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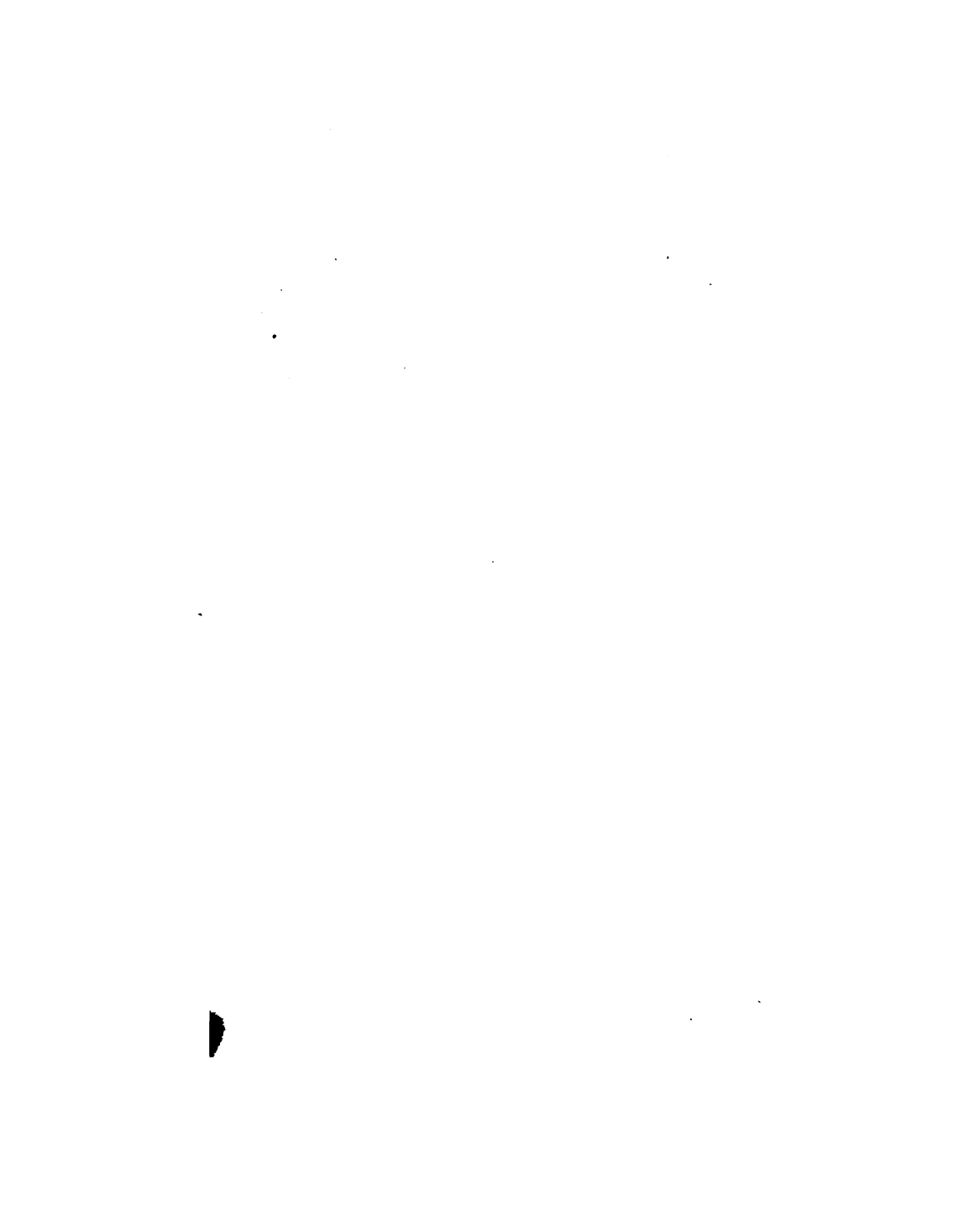
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The Negro's View OF Organic Union

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BY
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INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE A. OWENS

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	4
INTRODUCTION	5
I. ORGANIC UNION	7
II. AUTONOMY	40
III. ORGANIC UNION, FROM THE VIEW POINT OF A LAYMAN	55
JAMES A. HARRIS, Member of Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, Maryland.	
IV. NEGRO METHODISTS IN COUNCIL... REPORTED BY THE LATE M. C. B. MASON.	60

PREFACE

WHEN white men either write or speak on these questions their aim primarily is to impress white men. The black man comes up incidentally, if he is mentioned at all. If a black man is present at any of these meetings where these discussions are being held, his chief interest centers in what will be said of him. He has a feeling that they are thinking about him, even if they do not mention his name.

This book aims at giving our readers the *Negro's* views on these questions. It is a pity that we have to admit that there is a black and white side to all these questions, but it is nevertheless true. And this will continue to be so as long as these elements differ in race and color. This fact inspires feelings of superiority in the bosom of the most fortunate element, which invariably leads to a denial of equality.

This volume is written in the interest of a complete understanding of the whole question, and I trust it will find a hearty welcome among the people.

ERNEST LYON.

INTRODUCTION

THE question of organic union of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is one that has engaged, and still engages the serious thought of the membership—ministerial and lay—of the great branches of American Methodism.

That the crux of the whole matter is the presence of the Negro in the Methodist Episcopal Church is neither questioned nor denied. For the Church South to accept unqualifiedly the terms of union as proposed by the Methodist Episcopal Church would mean the abolition of traditions long cherished and, thereby, an acknowledgment that its act of 1845—withdrawal from the mother church because of the Negro's presence therein—was wrong. For the Methodist Episcopal Church to accept, in its entirety, the proposition of the Church South, especially that part suggesting the grouping of the colored membership in one great

Conference district with merely *fraternal* relations to united Methodism—would mean a world-wide confession that it had erred in its insistency that the Negro deserved treatment as a man, and that its claim as a universal missionary church was a fancy and not a fact.

