dispositions of the parties concerned. There will, doubtless, be some who will want the concessions at the expense of all but themselves. They will think small concessions, made by the party to which they belong, to be of more consequence than much greater sacrifices made by the others. This we shall expect to meet with from all who make self the great point in every thing.

Another class who may be disaffected, is that class of persons whose religion has been of that narrow kind, which looks at none as true Christians but those who belong to their particular church. These will fear lest Union will let some bad people into the church; but we have no fears of either denomination being made worse by contact with the other. Still another class may object, because some thing must be given up to which they have long been accustomed; and they will

think this can also be got along with. It is a matter of great importance, and therefore should not be passed over lightly. When the Free Church, and the United Presbyterians, formed a union, they applied for, and obtained, an act of parliament, by which their church property was saved. Let us do likewise. We would propose, that in the event of a plan of Union being agreed upon by the Conference, let them, at the same time and place, petition parliament for an act, by which the property of all may be secured to the newly organised church. When this plan of Union is submitted to the several quarterly Conferences, of the different parties to such Union, let these quarterly Conferences, also, there and then, petition for the same end, and there will be no kind of danger of the property being lost. A decided advantage would be gained in the question of church property, as in many places there would be two or three chapels, while but one would be needed—leaving the others to be disposed of as occasion may require, always reserving that which is best adapted to our wants and convenience. The proceeds of such sales would constitute a fund



with which to pay the debts on encumbered property, to build churches in destitute localities, or for any other purpose to which the proper authorities might see fit to apply it. So far, then, as a surplus of chapels is concerned, instead of there being an impediment to Union, their very existence is an argument in its favour. They show that, in our present divided state, we have a large amount of capital uselessly invested; and the sooner we can make a proper adjustment of it, the better: and the only means of making such adjustment, is to become united in heart and name, so that we can worship under the same roof, and encircled by the same walls. O what a wide chasm has existed between us for so many years. We have not regarded one another as brethren, or rather, we have looked one on the other, much in the same light as that in which we regard a natural brother who has discarded the parental roof, who has so far strayed as to cause a brotherly sympathy to be turned into pity for the erring. As we could have but little happiness in communion with such a brother; so has our communion with our brethren of the several Methodist bodies, such as it has been, yielded us but little real happiness and comfort. We long to see the day when such a state of things shall cease—when brother shall again meet brother, feeling that no separating walls or denominational chasms are dividing us. We shall then feel that flow of love, that bond of Union, which is experienced alone by those who are cemented together by the ties of spiritual kindred. We are sometimes drawn out to contemplate the scene which will be presented at the consummation of Union, between the denominations under consideration; for Union there will be, sooner or later. In our imagination, we have often been led to the scene of the first meeting of these societies as one, after so long a separation; and we have been reminded of the occasion, when Joseph met his brethren after so long a separation from them: when, after having restrained his feelings for so long a period, he made himself known, in the use of that simple, yet touching language—"I am Joseph; does my father yet live?"

O what could appear so sublime, and yet so affectionate, as this touching announcement, accompanied, as it was, by such a filial inquiry. Joseph and his brethren had been long separated—each knew not but the other was in the grave. His father, who had long mourned him as dead, he had not yet seen, but his heart gave vent to its deep feeling, not only by the above touching language, but also in embracing his long lost kindred. And how similar to this will be the first meeting of these long separated societies around the communion-board. As they think on the long separation, and remember that, as far as church communion has been concerned, they have been lost to each other, they will, doubtless, feel to exclaim that they are brethren. Although parents and children have been separated by a denominational line, here they will once more embrace, and while receiving together, perhaps for the first time, the elements of the Lord's Supper, each will bow his head and weep: first of all, that they have been so foolish as to continue separated so long; and, also, that God has been so kind as to bring them together at last. It will be sublime, indeed, to see old gray haired pilgrims, who have always looked upon each other as only half-brothers at most, because separated in name, now kneeling together around the same altar, responding to the same prayers, having the same aspirations, and called by the same name. You may, perhaps, accuse me of coloring too highly, but all coloring falls below the reality. No Christian, who is a Methodist, can look with candor on the divided state of the church, and not feel that denominationalism has, to a great extent, blinded the eyes of christians, so that it is hard for most men to see any real good outside of his own sect, or to find any person who is a real pattern of piety, except they are such as pronounce his own peculiar sectarian shibboleth. Now, brethren, this ought not so to be. A little more intercourse with other Methodist bodies, will teach us that they have less horns than we really supposed, and that they are really possessed of some excellences, and that even in their mode of church government, there are

some things commendable. The advantages arising from Union are so numerous, as to be beyond the scope of this small work. We shall, therefore, only glance at those which would seem to us of greatest magnitude. The beneficial result, which would secure to our connectional finances, should not be overlooked. The finances in connection with all the institutions of these several denominations, are in a more or less embarrassed condition. To commence with, the Missionary Society of each of those bodies is considerably involved, consequently more or less embarrassment is experienced in carrying on the missionary work. The call for aid in men and means, and especially the latter, is greater than the resource of the societies, and, as a consequence, great difficulty is experienced. Were Union to take place, as we have already seen, the Missionary Societies would be relieved of a heavy burden, enabling them to pay their present indebtedness, and to send Missionaries into fields hitherto unoccupied by any of them. We should not be confined in our labours to Canada, but we should be able to push our conquests into British Columbia and the Lower Provinces. Just in proportion as we feel it our duty to preach the Gospel to every creature, we should feel it our duty to unite, that, by a careful husbanding of men and means, we may be enabled to send the Gospel to every neighborhood in our own country, and then to foreign lands. The present indebtedness of these societies, not only cripple their operations, but it cripples the Missionaries. They enter upon their missions, with an appropriation just as small as the Committee on appropriations can have a conscience to put it, and struggling hard with want, they get through the year, only to find their appropriation cut down, from twenty-five to fifty per cent, leaving them in debt, and in want, to grapple with the same labour, and the same hopes, and doomed, at the close of the year, to a like disappointment. All of this sacrifice is borne to perpetuate separate interests—which interest and duty would teach us to amalgamate. It is strange what hardships we will endure, and what privations we will put up with,

without murmuring, rather than seek an honorable Union with our neighboring churches, for fear some one will say he is suing for peace. We hope, however, that "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand"—the day of our emancipation from the thick darkness of pride and bigotry. When this takes place fully, we shall be ready to join hands, hearts, interests and all, and march on together, toward our port of destination. Not only are our Missionary Societies embarrassed, but our church papers are in debt. A denominational paper is conceded to be a necessity. No church can carry on the business of its own connection without a connectional periodical, which must be the exponent of her principles, the advocate of her policy, and the medium of her advertising. Nearly every denomination has adopted this theory, and reduced it to practice, by establishing a denominational paper. Each of these denominations are struggling to support one. The result is, that the limited patronage consequent on limited membership, keeps all of them constantly embarrassed. With these denominations united, one paper would do for all, and, with the united patronage, it would not only become self-supporting, but would yield a handsome revenue, to be applied in support of superannuated preachers, or whatever else is thought proper. It is certain that nearly, or quite two-thirds of the amount paid out by these denominations for newspaper publishing, could be saved in the event of Union. The entire subscription list could not only be amalgamated, but the paper could be so far improved, that the circulation could be greatly increased. It is frequently asked of us, how it is, that among the methodists in Canada, periodicals cannot be made to pay just as well they can in the United States. Now the reason is simply this: they get larger lists of subscribers than we can possibly obtain. The Methodist Episcopal Church is not only numerous, but wealthy, and consequently able to drive such an enterprise with profit. For instance, "The Northern Christian Advocate," published in Auburn, New York, is supported by five patronising conferences, with a membership which, in num-

bers and wealth, is superior to all the Methodists of all denominations in Canada. Yet we are trying to support four different, weekly, Methodist periodicals. Thus divided, is it a wonder that our publishing houses are in debt. In our opinion, they must ever remain in debt, so long as there are so many different interests to keep up. Indeed, we see no chance of success in this department of our work, unless, likewise, Christian men we unite together, and thus combine strength with our zeal. It is perfectly right to be zealously affected in a good cause, but it is never safe to have a greater amount of zeal than we have of ability to carry it into effect. However, we believe God has had to do with bringing these several denominations into financial difficulty. He has taken this method of making us feel the right, and if we profit by it, we shall be blessed by him; but if we continue to cherish our individuality as denominations, it is hard to say what may be the consequence. Perhaps, like ancient Israel—God, after having borne with us until his wrath is kindled, will allow us to be *carried into captivity*, only to be restored at the *millenium*. Our denominational schools, also demand our careful attention. As all desire an intelligent piety, it becomes the duty of all to assist in educating the masses. The theory, that education is the exclusive work of the state is, in our opinion, a false one. That it becomes the duty of the state, to educate her subjects, we freely admit; but that it is equally the duty of the church, we steadfastly aver. As the church is engaged to look after the spiritual welfare of the people, and as their welfare is endangered by ignorance, it becomes her absolute duty to engage in, and provide for their education. The evidence of this is clearly set forth in the history of the dark ages. As learning died out, and ignorance began to prevail—the church commenced sliding off into superstition and semi-idolatry. As ignorance increased, superstition also increased, until Christendom was almost entirely darkened, and the institutions of the church turned into unmeaning mummeries. When the reformation of the sixteenth century

commenced, it was by the revival of learning. As the reform advanced, learning advanced also: the most pious of the reformers being the most assiduous in advancing education. If the church is to depend entirely on the state for the education of her communicants and teachers, she will be subject, at any period, to relapse into a state of ignorance; for the state has no moral status, except what she derives from the church. If we would have a pure government, one which will legislate for the greatest good of the people, we must have a people highly versed in education, and well taught in the doctrines of an enlightened Christianity. So firmly fixed upon society, are these truths, that no church can rise to any degree of eminence, without engaging in this great work. So forceably has this truth been applied, that every denomination having any pretence to respectability; is trying to do something in this direction. None are doing more, in this direction, than Methodists. In England and the United States their schools are multiplying on every side. In Canada, Methodism, true to her genius, is striving to direct, in a measure, the current of public education. Of the necessity of an educated ministry, there can be hardly any difference of opinion; for if the ministry is to be composed entirely of ignorant men, what guarantee have we, that, like the church in the dark ages of christendom, we, too, shall not settle into the grossest night. In order to an educated ministry, it becomes a necessity for every denomination to have a school under its own control; for secular schools, in general, exercise no moral restraint upon their pupils, but, frequently, are the nurseries of vice and infidelity. In such schools, the young men of the church are not safe. On the other hand, if they are sent to institutions under the control of other denominations, they are in danger, to some extent, of imbibing sentiments out of keeping with our own view and practices; thus returning to us, if they return at all, more or less biassed in favour of another denomination. For the above reasons, with others, most Christian churches are founding schools to be under their own control. The M. E.



