Methodist
Episcopal
church. South.
Committee on
Organization.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION,

PRESENTED TO THE

CONVENTION OF DELEGATES

FROM THE

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-WESTERN STATES,

MAY 14, 1845.

HENRY B. BASCOM, D. D., CHAIRMAN.

LOUISVILLE, KY.
PRENTICE AND WEISSINGER.
1845.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION.

The Committee appointed to enquire into the propriety and necessity of a separate organization of the Annual Conferences of the M. E. Church, in the slaveholding States, for the purpose of a separate General Conference connexion and jurisdiction, within the limits of said States and Conferences, having had the entire subject under careful and patient consideration, together with the numerous petitions, instructions, resolutions, and propositions for adjustment and compromise, referred to them by the convention—offer the following as their

REPORT:

In view of the extent to which the great questions in controversy, between the North and the South of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have been discussed, and by consequence must be understood by the parties more immediately interested; it has not been deemed necessary by the Committee to enter into any formal or elaborate examination of the general subject beyond a plain and comprehensive statement of the facts and principles involved, which may place it in the power of all concerned, to do justice to the convictions and motives of the Southern portion of the Church, in resisting the action of the late General Conference on the subject of Slavery, and its unconstitutional assumption of right and power in other respects; and also presenting in a form as brief and lucid as possible, some of the principal grounds of action, had in view by the South, in favoring the provisional plan of separation, adopted by the General Conference at its last session.

On the subject of the legitimate right, and the full and proper authority of the Convention to institute, determine, and finally act upon the enquiry, referred to the Committee, to deliberate and report upon, the Committee entertain no doubt whatever. Apart from every other consideration, which might be brought to bear upon the question, the General Conference of 1844, in the plan of jurisdictional separation adopted by that body, gave full and express authority to "the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States," to judge of the propriety, and decide upon the necessity of organizing a "separate ecclesiastical connexion," in the South. And not only did the General Conference invest this right in "the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States," without limitation or reserve, as to the *extent* of the investment, and *exclusively* with regard to every other division of the church, and all other branches or powers of the government, but left the method of official determination and the mode of action, in the exercise or assertion of the right, to the free and untrammelled discretion of the Conferences interested. These Conferences, thus accredited by the General Conference, to judge and act for themselves, confided the right and trust of decision and action, in the premises, to delegates regularly chosen by these bodies respectively, upon a uniform principle and fixed ratio of

representation, previously agreed upon by each, in constitutional session, and directed them to meet in general convention, in the city of Louisville, May, 1845, for this and other purposes, authorized by the General Conference, at the same time and in the same way. All the right and power, therefore, of the General Conference, in any way connected with the important decision in question, were duly and formally transferred to "the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States," and exclusively invested in them. And as this investment was obviously for the purpose, that such right and power, might be exercised by them, in any mode they might prefer, not inconsistent with the terms and conditions of the investment, the Delegates thus chosen, one hundred in number, and representing sixteen Annual Conferences, under commission of the General Conference, here and now assembled in Convention, have not only all the right and power of the General Conference, as transferred to "the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding states," but in addition, all the right and power of necessity inherent in these bodies, as constituent parties, giving birth and power to the General Conference itself, as the common Federal Council of the Church. It follows hence, that for all the purposes specified and understood, in this preliminary view of the subject, the Convention possesses all the right and power both of the General Conference and the sixteen "Annual Conferences in the slaveholding states," jointly and severally considered. The ecclesiastical and Conventional right therefore, of this body, to act in the premises, and act conclusively, irrespective of the whole Church —and all its powers of government beside, is clear and undoubted. As the *moral* right however, to act as proposed, in the General Conference plan of jurisdictional separation, rests upon entirely different grounds, and will perhaps be considered, as furnishing the only allowable warrant of action, notwithstanding constitutional right, it may be necessary at least to glance at the grave moral reasons, creating the necessity, the high moral compulsion, by which the Southern Conferences and Church, have been impelled to the course of action, which it is the intention of this Report to explain and vindicate, as not only right and reasonable, but indispensable to the character and welfare of Southern Methodism.

The preceding statements and reasoning, present no new principle or form of action in the history of the Church. Numerous instances might be cited, in the constitutional history of church polity, in which high moral necessity, in the absence of any recognized conventional right, has furnished the only and yet sufficient warrant for ecclesiastical movements and arrangements, precisely similar in character with that contemplated in the plan of a separate Southern Connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church, adopted by the late general Conference. Wesleyan Methodism, in all its phases and aspects, is a most pertinent illustration of the truth we assume, and the fitness and force of the example must go far to preclude the necessity of any other proof. It was on the specific basis of such necessity, without conventional right, that the great Wesleyan Connection arose in England. It was upon the same basis, as avowed by Wesley, that the American Connection became separate and independent, and this Connection again avows the same principle of action, in the separation and establishment of a Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, whose organiza-

tion took place by permission and direction of the same authority, under which this convention is now acting for a similar purpose.

Should it appear in the premises of the action proposed, that a high, moral, and religious duty is devolved upon the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the South—devolved upon us by the Great Head of the Church, and the Providential appointments of our social condition, which we cannot neglect without infidelity to a high moral trust, but which we cannot fulfil in connexional union with the Northern portion of the Church, under the same general Conference jurisdiction, owing to causes connected with the civil institutions of the country, and beyond the control of the Church, *then* a strong moral necessity is laid upon us, which assumes the commanding character of a positive duty, under sanction of Divine right, to dissolve the ties and bonds of a single general Conference jurisdiction, and in its place substitute one in the South, which will not obstruct us in the performance of duty, or prevent us from accomplishing the great objects of the Christian ministry and Church organization. From a careful survey of the entire field of facts and their relations—the whole range of cause and effect, as connected with the subject-matter of this report, it is confidently believed that the great warrant of *moral necessity*, not less than unquestionable ecclesiastical right, fully justifies this Convention in the position they are about to take, as a separate organic division of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by authority of its chief synod, "the delegates of all the several annual Conferences in General Conference assembled." One of the two main issues, which have decided the action of the Southern Conferences, relates, as all know, to the assumed right of the Church, to control the question of slavery, by means of the ordinary and fluctuating provisions of church legislation without reference to the superior control of State policy and civil law. From all the evidence accessible in the case, the great masses of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and South, present an irreconcilable opposition of conviction and feeling on the subject of slavery, so far as relates to the rights of the Church to interfere with the question—the one claiming unlimited right of interference to the full extent the Church may, at any time or from any cause, be concerned, and the other resisting alike the assumption or exercise of any such right, because, in nearly all the slaveholding States, such a course of action must bring the Church in direct conflict with the civil authority, to which the Church has pledged subjection and support in the most solemn and explicit forms, and from the obligations of which she cannot retreat without dishonoring her own laws, and the neglect and violation of some of the plain and most imperative requirements of Christianity. Under such circumstances of disagreement—in such a state of adverse conviction and feeling, on the part of the North and South of the Church, it is believed that the two great sections of the Church, thus situated, in relation to each other by causes beyond the control of either party, cannot remain together and successfully prosecute the high and common aims of the Christian ministry and Church organization, under the same General Conference jurisdiction. The manifest want of uniformity of opinion and harmony of co-operation, must always lead, as heretofore, to struggles and results directly inconsistent with the original intention of the Church, in establishing a common jurisdiction, to control all its general