The following pages, written by Dr. Ernest Lyon, a member of the race whose cause they advance and whose claims to the right of self-government they advocate, are the result of years of conscientious study and painstaking research on three continents—America, Europe, and Africa.

We commend the message to Methodist men, regardless of color and sectional bias, as a possible solution of the problem of organic union and as the epitome of the wishes of those who join with Mr. Wesley in the declaration, "Lose no opportunity of declaring that Methodists are one people in all the world and that it is their full determination to so continue, 'though mountains rise and oceans roll, to sever us in vain.'"

GEORGE A. OWENS.

I

ORGANIC UNION

WE are deeply sensible of the honor and the distinction you have conferred upon us by your invitation to address you upon the subject of "Organic Union of the Three White Methodisms in the United States of America," of which our race constitutes the minority element in one of the factorial units, and we approach its discussion with the fullest appreciation of its world-wide importance to Methodism in general, and to its *Negro membership in particular*.¹ Actuated by these sentiments, we are under obligation not only to be serious in the discharge of so solemn a duty, but to be careful in the selection of terms, lest we might mislead the weaker brethren, in view of the far-reaching consequences, involving not only revolution of sentiments, and reorganization of the several denominations concerned, but also the religious destiny of

¹ Originally delivered as an address before the joint Preachers' Meetings of Washington, Baltimore, and vicinities, June 14, 1915.

8 THE NEGRO'S VIEW

the minority element in the Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the factors of this prospective union and of which we are an integral part.

ERROR TO BE CORRECTED

It is frequently asserted by those unfamiliar with the movement for "organic union among the three great white Methodist denominations in the United States of America" that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is responsible for the agitation surrounding the question in its present stage of development. *This is an error* which must be corrected at the very threshold of the discussion, if our minds are to be free from sectional bias and from traditional prejudice.

THE OVERTURE FOR UNION

This erroneous belief, influenced by the history of the past and the traditional relation of the black man to the white man of the South, produced in the minds of many feelings of mistrust and appre-

hension concerning any proposition originating from that source, regardless of its merits. To relieve the situation, therefore, I will state in a single sentence the truth about the matter: The overture for union originated *not* with the Methodist Episcopal Church, *South*, but with *us*, the Methodist Episcopal Church, by the appointment of a General Conference Commission, which made the first proposals for union.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES MAKING UNION DESIRABLE AND NECESSARY?

The primary causes which brought about separation, thus rendering organic union necessary and desirable, were *slavery* and the *Negro question*. Prior to 1845 these two bodies, now the Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Episcopal Church, *South*, were one body, one in doctrine, in sentiment, in principle, in government, and in polity. Slavery and the Negro question divided them into two bodies, creating two denominations, as we find them to-day, namely, The

10 THE NEGRO'S VIEW

Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and
the Methodist Episcopal Church.

THE NEGRO THE VICTIM

The victim of this slavery which brought about schism, was the Negro, the Banquo's ghost of America. His advent upon this American continent furnished the occasion for slavery, and all the evils connected with that inhuman institution, although the Negro, unlike his captors, had nothing to do with his coming. He came almost simultaneously with them. They came for liberty, but he was brought for bondage. They controlled the condition of his exodus, but he was forced into involuntary servitude. Both of them are exotic plants from the viewpoint of origin. But in the final analysis the white man became the *master* and the black man the *slave*. This condition, which blighted the sensibilities of the former, involved no inherent principle of race superiority—or inferiority, as many have argued—but simply vantage ground, that is, superior advantages by reason of environments, climatic and otherwise.

OF ORGANIC UNION 11

DIFFERED IN PRINCIPLE

These denominations differed widely in principle. The Methodist Episcopal Church was anti-slavery, the Church South was pro-slavery. The former stood for the freedom of the black man—the latter for his enslavement; the former stood for his intellectual development, the latter for the reverse. These principles, advocated by the Methodist Episcopal Church on the one hand and denied by the Church South on the other, were the “rocks of severance” in 1845.

AN OBLIGATION EMPHASIZED

The black man, not only in America, but in the world, owes the Methodist Episcopal Church a debt of gratitude, the magnitude of which only eternity will disclose, for she stood like “a beaten anvil to the stroke, when others shrank from the fire and the flames,” in support of those inalienable rights which the federal Constitution and the laws of God guaranteed to all mankind, without any regard to the color of the skin or the human

type from which they may have descended. And if in this situation, in which these white brothers, so long divided on account of *us*, are trying now by every way they know to come together again and live as one family under one roof, we see an opportunity to aid the situation, *we* would gladly do so, if by so doing, the larger interest of the church and of humanity in general will be conserved by our action.

SLAVERY DIVIDED CHURCH AND NATION

Slavery not only divided the church into two hostile camps, but it divided the nation also. It put enmity between the North and the South, and for a period of years by a fierce and bitter war, drenched the land in blood and left it ruined and devastated. A condition which presented very few parallels in the annals of human history. And the church must assume her share of the blame, for this condition of carnage and misery, following in the wake of the Civil War, which began about fifteen years after the

separation—with churchmen fighting at the front, brother against brother, many of whom have risen to the bishopric and other responsible positions in the denominations since the conflict ended. Dr. Dillard, a distinguished Southerner, in an address at the commencement of Morgan College, Baltimore, was of the opinion, in speaking of the horrors of war, that the same results obtained by the Civil War could have been obtained without it. He meant by that statement that there was no need for the shedding of so much blood and the sacrifice of so many patriots. I doubt the correctness of his observation as revealed in the divine treatment of transgressors, for in the divine economy, blood and sacrifice are essential to emphasize the analogies in the law and in the gospel, which make death necessary to establish the validity of a Testament, and the shedding of blood to the integrity of an atonement. As in law the testator must die before the will and testament could be valid, and as in theology blood must be shed before the sins of the people could be remitted, so

14 THE NEGRO'S VIEW

in this national controversy, in which both the church and the nation had transgressed, the death of countless patriots was necessary to render valid the testament of freedom, which the slaves were to inherit, after a long and bitter night of forced bondage, and their blood was also required to atone for the sins and transgressions of the nation, for the court of heaven had proclaimed that "Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins."