Church has such a school; the New Connection have an unmatured plan of educating their candidates for the ministry; and the Primitives are taking measures to establish a school. The Belleville College, which is under the control of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is amply sufficient to accommodate all; and with the patronage of all three of these Methodist bodies, would be second to no institution in the province. Its affiliation with the Toroto University, which is the standard institution in this province, for granting degrees in arts, medicine, and law, places the Belleville College beyond the reproach of giving its students only an inferior training. With the combined patronage proposed, the facilities for acquiring the professions of law and medicine, could be greatly improved, and a theological chair could be established; thus enabling our ministers to obtain a divinity title, without the necessity of resorting to the institutions of other denominations, or to another country. We should then occupy an independent position as to educational advantages, and our own people, as well as the people at large, would have a degree of confidence in our educational institutions, which cannot be required in our present divided state. At present, the Belleville College is groaning under indebtedness, which exceedingly militates against its prosperity. If the New Connection establishes a school of any considerable pretensions, they must run heavily into debt; and the Primitives likewise. So, that for these three denominations to have each a school, which would have any considerable pretensions to respectability, they must all be heavily involved in debt. With this indebtedness, and the limited patronage which each must receive, they must continue to struggle with debts and perplexities which will, for time to come, keep these institutions in an inefficient state. With this inefficiency, the number of students will become yearly less—the running expences will increase the indebtedness, until the institutions are sunk by its awful weight. We do not wish to harp upon dark pictures, but, when we take into account the relative strength of these denominations,

in a comparison of each, with the weight of the enterprise referred to, a cool and dispassionate view of the matter, we think, is sufficient to convert any right-minded man to our views.

Canada is but comparatively small—its predominating element is not Methodist, but entirely antagonistic to our doctrines and views. This considered, together with the fact, that we have no vast tracts of superior land of congenial climate yet unoccupied, to which immigration is likely to flow, to augment our numbers, makes it almost certain that we can never attain to that eminence to which the Methodist church has arrived in the United States. Add to this the deplorable fact, that Methodism in Canada is so exceedingly split up, and we must confess that we are unable to see that bright future for Methodism in Canada, that many effect to see, unless an infinite God shall be pleased to bring about a means of healing the many breaches which now exist; and we believe the time at hand, which shall witness the commencement of the return of the several sections of Methodism to that oneness which should characterise her in this country. It seems as though Canada, above all other countries, has been made the centre of Methodist controversy. In no other country of its magnitude, has so many denominations of Methodists appeared. It seems as though every division of the Methodist church in the mother country had been strangely directed to Canada. We know of but one such division, which has not got missions here. It must be, either that these denominations at home, think this to be a wonderful country; or that they think it inhabited by a people of a very degenerated religious state: or perhaps, which is most likely, God has permitted this state of things, in order to bring out of these divisions a more congenial church government for Methodists in this country. Feeling this latter to be the case, we pray for, and expect,

this result to make its appearance almost at once. Under God, we believe the wisdom and experience of these several denominations are capable, out of these several systems, of forming a church government superior to any which exists among us. Then if we love Methodism, would see it prosper, its doctrines taught, and its influence felt, let us make one honest effort to lay aside all our differing on trifles, and unite our forces. Let us come together, and in the spirit of Union, and christian sympathy, let us examine our points of difference, and, guided by reason and experience, let us adopt what is best in all of our church politics, and cast the rest to the winds: and launching our craft anew, we shall command the confidence and admiration of our friends, and, no doubt, the envy of those who would have us fail, and our divisions perpetuated.

The foregoing we consider among the main advantages to be derived from Union. That there are other advantages is a fact, but those already enumerated are among the greatest. The general good feeling which would pervade all hearts, on the reception of the news, that the old difficulties, which have so long seemed insurmountable, had been entirely overcome, would animate all of us with a fresh zeal and ardour, which would cause us to work more energetically in the vineyard of our Divine Master. Old barriers being taken out of the way, the love of God would flow more freely, brotherly affection gloriously revive, our communions would become sweeter, and, no doubt, we should step farther out into the pool of salvation than we have been wont to go. Should this result be obtained, we will command the respect and confidence of the public at large to a greater extent than we have ever done. It is our greatest reproach, that we have so long allowed these mere trifles to keep us apart. The world has remarked the utter want of sympathy between us; and the enemies of the cross have rejoiced in

our division. They have argued wisely, when they have said, that "Half of our strength is spent in combating one another." With the establishment of public confidence, will come a large share of public patronage to our institutions—both educational and otherwise—which will enable us to support them in a manner which will bring to them greater prosperity; as also to do much more good.

With Union fairly established, and our faith and confidence fixed on God, we shall proceed steadily toward prosperity and success, the same as the great river flows unbounded toward the mighty deep. Our ministry will speedily be composed of young men of intellectual powers far surpassing those of to-day. It is a lamentable fact, that many of our young men, whom God calls to the ministry, hesitate, and many of the more promising refuse to go. And who dare reproach them for acting thus? They can see nothing before them, but poverty and want, and is it a wonder that they finally decide to shun such a fate? One of our cardinal doctrines is, that ministers should marry at their own discretion—that deacons and bishops should be husbands, ruling their own houses well—being not only patterns of piety to their flocks, but also patterns of domestic order and virtue. In accordance with this doctrine, most Methodist preachers take wives, and rear families, and as "He that wareth, entangleth himself not with the things of this life," in order that he may give himself more fully to the work of his calling, he has to depend for support entirely on those whom he serves. With the present divided state of Methodism, he can see before him nothing but privation and want. This might do for himself, but his wife and children must share in his privations and hardships. The Methodist preacher loves his family as well as any other person can; but at present he is compelled, for want of means, to allow his children to grow up with but a partial education, and that ob-

tained by other privations which are hard to be borne. We know that people are fond of arguing that poverty is necessary to keep the preacher humble; but, for our part, we are quite willing others should try this way of humbling themselves. Again, we are told that this kind of poverty is good to assist us in our religious growth; but we could never see how starving the body, was going to feed the soul. Although we always prized fasting, yet we never thought there was any virtue in a forced abstinence. The doctrine of the Gospel is, that the "Labourer is worthy of his hire; but what kind of a hire is it that ministers, of these denominations frequently receive. Three or four hundred dollars is the common salary—for although more than this is sometimes voted, less than this is frequently paid—while the same person with the same time spent to qualify himself for some other calling, would be able to make from eight hundred to a thousand dollars per annum. Is it a wonder then, that young men who have the mental calibre, and who are possessed of the ability to qualify them to occupy a prominent place in the ministry, when called to that work, should hesitate to comply, and either go to another church, or another country, or, perhaps, finally decide to choose some other calling. We know that it is argued against this, that we want no one in the ministry who is not willing to sacrifice all for the work. This argument is good when not misapplied, but in the present case it can have but little bearing. If we were labouring to establish a principle which was dissimilar to those taught by all other denominations around us, and we felt that upon this principle depended the future weal of the church, and the salvation of souls, then we would be ready to sacrifice all to this end, and, we presume, those young men referred to, would at once buckle on the armour, and enter the contest. Or if the situation of our country was that of the west, where those pioneers

laboured, of whose fame we have heard so much, then we should be willing to labour on at God's command, expecting the next generation to reap the benefit of our labours. But, as it is, there is no rapid emigration to follow up, on which may be built a great religious structure, counting the accessions to the church by tens of thousands annually. So far from this, the inhabitants of our country are extensively divided into religious sects. In many places we are entirely barred out, unless we, by preaching the pure gospel, get some of those, who were formal church members, to see their danger, they then, sometimes, unite with us; and thus we obtain a footing, but it is only by a slow and toilsome progress. Under such circumstances, with the fact constantly before us, that we are so badly split up into parties, each one of which teach the same doctrine, and embrace, to some extent, the same great truths and principles in our church governments, is it a wonder that a man with any discernment, and with any great amount of natural ability, should try to find some place, to labour for God, where he would have less of privations and sufferings—a place where, instead of being deprived of the common necessities of life, he can obtain a share of its comforts and its luxuries. Now who is to blame for this state of things? We answer, the preachers themselves are primarily to blame. They have educated the people in division, by magnifying one another's defects, and underrateing their excellencies. We do not mean to say, that preachers have taught the people to look uncharitably on Christians of other denominations as individuals, but, that with their strong desire to make the members of their own church feel that theirs is the best church organization in the world, they have magnified the denominational defects of their sister churches, and have underestimated their denominational excellencies; while they have covered up their own faults, and extolled their own virtues and excellencies. This unwise course has reverted upon the ministers themselves; by stimulating the people with a strong denominational feeling, thereby perpetuating divisions, which lead, in a natural channel, to the oppressively low sup-

port which they now obtain, and under which, in many instances, they are suffering financial embarrassment, and their families in want. In the second place, we consider the people to blame, for groaning under these oppressive difficulties, in supporting the church, when the remedy is so simple and easy. We say groaning under these difficulties; because we believe the membership are as a whole, doing all they can be expected to do for the support of the gospel. That there are cases of niggardliness in supporting the church is true, but we consider these the exception, and not the rule. We said the remedy is simple and easy. In this we assume the expectation that the members of all these denominations will act in unison; and if the ministry do not appear disposed to lead in this important matter, let the laity take it in hand, and bring a pressure to bear on the ministry which they cannot resist. If even the laity should move in this matter, they would find many of the ministry ready to move with them.

Now, if what we have written on this subject is true, and you admit our conclusions to be correct, duty demands that an effort should be made to consummate Union. If we can be of more service to the world united, than we can be separated, then it becomes our absolute duty to go to work to promote this end. As to the fact of our being able to do more good if we were all one, than we can in our present isolated condition, we think no sane person will dispute it. Then let all who think thus, go to work heartily to cultivate feelings of christian charity, and to promote Union. By every possible means agitate the subject as you do that of the sinner's salvation, and give it no rest night or day, until your prayers are answered, and your object attained. What if some do talk discouragingly, or even insinuate that you are disturbing the peace of the church—what reform was ever accomplished without such discouragements. If you feel that to unite these branches of Methodism will promote the ends of the gospel, we would exhort you to do your best, by your prayers and persuasions, to promote this end. Go forward in the discharge of your duty, and God shall direct the aright.

## SECTION II.

### A GENERAL PLAN OF UNION.

IN approaching this part of our task, we can but feel it to be an arduous one. With regard to the desirableness of Union, and the advantages arising therefrom, there is hardly any ground for an opposing argument; but on the general plan of that Union, our opinions will doubtless vary. We do not for one moment cherish the thought of meeting all of those varied opinions. To do this would require more skill than we pretend to possess. That there are difficulties in the way of a fair adjustment of all differences in church polity, which exist between the New Connection, the Primitive, and the M. E. Church, we are free to admit; and difficulties, too, of no ordinary character. But so far from these difficulties arising from the nature of the differences existing between us, we feel them to be in the dispositions of the parties concerned. There will, doubtless, be some who will want the concessions at the expense of all but themselves. They will think small concessions, made by the party to which they belong, to be of more consequence than much greater sacrifices made by the others. This we shall expect to meet with from all who make self the great point in every thing.