interests. And should it appear that, by a division and future duality of such jurisdiction as authorized by the late general conference, the original purposes of the Church can better be accomplished, or rather, that they can be accomplished in no other way, how can the true and proper unity of the Church be maintained except by yielding to the necessity, and having a separate General Conference jurisdiction for each division. By the Southern portion of the Church generally, slavery is regarded as strictly a civil institution exclusively in custody of the civil power, and as a regulation of State beyond the reach of Church interference or control, except as civil law and right may be infringed by ecclesiastical assumption. By the Northern portion of the Church, individuals are held responsible for the alleged *injustice* and *evil* of relations and rights, created and protected by the organic and municipal laws of the Government and country, and which relations and rights, in more than two thirds of the slaveholding States, are not under individual control in any sense or to any extent.

Both portions of the church are presumed to act from principle and conviction, and cannot therefore recede; and *how* under *such* circumstances is it possible to prevent the most fearful disunion, with all the attendant evils of contention and strife, except by allowing each section a separate and independent jurisdiction, the same in character and purpose with the one to which both have hitherto been subject. What fact, truth, or principle, not merely of human origin, and therefore of doubtful authority, can be urged, as interposing any reasonable obstacle to a change of jurisdiction, merely *modal* in character, and simply designed to adapt a single principle of Church government, not pretended to be of divine obligation or scripture origin, to the character and features of the civil government of the country? Nothing essential to Church organization—nothing essentially distinctive of Methodism—even American Methodism, is proposed to be disturbed or even touched, by the arrangement. It is a simple division of general jurisdiction, for strong moral reasons, arising out of the civil relations and position of the parties, intended to accomplish for both, what it is demonstrated by experiment, cannot be accomplished by one common jurisdiction, as now constituted, and should therefore, under the stress of such moral necessity, be attempted in some other way.

The question of slavery, more or less intimately interwoven with the interests and destiny of nine millions of human beings, in the U. States, is certainly of sufficient importance, coming up as it has, in the recent history of the M. E. Church, and as it does in the deliberations of this convention, to authorize any merely *modal* or even organic changes in the government of the church, should it appear obvious, that the original and avowed purposes of the church, will be more effectively secured and promoted by the change proposed, than by continuing the present or former system. The evi dence before the Committee, establishes the fact in the clearest manner possible, that throughout the southern Conferences, the ministry and membership of the church, amounting to nearly 500,000, in the proportion of about 95 in the 100, deem a division of jurisdiction, indispensable to the welfare of the church, in the southern and southwestern Conferences of the slaveholding states; and this fact alone, must go far to establish the *right*, while it demonstrates the *necessity* of the separate jurisdiction, contemplated in the plan of the General Conference and adopted by that body in view of such ne-

cessity, as likely to exist. The interests of State, civil law, and public opinion, in the South, imperiously require, that the Southern portion of the church, shall have no part in the *discussion* and agitation of this subject in the chief councils of the Church. In this opinion, nearly universal in the South, we *concur*.

Christ and his Apostles—Christianity and its inspired and early teachers, found slavery in its most offensive and aggravated forms, as a civil institution, diffused and existing throughout nearly the entire field of their ministrations and influence; and yet, in the New Testament and earlier records of the Church, we have no legislation—no interference—no denunciation with regard to it, not even remonstrance against it. They found it wrought up and vitally intermingled with the whole machinery of civil government and order of society—so implicated with "the powers that be," that infinite wisdom, and the early pastoral guides of the Church, saw just reason why the Church should not interfere beyond a plain and urgent enforcement of the various duties growing out of the peculiar relation of master and slave, leaving *the relation* itself, as a civil arrangement, untouched and unaffected, except so far as it seems obviously to have been the Divine purpose to remove every form and degree of wrong and evil connected with the institutions of human government, by a faithful inculcation of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, without meddling in any way with the civil polity of the countries into which it was introduced. A course precisely similar to this, the example of which should have been more attractive, was pursued by the great founder of Methodism, in all slaveholding countries in which he established societies. Mr. Wesley never deemed it proper to have any rule, law, or regulation on the subject of slavery, either in the United States, the West Indies, or elsewhere. The effects of the early and unfortunate attempts of the Methodist Church to meddle and interfere, in the *legislation* and *practice* of government and discipline, with the institution of slavery in the United States, are too well known to require comment. Among the more immediate results of this shortsighted, disastrous imprudence, especially from 1780 to 1804, may be mentioned the watchful jealousy of civil government, and the loss of public confidence throughout a very large and influential portion of the whole Southern community. These, and similar developements, led the Church, by the most careful and considerate steps, to the adoption, gradually, of a medium compromise course of legislation on the subject, until the law of slavery, as it now exists in the *letter* of discipline, became, by the last material act of legislation in 1816, the great compromise bond of union between the North and the South on the subject of slavery. The whole law of the Church, all there is in the statute-book to govern North and South on this subject, is the following: First: The general rule which simply prohibits "the buying or selling of men, women, or children, with an *intention to enslave them.*" Second: "No slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our church hereafter, where the laws of the State in which he lives admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom. When any traveling preacher becomes an owner of a slave, or slaves, by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our Church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the State in which he lives."