WHAT IS THE OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF UNION?

The proposition for union, as I have afore mentioned, was made by our church; the "olive branch of peace" was first extended by her. Like the nation at the close of the war, pleading through Abraham Lincoln, its greatest exponent, for a reunited people, and for the removal of sectionalism, so the Methodist Episcopal Church, after the abolition of slavery, the institution which brought about separation, pleaded through Bishop

Foster, its "Greatest Seer," for union, for the coming together again of brothers into the communion and fellowship of one homogeneous circle, composed of all the elements of white Methodism.

LINCOLN'S CRY HEEDED

The nation heeded the cry of Lincoln and came together. North and South are now united in the government of the country. The Chief Executive of the nation is a Southerner and his Third Assistant Secretary of State is a Northerner, the grandson of Wendell Phillips, the noted abolitionist.

What a pleasing spectacle of union that was when, on the 31st day of May last, at Arlington Cemetery, the President of the United States, a Southerner, sat between the veterans of the Civil War and the veterans of the Spanish-American War and responded "Amen" to the invocation of Bishop Cranston, now the senior bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, but at the time of the struggle a Union soldier.

Speaking at the National Cemetery at

Winchester, Virginia, on the same day, the occasion being Decoration Day, Col. Robert B. Barton, a leading lawyer and Confederate veteran, produced a profound impression among the veterans of both armies when he said that he was going to attend the Confederate Reunion at Richmond, Virginia, for the purpose of urging that the Grand Camps of the United Confederate Veterans, and all Southern organizations perpetuating the memories of the Civil War, be abolished at once, and that the Grand Army of the Republic also go out of existence, for the reason that the purpose for which both the Northern and Southern organizations were formed was now passed, and the issues which kept them alive for half a century were now dead.

Now, then, what is it that keeps the *church* apart? Is the nation more godly than the church? Is the church more pronounced in its bitterness than the nation? Are the politicians more Christ-like than the preachers? Surely, there must be a cause for remaining apart after these years of earnest importunities.

What obstacle blocks the way? Those who rule in the nation rule in the church. To the foreigner the situation is complicated, but to the American it is not. Certainly, one must be mentally and physically blind if he cannot see the obstacle in the way.

It is true that slavery is dead, but its victim nevertheless lives. The war has removed the institution, but the "bone" concerning which contention arose nevertheless remains. This bone may not be the only obstacle, but it is undoubtedly the chief obstacle. With it out of the way, you would see a mighty coming together of dry bones. How to remove it is now the question of gravest concern and greatest moment, because its removal might involve the surrender of principle or the violation of precedents too long adhered to to be surrendered without an effort.

CIVIC EQUALITY NULLIFIED

It is worthy of note as an historic and potential element which must enter into this discussion that before the nation

united, or, for the purpose of clearness, before the South would yield to unity, the spirit of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments of the Constitution, which lifted the slave to the plane of civic equality, was annulled by disfranchisement, segregation, etc., and what was left undone under Republican rule, is now being accomplished under the present administration. In other words, the Negro is now out of the way; he is no longer an obstacle in the way of national unity. And the people who did this are the same people with whom union is desired.

Before answering the question, "What is the bone?" let us define "Organic Union, or Unity." We are not sure but that there is a slight difference in the etymology of the two terms "union" and "unity"; but, in our judgment, *union* implies *unity*, and, following this interpretation, we shall employ the terms interchangeably.

ORGANIC UNITY

Organic unity is the union of two or more bodies, based upon a constitution,

in which there shall be concord, harmony, agreement, and oneness—oneness in sentiment, in principle, in polity, in administration, and, last but not least, *in ideals*. This is what is involved by the union of these two Methodisms, one of which contains a heterogeneous element. Now, in view of this, is organic unity possible between the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, with this heterogeneous element, which was undoubtedly the cause for separation? Let us see.

Aside from the work of reorganization, reconstruction, and adjustment, would it not mean also a change in sentiment and principle, in relation to this element of black people? And would not this be equivalent, not merely to a backdown or compromise, but to an open confession that one was right and the other was wrong in the attitude assumed in the great controversy which divided the church and plunged the nation into war? What attitude could our church afford to take in this situation? Could she go back upon her record—the only thing

in her history which has given her distinction in the world, and a name above all other ecclesiastical names? Would you want her to go back on that record and die an ignominious ecclesiastical death—a penalty which has come upon all institutions and individuals who have faltered in the hour of decision when principle demanded an advocate? The moral situation is, I confess, a very difficult and perplexing one, and the key to its solution is in the hands of the Negro. What will he do with it? How will he use it? Will he use it to open the door, for the glory of God and the development of his people?

WHEN IS ORGANIC UNITY POSSIBLE?

Organic unity is possible, I take it, only when racial homogeneity prevails and where the equality of the elements constituting the union is conceded. Now, the majority element in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and in the Methodist Protestant Church, are *white* people and are homogeneous and equal—equal in point of opportunity,

achievements, and development. Therefore organic unity is not only possible but probable among these.

The minority element in the Methodist Episcopal Church is *Negro*, and the Negro is heterogeneous, and his equality is neither conceded by the majority element in his own church, nor in the Church South, nor in the Methodist Protestant—with whom union is desired and sought after. Therefore unification with this heterogeneous element is not possible—not even as a subsidiary element in the organism. Union to be effective must be *inter pares*. Matrimony is based upon the assumption of equality, and happiness is founded upon homogeneity. This is the white man's doctrine of unity, and we know of no other.