Another class who may be disaffected, is that class of persons whose religion has been of that narrow kind, which looks at none as true Christians but those who belong to their particular church. These will fear lest Union will let some bad people into the church; but we have no fears of either denomination being made worse by contact with the other. Still another class may object, because some thing must be given up to which they have long been accustomed; and they will



exceedingly fear lest so much change be introduced as to ruin the church. We are not much given to change, and have but little affinity with the plan of changing things from year to year. But at the same time, we are not in sympathy with that conservatism which admits of no reform. Reformations have never been accomplished without changes. This would be impossible in the nature of things as they are constituted in this lower world. Then if reformation cannot be obtained without change, and as such reformation is necessary, we become willing to submit to such change.

In examining this question, as given at the head of this section, we shall try to be as impartial as possible, and if we are found fault with by all parties, we shall at once conclude that our plan is pretty nearly correct.

In laying down these general terms of Union, we want all to understand that we do not consider them binding on either of the parties to such Union, but merely as a basis from which to argue, not only the possibility, but also the feasibility of Union. In our arguments we shall proceed on the hypothesis, that in church government the New Testament gives some rules which are of divine appointment, and leaves others to the judgment and discretion of the church. A great deal of bigotry arises in church government, from not discerning rightly between what is of Divine appointment, and what is only of human origin. Those rules which are of Divine appointment cannot be changed, either by councils, or otherwise; and those which are human, can only be made binding by mutual consent. Of the former is the order of the ministry, the administration of the sacraments, the preaching of God's word, and the institution of prayer. It is only the human portion of the laws of the church that we propose to adjust. These have been wisely left to the decision of the church herself, so that she may adapt her rules to her circumstances of country or society; or circumstances of any other nature. Although these laws have been left to the enactment of the church, yet are they binding on all who become, by a voluntary

act, members of such church. Civil laws are of human enactment, and still we are taught of God, "to be subject to the powers that be. So, also, in respect to ecclesiastical laws enacted by the church, we are instructed to "obey those who have the rule over us, not, it is true, from any Divine right, but from appointment of the church; so that he that offends by disobeying the constituted authority of the church, sins against the church; and he who offends against the church, offends against God—for the church exists by Divine appointment. If this position be correct, persons make a great mistake when they take the liberty, which the gospel gives, to be license. Having thus examined the ground of authority by which the various laws of the church are constituted, we shall proceed to notice the points of coincidence, and also the points of divergence in the government of these several denominations.

By the church we would be understood to convey the same idea which is conveyed by the Thirteenth Article of Faith of the Methodist Episcopal Church as it occurs in the printed discipline of that denomination. That article teaches us, that "the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." In accordance with this article, the authority of the church cannot be vested in the ministry, because they do not compose the church; neither can it be vested in the laity, because they of a necessity cannot compose the church; for there must not only be a company "of faithful men," but "the pure word of God must be preached, and the sacraments duly administered." Are we then to conclude, that because the government of the church is vested neither in the ministry or the laity, that it is vested no where? By no means. For while neither the ministry or laity have the governing of the church, its government is vested in them jointly, so that they are required to act conjointly with each other, in order to the

right government of the church. This we believe to be the only sensible conclusion which can be drawn from the above named Article of Faith as endorsed by the M. E. Church. And not only do we think this view supported by the above named Article of Faith, but we also believe it to be supported by Scripture, and also by the usage of the early church. In our references to the organism and authority of the church, we shall be governed by the foregoing conclusion, as to the proper means of maintaining its order and government. The principle of confederation is very extensively developed in the constitutional arrangement of the Methodist Church. First come her class-meeting, which is the first and primary body in her organism. These meetings are designed, first, as a means of spiritual instruction, and of obtaining a personal knowledge of each other's Christian experience. The meeting is generally composed of about twelve or fifteen persons; styled a class, and one of whom is denominated a leader; who, after reading a portion of Scripture, and singing, offers prayer, or calls on some other person to do so, and then proceeds to enquire into the personal experience and present enjoyment of each member of his class. In our opinion, the class-meeting should be conducted in a conversational manner, at least as far as possible. The class-meeting is one of the earliest developments of Methodism, and has always been kept up by all branches of that body; and by most of them attendance on class-meeting has been made a condition of church membership. Of all the institutions of Methodism, we consider the class-meetings to be of the first utility, as having for its object the cultivation of individual piety, without which the church becomes a curse to the world, instead of a blessing. And we are of opinion that no means could be employed which would be more successful in the promotion of piety among the membership, than attendance on the class-meeting, and, for this reason, we hope that the day will never come when attendance on these meetings will cease to be a condition of church membership.

The next link in the confederation, is the uniting of these classes into societies. By a society we understand all that meet in one place for public worship, and the administration of the ordinances of the church. A society may be composed of but one class, but is generally understood to comprise a confederation of classes. These societies are again joined together into circuits, except where a society is able of itself to support a minister, and then it is termed a station. These circuits and stations are again united into districts, and these districts into annual conferences; and in the Methodist Episcopal Church these annual conferences are joined by a general conference, which is the highest earthly tribunal of the church. All of these confederate divisions, except the general conference, we believe, are common to all Methodist bodies, and especially to those denominations more particularly under consideration.

Having thus set before our readers the several divisions in the organism of the New Connection Methodist, the Primitive Methodist, and the Methodist Episcopal Churches, we shall proceed to examine the points of coincidence and divergence in the composition and powers of each of these divisions, commencing with the lowest, and proceeding to the highest confederate court of each, and then proceed to examine the general superintendency of the whole.

As the class-meeting is common to all, and as its composition and powers are nearly the same in each, we shall not make farther mention of its duties, but proceed to consider the lowest proper court of any of these denominations.

The leader's meeting is held by both the New Connection and the Primitive, but has become obsolete in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, although it is still one of the regular institutions of the M. E. Church in the United States, and, we think, is well adapted to ensure order in the carrying out of the general rules of the church, and, therefore, should never be abandoned. The leader's meeting in the New Connection Church, is composed of the preachers stationed on the

circuit, together with the class leaders and stewards of the society where the meeting is held. Its duties are to regulate all matters pertaining to the place of worship where the society meets—to attend to the regular payment of class-money into the hands of the stewards—to direct and sanction all disbursements—to examine the class-books—make inquiry for the sick—to fill up vacancies in the staff of leaders—arrange notices for the pulpit—and decide all matters of dissatisfaction occurring between any member of a class and the leader of such class. The leader's meeting is also expected to assist the minister in carrying out all the rules of the connection, as also all resolutions of the annual or quarterly conferences.

In the Primitive Methodist Church, the leader's meeting is composed of the stationed preachers, and the class leaders and steward of the society. The leader's meeting constitutes a court of appeals from the decisions of leaders on any misunderstandings which may have occurred between members, or between members and leaders. It is the province of this meeting to appoint all leaders and assistant leaders—to examine the class books—and to prepare accounts for quarterly meetings. It will be seen by the above, that the leader's meeting is very nearly the same in the government of those two denominations, both as to its composition, duties, and powers; so that no great difficulty would be experienced in amalgamating the two.

In case of an Union; we would propose to incorporate the leader's meeting, with composition and powers, nearly the same as now exist in the New Connection. We would propose that the leaders should be appointed by the classes, but subject to the sanction of the leader's meeting: reserving to the leader's meeting the power to remove any leader who should prove incompetent, or unwilling to perform his duty. We would, also, make the duty of the leader's meeting to appoint one of the stewards; in such society, a chapel treasurer, whose duty it should be to take charge of all collections taken in the congregation, paying them over to the party designated in the

order for such collection—to take charge of warming and lighting the place of worship, together with the funds raised for such purpose—and to prepare the requisites for the proper administration of the sacraments when required. This system, thoroughly carried out, would save a great deal of that looseness which we now experience. In the M. E. Church, nearly all this is left on the minister, and having no regularly organized court to look after these matters, if the preacher is slack in his duty, nothing is looked after; but if a leader's meeting should take place once a month—say on the first Monday of each month—we might look for a more systematic administration of the rules of the church. We were for some years connected with the M. E. Church in the United States, where this system was carried into effect, and the most satisfactory results were seen.

The second court, and business meeting of the Methodist church, and one which is common to all Methodist denominations, is the quarterly conference. This is the highest court of a circuit or station, and as such, its importance demands our careful attention.

This court in the M. E. Church is composed of the traveling preachers stationed on the circuit, together with all local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders. Its powers and duties are to receive and try appeals from the lower courts—to take charge of all the general business of the circuit or station—to fix the estimates of the amount necessary to be raised, with which to pay the horse keeping, table expenses and firewood of the minister, and to supply him with a house when there is none owned by the circuit. It also constitutes a court for the origination of local preachers, and for the renewal of the licenses of exhorters. It appoints the stewards annually, and whenever a vacancy occurs; and takes charge of the manner and means of raising all the finances of the circuit or station. From this court, also, must issue all recommendations to the annual conference of candidates for admission into that body on trial as traveling preachers, and from it

every preacher is required to bring to conference a certificate of his acceptability as a preacher.

In the New Connection the quarterly conference is composed of the circuit preachers, circuit stewards, and secretary of the local preacher's meeting. These take their seats ex-officio. Added to these are representatives of the people, chosen at the society meetings. The powers and duties are principally the same as those of the same court in the M. E. Church, except the appointing of stewards, which is done by the societies—except two, who are called circuit stewards. This court, in the New Connection Church, also appoints the lay delegates who are to attend the annual conference.

In the Primitive Methodist Church the composition of the quarterly conference is the same as that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the addition of superintendents of Sabbath Schools, and members of a circuit committee, which is appointed to carry out the measures of the quarterly conference, and to provide for any emergency during the intervals of the same. The powers and duties of the quarterly conference in the Primitive Methodist Church are the same as those of the same court in the M. E. Church, with the additional power of employing preachers to travel, on branches, when they see proper to do so, and to appoint delegates to the district meeting. It will be seen that in this instance, again, there is no essential difference between these denominations. The composition of this court, and its powers, are so nearly the same in each, that there would be no trouble in amalgamating them so as to preserve all that is essential in each.

We would propose as a basis on which to unite the three, let the quarterly conference be composed, as at present in the M. E. Church and the Primitive Church, of the preacher stationed on the circuit or station, all the local preachers, exhorters, class-leaders, stewards, Sabbath School superintendents, and trustees of chapels, when there is to be action taken which is to effect the property they hold in trust. Let the duties of this court be about the same as at present in all

these churches combined, with the exception of the power to employ preachers on branches, or make any arrangement with preachers for their appointment to their circuits, leaving these matters entirely to the management of the stationing committee and the chairman of the district. Let the general business be to manage all financial matters in the circuit, originate local preachers, and renew licenses of exhorters; elect the stewards of the circuit and societies; appoint all boards of trustees for holding church property; recommend local preachers to admission into the annual conference as preachers on trial; and to elect all lay delegates to attend the district meeting. It would also constitute a court of appeals from all other courts or committees of the circuit, and have power to recommend local preachers for orders in certain cases. Let the preacher in charge of the circuit be chairman of the quarterly conference, *ex-officio*. The business of the circuit committee as incorporated in the economy of the Primitives, we think would be much more efficiently done by the leader's meeting, than it can possibly be done by such committee, and thereby save another wheel in the machinery, which only serves to increase the friction, and thereby decrease the power and motion. With regard to the society meetings, as held by the New Connection, we would advise their continuance as a social and spiritual advantage, but dispense with their business character, as we believe their business could be much more efficiently done by the leader's meeting and the quarterly conference. Our reasons for thinking thus, are, first, there can be a greater degree of deliberation in a leader's meeting, composed, as we propose, of the class leaders and stewards of the society, than there could possibly be in an open society meeting; and as deliberation is an absolute necessity to right conclusions and right action, we can but think that the leaders meeting would have a decided advantage over that of the society in a business point of view. Then again, as to the rights of the society, they would be amply protected, from the fact, that the members of the leader's meeting are the repre-



representatives of the societies. The leaders are chosen out of the classes, and by the classes, and the stewards are members of the society.