Here is the law, the *whole*, the *only* law of the church, containing first, a *prohibition*, and second a *grant*. The prohibition is, that no member or minister of the church, is allowed to purchase or sell a human being, who is to be *enslaved*, or *reduced to a state of slavery*, by such purchase or sale. And further, that no minister, in *any of the grades* of ministerial office, or other person, having official standing in the church, can, if he be the owner of a slave, be allowed to sustain such official relation to the church, unless he shall legally provide for the emancipation of such slave or slaves, if the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of legal emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom. Such is the plain *prohibition* of law, binding upon all. The *grant* of the law, however, is equally plain and unquestionable. It is, that persons *may* purchase or sell men, women, or children, provided such purchase or sale does not involve the fact or intention of enslaving them, or of *reducing the subjects* of such purchase or sale *to a state of slavery*. The intention of the law no doubt is, that this may be done from motives of humanity, and not by any means for the purposes of gain. But further, the law distinctly provides, that every minister, *in whatever grade of office*, and every person having *official standing of any kind*, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, being the owner or owners of slave property, shall be protected against any forfeiture of right, on this account, where the laws of the State do not admit of legal emancipation, and allow the liberated slave to enjoy freedom in the State in which he is emancipated. Here is the plain *grant of law* to which we allude. From the first agitation of the subject of slavery in the church, the Northern portion of it has been disposed to insist upon further *prohibitory* enactments. The South, meanwhile, has always shown itself ready to go as far, by way of prohibition, as the law in question implies, but has uniformly resisted any attempt to impair Southern rights under protection of the grant of law to which we have asked attention. Under such circumstances of disagreement and difficulty, the conventional and legislative adjustment of the question, as found in the General Rule, but especially tenth section of the discipline, was brought about, and has always been regarded in the South as a great compromise arrangement, without strict adherence to which, the North and the South could not remain together under the same general jurisdiction. That we have not mistaken the character of the law, or misconstrued the intention and purposes of its enactment, at different times, we think entirely demonstrable from the whole history both of the legislation of the church and the judicial and executive administration of the Government. The full force and bearing of the law, however, were more distinctly brought to view, and authoritatively asserted, by the General Conference of 1840, after the most careful examination of the whole subject, and the judicial determination of that body, connected with the language of the discipline just quoted, gives in still clearer light *the true and only law of the Church* on the subject of slavery. After deciding various other principles and positions incidental to the main question, the decision is summed up in the following words: "While the general rule (or law) on the subject of slavery, relating to those States whose laws admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, should be firmly and constantly enforced, the exception to the general rule (or law) applying to those States where

emancipation, as defined above, is *not practicable*, should be recognized and protected with equal firmness and impartiality; therefore—

Resolved, By the several annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, that under the provisional exception of the general rule (or law) of the Church, on the subject of slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property, in States or Territories where the laws do not admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, constitutes *no legal barrier* to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office, known in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating *any forfeiture* of right, in view of such election and ordination." This decision of the General Conference was not objected to or dissented from by a single member of that body. It was the unanimous voice of the great representative and judicial council of the Church then acting in the character of a high court of appeals for the decision of an important legal question. It will be perceived how strikingly the language of this decision accords with *both* the features of the law of slavery which we have thought it important to notice, the *prohibition* and the *grant* of law in the case; what may *not* be done as the general rule, and at the same time what *may be done*, under the provisional exception to the general law, without forfeiture of right of any kind. It is also worthy of particular notice, that beside the plain assurance of the original law, that where emancipation is not legally practicable, and the emancipated slave allowed to enjoy freedom, or where it is practicable to emancipate but the emancipated slave cannot enjoy freedom, emancipation is not required of any owner of slaves in the Methodist Episcopal Church, from the lowest officer up to the Bishop, but the rights of all thus circumstanced are protected and secured, notwithstanding their connection with slavery. Beside this, the full and elaborate decision of the General Conference as a grave and formal adjudication had upon all the issues involved in the question, published to all who were in or might be disposed to enter the Church, that the law of slavery applied to States where emancipation is impracticable, and the freed slave not allowed to enjoy freedom, this clear and unambiguous decision, by the highest authority of the Church, *leaves* the owner of slaves upon the ground—upon a basis of the most perfect equality with *other* ministers of the Church, having no connection with slavery. Such, then, is the law; such its construction; such the official and solemn pledge of the Church. And these had, to a great extent, restored the lost confidence and allayed the jealous apprehensions of the South, in relation to the purposes of the Church respecting slavery. There was in the South no disposition to disturb, discuss, or in any way agitate the subject. The law was not objected to or complained of, but was regarded as a settled compromise between the parties, a medium arrangement on the ground of mutual concession, well calculated to secure and promote the best interests of the Church North and South.

That this law, this great compromise conservative arrangement, which had been looked to as the only reliable bond of jurisdictional union between the North and the South for nearly half a century, was practically disregarded and abandoned by the last General Conference, in the memorable cases of Harding and Andrew, both by judicial construction and virtual legislation, manifestly inconsistent with its provisions and purposes,

and subversive of the great objects of its enactment, has been too fearfully demonstrated by various forms of proof, to require more than a brief notice in this report. The actual position of the Church was suddenly reversed and its long established policy entirely changed. The whole law of the Church and the most important adjudications had upon it, were treated as null and obsolete, and that body proceeded to a claim of right and course of action amounting to a virtual repeal of all law, and new and capricious legislation on the most difficult and delicate question ever introduced into the councils of the Church or named upon its statute book.

By no fair construction of the law of slavery as given above, could the Church be brought in conflict with civil legislation on the subject. It is true, as demanded by the convictions and opinions of the Church, testimony was borne against the evil of slavery, but it was done without conflicting with the polity and laws of any portion of the country. No law, for example, affected the lay-membership of the Church with regard to slaveholding; the Church gave its full permission that the private members of the Church might own and hold slaves at discretion; and the inference is indubitable, that the Church did not consider simple slaveholding *as a moral evil*, personally attaching to the mere fact of being the owner or holder of slaves. The evil charged upon slavery must of necessity have been understood of other aspects of the subject, and could not imply moral obliquity, without impeaching the integrity and virtue of the Church. Moreover, where the laws precluded emancipation, the ministry were subjected to no disabilities of any kind, and the requirements of the Church, in relation to slavery, were not at least in any thing like direct conflict with civil law. In contravention, however, of the plain and long established law of the Church, the action of the General Conference of 1844, in the well known instances cited, brought the Church into a state of direct and violent antagonism with the civil authority and the rights of citizenship, throughout all the slaveholding States. This was not done by the repeal of existing law, or additional legislation by direct enactment, but in a much more dangerous form, by the simple process of resolution by an irresponsible majority, requiring Southern ministers as slaveholders, in order to Church eligibility and equality of right with non-slaveholding ministers of the Church, to do what cannot be done without a violation of the laws of the States in which they reside, and is not required or contemplated, but expressly excepted and even provided against by the law of the Church.