CONDITION, NOT THEORY

This situation is neither a theory nor a speculation, but a condition based upon the facts themselves, which are the common experience of everyone who has eyes to see, a condition which manifests itself in antimiscegenation laws, in Jim-Crow-

isms, civic segregation, and all kinds of social discriminations in hotels and other public places, where the white race experience neither let nor hindrance. What is keeping the black man from representation in the general superintendency in the church but a denial of equality? Why are two Commissions on Federation necessary—one to treat with the whites and the other with the blacks? If we are equal, why this division? Echo answers, "Why?"

AGENTS SHOULD TESTIFY

And is there any evidence of a change of sentiment along this line? Ask the agents of the race in the church who travel; and if they have your confidence, that is, if they can be assured that you will not use the information against them, they will unfold an experience which embarrasses your self-respect and compromises your manhood. Who believes that a white man believes any more today than he did yesterday, whether in or out of the church, that the black man is his equal? The white man regards the

race as an inferior race; not as a race having inferior advantages, but a race inherently and organically inferior. The integrity of this statement is not a subject for discussion here. I simply state the white man's doctrine in comparing his race with the black race.

I know that it is frequently asserted that failure to elect a man of African descent to the general superintendency in the Methodist Episcopal Church is due to his lack of voting strength in the quadrennial contest, but this is only a logical subterfuge. It is an ecclesiastical anomaly. It is as untrue as it is true. Let us admit the truth which stares us in the face and be men. What is the secret for this attempt at constitutional mutilation but the prevailing doctrine of racial inequality and inferiority? If these observations are untrue, I ask for a denial upon just and veritable grounds.

PERTINENT QUESTIONS

Is the general superintendency in the Methodist Episcopal Church specifically

a *white* man's office? The change of the constitution gives him the monopoly, and those who clamor for it contribute to this false notion. It is bad enough to admit the doctrine of apostolic succession, which admission in its operation would vitiate the credentials of every bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church and in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and would leave us as Methodist Episcopalians in a very embarrassing position; but it is worse than wicked to believe that succession to this high office in the church is based upon the color of one's skin. Such a doctrine, whether taught or implied, is an offense to Divine Justice. How are we to interpret the declaration of our venerable founder, John Wesley, who said, "The world is my parish"? What world was he thinking of? Was he thinking of a world populated with *white* people only? or was he thinking of the world as God created it, with its heterogeneous population—Indians, Chinese, Malays, Japanese, Africans, Mexicans, Europeans, etc.?

THE PRESENT PLAN OF UNIFICATION

Briefly, the present plan of unification as suggested by the Federal Commission, made up of the three principal white denominations, provides for the reorganization of this triple alliance into four Quadrennial or Jurisdictional Conferences, under one General Conference. Mark, this union is sought among *white* Methodisms, not among Methodisms of color, such as represented by the African Methodist and the African Zion and other distinctively Negro Methodist bodies.

The composition of the Commission on Organic Union reveals this fact. There is only one Commission on Federation and Organic Union, and that is the one of which Bishop Cranston is president. No colored members are included in this Commission.

In order, however, to provide for the minority element in the denomination, the Commission suggested that one of the Quadrennial or Jurisdictional Conferences should be negro, and should be a part of the organism comprising the

Union. These Quadrennial Conferences are to be automatic in government, but shall be a part of the General Conference, through its chosen representatives and bishops. If such an arrangement could be made effective, it would be the best thing that could ever happen for the colored churchmen of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

But, "I see a serpent in the grass," and the Church South is keen enough to perceive it also. This suggestion of union by reorganization has been adopted at the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with this exception, however, that the Negroes, instead of being one of the Jurisdictional Conferences in the organism, as suggested by the Commission, be set apart in a separate, distinct, and independent organization, holding only fraternal relation with the new union. The Church South no doubt saw that if they proceeded upon the basis recommended by the Federal Commission, they would have to sit in the General Conference with the Negro delegates and would have to submit to the

presidency of Negro bishops in that august body—an agreement to which, I am sure, they will probably never consent. And the Church South is frank in its declaration, and hence they proposed independent organization for the Negroes instead of organic relation, as at first agreed to. The indorsement of this plan by the Church South at its last General Conference leaves no room for *our* church, at its next General Conference, to ignore the issue, which with little, if any, exception will be the most vital question facing the General Conference of 1916.

IS THE PLAN POPULAR?

With a few exceptions, based merely upon details, this tentative plan has met with popular favor. Approval has been pronounced in the editorials of the *Zion Herald*, though an independent journal, nevertheless Methodist to the core, of the Gilbert Haven type, and a true exponent of New England Methodism, always friendly to the black man. The Epworth League in its last General Convention,

although not the church, nevertheless representing the bone, sinew, and blood of the future church, adopted unanimously resolutions commending the plan, and asking its favorable consideration by the next General Conference. The Southwestern Christian Advocate, the journalistic mouthpiece of the Negro membership, favors it. Our bishops in a recent semiannual council, although not the General Conference, nevertheless our chief pastors and preservers of the destiny of the church, have passed favorably upon the *principle* of unification, which action cannot fail to influence the next General Conference in its treatment of the case. Bishop Earl Cranston, the senior bishop of the church, and beyond doubt the ablest and most pronounced apostle and advocate of the doctrine of unification, has in public addresses, as well as in supplications to Almighty God, and in journalistic endeavors, declared that the time has come for union, and invites upon himself anathemas, if he does not advocate and work for it.