The next feature in the government of these several denominations, is the union of the several circuits and stations into districts. This feature, as we previously stated, is one common to Methodism; but in the internal arrangement and management of these districts there is a wide difference between them.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church the districts are managed almost exclusively, by the presiding elder. This office was established in the M. E. Church at an early day, and was found not only advantageous, but necessary. When Methodism was first being established in the New World, the societies were very much scattered, the preachers few and inexperienced—very frequently local preachers being employed for want of men in the regular work. These things, together with the fact, that many of the circuits were hundreds of miles apart, made it an absolute necessity that some competent person should travel at large through the entire work, taking the oversight of the same, and providing for all exigencies which might arise from time to time. This office has been perpetuated among us until the present. The quarterly meetings are appointed by this officer of the church, and the quarterly conferences convened by him. He has the authority to fill all vacancies which may occur on his district, and advise with the bishop in the stationing of the preachers. He is, also, chairman of all quarterly conferences, when present and the fountain of law and order for the time being: an appeal, however, can be made from his decisions. If it is on a point of order, the appeal can be taken directly to the quarterly conference; but if it is on a point of law, it must go to the annual conference. In that case, the appellant requires his exception to their ruling recorded on the quarterly conference journal, and then carries his appeal to the annual conference. In other denominations of Methodists, the districts are man-

aged entirely by district meetings or conferences. In the economy of the Primitive Methodist Church the district meeting is composed of delegates sent from the several circuits and stations by the appointment of their several quarterly conferences. They elect a president and secretary, and all officers of the district. Its principal powers are to manage the district finances, receive the contributions to the several church funds, examine the reports of stations;—to hear complaints and try appeals from the quarterly conferences, and other lower courts;—to examine candidates recommended from the circuits to the regular ministry;—to receive reports from the examiners of probations;—to decide on their probation;—and to elicit the members of the stationing committee, the general committee delegates, and the lay delegates who are to attend the annual conference. We would remark here, that, in our opinion, work left to a succession of committees to perform, is not generally as well done as when one man can be made responsible for the same work; provided always, that sufficient safeguards are thrown around such officer.

In the New Connection we find, what we think to be, a better plan of regulating and managing the district work. Their district meeting is composed of all traveling preachers on the district, and of an equal number of lay delegates appointed by the quarterly conferences held next preceding such district meeting: each circuit and station sending a number of delegates corresponding to the number of preachers stationed on them respectively. The annual conference appoints a chairman to each district, who is *ex-officio* chairman of the district meeting, unless the general or assistant superintendent is present—in that case he presides. The ordinary duties and powers of these district meetings are to maintain discipline in the district—to hear and decide appeals from circuit courts—to take cognizance of the personal and official conduct of all the ministers in the district—to enquire into the conduct, studies, and general qualifications of all probationers, and arrange for all missionary services—and to hear appeals from preachers

or circuits, where the preacher from any cause has been suspended from his duties.

We have, then, here before us, the polity of all three of these denominations, so far as their management of the affairs of their districts is concerned; and it is our opinion, that all could be improved.

We would propose the adoption of the district meeting or conference, to be constituted the same as it is now constituted in the New Connection, viz.: of all the traveling preachers stationed in the district, and an equal number of laymen appointed by the quarterly conference of the several circuits and stations on the district. Let this meeting constitute a court of appeals for the circuits on all matters of finance, and for the settling of all difficulties which cannot be settled on the circuits; so that none of such difficulties shall go to the annual conference, except such as might come in the shape of regular charges brought against the preacher for maladministration: in such cases, even let the matter be laid before the district meeting, and enquired into there, and if sufficient cause of complaint is found, let it then be presented to the conference. In this way a greater efficiency in settling such difficulties would be attained. This would save the conference a great amount of disagreeable business which should never come before it. Let the district meeting have all the management of the affairs of the district, in the interval of the annual conference, the same as the presiding elder now has. Require all recommendations to the annual conference, of candidates for trial in the traveling connection, to pass the district meeting, and receive its sanction before being presented to the annual conference. Let conference probationers also be examined by this meeting, thereby saving the candidate the trouble of attending conference, except for ordination, and also save the conference the time and trouble of their examination. Let the district meeting

also make arrangements for holding all missionary services in the district, appointing deputations to attend the meetings to be held in the several circuits, and make all necessary arrangements for successfully prosecuting this important branch of our work. Let the annual conference appoint a chairman to each district who shall have a central circuit, and at the same time have a supervisory oversight of the whole district. He should be *ex-officio* chairman of the district meeting and of all quarterly conferences when present. In case a vacancy from any cause occurs on a circuit or station it shall be the duty of the district chairman, as far as possible, to provide for such vacancy subject to the approval of the district meeting. In case of any difficulty occurring on a circuit, which is like to involve the preacher with the quarterly conference, it shall be the duty of the chairman, on application from the preacher or recording steward, to attend such quarterly conference, and act as chairman. No doubt we shall be accused of being opposed to the office of presiding elder. As far as that is concerned with our present arrangements for managing the district, no doubt this office is a necessity, but at the same time we believe we might adopt the plan above described without any considerable loss, and as a measure of reconciliation we believe it would be for the interest of all to adopt something of this nature. Some, no doubt, will think that, by proposing to change an institution which our fathers have arranged, we are impeaching their wisdom. So far from this, in the early days of Methodism in Canada, as well as in the United States, it was impossible to work the system above described. To promote the prosperity of the church, with districts two, three, and sometimes four or five hundred miles in length, was a difficult task. To convene a district meeting, under these circumstances, was impracticable, consequently it became necessary to have most of the powers

which we propose to vest in a district meeting and chairman, vested in something of itinerant proportions. The presiding elder's office was that which presented itself as the most feasible and convenient arrangement for meeting the necessities of the case, and we think the fathers of the church have left us an evidence of their wisdom in choosing an instrumentality so well calculated to promote the end for which it was designed.

But because this office in its itinerant character was once a necessity, does it follow that it cannot now be changed without involving a serious loss? We are no strong advocate for change, unless by such change we are to accomplish a great amount of good in some other direction. We think it very doubtful if the changes which we would propose would repay the trouble when considered merely as changes, but as we consider there would be little to lose in the exchanges of the presiding elder for a district chairman and district meeting, we would be heartily willing to make the compromise. It is worthy of note, however, that the support of the office of presiding elder is considerable. The M. E. Church in Canada pays out an amount annually sufficient to support a minister in a half dozen of the towns and cities of this province. We complain of not being able to support a cause in the towns and cities for want of men adapted to the work, and funds to support them, and yet we spend more money on the presiding elder's office than would be sufficient to support a minister in every town of any considerable importance in the province in which we are now unable to support a cause. If the office is of sufficient account to justify its expense, then of course the expense is no argument for changing it, but if we are not deriving as much benefit from it, as we would from employing the same amount of men and money in the regular pastoral work, it is wise for us to enquire into the expediency of making a change. If we can

effect the saving, and at the same time meet all the necessities of the general work, certainly it will recommend itself to our better judgment. Then again, if we are to make the office an efficient instrument in advancing the cause of God, and the interests of the church, we must have our best men to fill the position; and we are not over stocked with that class of preachers.

It is often asserted that the appointments cannot be properly arranged without an itinerant presiding elder who has traveled over the entire district, and consequently knows the wants of the circuits, and the abilities of the preachers to meet such wants. It is true that the presiding elder is expected to mingle with both people and ministers, and in this respect has an advantage in making appointments. This argument is, of course, founded on the assumption that presiding elders are always men who are qualified to judge fully of the wants of the several circuits, and to adapt preachers to meet such wants. Sometimes at least this qualification is lacking in those who are appointed to fill that office. This, of course, forms no argument against the office, but merely against the abuse of it. Wherever this abuse has occurred, we believe it has been because the right kind of men could not be spared from the regular work, and consequently inefficient men have been appointed to fill the office. But in the case of a district chairman, the matter is quite different. He would not be taken from the regular work, but would receive an important appointment, and at the same time have the oversight of the district.

It is our opinion, that, with the present position of Canadian Methodism, districts with seven or eight circuits can be managed, on the plan proposed, quite as well as they now are with the expensive office of presiding elder. As all the matters of the circuits would be brought before the district meetings, the district chairman would be well posted in all matters of the circuits, and, perhaps, would be as little affected by the representations of particular individuals as presiding



elders can be expected to be. By this means the chairman, who would be a member of the appointing cabinet, would be able to judge pretty correctly of the wants of the circuits on his district, and the ability of his men to meet such wants.

For a proof of the position which we have taken, we would refer you to the practical workings of the Wesleyan Methodist plan of making appointments; and without designing to extol the polity of any other church above that of our own, we would enquire if their appointments are not as advantageously made as those of our own church. If they are, and we believe it cannot be safely contradicted, it proves that the itinerant presiding elder is not a necessity to the successful prosecution of the general work.

Our difficulty has always been, that we have argued the necessity of this office as our polity is now constituted, forgetting that we could, by adopting something in its stead, prosecute our work without it. It requires the very best men we have, and we have so many places which demand such men, that, in many instances, men of the right stamp are not appointed to that office. If we cannot spare the very best we have got for that office, it at once becomes insupportable. As one of our venerable bishops said, on a certain occasion, "if we have got to take incompetent men for presiding elders, it would be a great deal better to do it away at once, and not bring it into disrepute by the appointment of inefficient men to the office."

It will be seen then, that not only is the monetary interest against the continuance of the office in its present form, but the very class of men which it requires to make the office efficient is an argument against it; in as much as we need all the men we have of that stamp to fill important station and circuit work, and are not fully able to spare them from it.

Any person who has been on the advisory committee, will at once comprehend the difficulties to which we refer. But it will be enquired, can we have any assurance that it would be easier to get men of the right stamp for district chairmen?



We think we have such assurance, in the fact that we are not taking them out of the regular work to make chairmen of them, and certainly there will be at least one circuit or station in every district which will demand a strong man, and while he fills such appointment he can at the same time attend to the office of chairman.

The next link in the connectional chain, is that by which all the districts are united in an annual conference. This annual court is common to all Methodist denominations, although its composition and powers considerably vary.

In the M. E. Church all ordained traveling preachers, and none else, are members of the annual conference. This conference is an executive body, and has no power to legislate. It attends to the internal management of all the affairs of the church within its own territories.