It will thus appear that the entire action of the General Conference on the subject of slavery, was in direct conflict with the law, both of the Church and the land, and could not have been submitted to by the South, without the most serious detriment to the interests of the Church. The action in the instance of Bishop Andrew, was in the strongest and most exceptionable sense, extra-judicial. It was not pretended that Bishop Andrew had violated any law of the Church; so far from this, the only law applicable to the case, gave, as we have seen, ample and explicit assurance of protection. So to construe law, or so to proceed to act without reference to law, as to subtract from it its whole protective power, and deprive it of all its conservative tendencies in the system, is one of the most dangerous forms of legal injustice, and as a principle of action, must be considered as subversive of all order and government. The late General Conference required of Bishop

Andrew, the same being equally true in the case of Harding, as the condition of his being acceptable to the Church, the surrender of rights secured to him, both by civil and ecclesiastical law. The purposes of law were contravened and destroyed, and its prerogative and place usurped by mere opinion.

The requisition in the case was not only extra-judicial, being made in the absence of any thing like law authorizing the measure, but being made at the same time against law, it was usurpation; and so far as the proceeding complained of is intended to establish a principle of action with regard to the future, it gives to the General Conference all the attributes of a despotism, claiming the right to govern *without*, *above*, and *against law*. The doctrine avowed at the late General Conference, and practically endorsed by the majority, that that body may, by simple resolution, advisory, punitive, or declaratory, repeal an existing law in relation to a particular case, leaving it in full force with regard to other cases—or may enact a new and different law, and apply it judicially to the individual case, which led to the enactment, and all in a moment, by a single elevation of the hand, is a position—a doctrine so utterly revolutionary and disorganizing, as to place in jeopardy at once, both the interests and reputation of the Church. The action in the case of Bishop Andrew, not only assumed the character, and usurped the place of law, but was clearly an instance of *ex post facto* legislation, by making that an offence after the act, which was not such before. The conduct charged as an offence, was at the time, and continues to be, under the full protection of a well understood, and standing law of the Church, and yet this conduct was made criminal, and punishable by the retrospective action of the Conference to which we allude. The officially expressed will of the General Conference intended to govern and circumscribe the conduct of Bishop Andrew, without reference to existing law, and indeed contrary to it, was made the rule of action, and he found guilty of its violation, by acts done before he was made acquainted with it. The conduct charged, was in perfect consistency with the law of the Church, and could only be wrought into an offence by the *expost facto* bearing of the after action of the General Conference.

Bishop Andrew became the ower of slave property, involuntarily, several years before his marriage, and as the *fact*, and not the *extent* of his connection with slavery constituted his offence, it follows, that for a relation in which he was placed by the action of others, and the operation of civil law, and in which, as a citizen of Georgia, he was compelled to remain, or be brought in conflict with the laws of the State, he *was*, in violation of the pledge of public law, as we have shown, arrested and punished by the General Conference. That body by direct requirement, such at least by implication, commanded him to free his slaves, or suffer official degradation. The law of Georgia required him to hold his slaves, or transfer them to he held as such by others, under heavy and painful penalties to master and slave. To avoid ecclesiastical punishment and disability, the Church required him either to leave the State of his residence, or violate its laws. In this way, taking the judicial decision in Harding's case, and the anomylous action in Bishop Andrew's, the Church is placed in most offensive conflict with the civil authority of the State. Can any country or government safely allow the Church to enforce disobedience to civil law, as a Christian duty?

If such attempts are made to subordinate the civil interests of the State, to the schemes and purposes of Church innovation, prompted and sustained by the bigotry and fanaticism of large masses of ignorant and misguided zealots engaged in the conflict in the name of God and conscience, and for the ostensible purposes of religious reform, what can be the stability of civil government, or the hopes of those seeking its protection? And what, we ask, must be the interest of the South, in connection with such movements?

In the instance of slavery inthis country, it is but too well known, that such antagonism as is indicated by the preceding facts and developments between the purposes of the Church and the policy of the state, must result in the most disastrous consequences to both. The slavery of the Southern States, can never be reduced in amount or mitigated in form by such a state of things. The Southern States have the sole control of the question, under the authority and by contract of the Federal Constitution, and all hope of removing the evil of slavery, without destroying the National compact and the union of the States, must connect with the individual sovereignty of the Southern States, as parties to the Federal compact, and the independent policy of each State in relation to slavery, as likely to be influenced by moral and political reasons and motives, brought to bear, by proper means and methods, upon the understanding and moral sense of the southern people. All trespass upon right, whether as it regards, the rights of property or of character—every thing like aggression, mere denunciation or abuse, must of necessity tend to provoke further resistance on the part of the South, and lessen the influence the North might otherwise have upon the great mass of the Southern people, in relation to this great and exciting interest. The true character and actual relations of slavery in the United States, are *so predominantly civil and political*, that any attempt to treat the subject or control the question, upon purely moral and eclesiastical grounds, can never exert any salutary influence South, except in so far as the moral and ecclesiastical shall be found strictly subordinate to the civil and political. This mode of appeal it is believed, will never satisfy the North. The whole Northern portion of the Church speaking through their guides and leaders is manifesting an increasing disposition, to form issues upon the subject, so utterly inconsistent with the rights and peace of the slaveholding States, that by how far the M. E. Church, in the South, may contribute to the bringing about of such a state of things, or may fail to resist it, the influence of Methodism must be depressed, and the interests of the Church suffer. In addition then, to the fact, that we have already received an amount of injury, beyond what we can bear, except under a separate organization, we have the strongest grounds of apprehension, that unless we place ourselves in a state of defence and prepare for independent action, under the distinct jurisdiction we are now authorized by the General Conference to resolve upon, and organize, we shall soon find ourselves so completely subjected to the adverse views and policy of the Northern majority, as to be left without right or remedy, except as a mere secession from the Church. Now, the case is entirely different, as we propose to do nothing, not authorized in the General Conference plan of separation, either expressly, or by necessary implication. The general view thus far taken of the subject, is intended to show, that "the Annual