The representatives of the colored mem-

bership, in council assembled at Nashville, Tennessee, although not a delegated body, nevertheless the molders of sentiment among their people, representing culture, brain, progress, and experience, have by a public manifesto declared themselves in favor of this plan of unification. The Western Ohio Conference, one of the most influential Conferences in Methodism, has not only indorsed it, but voted to send the proposition to all the Conferences in Methodism for their indorsement. And last, but not least, the Washington Annual Conference, undoubtedly the greatest Negro Conference in Methodism, at its last session at John Wesley Church, Baltimore, in a set of resolutions, strongly and unanimously declared for it. No measure proposed by the Church has met with more popular favor than this unification plan.

THE NEGRO

It ought to be noted that in both controversies, the one in 1845 and the other in 1860, the Negro was the bone of contention. As he was the cause of severance

in 1845, it would seem fair that this cause must be removed or adjusted in a way satisfactory to the party that withdrew—since it is the party who remained at home that is seeking union. This is what the Church South meant when it suggested friendly relation, instead of organic relation, in the unification plan under consideration.

In many respects it would have been easier in 1845, and even in 1865, to adjust this cause, or even to remove it entirely, than it would be now. In 1845 the black man was still a slave and subject to the will of his master. In fact, his preference was not a factor in the problem. His development was doubtful. No one ever dreamed, not even his most optimistic sympathizers, that his ambition would lead him to aspire to the high offices and rulership in the church.

The sainted Bishop Foster, however, prophesied that he would, by reason of his association and contact with ambitious men who desired these offices, and he ventured to call attention to it, but the voice of the prophet was ignored. The

Negro's progress in every line of human endeavors has been so marvelous as to attract world-wide attention. His intellect has been broadened by culture, and his development has been of such a character as to win for him the confidence of church and state, so that responsibilities of the most delicate nature have been intrusted to him, the discharge of which has merited commendation from friends as well as foes. But, like the leopard, unable to change his spots, so the Negro has remained *sui generis* in both church and state; and the church's dream of organic union, I fear, will never be realized as long as this racial difference is apparent, and American society adheres to the rigid practice, expressed in the denial of those amenities of life, on no other ground but that of race and color.

THE GREAT OBSTACLE

It is obvious from what we see and hear, privately as well as publicly expressed, by men whose influence as leaders cannot be questioned, that the Negro is

32 THE NEGRO'S VIEW

the *great obstacle* in the way of unification. No betrayal of confidences is necessary. We have sufficient evidence which is a matter of public record to warrant not only the assertion but the belief that the black man is the unification apparition.

The California Christian Advocate, an official organ of the church, in an editorial issue of February 4, 1915, discussing this question of union, said: "The desirability of the unification of the two Methodist Churches in the United States is admitted, provided it can be accomplished without either church *sacrificing conscientious scruples*. Can anyone point out a single thing which makes impossible this organic union save one—the color line? If this is true, why not discuss the main question? Is there any plan in sight by which organic union can be secured which does not evade the question of the segregation of the colored people? That is the question. There is nothing else in the way of organic union. If the colored people are to be segregated, then why is there any occasion for *three*

or *four* churches instead of *two*?" What man, who knows his situation, will say that this editor has overstated the case?

Again, when the Nashville Council declared last October in favor of the proposition, the Zion Herald, editorially announced that "the great obstacle to unification had been removed." It said among other things: "This action of our colored brethren is profoundly significant because it cuts the Gordian knot of the whole unification problem. Leaders in all branches of Methodism, our own as well as the Methodist Protestant and the Church South, and among the Negroes themselves, have recognized this as the *crux* of the whole question. 'What of the Negro?' has been the interrogation mark that has threatened to become a *barrier* to any progress toward the re-union of the family." My brethren, we might as well recognize now as at any other time the stubborn truth of the improbability of union between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church South with the Negro in it on terms of equality. Dr. A. B. Leonard in a recent

article in the New York Christian Advocate on this subject, declares the Negro the *great obstacle*.

HIS ATTITUDE

With these facts staring him in the face, what, then, should be his attitude? The Nashville declaration and the action of the Washington Conference express exactly his attitude, which should be one of helpfulness in the realization of the church's dream of union. He has acted exactly right in indorsing the tentative plan of the Federal Commission. If he is to be in the proposed union, he must be in it on terms of equality. Nothing else will preserve his self-respect, and at this stage of development he would not be satisfied with less. But knowing the temper of the dominant race in America as well as I do, I am satisfied that contention for a place in the organism on an equality basis will postpone union, and will deprive our white brothers of the desired aim. In view of this, should we accept the next best thing offered, if this

next best thing means the opportunity for racial development along independent lines, an opportunity not now afforded on account of our peculiar environments? At present we lack the opportunity for self-reliance, which Bishop Cranston declares is an indispensable quality of manhood. God give us light!

It is well to observe that this tentative plan of the Federal Commission, which has been indorsed by the Nashville Council and the Washington Annual Conference, is *autonomy* pure and simple—the exact plan suggested by Bishop Foster and more recently by myself in my pamphlet entitled AUTONOMY. Its appearance, you will recall, brought down upon me the malediction of some of the foremost leaders in our Conference, who to-day are hobnobbing with the distinctively Methodist bodies to bring about in an underhand way, not autonomy, but *separation*—a condition which at that time was apparently horrifying to them. Nevertheless, I hail with delight the change in sentiment, even though I regard with suspicion the method employed.

The Commission on Federation of Colored Churches which met in Cincinnati, representing our church, was composed of colored men and white bishops. Their functions are defined by the General Conference which created it. Nowhere is power given to it to negotiate for union with other Negro bodies. This Commission will transcend its bounds if it attempts to do this, and its labors will meet with general *disapproval*—so far as it relates to the Negro.