In the Primitive Methodist Church the annual conference is a delegated body, composed of two *laymen* to one *minister*. It is both a legislative and executive assembly.

The annual conference of the New Connection is, also, both executive and legislative, not only executing the law of the church, and attending to the management of all its internal affairs, but making and changing laws, from year to year, as may seem best to those who may be members of such conferences. With them, this court is composed of one minister and one layman from each circuit and station throughout the connection, who are appointed by the several circuits, sometimes by the quarterly meeting conferences, and sometimes by the several society meetings.

It will be seen by the above, that the only difference between the annual conferences of the Primitives and New Connection, is in their composition. Both of them have *lay delegation*; but while the New Connection have an equality in their representation, the Primitives have two laymen to one minister.

The difference between the Episcopal Methodists and the

others, in this particular, is greater. With them the lay element is entirely ignored in the composition of the annual and general conferences.

We would propose the following compromise, which, in our opinion, would be a better arrangement than either of those above referred to. Let the annual conference be composed of all the ordained preachers in connection with it, and say three or four laymen from each district, to be appointed by the district meeting held just previous to the session of conference, and appointed from among the lay delegates who may be members of such district meeting. Let the powers of the annual conference be the same as those now conferred on that body by the constitution of the M. E. Church, and let all legislation be confined to a general conference occurring quadrennially. As this proposition, if acted upon, will materially change the *modus operandi* of each of these denominations, it will be necessary for us to examine at length the changes we propose to make.

That which will first demand our attention, is the matter of lay delegation. No doubt some of our Episcopal brethren will take exceptions to laymen being allowed a representation in the annual and general conferences at all, while others, who are favourable to lay delegation, may not fall in with our plan of appointing such delegates. As far as our New Connection and Primitive friends are concerned, they will not demur as to the efficiency of laymen as members of conference, but may not fall in with our views as to the proper manner of appointment. We simply ask them to weigh candidly what we have to say on this subject, before condemning our theory. Then as to the principle of lay delegation, we are of the opinion that it cannot be successfully controverted. In the Thirteenth Article of Faith, as set down in the Book of Discipline of the M. E. Church, to which reference has already been made, we are told that the visible church consists of a congregation of faithful men, in which the word of God is preached, and to

whom the sacraments are duly administered. We firmly believe this to be the doctrine of the Bible, and, consequently, shall found our first argument for lay delegation upon it.

All, except those who hold to the successor of Saint Peter, hold that the church has power to regulate all her internal affairs as seemeth best to herself, and most advantageous to the cause of Christianity, so that nothing be incorporated in her polity which is contrary to the laws of God, or the rules of His Word. In such internal organism we are to take into account the state of society in which we live, the laws of the country by which we are governed, together with all the other circumstances by which we are surrounded. The church was designed for all people, and hence its great Author has left all church regulation to the church itself, subject to the great ruling principles which He has laid down: so that no denomination has a right to call another heretodox unless some of the doctrines of the Bible are denied, or some of the fundamental principles of church government as laid down in God's Word are ignored. When we see persons interdicting all but themselves, while nothing distinguishes them from others, except a few inessential points of government, we have to consider their religious education very defective. The question being settled, as to the right of the church to legislate on all points of polity, excepting those expressly defined by the word of God, it behoves us to enquire for the power of legislation. Is it vested in the ministry or in the laity, or in these combined. We are strongly inclined to the latter opinion; for if the church is to legislate, and execute that legislation, the power *must* be vested jointly, in the ministry and laity, for the ministry are not the church, neither are the laity the church—but *the two combined*. If the doctrine set forth in the above named article be correct, no legislation can be said to be that of the church, unless the legislative body be a mixed assembly. I know my Episcopal brethren will meet me here, by saying that the restrictive rule, by which the laity have the right to veto certain measures, constitutes mixed

legislation ; but we are unable to see the point for the following reasons.—The restrictive rules are properly confined to five points only, so that the general conference may legislate as it pleases on all matters except those especially referred to, and no layman has a right to say why do ye so. And then again, we deny that the restrictive rule gives the laity any power to legislate. That they have a power over legislation on those points is a fact ; but that power is about the same as the veto power which the Governor General exercises over the legislation of the province. If there is any advantage in their relation, it is on the side of the Governor, for he has the right, when he delivers his message at the opening of Parliament, to ask for whatever legislation he may think best calculated to serve the interests of the country. In this way he is enabled not only to set before the members of parliament his views, but to set them equally before the country ; while the laity of the church enjoy no such privilege. The constitution does not give the people a right to send a message to the general conference, setting forth their views of the legislation required to meet the necessities of the church, but simply to acquiesce in that which does not conflict with the restrictive rule, and to veto that which does. So far from this plan uniting the laity and ministry in a legislative point of view, it merely secures the laity against oppressive legislation on the part of the ministry, without giving them the slightest degree of power or liberty in originating legislation. This has, to some extent, arrayed the laity and ministry against each other in matters of legislation. Several instances have fallen under our own observation, which serve to confirm us in this matter, one of which is very fresh in our memory, and no doubt is in the memory of all the ministers who have a care for these matters. The last General Conference past a law for the adoption of a systematic plan for the reception of members into full connection, by which much disorder would be prevented. As it effected the conditions of membership it had to go before the quarterly conferences for their sanction. As

the measure had for its object the benefit of the laity, and not the ministry; no anxiety was felt as to the result; but contrary to all expectation it was vetoed. We have conversed with several leading laymen on the subject, and found none of them averse to the principles involved in the change; but their reason for opposing it, was the fear lest one encroachment should follow another, until some measure would be allowed to pass which the laity with a fair trial would not find for the best, and thus, as they had no voice in originating legislation, they would find it impossible to effect a remedy. We refer to the above merely to illustrate the position which we have taken. So far then from the present system practiced by the M. E. Church having a tendency to unite the wisdom of the ministry and laity for purposes of wise and good legislation, it has a tendency to array them against each other; the laity, especially, applying their sagacity more to watching all legislation lest their rights and liberties should be compromised, than to the origination of wise laws and rules. Perhaps some person will be ready to charge us with a want of charity toward the laity in assuming the above position, but so far from this we make full allowance for all the confidence the laity repose in the ministry, which, doubtless, is very considerable; but as self preservation is understood to be the first law of nature, we believe were the ministry placed in the same relation to legislation which the laity now occupy, they would be even more careful and jealous of their rights, and more ingenious in defending them, than the laity now are. Not only do we claim that laymen have a right to be represented in legislative and executive assemblies of the church, but we claim it to be for the best interests of all concerned to admit such representation. We believe that nothing would have so good an effect on the general finances of the church, as the proper association of laymen in their management. It is a notable fact that ministers are not generally financial men. That there are some good financiers among ministers we are free to admit; but we, at the same time, are free to assume

that it is but a small proportion of them who can lay claim to such a reputation. Many men, who are now successful ministers of the Gospel, have proven themselves to be utterly incapable of transacting temporal business: some there are among us whose failures have been signal, and yet it so happens that these have the most to say and do in the management of the financial affairs of the church. It is our candid opinion that if our laymen had more controll in our church finances they would be in a more healthy condition than they now are; for it is a fact, that many of the laymen of the church are the best financiers the country affords. Then again, if the laymen had a representation, and a voice in the management of the church, they would be more ready to respond to her calls for pecuniary aid. As it is, the conference lays certain amounts on the circuits, to be raised by them for connectional purposes. The members do not think themselves properly assessed, and as they had no hand in the assessment, by representation or otherwise, they do not feel so strongly bound to assist in making up the amount. In proof of the correctness of this position, we would just refer to the fact, that denominations having laymen extensively connected with the ministers in the management of their finances, raise the most money for the support of their various institutions. Should any person doubt the correctness of this assertion, we just invite them to examine the statistics of denominations having a mixture of lay element, and take those statistics as their guide in forming their conclusions. We are sometimes met with the objection, that the introduction of laymen into our conferences, will have a tendency to lower the intellectual status of that assembly. We do not for a moment contend that as a whole the laity are equal to the ministry in intellect and education; for the ministry is taken from the higher class intellectually, and receive an education quite superior to the average of the laity. But while we are free to admit the superiority of the ministry to the average of the masses, we at the same time claim many men in the laity

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who are quite equal, both as to natural ability and education, to any we have in the ministry. Indeed, we have men in the laity at whose feet many, if not all of us, can sit and learn, not only in temporal matters, but also in spiritual. Then the above objection can have little weight, except on the supposition that only an average of the laity, as to ability, can be delegated to the conference. All that is necessary, therefore, is to adopt some measure for the appointment of lay delegates that will secure the selection of the best men for that office. As our brethren in the laity are as much interested in the selection of proper delegates as ministers can be, it cannot be supposed that, as a general thing, wrong men will be appointed to represent them, if a proper method for the election of such delegates can be adopted. All that is required to secure such men as delegates, is to throw proper safeguards around their selection. In order to this, two things are essential to be observed—to guard against all electioneering intrigues, and, at the same time, avoid the danger arising from delegates being too sectional in their views and feelings. It cannot be denied, that laymen are more exposed to this than ministers. Ministers, being constantly changing, bear a more general relation to the church at large than laymen; and, hence, are less in danger of becoming infected with sectional feelings. The election of delegates by the several societies on the respective circuits, and sending one layman from each circuit and station, must have a tendency to increase this sectional feeling. Every delegate has his instructions from the circuit or station which he represents, and is expected to do all in his power to get such measures adopted as their instructions set forth. Of course these measures have been settled upon before the appointment of the delegate, and, consequently, the societies look for a man whom they can trust to manage such matters. The result is, the aim of each delegate is more to secure action suited to the peculiarities of his own constituency, than to secure the adoption of measures best suited to all, and, as a consequence, a great deal of the practice of

helping each other is resorted to, in order to success.' But all this can, doubtless, be avoided, by appointing the lay delegates in a proper manner. We have already proposed to have them appointed by the district meeting, and to have about three or four from each district: however, the number may be graduated by the number of circuits and stations on the districts. As the Annual Conference has no power to legislate, we can see no necessity of having the number of laymen and ministers equal; especially as the largest portion of the business of the Conference would relate to the ministers, and not to laymen. Perhaps some of our brethren, who may be opposed to lay delegation, will say, why have laymen in the Annual Conferences at all, seeing the General Conference will amply protect their interests. We answer, that while there is no need of lay delegation in the Annual Conference as a measure to protect the rights and privileges of the laity, there is need of it as a means for successfully managing the finances connected with the various institutions of the church. We want laymen on all committees, whose business it may be to see after, and report upon, the temporalities of the church. This manner of appointing them, would, doubtless, secure two important points. It would have for its advantage, first, the securing of the right stamp of men to fill such a position. Each quarterly Conference would, doubtless, send its best man as its representative in the district meeting; and as only one in three of those attending the district meeting would be sent as delegates to the Annual Conference, we may expect to have in that assembly laymen who will be fully equal in ability and experience to the same number of men in the ministry. The second advantage would, doubtless, be to secure the lay members of the Conference against that sectionalism to which we have already alluded, and to which the appointment of a conference delegate by each circuit must tend. All instructions and requests coming from circuits would have to be to the district meeting, and the question receive the approbation of such meeting, and from them be



laid before the Annual Conference. In this way the delegates from the several district meetings would, to a great extent, lose their sectional feelings, as no particular sectional matters would be officially intrusted to them: the real and apparent design in their appointment would be to serve the church, and not a particular section of it.