Conferences in the slaveholding States" embracing the entire Church South, have found themselves placed in circumstances, by the action of the General Conference in May last, which according to the declaration of the Southern Delegates, at the time, render it impracticable to accomplish the objects of the Christian Ministry and Church organization, under the present system of General Conference control, and showing by the most clear and conclusive evidence that there exists the most urgent necessity for the 'separate ecclesiastical connection,' constitutionally provided for by the General Conference upon the basis of the Declaration, just adverted to. At the date of the Declaration, the Southern Delegates were fully convinced that the frequent and exciting agitation and action in that body on the subject of slavery and abolition as in Harding's case and especially the proceedings in the case of Bishop Andrew, each being regarded as but a practical exposition of the principles of the Majority—rendered a *separate organization* indispensable to the success of Methodism in the South. The truth of the Declaration, so far from being called in question, by the Majority, was promptly conceded in the immediate action the Conference had upon it, assigning the Declaration, as the sole ground or reason of the action, which terminated in the adoption of the plan of separation, under which we are now acting, as a Convention, and from the spirit and intention of which, it is believed to be the purpose of the Convention not to depart, in any of its deliberations or final acts. Although the action of this General Conference on the subject of slavery, and the relative adverse position of the parties North and South, together with the irritating and exasperating evils of constant agitation and frequent attempts at legislation, are made in the Declaration, the grounds of the avowal, that a separate organization was necessary to the success of the Ministry in the slaveholding States, it was by no means intended to convey the idea, or make the impression, that no other causes existed rendering a separate organization proper and necessary, but as the action of the Conference on the subject of slavery, was certain to involve the Church in the South, in immediate and alarming difficulty, and it was believed that this could be so shown to the Majority, as to induce them to consent to some course of action, in remedy of the evil, the complaint of the Declaration, was confined to the single topic of slavery. It will be perceived that the case of Bishop Andrew, although prominently introduced, is not relied upon as exclusively furnishing the data of this conclusion at which we have arrived. The entire action of the General Conference so frequently brought to view, and which is made the ground of dissent and action, both in the Protest and Declaration of the Southern Delegates must be understood as belonging to the premises and language employed as including all the principles avowed, as well as the action had by the late General Conference on the subject of slavery. The attempt to disclaim the judicial character of the action ,in Bishop Andrew's case, and show it to be merely advisory cannot affect the preceding reasoning, for first; the disclaimer is as equivocal in character, as the original action: and secondly; the reasoning in support of the disclaimer, negatives the supposition of mere advice, because it involves issues coming legitimately within the province of judicial process and legal determination, and thirdly; Bishop Andrew is by the explanation of the disclaimer itself, held as responsible for his conduct, in view the alleged advice, as he could have been held by the original action without

the explanation. While therefore, the explanation giving the original action an *advisory* character notwithstanding the inconsistency involved, fully protects Bishops Soule and Andrew from even the shadow of blame in the course they have pursued, the entire action in the case, and especially when connected with the case of Harding, as alluded to in the declaration, fully sustains the general view of the subject we have taken in this report. The Southern delegates at the General Conference, in presenting to that body their declaration and protest, acted, and they continue to act, as the representatives of the South, under the full conviction that the principles and policy avowed by the Northern majority, are such as to render their *public* and *practical renunciation* by the Southern Methodist Ministry and people, necessary to the safety, not less than success of the Church in the South.

Other views of the subject, however, must claim a share of our attention. Among the many weighty reasons which influence the Southern Conferences in seeking to be released from the jurisdiction of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church as now constituted, are the novel and as we think dangerous doctrines, practically avowed and endorsed by that body and the northern portion of the Church generally, with regard to the *constitution* of the Church, and the constitutional rights and powers respectively, of the Episcopacy and the General Conference. In relation to the first it is confidently, although most unaccountably maintained that the six short *Restrictive Rules* which were adopted in 1808, and first became obligatory, as an amendment to the constitution, in 1812, are in fact the *true* and *only* constitution of the Church. This single position should it become an established principle of action, to the extent it found favor with the last General Conference, must subvert the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It must be seen at once, that the position leaves many of the organic laws and most important institutions of the church entirely unprotected and at the mercy of a mere and ever fluctuating majority of the General Conference. Episcopacy, for example, although protected in the abstract, in general terms, may be entirely superceded or destroyed by the simple omission to elect or consecrate Bishops, neither of which is provided for in the Restrictive Articles. The whole itinerant system, except general superintendency, is without protection in the Restrictive Rules; and there is nothing in them preventing the Episcopacy from restricting their superintendency to *local* and *settled* Pastors, rather than a traveling ministry, and thus destroying the most distinctive feature of Wesleyan Methodism. So far as the Restrictive Rules are concerned, the Annual Conferences are without protection, and might also be destroyed by the General Conference at any time. If the new constitutional theory be correct, class leaders and private members, are as eligible upon the basis of the constitution, to a seat in the General Conference, as any Minister of the Church. Societies too instead of Annual Conferences, may elect delegates, and may elect *laymen* instead of ministers, or local instead of traveling ministers. Very few indeed of the more fundamental and distinguishing elements of Methodism, deeply and imperishably imbedded in the affection and veneration of the Church, and vital to its very existence, are even alluded to in the Restrictive Articles. This theory assumes the self-refuted absurdity, that the General Conference is in fact the govern-

ment of the Church, if not the Church itself. With no other constitution than these mere restrictions upon the powers and rights of the General Conference, the government and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church as a system of organized laws and well adjusted instrumentalities for the spread of the Gospel, and the diffusion of piety, and whose living principles of energy and action, have so long commanded the admiration of the world, would soon cease even to exist. The startling assumption that a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church instead of holding office under the constitution, and by tenure of law, and the faithful performance of duty, is nothing in his character of Bishop, but a mere officer at will, of the General Conference, and may accordingly be deposed at any time, with or without cause, accusation, proof, or form of trial, as a dominant majority may capriciously elect, or party interest suggest—and that the General Conference may do, by right, whatever is not prohibited by the Restrictive Rules, and with this single exception, possesses power, "supreme and all-controlling," and this, in all the possible forms of its manifestation legislative, judicial, and executive—the same men claiming to be at the same time both the fountain and functionaries of all the powers of government, which powers thus mingled and concentrated into a common force may at any time be employed, at the prompting of their own interest, caprice or ambition. Such wild and revolutionary assumptions, so unlike the Faith and Discipline of Methodism, as we have been taught them, we are compelled to regard as fraught with mischief and ruin to the best interests of the church, and as furnishing a strong additional reason why we should avail ourselves of the warrant we now have, but may never again obtain, from the General Conference, to "establish an ecclesiastical connexion," embracing only the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States.