ONLY SOVEREIGN STATES CAN ENTER INTO TREATY RELATIONS

I am impressed from reliable sources that these sovereign Negro bodies will not treat in this way. The Negro membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church in its present condition cannot treat with sovereign bodies any more than can the State of California enter into treaty relations with Japan. We have no colored bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church who could approach the colored bishops in the distinctively Negro

denominations on terms of official equality. And the church does us an injustice when it appoints agents for so important and delicate a mission who lack episcopal prestige, which means so much in a church with an episcopal form of government. Before we could treat with these would we not have to be set apart so as to give us an even chance in the compact?

ORGANIC UNION WITH OTHER NEGRO
METHODISMS MEANS SEPARATION

Now, have you ever stopped to consider that organic union with these bodies would mean separation for us from the mother church? Don't you suppose your representatives on the Commission knew full well that organic union with colored Methodists means separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church? Have the Negroes in the church expressed themselves on this question of separation? Have these representatives been converted into this new order, or are they being used against their conviction as agents of separation, or are they using the church

and *us?* Our destiny should not be settled by any "star-chamber" arrangement, where one half dozen men shall settle the fate of three hundred and fifty thousand. Let us protest against such an arrangement, and claim our right, if separation comes, to select our own company. Christianity gives the man the right to select his own wife. We are Christians and should not be subjected to the rule of paganism, which makes the father responsible for the selection of a wife for the son. It is true that we are sons, but we have reached the stage of maturity and responsibility.

I have refrained from reference to the proposition which proposes to change the Restrictive Rule so as to elect Bishops for Races and Languages, since others have written exhaustively on that subject; but if this proposition and the unification plan be rejected by our coming General Conference, which meets in May, 1916, what then? I leave you to answer this question for yourselves and for your posterity. For *my* part, I stand for *autonomy*—as against *separation*. In

other words, I stand for an arrangement (call it whatever name you choose) that will enable us to stand up like men and play the part of men, without official embarrassment.

II**AUTONOMY**

WE are vain enough to believe that we have made out a case against the probable adoption of organic union, as proposed by the Commission on Federation. We have no reference whatever to the plan as amended by the General Conference of the Church South in its last session, because it seems settled, so far as the colored membership in the church is concerned, that it will not consent to be set aside in an independent organization, as suggested by the Church South, to accommodate caste and prejudice. We have shown, beyond doubt, in the preceding articles why organic union with white Methodisms is improbable.

Proceeding, therefore, upon the hypothesis that we are right—that race prejudice, social inequalities, and the traditional relationships between the white man and the black man will hinder

organic union on terms of equality—what, then, is the best thing for the black man in the church? This is the logical question. What thing would develop manhood and independence, inspire self-respect, and preserve the solidarity of the race?

It is quite evident that the race is clamoring for something, in spite of reports to the contrary. As to this the leaders are now agreed. The Tennessee Council is proof positive of this assertion. Present conditions are destructive to the development of true manhood, and the intelligence of the race is asking for a leadership of its own manufacture, independent of the controlling influence of those who cannot know all of the facts in the case from first hand.

The best thing in the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the race, without equivocation, is the election of a man of African descent to the general superintendency. This step would not only be the best thing for the race and the Methodist Episcopal Church in particular, but for the church in general. It would

emphasize the genius of Christianity, and silence the enemies of Christ, our Divine Founder, by dealing a death blow to prejudice and discrimination on account of race and color. The white man would thus raise himself and the cause of Christ, which he now dominates, to that lofty height of transfiguration to which both belong, and to which he himself is also capable of ascending—often demonstrated, as in the case of the recent decision of Chief Justice White, in the Supreme Court, on the question of disfranchisement, by grandfather clauses and other undemocratic subterfuges.


But this, the General Conference says by its past action, cannot be done. That body had an opportunity at its last session to do it by electing a general superintendent of African descent, or by advancing Bishop Scott from the segregated position of a missionary bishop in Liberia to a general superintendent in the United States, and assigning him to work among his own people. In our judgment, that would have been an easy transition—but it seemed as if it would have been too

much of a risk, although the black men attending the Conference gave positive assurance that their desire was only to serve their own people as they were doing in other official positions in the connec-tional societies.

The position of a general superinten-dent in the United States—or, for that matter, the position of a bishop, according to the definition of one of the highest authorities of the Protestant Episcopal Church—is that of a ruler and leader. Now, who among us believes that it is the intention of the church to train black people to be rulers in a church dominated by white people? Personally, there would be no objection to it if the white member-ship needed it. But do the whites need the leadership of the blacks? Our fathers at the beginning, flushed with hope in their new relation to the ministry, may have thought so. But how can their chil-dren share in that belief in the face of what has happened, and what is contin-ually happening, as the result of evolution in American society? The recognized leaders of the church are agreed that the

advancement of a man of African descent to the general superintendency is not only impossible, but even, if possible, would be unwise.

Bishop Foster, in discussing this phase of the question in his book, *Union of Episcopal Methodisms*, says: "But out of this comes another fact; it is here; these brothers demand recognition. They ask, and claim it with persistence, that they shall not be discriminated against in the high offices of the church. It is attempted to pacify them with the assurance that when they shall develop men who will be qualified to fill these positions, their claim will be recognized and they will be elected to the coveted places. Is this a fair putting of the case? Why, then, shall we be insincere? Who among us believes that a colored man could be elected general superintendent, for instance, if a man every way qualified to fill that office could be found? Nay, I will put it yet stronger: if a man better qualified than any of his competitors could be found, who believes that it would be a wise thing to do? Who believes that would tend to



the greatest peace and welfare of the church? The same is true of other high offices. Why, then, shall we not recognize the fact as a thing impracticable, and not to be thought of?" No commentary is necessary. The truth herein involved is its own commentary.

Again, Dr. Spencer, that sane and versatile editor of the Central Christian Advocate, in an editorial dated October 19, 1910, in discussing this very question under the topic, "The Negro and the Race To-day," says, "But a general superintendent capable of presiding over white Conferences throughout the world, or of presiding over even the twenty-one colored Conferences in this country, they have not had, and as we read the signs in the sky, they are not likely to have."