As the best possible plan of governing the church should demand our attention, we crave a careful investigation of the foregoing thoughts. We believe, from what light we have been able to obtain on the subject of church polity, that the only true method of procedure is by mixed legislation.

We have already referred to the General Conference as a legislative body. This assembly should, we think, continue to be held once in four years, as at present in the Methodist Episcopal Church, at such time and such place as shall be fixed upon by an act of its last session. The advantages of this court are not strange to all Methodists of other branches of the church, but, doubtless, are too many, if not most of them. As a consequence, it will be necessary for us to set forth its composition, powers, and general advantages. As we have already said, the Annual Conferences of other denominations of Methodists are legislative assemblies, while those of the M. E. Church are only executive: they possess no law-making powers, but all their acts are confined to executing the laws of the General Conference, and the transacting of business in conformity therewith. One prominent advantage of quadrennial legislation is the securing of the church against that excessive legislation which is so pernicious in its effects, and to which annual legislation has so great a tendency. Frequent changes in the rules and regulations of any organization are always injurious in their effects,—the public always fearing that association which is always changing; so that what we find them to be to-day, we can have no expectation of finding them to-morrow. Again, when such favourable opportunities for frequent legislation present themselves, there will never be wanting those who are anxious to distinguish

themselves as legislators. The General Conference plan of legislation secures the church against all these, by allowing the opportunity of legislation to occur only once in four years; thus when any person gets over anxious to distinguish himself as a legislative genius, he must wait four years before he can exhibit his ability in that capacity. His zeal thus gets an opportunity to abate, and generally disappears. We are told that the annual plan of legislation has an advantage in facilitating important enactments without having to await the return of a quadrennial Conference. Good laws, it is true, can never be obtained too soon, and bad ones can never be deferred too long. As human judgment is weak, and extensively liable to err, it becomes prudent to weigh well every subject upon which we are called to take action. We therefore consider the General Conference plan well adapted to our natures and circumstances. As there is far more danger in too precipitate action, than there is in too great delay, we conclude the weight of argument is in favour of the four years plan. Again, new laws always require more care in their execution than old ones, and therefore, at first, are seldom as well executed. This leads many to suppose them to be inferior to those previously in force, and, if the opportunity is presented, an effort will be made to effect *another change*, thus condemning a measure without giving it an impartial trial. We are decidedly opposed to any change in ecclesiastical polity, excepting on mature reflection it is considered for the best; and then when such changes are made, we are of the opinion they should have a fair trial, by continuing them in existence long enough to test fairly their utility.

The wisdom of this plan of legislation may be farther seen in the fact, that the M. E. Church in the United States, although as large, numerically, as all the non-Episcopal Methodist Churches in the world, and properly the oldest of all in a separate existence, has had only about one-half the number of secessions from her ranks that the Wesleyans have suffered; and yet she has multiplied with more astonishing

rapidity than all others put together. Neither can it be argued that her escape from those internal commotions, which produce unhappy divisions, has been owing to the state of society where she has operated. To every person acquainted with American history, the fact is patent that the Americans are a restless class of people, speculative in their natures, and being made up of people from every country, they, of course, must be incongruous in their tastes and feelings. Yet with all this variety of element to facilitate discord, she has nobly stemmed every tide, and has suffered less, by one-half, from secessions than any other Methodist Church of her age. This we can attribute to nothing else but the wisdom of her legislation—the principal reason for which, we conceive to be nothing short of the quadrenial plan—by which all unnecessary and excessive legislation has been avoided. Then, also, this plan gives the greatest possible advantage to obtain the wisest and best men as members of the General Conference, as only about one fourth of the Annual Conference Members are appointed as members of that body. This gives quite a chance to cull the Annual Conferences, and generally this is done to good advantage, as every member of the Annual Conference is extremely anxious to have the very best men appointed as delegates from their own Conference. This has the most beneficial effect, as it, to a very great extent, places the right men in the right place—thereby securing the wisest and best legislation, which results in the peace and prosperity of the church.

Having said thus much about the advantages of the General Conference plan of legislation as it is practised in the Methodist Episcopal Church, we shall proceed to suggest a basis of composition, and to define its powers. We would propose to delegate about one-fourth or one-fifth of the ministers of all the Annual Conferences as members of the General Conference. If it is thought that with Union

this ratio would compose too large and unwieldy a Conference, the ratio may be decreased to suit the peculiar circumstances. In the 'United States' M. E. Church the ratio of General Conference Members is one in twenty-seven of all the members of the several Annual Conferences. We would here remark, that the larger the church, and the less the ratio of representation, the greater becomes the facilities for getting the right stamp of men to compose the General Conference, and the greater becomes the probability of securing their appointment; for if there is to be but a small number of men appointed from each Annual Conference, the members become more desirous and careful that the right kind of men should obtain the appointment. Whatever the ratio may be, let the delegates from the Annual Conference be appointed by ballot from among the elders who may be members of said Conferences. Let there be also an equal number of laymen chosen by the Annual Conferences from among those who may be members of that body, to be chosen at the same time and in the same manner as the ministerial delegates. This would secure the lay delegates against the sectionalism of which we have already spoken. Their appointment by the Annual Conference would have a tendency to cause them to feel that they were the representatives of the church, and not the representatives of isolated sections of it. This plan for the appointment of lay delegates would also have the advantage of securing the very best men as representatives of the laity in the General Conference. This, in our estimation, would constitute a General Conference adequate to any emergency of the church. This assembly would form a court of appeals from the decisions of Annual Conferences—would be the highest earthly court of the church, and her only legislative assembly. This Conference would possess the sole right of appointing editors and book

agents, and have original jurisdiction of all matters connected with the general institutions of the church. In it would be vested the power of appointing bishops or general superintendents, and to this court they would be originally responsible. In order to meet any emergency that may arise in the management of the printing establishment during the interval of the General Conference, let there be a book committee appointed by the Conference, who shall have the general management of the concern during the intervals between the sessions of that body. In case of a vacancy occurring in the office of editor or book agent, this committee would possess full powers to fill such vacancy until the next session of the General Conference. This committee should receive annual or semi-annual reports of the doings of the book rooms, and have authority to call any of the agents to account for delinquency in the performance of their duty. The General Conference, which holds original jurisdiction over this committee, should receive an exhibit of their doings. This much will, doubtless, suffice to set before our readers the advantages and powers of the General Conference; and we would proceed next to examine the General Superintendency of the whole church. It is supposed by some, that, in the event of Union, the church would need no General Superintendent at all. At present each of the three denominations under consideration, have a plan of General Superintendency. In the Primitive Church, this power is vested in two committees: the General Committee and the Missionary Committee. While these committees are distinct in name they are one in fact, the same persons composing each of these committees, and their meetings being held quarterly at the same time and place: so instead of being two, they can only be considered as one, exercising all the powers which purport to be vested in both. The powers of these committees, or rather of this committee, are vested in an Executive Committee, which transacts its business in the intervals of the General Committee Meetings. In the economy of the New Connection Church, the superintendency

of the work during the interval of Conference is vested in a General Superintendent and an Annual Committee appointed by the Conference. These jointly have the superintendency of all matters connected with the church. Their powers are about the same as those of the committees above referred to. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, the superintendency is vested in a General Superintendent or Bishop. He is, by virtue of his office, chairman of all Annual and General Conferences, unless there should be more than one Bishop; in that case the work is either arranged between them, or parcelled out to them respectively by the General Conference. This officer, by and with the advice of the Advisery Committee, forms the districts, and appoints the Presiding Elders; and by and with the advice of the Presiding Elders the Bishop stations the preachers. This officer has, also, the full oversight of the entire work during the interval of the Annual Conference. The power to station preachers is not a power vested in a Methodist Bishop by virtue of his ordination, but by appointment of the General Conference. This court has always been understood, by us, to station the preachers, and the Bishop only to exercise that prerogative by virtue of authority delegated to him by that body—an authority which the General Conference has a right to withdraw from the Bishop whenever that body shall see it expedient to do so. The Deed of Settlement of the M. E. Church secures the occupancy of her pulpits to such preachers as the Annual or General Conference shall authorize. This shows conclusively, that the authorizing or appointing power is vested in the Conference alone, and although exercised by the Bishop or General Superintendent, the right to exercise such power is derived alone from the sufferages of the General Conference. This position is farther established by the fact, that the Bishop has no power to punish a preacher for refusing to go to the work assigned him in the plans of appointments. The power, to thus deal with a delinquent, is vested solely in the Conference. This shows conclusively that the power of

appointment is vested in the Conference and not in the General Superintendent, that officer only possessing an executive authority. That such a superintendency is necessary to the successful management of the church, in our position, cannot be successfully controverted. Ours is an itinerant system of government. Not only is itinerancy considered compatible with Methodism, but it is considered one of its distinguishing features. Without the itinerant plan, Methodism would have long since become dwarfed in its proportions, if it had not been entirely absorbed by other interests. By the workings of her plan of appointment she has been enabled successfully to occupy territory; to build up a cause, and then to make it permanent. No one man can be found who possesses traits of character which eminently qualify him for all of this work. One man is well adapted to obtain an opening for the establishment of a new appointment, another is just qualified to break up the ground, get the people converted, and organize societies, leaving the permanent establishment of such societies to a minister of still different qualifications. Thus Methodism has successfully established herself in neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and countries, until the wisdom of her system of management has been acknowledged by even her enemies. In those branches of the church, which have been the most successful in building up the Redeemer's kingdom, itinerancy has been compulsory. The appointing power has been vested in a committee who have been, as far as possible, free from sectional feeling, and who have had no other motive in making the appointments than the highest good of all concerned. The preachers who have covenanted to labour in and for those churches, have done so with a full knowledge of what they would be required to submit to, and consequently have had no right to complain of such plan of itinerancy being oppressive. To have an optional itinerancy, is to have none; for to have it optional, is to defeat the end for which itinerancy was instituted. It was inaugurated, not for the mere purpose of changing, but for the purpose of

applying every variety of talent successively to every field of labour, so that every resource will be developed. The success of those denominations who have adopted compulsory itinerancy, has clearly established their wisdom. Take for instance the M. E. Church in the United States, and where is her superior, or even her equal, in the rapidity of her increase. When the American Wesleyans broke off from that church, one of their main objections to her polity was, that her appointments were made without reference to the like or dislike of the preachers, and when made, the preacher's acquiescence was compulsory. Accordingly they modified their itinerancy, so as to allow the people to interfere with the appointments, and finally declared that they did not consider their appointments compulsory. And what has been the result? This may be easily seen by a comparison of their prosperity with that of the parent stock. Although the secession carried off many prominent ministers and a large membership, and had the still farther advantage of having no complicity with *slavery*, and of being strong advocates of lay delegation, practically embodying it, they have made but small progress according to the time they have been incorporated, and the advantages they have enjoyed. We believe this failure of the American Wesleyans is a conclusive evidence of the superiority of a compulsory itinerancy over that of an itinerancy of convenience. Neither do we believe it advisable to allow of any correspondence between preachers and circuits for the purpose of arranging the appointments of such preachers to such circuits. This is a direct interference with the plan of a general itinerancy, and tends to congregationalism; for unless the appointments are made, as a general thing, without any reference to the peculiar wishes of either people or preachers, our system becomes itinerant in name, but not in fact. For if the several circuits, either by their delegates or otherwise, are allowed to make arrangements for the appointment of its own preachers, a certain class of circuits will always have just such a class of preachers, while



an inferior class of circuits will always have a very inferior class of preachers. This serves to defeat the ends of itinerancy, by as effectually stereotyping the work as Congregationalism can possibly do it. By this course, the Stationing Committee becomes a pigmy, only making appointments for those circuits which are so inferior as to be unable to obtain a preacher, and for those preachers who are of such inferior talents as to be unable to negotiate for themselves. This system has the effect to destroy the beneficial results derived from an interchange of preachers; for while there is a change it precludes that change of variety, which is the main advantage of itinerancy. A compulsory itinerancy cannot be successfully practiced without a General Superintendency. Such Superintendency the M. E. Church now possesses, and we shall endeavour to show it to be the least liable to objection of any system ever established.