Without intending anything more than a general specification of the disabilities, under which the Southern part of the Church labors, in view of existing difficulties, and must continue to do so until they are removed, we must not omit to state, that should we submit to the action of the late General Conference, and decline a separate organization, it would be to place, and finally confirm the whole Southern ministry in the relation of an *inferior caste*, the effect of which, in spite of all effort to the contrary, would be such a relation, if not (as we think) real degradation of the ministry as to destroy its influence to a great—a most fearful extent throughout the South. A practical proscription under show of legal right, has long been exercised towards the South, with regard to the higher offices of the Church, especially the Episcopacy. To this, however, the South submitted with patient endurance, and was willing further to submit in order to maintain the peace and unity of the Church, while the *principle* involved, was disavowed, and dicided to be unjust as by the decision of the General Conference in 1840. But when in 1844, the General Conference declared by their action, without the forms of legislative or judicial process, that the mere providential ownership of slave property, in a State where emancipation is legally prohibited under all circumstances, and can only be effected by special legislative enactment, was hereafter to operate as a forfeiture of right in all similar cases, the law of the Church and the decision of the preceding General Conference to the contrary notwithstanding, the Southern minis-

try were compelled to realize, that they were deliberately fixed, by the brand of common shame, in the degrading relation of standing inferiority to ministers, not actually, nor yet liable to be, connected with slavery, and that they were published to the Church and the world as belonging to a *caste* in the ministry, from which the higher offices of the Church could never be selected.

To submit, under such circumstances, would have been a practical, a most humiliating recognition of the *inferiority of caste*, attempted to be fixed upon us by the Northern majority, and would have justly authorized the inference of a want of conscious integrity and self-respect, well calculated to destroy both the reputation and influence of the ministry in all the slave-holding States. It may be no virtue to avow it, but we confess we have no humility courting the grace of such a baptism. The higher objects, therefore, of the Christian Ministry, not less than conscious right and self-respect, demanded resistance on the part of the Southern Ministry and church, and these unite with other reasons, in vindicating the plea of necessity, upon which the meeting and action of this Convention are based, with the consent and approval of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The variety of interests involved, renders it necessary that the brief view of the subject we are allowed to take, be varied accordingly.

Unless the Southern Conferences organize as proposed, it is morally certain, in view of the evidence before the Committee, that the Gospel now regularly and successfully dispensed by the ministers of these Conferences to about a million of slaves, in their various fields of missionary enterprise and pastoral charge, must, to a great extent, be withheld from them, and immense masses of this unfortunate class of our fellow beings be left to perish, as the result of Church interference with the civil affairs and relations of the country.

The Committee are compelled to believe, that the mere division of jurisdiction, as authorized by the General Conference, cannot affect either the moral or legal unity of the great American family of Christians, known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, and this opinion is concurred in by the ablest jurists of the country. We do nothing but what we are *expressly authorized to do* by the supreme, or rather highest legislative power of the Church. Would the Church authorize us to do wrong? The division relates only to the power of general jurisdiction, which it is not proposed to destroy or even reduce, but simply to invest it in two great organs of Church action and control, instead of one as at present. Such a change in the present system of general control, cannot disturb the moral unity of the Church, for it is strictly an *agreed modification* of General Conference jurisdiction, and such agreement and consent of parties must preclude the idea of disunion. In view of *what* is the alleged disunion predicated? Is the purpose and act of becoming a separate organization proof of disunion or want of proper Church unity? This cannot be urged with any show of consistency, inasmuch as "the several Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled," that is to say, the Church through only its constitutional organ of action, on all subjects involving the power of legislation, not only agreed to the separate organization South, but made full constitutional provision for carrying it into effect. It is a separation by consent of parties, under the highest authority of the Church. Is it intended to

maintain that the unity of the Church depends upon the modal uniformity of the jurisdiction in question? If this be so, the Methodist Episcopal Church has lost its unity at several different times. The general jurisdiction of the Church has undergone modifications, at several different times, not less vital, if not greatly more so, than the one now proposed. The high conventional powers, of which we are so often reminded, exercised in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, were in the hands of a Conference of unordained lay preachers, under the sole superintendance of an appointee of Mr. Wesley. This was the first General Confer ence type and original form of the jurisdiction in question. The jurisdictional power now proposed by the General Conference, was for years exercised by small annual Conferences, without any defined boundaries, and acting separately on all measures proposed for their determination. This general power of jurisdiction next passed into the hands of the Bishops' Council, consisting of some ten persons, where it remained for a term of years. Next it passed into the hands of the whole itinerant Ministry, in full connection, and was exercised by them, in collective action, as a General Conference of the whole body, met together at the same time. The power was afterwards vested in the whole body of travelling Elders, and from thence finally passed into the hands of Delegates, elected by the annual Conferences, to meet and act quadrennially as a General Conference. under constitutional restrictihns and limitations. Here are several successive reorganizations of General Conference jurisdiction, each involving a much more material change than that contemplated in the General Conference plan, by authority of which, this Convention is about to erect the 16 annual Conferences in the slaveholding States into a separate organization. We change no principle in the existing theory of General Conference jurisdiction. We distinctly recognize the jurisdiction of a delegated General Conference, receiving its appointment and authority from the whole constituency of annual Conferences. The only change in fact or in form, will be, that the Delegates of the "annual Conferences in the slaveholding States," as authorized in the plan of separation, will meet in one General Conference assembly of their own, and act in behalf only of their own constituency, and in the regulation of their own affairs, consistently with the good faith and fealty they owe the authority and laws of the several States in which they reside, without interfering with affairs beyond their jurisdiction, or suffering foreign interference with their own. And in proceeding to do this, we have all the authority it was in the power of Methodist E. Church to confer. We have also further example and precedent in the history of Methodism to show that there is nothing irregular or inconsistent with Church order or unity in the separation proposed. The great Wesleyan Methodist family, everywhere one in faith and practice, already exists under several distinct and unconnected jurisdictions—there is no jurisdictional or connectional union between them; and yet it has never been pretended, that these several distinct organizations were in any sense inconsistent with church unity. If the Southern conferences proceed then, to the establishment of another distinct jurisdiction, without any change of doctrine or discipline, except in matters necessary to the mere economical adjustment of the system, will it furnish any reason for supposing that the real unity of the church is affected by what all must perceive to be a simple division of jurisdiction? When

the Conferences in the slaveholding States are separately organised as a distinct ecclesiastical connection, they will only be what the General Conference authorised them to be. Can this be irregular or subversive of church unity? Acting under the provisional plan of separation they must, although a separate organization, remain in essential union with, and be part and parcel of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in every scriptural and moral view of the subject, for what they do is with the full consent, and has the official sanction of the Church as represented in the General Conference. The jurisdiction we are about to establish and assert as separate and independent is expressly declined and ceded by the General Conference as originally its own, to the Southern conferences, for the specific purpose of being established and asserted in the manner proposed. All idea of secession, or an organization alien in right or relation to the Methodist Episcopal Church, is forever precluded by the terms and conditions of the authorised plan of separation. In whatever sense we are *separatists* or *seceders*, we are such by authority—the *highest* authority of the Methodist Episcopal Church. To whatever extent or in whatever aspect we are not true and faithful ministers and members of that church, such delinquency or misfortune is authenticated by her act and approval, and she declares us to be "without blame." "Ministers of every grade and office in the M. E. Church, may, as they prefer, without blame, attach themselves to the Church South." Bishops, elders, and deacons come into the Southern organization at their own election, under permission from the General Conference, not only accredited as ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but with credentials *limiting* the exercise of their functions *within the Methodist Episcopal Church.* Is it conceivable that the General Conference would so act and hold such language in relation to an ecclesiastical connection which was to be regarded as a secession from the Church? Does not such act and language, and the whole plan of separation, rather show that, as the South had asked, so the General Conference intended to authorise, a simple division of its own jurisdiction, and nothing more?