Editor Jones, of the Southwestern Christian Advocate, the organ which elects to speak for the Negro in the church, and a man of unquestioned loyalty and ability, declares that "The Negro should no longer be deluded by any such statement and any man who makes it, white or black, knows that under the

46 THE NEGRO'S VIEW

present conditions in the church and country a general superintendent elected from among our Negro membership at this time in the Methodist Episcopal Church, is not at all probable, if not impossible. However ardent and sincere our friends are, they are doing us a great injury by pushing such propaganda, which we believe they know is absolutely impossible."

What further testimony is needed? None I say, except it be the testimony of common sense. What do these voices teach? They teach the absolute groundlessness of the black man's hope in the realization of this high office, of a general superintendent. Since, therefore, the election of a man of African descent to the general superintendency is impossible, from what we have seen, heard, and felt, what is then the next best thing?

The next best thing would logically be the election of bishops for races and languages. This proposition was up once before, and its defeat was charged up to the colored membership. This may or may not be so, because there were as many

white men as black men in the General Conference at that time who were constitutionally opposed to the proposition—for various reasons.

At the last General Conference our hope was again inspired by the enthusiastic support of the editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* for the episcopacy. They lifted him just high enough to enable him to see the outlines of the promised land. They carried him just near enough to its border to increase his appetite for the enjoyment of the coveted goal. Then after one or two electoral summersaults, withdrew from him, so that it was with difficulty he found his way back to his editorial sanctum.

Some of our sympathizers felt that a wound had been made on account of this defeat, and as a kind of salve, offered in the closing moments of the life of that body, when it was in the very throes of death and, therefore, hardly responsible for its acts, another amendment of a similar character to the one previously defeated, which the Board of Bishops declined to send down to the Annual and

Lay Electoral Conferences. The general understanding is that since the proposal did not receive a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of the General Conference, the Bishops held that it was not a constitutional vote; notwithstanding a decision to the contrary by former President Taft, among the most eminent constitutional lawyers of the present day.

The proposition, however, was taken up *de novo* by the Mississippi Conference, and the Board of Bishops, having now submitted it, it is hoped that it will pass the Annual and Lay Electoral Conferences, so that the General Conference of 1916 will be in a position to evidence its sincerity to aid the colored membership in giving it what seems to be a general demand.

This may not be as good a thing as the first, but a half loaf is better than no loaf at all to a hungry man. This step would complete at the top, the system already in vogue, and so put us in a condition to treat with any denominations having an episcopal form of government or to prepare us for autonomy, or self-government,

and so give us a commanding position in the ecclesiastical world, and especially with other ecclesiastical bodies dominated by black people.

Now, by autonomy we mean a plan similar to the one suggested by Bishop Foster. We mean by it that we remain exactly as we are in the mother church, organically related to her as part and parcel of the great organization, with this exception, that instead of being governed by the white men we be governed by leaders selected by ourselves and in our own way. Our relation to the church would then be exactly like the relation of Canada to the British empire. That where we now have Annual Conferences presided over by white bishops they be presided over by colored bishops, who on account of their organic relation would meet with the white bishops in their semiannual gathering, to plan for the work among the colored membership, as the white bishops now do for the white and colored membership. Further, that we have a Missionary, Church Extension, Freedmen's Aid, Woman's Home Mission-

ary, Epworth League, and Sunday School Union, conducted exactly like the parent organizations, with the exception that instead of white secretaries, as we now have, there be colored secretaries, who would meet together in the annual boards for the adjustment, enlargement, and inspiration of the societies.

Many allege that while this plan has merits, yet it would be difficult to accomplish. We admit that there are difficulties in the way of any movement, new or old, but we contend that the difficulties would not be of an insurmountable character. This arrangement would give us full-fledged secretaries, instead of, as now constituted, simply agents, who have not the full responsibility of the development and progress of the institutions. It would give us real opportunities for the development of the race. It would quicken its aspirations and give it an impetus that would be magical in its effects and consequences. No one who has the interest of his race fully at heart would object to an arrangement which had in it larger opportunities for his people. No just rea-

son can be given against the adoption of such a plan.

As to the matter of elections, he would act singly and alone, voting in his own convention, as is proposed in the jurisdictional plan, for men selected as leaders, according to his own preference, and not, as now constituted, according to the preference of others, who have no social connection with us. As to the matter of General Conferences, we would meet together, exactly as we are now meeting, our bishops presiding in their turn, in the very same way that the Negro bishops of Negro denominations preside at ecumenical conferences and other ecclesiastical gatherings of magnitude and moment. We have never heard any of our bishops, or any of the delegates attending any such conferences or conventions, objecting to the presidency of any of these black bishops—of other denominations—and surely they would not object to bishops of their own creation.

We cannot stop to note the disadvantages of the present system which relieves us of responsibility to plan for the general

work; which deprives us of representation in the highest councils of the church, making us followers, instead of leaders, a condition which makes us absolutely dependent upon the judgment of others, which eventually must have a weakening effect upon the character and manhood of the race.

We cannot stop to note the disadvantages from a lack of racial episcopal representation among our own people in the state and nation. In this imperfect union we are swallowed up by the overwhelming number of the whites. In this predicament the world looks to the distinctively colored denominations for representation as it relates to the race in the United States. This fact makes against us in church and state. It compels us to take a back seat in many forward movements because of a lack of racial episcopal prestige.

This is no reflection, whatever, on the white bishops, who have served us well and ably. They have been kind, gentle, and fatherly, and we hope that the conditions will continue forever. So far as

they are concerned, they are all right, but they are handicapped by environments, social and racial—environments based upon providential differences, over which no one has any control. Surely, the presence of bishops of our race would lend inspiration to a colored congregation, because every colored minister with ability and piety, as well as every pupil in his Sabbath school, may hope one day, if he so elects, to reach the same exalted position among his own people and race.