While it serves to prevent Congregationalism, and to cement the different portions of the church into one consolidated body, there are sufficient safeguards thrown around the office to prevent all usurpation. The Episcopacy of the M. E. Church in the United States is the same as that of the same church in Canada, and they have never suffered from their Bishops usurping too great authority: As we have already noticed, they are accountable to the General Conference for the proper discharge of their duty; and for neglect or abuse of their authority, are subject to removal from office by that body. It will be remembered that this Conference is not composed of a bench of Bishops, like the English hierarchy, but of Elders of the church, and in the arrangements proposed, in case of Union, of elders and an equal number of laymen associated with them. This effectually secures the church against any abuse of the authority vested in an Episcopal Methodist Bishop. In our view of Episcopacy, any minister who may be vested with the office of overseer or superintendent is really a Christian bishop. This view we shall try to establish from Scripture, and the practice of the

church. The design of this work is too limited to allow of our entering into the Episcopal controversy at full length,—consequently we shall have to be content with merely glancing at a few of the more important arguments. Before entering upon the investigation of the argument in favour of Episcopacy, we would just remark that because an office has been abused, is no reason why we should ignore the name by which such office is designated. This, no doubt, has been done in the case under consideration. We might, with just as much show of propriety, ignore the sacraments because they have been perverted. If we can establish the fact that the office existed in the Primitive Church, and that said office has not passed away by divine edict, then we shall claim a right to the office, notwithstanding its abuse by ecclesiastical hierarchies. We contend, first, that the offices of elder and bishop are the same, and that we use them separately, only to designate an office, and not an order. As an evidence of this, we claim that presbyters ordained for the ministry. In proof of this claim, we would refer the reader to the case of Timothy. In I. Timothy, iv., 14, we find the Apostle Paul making this reference to his ordination:—"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Presbyters also ruled or governed the church, as in Acts xx. 28:—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And again, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."—I. Timothy, v., 17. The last two passages prove conclusively that the elders or presbyters ruled in the church even in the Apostle's time;—neither can it be argued that these presbyters were successors of the Apostles, for they were yet living, and consequently had not been succeeded. It is a noteworthy fact, that while apostles and presbyters, apostles and bishops, and bishops and deacons, are distinguished from each

other when they are mentioned together, presbyters and bishops, or elders and bishops, are never individually named at the same time, as though they were two separate orders of ministers. But on the contrary, the names of elder, or presbyter and bishop are used alternately to designate the same order. As a sample of such alternate use of these names, we would direct attention to the Epistle to Titus, i. 5-7, which reads as follows:—"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre—but a lover of hospitality, etc." Nothing is more evident than that Elders and Bishops are here spoken of as one and the same order. "To say ordain presbyters, for a bishop must be blameless, is like saying crown the sovereign, for a king must be crowned." As sovereign and king would here be considered as synonymous terms; so those of Elder and Bishop, as used above, can be nothing less or more than synonymous. Nearly the same terms are used by the Apostle in his First Letter to Timothy, iii. 1-4, only the word elder is left out, but the honest inquirer after truth will at once admit that the reason must be because the terms are synonymous. The same in Acts xx. 17. Thus much then for the title. We come now to examine the qualifications and powers of the office of Bishop.

As far as the authority given to Bishops by the act of ordination is concerned, we believe it to be the same as that of presbyter, and nothing more. Indeed, if there is any superiority it is found with the presbyters—if we undertake to separate these orders (which we have no sanction in scripture for doing), for the presbyters alone are said to have practiced ordination. It may be asked, then, if presbyters have the same power to ordain, which are vested in a bishop by virtue of their

ordination, in what does the superiority of a bishop consist? We answer, it consists in a superiority of office, and not in order. By divine appointment the laymen of the church are all equal—all a common brotherhood; and yet some of those laymen are, by the church, elevated above their brethren by being placed in official positions. Their office gives them authority to perform acts which their brethren, who are equal with them by divine appointment, have no right to perform, yet whoever reprehends this as a despotic power? Does not the organization of every denomination acknowledge this to be a necessity, in providing for officers of the church, to be chosen from among the laymen? Indeed, this is a necessity as a measure to prevent that state of confusion which would arise from every person transacting the business of the church as should appear best to themselves. And nothing but strict adherence to the constituted authorities of the church, as vested in her several officers, can save us from a state of perfect anarchy. The same practice is common to all christian churches with regard to the ministry. In every denomination, ministers are appointed to offices which give them powers above those enjoyed by their brethren; and whoever thought the mere fact of their being so appointed, constituted a despotism? So far from this, all have acquiesced in the practice. Even the Primitive and New Connection Churches have fallen into the practice of elevating some of their ministers to offices which give them power above those of their brethren. In the apostolic age, all presbyters were wont to ordain at their own discretion, as may be gathered from many circumstances recorded in the New Testament. Paul admonishes Timothy "to lay hands on no man," which clearly shows that the exercise of the powers of ordination, which were conferred on Timothy by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, were discretionary with him. The injudicious exercise of these discretionary powers was the cause of great confusion in

the early church, as may be seen by reference to the writings of the fathers. Jerome, in his note on the first chapter of Titus, says, "Presbyters and bishops were formerly the same. And before the Devil incited men to make divisions in religion, and one was led to say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters. But afterwards, when every one in baptising rather made proselytes to himself than to Christ, it was every where decreed that one person, elected from the rest of the presbyters in each church, should be placed over the others, that the chief care of the churches devolving upon him, the seeds of division might be taken away. Should any one suppose this opinion, viz.: that bishops and presbyters are the same, and that one is the denomination of age, and the other of office, is not determined by the Scriptures, but is only a private opinion, let him read over again the Apostle's words to the Philippians, saying "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippi is one of the cities of Macedonia: and certainly as to those who are now esteemed bishops, not more than one at a time can be in one and the same city. But because bishops at that time were called the same as presbyters, therefore the Apostle speaks of bishops indifferently as being the same as presbyters. And here it should be carefully observed how the Apostle, sending for the presbyters, in the plural, of the single city of Ephesus only, afterward calls the same persons bishops.—Acts xx. 17–28. He who receives the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, there finds the care of the church divided equally among many: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they who must give account; that they may do it with joy and

not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." And Peter, who received his name from the firmness of his faith, says in his Epistle, "The presbyters who are among you, I exhort, who am also a presbyter, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly." These passages we have brought forward to show, that, with the ancients, presbyters were the same as bishops. But, that the roots of dissension might be plucked up, a usage gradually took place, that the chief care should devolve upon one. Therefore, as the presbyters know that it is by the custom of the church that they are to be subject to them who are placed over them; so let the bishops know that they are above presbyters rather by custom than by divine appointment, and that the church ought to be ruled in common." There can be no doubt, but Jerome speaks the language of the ancients on this matter. In conformity then with this view of this custom of the church, the M. E. Church has adopted a system of general superintendency, founded not on the divine right of an order, but on the human right of church appointment to an office, and in conformity with the practice of the early church, as given us by the fathers, and not inconsistent with the teachings of Scripture, but sanctioned by them. The only means of securing uniformity in the administration of the rules of the church, is by the employment of some general executive officer, who shall have the general oversight of the church. To meet this constitutional necessity, which not only existed anciently, but exists now, the M. E. Church has adopted the above superintendency in the form of what she understands to be a Scriptural Episcopacy. It is our opinion, that most of the opposition which has been shown to this mode of managing the affairs of the church, is owing to a misapprehension of the peculiarities of the office of bishop as it exists among us. In

order to make these apparent, we will give the opinion of the bishops themselves on Methodist Episcopacy. The following are the views of Bishops Coke and Ashbury, as given in their notes on the discipline, which were prepared by them at the request of the General Conference:—"Nothing but an apostolic uninterrupted succession can possibly confine the right of episcopacy to any particular church. The idea of an apostolic succession being exploded, it follows that the Methodist church has every thing which is Scriptural and essential to justify its episcopacy." "Nor must we omit to observe that each diocese had a college of elders or presbyters, in which the bishop presided. So that the bishop by no means superintended his diocese in a despotic manner, but was rather the chief executor of those regulations which were made in the college of presbyters."—Ed. 1798; pp. 6, 7, 8.