All idea of secession or schism or loss of right or title, as ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, being precluded by the specific grant or authority under which we act, as well as for other reasons assigned, many considerations might be urged, strongly suggesting the *fitness* and *propriety* of the separate jurisdiction contemplated, rendered *necessary*, as we have seen, upon *other* and *different* grounds; and among these the increased value of the representative principle likely to be secured by the change, is by no means unworthy of notice. At the first representative General Conference, thirty-three years ago, each delegate represented five travelling ministers and about two thousand members, and the body was of convenient size for the transaction of business. At the late general Conference each delegate was the representative of twenty-one ministers and more than five thousand members, and the body was inconveniently large for the purpose of deliberation and action. Should the number of delegates in the general Conference be increased with the probable growth of the Church, the body will soon become utterly unwieldy. Should the number be reduced, while the ministry and membership are multiplying, the representative principle would become to be little more than nominal, and in the same proportion, without practical value. Be-

side that the proposed reorganization of jurisdiction will remedy this evil, at least to a great extent, it will result in the saving of much time and expense and useful services to the Church, connected with the travel and protracted sessions of the general Conference, not only as it regards the delegates, but also the bench of Bishops, whose general oversight might become much more minute and pastoral, in its character, by means of such an arrangement. When, in 1808, the annual Conferences resolved upon changing the form of General Conference jurisdiction, the precise reasons we have just noticed, were deemed sufficient ground and motive for the change introduced, and as we are seeking only a similar change of jurisdiction, although for other purposes as well as this, the facts to which we ask attention, are certainly worthy of being taken into the estimate of advantages likely to result from a separate and independent organization, especially as the ministry and membership, since 1808, have increased *full seven hundred per cent.*, and should they continue to increase, in something like the same ratio, for thirty years to come, under the present system of General Conference jurisdiction, some such change as that authorized by the late General Conference must be resorted to, or the Church resign itself to the virtual extinction of the representative principle, as an important element of government action.

In establishing a separate jurisdiction as before defined and explained, so far from affecting the moral oneness and integrity of the great Methodist body in America, the effect will be to secure a very different result. In resolving upon a separate Connection, as we are about to do, the one great and controlling motive is to restore and perpetuate the peace and unity of the Church. At present we have neither, nor are we likely to have should the Southern and Northern Conferences remain in connectional relation, as heretofore. Inferring effects from causes known to be in existence and active operation, agitation on the subject of slavery is certain to continue, and frequent action in the general Conference is equally certain, and the result, as heretofore, will be excitement and discontent, aggression and resistance. Should the South retire and decline all further conflict, by the erection of the Southern Conferences into a separate jurisdiction, as authorized by the General Conference plan, agitation in the Church cannot be brought in contact with the South, and the former irritation and evils of the controversy must, to a great extent, cease, or at any rate so lose their disturbing force as to become comparatively harmless. Should the Northern Church continue to discuss and agitate, it will be within their own borders and among themselves, and the evil effects upon the South must, to say the least, be greatly lessened. At present, the consolidation of all the annual Conferences, under the jurisdictional control of one General Conference, always giving a decided Northern majority, places it in the power of that majority to manage and control the interests of the Church, in the slaveholding States, as they see proper, and we have no means of protection against the evils certain to be inflicted upon us, if we judge the future from the past. The whole power of legislation is in the general Conference, and as that body is now constituted, the annual Conferences of the South are perfectly powerless in the resistance of wrong, and have no alternative left them but unconditional submission. And such submision, to the views and action of the Northern

majority on the subject of slavery, it is now demonstrated must bring disaster and ruin upon Southern Methodism, by rendering the Church an object of distrust on the part of the State. In this way, the assumed *conservative power* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with regard to the *civil union* of the States, is to a great extent destroyed, and we are compelled to believe that it is the *interest* and becomes the *duty* of the Church in the South to seek to exert *such conservative influence* in some *other* form; and after the most mature deliberation and careful examination of the whole subject, we know of nothing so likely to effect the object, as the jurisdictional separation of the great Church parties, unfortunately involved in a religious and ecclesiastical controversy about an affair of State—a question of civil policy, over which the Church has no control, and with which it is believed, she has no right to interfere. Among the nearly five hundred thousand ministers and members of the Conferences represented in this Convention, we do not know *one* not *deeply* and *intensely* interested in the *safety* and *perpetuity* of the *National Union*, nor can we for a moment hesitate *to pledge them all*, against *any* course of *action* or *policy*, not calculated, in their judgment, *to render that union as immortal as the hopes of patriotism would have it to be!*

Before closing the summary view of the whole subject taken in this report, we cannot refrain from a brief notice of the relations and interests of Southern border Conferences. These, it must be obvious, are materially different from those of the more Southern Conferences. They do not, for the present, feel the pressure of the strong necessity impelling the South proper, to immediate separation. They are, however, involved with regard to the subject matter of the controversy, and committed to well defined principles, in the same way, and to the same extent, with the most Southern Conferences. They have with almost perfect unanimity by public official acts, protested against the entire action of the late General Conference on the subject of slavery, and in reference to the relative rights and powers of Episcopacy and the General Conference, as not only *unconstitutional*, but *revolutionary*, and, therefore, dangerous to the best interests of the Church. They have solemnly declared, by approving and endorsing the declaration, the protest and address of the Southern delegates, that the objects of their ministry cannot be accomplished, under the existing jurisdiction of the General Conference, without reparation for past injury and security against future aggression, and unless the border Conferences have good and substantial reason to believe such reparation and security not only *probable*, but so certain as to remove *reasonable* doubt, they have, so far as *principle* and pledge are concerned, the same motive for action with the Conferences South of them. Against the principles thus avowed by every one of the Conferences in question, the anti-slavery and abolition of the North have, through official Church organs, declared the most open and undisguised hostility, and these Conferences are reduced to the necessity of deciding upon *adherence* to the principles they have officially avowed, or of a resort to expediency to adjust difficulties in some unknown form, which they have said could only be adjusted by substantial reparation for past injury, and good and sufficient warrant against future aggression. The question is certainly one of no common interest. Should any of the border Conferences, or societies South, affiliate with the North, the effect, so far as we can see, will be to transfer the seat of war from the remoter South, to these border