"Here, then, lies the grand difference between Mr. Wesley's authority, in the present instance, and that of our American bishops. The former, as (under God) the father of the connection, was allowed to have the sole, legal, independant nomination of preachers to all the chapels; the latter are entirely dependant on the General Conference.—"But why does the General Conference lodge the power of stationing the preachers in the episcopacy? We answer, on account of their entire confidence in it. If ever, through improper conduct, they lose that confidence in any considerable degree, the General Conference will, upon evidence given, in a proportionable degree, take from it this branch of its authority. But if ever it betrays a spirit of tyranny or partiality, and this can be proved before the General Conference, the whole will be taken from them; and we pray God that in such case the power may be vested in other hands..... And we believe that if our episcopacy should at any time, through tyrannical or immoral conduct, come under the severe censure of the General Conference, the members thereof would see it highly for the glory of God, to preserve the present form, and only to change the men..... Mr. Wesley, as the venerable founder (under God) of the

whole Methodist society, governed without any responsibility whatever;—but the American bishops are as responsible as any of the preachers. They are perfectly subject to the General Conference. “We have drawn this comparison between our venerable father and the American bishops, to show to the world that they possess not, and, we may add, they aim not to possess, that power which he exercised, and had a right to exercise, as the father of the connection;—that, on the contrary, they are perfectly dependent; that their power, their usefulness, themselves, are entirely at the mercy of the General Conference.”—*Ibid*, 40–44. We have given the above extracts to convince the reader that, in the establishment of Methodist Episcopacy, the bishops themselves did not consider theirs a perpetual divine order, but an office which conferred on them a degree of authority, which was subject to be lessened at any time, and from which they were subject to be removed by the General Conference, should that body see it expedient for the welfare of the church. How, in the face of the statements of episcopacy, made by the the bishops themselves, any person can have the hardihood to charge the first bishops with arrogating to themselves despotic and arbitrary powers, we are unable to comprehend. We must conclude that those who make such assertions, do it without examining the subject, or, what is worse, that they mean to revile and vilify honest men. The first paragraph, which we quoted from the notes of the Discipline, must for ever put to rest the assertion, that Dr. Coke did not consider his an episcopal ordination. The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church have no control over the decisions of either an Annual or General Conference—not so much as a veto power or even a casting vote. If there is a tie on any question, the bishop must decide it lost for want of a majority. Another evidence of their entire dependence is the fact, that if they cease to travel without the consent of the General Conference, they forfeit their episcopal functions, or, in other words, they must travel until the General Conference is pleased to pronounce



them superannuated,—which the Conference has a right to do, when, in its judgment, they are unable efficiently to serve the church in the capacity of a bishop. With regard to the power of ordination we remark:—A Methodist bishop has no right to ordain any man to the office of elder or deacon, unless he is first recommended by the Annual Conference to fill such office. It is true, the Discipline provides for his surcoasting to ordain on certain conditions, but only when some valid objection is made, and then only until such times as the case has been investigated. On this point the venerated bishop Hedding, whose authority none will dispute, says:—“The superintendents now have no power in the church above that of elders, except what is connected with presiding in the Conferences, fixing the appointments of the preachers, and ordaining. They have no voice in any question to be decided by vote in any Conference,—no vote even in making the rules by which they themselves are to be governed. They are the servants of the elders, to go out and execute their commands. At the same time they are held rigidly responsible, not only for their private conduct, but also for their official acts. The General Conference may expel a bishop, not only for immoral conduct, but for improper conduct, if they see it necessary. Improper conduct, in our discipline, means a small offence below a crime;—and though the preachers and private members may be expelled for that kind of offence, when it is persisted in after repeated admonitions, yet no one but a bishop, not even a child, or a slave, can be expelled for the first improper act of that character. And if a bishop be expelled there is no appeal.” Much more might be adduced on this head, did we think it necessary, but we believe the foregoing to be sufficient to convince any candid man that a Methodist Bishop is not such a monster as many have supposed him to be; but on the contrary, that he is as dependent as any other minister;—his dependency being, not on a bench of bishops, but on a body of elders. If his acts are oppressive at all, they must be on the ministry. for Methodist Bishops have no

connection with the administration of the laity. And can any sensible person be brought to believe that a Methodist Bishop would dare to be tyrannical with those on whom he depends for the continuance of his office and its powers? Common sense answers no—emphatically no! Under these circumstances, where is the danger from Methodist Episcopacy? Entirely subject to the General Conference, limited and regulated by specific statutes, and declining rather than increasing in its powers, who can feel any great anxiety or alarm? The thought is absurd! Some may object to their having the power to appoint the preachers. This power must be vested somewhere, and, we would ask, in what better hands can it be placed than those of a bishop thus limited and controlled? Who are wiser and more experienced than they? Who are better able to understand the nature of the fields to be supplied, and to judge more correctly of the capacity of the preachers, than those who make this their constant study? Who are more interested in the whole work, and freer from sectional feelings and prejudice than those who travel over the entire field, and feel closely allied to all? In short, give it to the preachers and people in general, or vest it in a local committee or conference, and the individual interests to be served will produce confiction of action—and confusion will be the result. Our itinerancy will cease to be any thing more than a mere name, without any of the glorious advantages which it now possesses. Vested in the hands of Methodist Episcopacy, it is safe and fair for all, endangering neither the liberties of the ministers, nor the prosperity, happiness, and peace of the laity;—securing to all the most unprecedented prosperity. Some object to a superintendent being appointed for life, but to us it presents most unquestionable advantages. Of course, the reader will bear in mind, that, from what has been already shown, a bishop's office is not perpetual unless he fills it to the satisfaction of the General Conference; for his authority is not by virtue of his ordination, but of the office to which he is ele-

vated by the suffrages of the conference, and consequently subject to its decisions. In the first place, it prevents the appointment of any, except tried men. For the conference feels the responsibility and importance of the office, and, consequently, great care is taken in the selection of a man to fill the position. Again, the man who is thus elevated to the office of a bishop, will make it his study to qualify himself for the discharge of his duty. Every year adds, both to his experience and knowledge, thus increasing his capacity for the office. It is in this way that statesmen gain their ability, wisely to legislate and to govern; and it is the only means of combining practical wisdom in the administrations of the church. Still another objection is raised against Methodist Bishops, because they decide law points. And we would enquire, who are better qualified to decide them. They have made the Discipline their constant study—have had opportunity of conversing with the wisest and best of men on the various points of the same, and are less liable to be influenced by sectional feelings, or petty interests, than any other officer of the church. Would you vest the power in an Annual Conference?—Would they be likely to decide such questions more correctly than a bishop? On intricate law points not one-half of the men, who compose such conference, would be able to give you an answer at all, and still, without a personal knowledge of the law, they become its expounders. Again, this plan subjects us to a variety of decisions on the same point, as it may come up on different occasions. But with the bishops, these decisions are necessarily uniform, and if any member of an Annual Conference feels himself aggrieved by such decision, he has a right to an appeal to the General Conference, where the case may be argued at length, and the combined wisdom of that body brought to bear in a decision. For our own part, as an individual, we can see nothing dangerous in

Methodist Episcopacy, but much which is commendable and of the highest utility; and we trust that the reader, whose mind heretofore has been biassed against it, will be enabled to take another view of the case. Finally we remark, this system has been more successful than all others put together in the propagation of the Gospel—there being more than one and three-fourths millions of Episcopal Methodists in the world, while there is less than one million of all others combined. This fact is ominous, when we take into account that all preach the same doctrine, and hold to the same great tenets; while, doubtless, the ministers of all have been equally pious and zealous.

We come now to notice the last point, which is one of some importance. We refer to ordination. Between the Episcopalians and the New Connection we see no great difficulty. They have always acknowledged our ordinations, and we have acknowledged theirs. The New Connection ordain alone to the office of presbyter, and consequently, are as high in orders as Episcopalians can claim. In the case of the Primitives there is a greater difference. However, we apprehend no great difficulty in so far reconciling those differences as to make them in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. We have thus noticed the leading differences between those denominations under consideration, and have set forth what, from our standpoint, we think to be the best and most feasible means of adjusting them. We say farther on this point, that an Union can never be effected unless each denomination can retain its great distinctive feature. That, with the New Connection and Primitives, is lay delegation. For this they have battled long and hard. To surrender it now, would be to ingloriously quit the field—surrendering all they have accomplished in the past. To suppose they will do this, is supposing more than will be realized—unless they become convinced that

lay delegation is a failure; and we apprehend that this will never happen. They may submit to a modification of it without any compromise of principle, and, doubtless, will be ready to do so, as far as can be shown to be for the better regulation of the church, but they will never surrender it.

On the other hand, Episcopacy and the General Conference plan of legislation are the distinctive features of the M. E. Church—these she cannot and will not abandon. She has contended long and earnestly for their maintenance, meeting with subtle opposition, and still she has triumphed. Every year has confirmed her in a belief of their utility, and we think we can safely say, that members and ministers have a stronger attachment to these peculiar institutions than they have had at any previous season. To surrender them now, would be to give up an institution uncondemned, for which she has laboured and toiled for near forty years. If these have got to be given up in order to Union, it would be quite as well to drop the subject at once. For, from what we know of the sentiment of the M. E. Church, both in the ministry and laity, we are convinced that she will surrender any thing else sooner than these. She may submit to their modification, but will, in our opinion, never surrender them. We think all other differences can be compromised without difficulty, but the peculiarities of these several churches must be retained. As to the name, there is no need of uneasiness on that score. A convention properly formed would soon settle on what is best to be done in that respect. If it is thought best to retain one of the old names, amalgamate the two, or take an entire new one, it can be done accordingly. Finally, as a means of getting properly at work in this matter we would recommend the visitation of each others conferences in order to bring us into closer proximity. A more extended acquaintance is desirable, and we should make use of every possible means for its cultivation. The exchange of pulpits would, no doubt, have a beneficial tendency, as a means of cultivating an acquaintance between the ministers and people of those

several denominations. We would further recommend the appointment of delegates by these denominations, to visit the conferences of each, and to bear proper expressions of the sentiments of each of the several denominations on this subject: If any two, or more, are favourable, then let the conference of each appoint delegates to a general convention, held at such time and place as may be fixed upon, which shall be empowered to strike out a plan of Union, which can then be submitted to the proper courts of the several denominations, for their ratification. We can see no difficulty in a committee, composed of a few wise and good men, chosen out of the several churches, devising a feasible plan of Union—one which the people of these several churches would sanction, if properly laid before them. We cannot make up our mind that the majority of Methodists are bigots, and consequently, cannot believe they would reject a fair and equitable plan by which all breaches may be healed, and much scandal wiped away. As the General Conference of the M. E. Church does not meet until one year from this summer, we would recommend, as a means of facilitating the object we have in view, the appointment of delegates to that body, by all Methodist bodies who feel favourable to Union. Let the ministers and members, who feel favourable to the movement, agitate, by all lawful means, this question—keeping the matter before the people until opinion is sufficiently revolutionized to admit of the compromise necessary. It is not only a laudable movement, but one that will recommend itself to every man's judgment. Then what if some difficulties do arise, and some clouds threaten,—feeling the importance of our cause we should go forward in the strength of grace. Unlawful and violent agitation will accomplish nothing. Let us have strong arguments couched in soft words, and strong efforts put forth in a quiet manner, and we shall soon see the accomplishment of our hearts desire. The basis which we have laid down may not be the only one on which Union can be accomplished, or even the best one that can be devised, but we have

given it as, in our opinion, the most feasible. If a better can be hit upon, we are ready to give it our support. What we have written on this subject has been dictated, by the kindest of feelings, and if any of our more prudent brethren shall pronounce us rash, we shall find no fault with them,—our only apology being the heart-rending divisions which exist in Methodism; and if this pamphlet serves as an instrument, by which to wake up a general desire for UNION, we shall feel amply repaid for all our trouble. We have *dared* to break the ice on this subject, and in doing so, we expect to arouse some opposition, especially from the ignorant and bigoted; but we have little fear of enlightened christians opposing the measure in the abstract. True, we may differ as to the proper manner of bringing about the desired object, but if we are actuated by a proper spirit we can overcome all these, and these denominations long separated in name and heart may be one.

#### ERRATA.

22 page, 4 line, for "*there* being an impediment," read "their being an impediment."

26 page, 7 line, for "unless *likewise* Christian men," read "unless like Christian men."

30 page, 12 line, for "all our church *politics*," read "all our church polities."

45 page, 13 line, for "to *elicit* the members," read "to elect the members."