districts; and what, we ask, will be the security of these districts against the moral ravages of such a war? What protection or security will the *discipline* or the *conservatism* of the middle Conferences afford? Of what avail were *these* at the last General Conference, and has *either* more influence now than then? The controversy of a large and rapidly increasing portion of the North, is not so much with the *South* as with the *discipline*, because it tolerates slavery *in any form* whatever, and should the Southern Conferences remain under the present common jurisdiction, or any slaveholding portions of the South unite in the Northern Connection in the event of division, it requires very little discernment to see that *this controversy* will never cease until every slaveholder or every Abolitionist is out of the connection. Beside, the border Conferences have a great and most delicate interest at stake, in view of their *territorial* and *civil* and *political* relations, which it certainly behooves them to weigh well and examine with care in coming to the final conclusion, which is to identify them with the North or the South. Border districts going with the North, after and notwithstanding the action of the border conferences, must, in the nature of things, as found in the Methodist Episcopal Church, affiliate, to a great extent, with the entire aggregate of Northern anti-slavery and abolition, as now embarked against the interests of the South—as also with all the recent official violations of right, of law, and discipline, against which the South is now contending. In doing this, they must of necessity, if we have reasoned correctly, elect, and contribute their influence to retain in the connection of their choice all the principles and elements of strife and discord which have so long and fearfully convulsed the Church. Will this be the election of Southern border sections and districts, or will they remain where, by location, civil and political ties and relations, and their own avowed principles, they properly belong, firmly planted upon the long and well tried platform of the discipline of our common choice, and from which the Methodism of the South has never manifested any disposition to swerve? To the discipline the South has always been loyal. By it she has *abided* in every trial. Jealously has she cherished and guarded that "form of sound words"—the faith, the ritual and the government of the Church. It was Southern defence against Northern invasion of the discipline which brought on the present struggle; and upon the discipline, the whole discipline, the South proposes to organise, under authority of the General Conference, a separate connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This result, from first to last, has been consented to on the part of the South with the greatest reluctance.

After the struggle came on, at the late General Conference, the Southern Delegates, as they had often done before, manifested the most earnest desire, and did all in their power, to maintain jurisdictional union with the North, without sacrificing the interests of the South: when this was found impracticable, a *Connectional* union was proposed, and the rejection of this, by the North, led to the *projection* and *adoption* of the present General Conference plan of separation. Every overture of compromise, every plan of reconciliation and adjustment, regarded as at all eligible, or likely to succeed, was offered by the South and rejected by the North. All subsequent attempts at compromise, have failed in like manner, and the probability of any such adjustment, if not extinct, is lessening every day, and the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States are thus left to take

their position upon the ground assigned them by the General Conference of 1844, as a distinct ecclesiastical Connection, ready and most willing to treat with the Northern division of the Church, at any time, in view of adjusting the difficulties of this controversy, upon terms and principles, which may be safe and satisfactory to both.

Such we regard, as the *true position* of *the Annual Conferences* represented, *in this Convention. Therefore, in view of all the principles and interests involved*, appealing to the *Almighty searcher of hearts, for the sincerity of our motives, and humbly invoking the Divine blessing upon our action,*

Be it Resolved, by the Delegates of the several Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the slaveholding States, in General Convention assembled, That it is right, expedient, and necessary, to erect the Annual Conferences, represented in this Convention, into a distinct ecclesiastical Connection, separate from the jurisdiction of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as at present constituted; and, accordingly, we, the Delegates of said Annual Conferences, acting under the provisional Plan of separation adopted by the General Conference of 1844, do solemnly *declare* the jurisdiction hitherto exercised over said Annual Conferences, by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *entirely dissolved;* and that said Annual Conferences shall be, and they hereby *are constituted* a separate ecclesiastical Connection, under the provisional plan of separation aforesaid, and based upon the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, comprehending the doctrines, and entire moral, ecclesiastical, and economical rules and regulations of said Discipline, except only, in so far as verbal alterations, may be necessary to a distinct organization, and to be known by the style and title of the *Methodist Episcopal Church, South.*

Resolved, That Bishops Soule and Andrew be, and they are hereby respectfully and cordially requested by this Convention to unite with, and become regular and constitutional Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, upon the basis of the plan of separation adopted by the late General Conference.

Resolved, That this Convention request the Bishops presiding at the ensuing sessions of the border Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to incorporate into the aforesaid Conferences any societies or stations adjoining the line of division, provided such societies or stations, by a majority of the members according to the provisions of the plan of separation, aforesaid, request such an arrangement.

Resolved, That answer the 2d of 3d Section, Chapter 1st, of the book of Discipline, be so altered and amended as to read as follows:—The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord, 1846, in the town of Petersburg, Va., and thenceforward, in the month of April or May, once in four years successively, and in such place and on such day as shall be fixed on by the preceding General Conference," etc.

Resolved, That the first answer in the same chapter, be altered by striking out the word "*twenty-one,*" and inserting in its place the word "*fourteen,*" so as to entitle each Annual Conference to one Delegate for every fourteen members.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed whose duty it shall be to prepare and report to the General Conference of 1846, a revised copy of the present Discipline, with such changes as are necessary to conform it to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Resolved, That while we cannot abandon or compromise the principles of action upon which we proceed to a separate organization in the South, nevertheless, cherishing a sincere desire to maintain Christian union and fraternal intercourse, with the Church North, we shall always be ready, kindly and respectfully to entertain, and duly and carefully consider, any proposition or plan, having for its object, the union of the two great bodies, in the North and South, whether such proposed union, be *jurisdictional* or *connectional.*

Methodist Episcopal church in S. and S.W. states.
Report of the committee on organization 1845

	Sarah Dickinson
31 '37	Hist R.R. # 63.
APR 20	Recaus
MAY 5 '81	1156 E. 57th 5-4
OCT 6	Raiel Wall
DEC 28 '04	126 Gdsp (Follow)
JUN 22 '38	S.C. Summers
22	"
SEP 8 1947	J. S. Slotkin
SEP 18 1947	Fact X
FEB 9 1956	Dan Lane
FEB 23 1956	830 E 59th
FEB 23 1956	RENEWED
MAR 5 1956