No such inspiration can come to him under the present arrangement. He sees no hope, and therefore, can cherish no such ambition, which appears to him to be utterly impossible. Our admonition to our boys in this direction can have no meaning, for there has never been any verification of it. These intelligent boys are asking their fathers, "What of the future?" What answer can we give in the face of these facts?

We have been in the old church from its beginning in this country—long before the war put an end to slavery. Reckoning, however, from the close of the

war, which opened a new regime, is nearly three score years. What have we been doing all this time? In school, some have said, undergoing training. Well, that is a good and noble thing; but when will graduation day come? Will there never be a commencement day? Such a day is always inspiring to parents, as well as to teachers and pupils. What is the matter that we have had no graduation day? Is there none worthy among the nearly three hundred thousand colored pupils in training since 1860? Why is it we have had no commencement? Christendom is interested in the answer.

III

ORGANIC UNION, FROM THE
VIEWPOINT OF A LAYMAN

BY JAMES A. HARRIS

THE times are auspicious. Opportunities are presenting themselves to church and state such as never before were known. Those of us who love the Methodist Episcopal Church pray that she may be guided by an unerring wisdom so that she may maintain her reputation for doing things in the right way.

The agitation for union among Methodists marks a new era in Methodism. As a part of the great Methodist family to say that we are interested is to express it lightly. In the discussion and plan for union the Negro becomes an object of more than ordinary interest. No movement of any consequence taking place in church or state can afford to ignore his presence. We anxiously await the time

when the Christian Church will reach that high standard in Christlikeness that will enable it to recognize men for what is in them, and not for the complexion of the skin or the texture of the hair; when she will be willing to accord to any race, the black man included, the consideration it is entitled to in the Christian family, where God is acknowledged as the common Father of all and human-kind as a great brotherhood.

The Negro in the Methodist Episcopal Church has upon all occasions, no matter how trying the circumstances, behaved himself with becoming dignity. He has been patient under persecution, dignified under proscriptions, silent under pressure, and forgetful of revenge toward those who purposely ill use and abuse him. His presence, therefore, in the white church has worked no hardship for his white brethren.

The stand which our church will take in this plan for union, insomuch as it concerns the Negro, will mean much to him. The world is watching the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is waiting to

see whether it will agree to union on the suggestion of the Church South, or whether it will maintain its ancient prestige for a common brotherhood—for a church composed of all colors and races.

The Negro is in no mood to handicap union, provided union is founded upon New Testament principles. We love the church too well to do anything that would embarrass it, and we have too much confidence in its integrity to believe that it would agree to any proposition that would stultify its record.

It must be remembered that the Methodist Episcopal Church has set the pace for other churches in its past attitude to the Negro, and its action in this pending matter will have much to do with the world's feeling toward the black man. We are neither pleading nor thinking for ourselves, but for our posterity. We cannot afford to make a move that will be detrimental to unborn generations. The faith of our fathers still lives in our bosoms, and we still adhere to the belief that the privilege of prayer and supplications are common boons for all mankind.

This plan of union, if it carries as Dr. Lyon has set forth in his address, provides a providential way out of difficulties and embarrassments, and would be a blessing to the church in general and to the Negro in particular. It would put him in a position to think and act for himself in the development of the work. At present he enjoys no such privilege.

The following incident illustrates his position in the church exactly: In the days of slavery there lived a popular builder and constructor in Baltimore who had a very clever slave. As a bricklayer he had no equal among white or colored mechanics. He was a specialist in the art of fancy work—ornamental and frontal decorations. But his master never allowed him to see the drawings or to trace the blue-prints. He was not allowed to use the tools the white men used, although he surpassed them in native skill and genius. All he was permitted to use was the trowel and the hammer.

The Negro in the Methodist Episcopal Church is not allowed to see the blue-prints nor to make the drawings. He is

not permitted to use the delicate tools which others use who are in the upper circle. He is expected to do the work and to get success out of the plans arranged by others.

This plan of union will give him an opportunity not only to see and trace the lines on the blue paper which contains the drawings for the building, but it will force him to make his own drawings. Union on this basis cannot come too fast.

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IV

NEGRO METHODISTS IN COUNCIL

REPORTED BY THE LATE
DR. M. C. B. MASON

PROBABLY the most representative meeting of the Negro members of the Methodist Episcopal Church that has ever taken place since the war, convened in Clark Chapel, Nashville, Tennessee, Wednesday and Thursday, October 21 and 22, 1914. The meeting was called together mainly for the purpose of considering the plan for organic union agreed upon by the Federation Commission of Methodism and that recently adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The meeting opened by the election of Professor M. S. Davage, manager of the Southwestern Christian Advocate, of New Orleans, as permanent secretary, and an arrangement by which certain representative men were to preside at each day's

session. Following this plan, Dr. M. W. Dogan, president of Marshall University, presided on the first day, and Dr. M. C. B. Mason, of Jacksonville, Florida, on the second day. The Rev. Dr. W. H. Brooks, who had acted as temporary chairman, was subsequently elected as permanent chairman. A tentative program had been arranged by the committee touching all the important questions embraced in the call, such as "The Movement for Negro Bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church," "Our Attitude toward the Proposed Amendment," "The Attitude of Methodism toward the Negro," "The Best Method of Meeting Alleged Constitutional Handicaps," "Interracial Cooperation for Civic and Moral Improvements," etc.

These subjects were ably discussed by Professor Pezavia O'Connell, of Gammon Theological Seminary, the Rev. Dr. R. E. Jones, editor of the Southwestern Christian Advocate, the Rev. Dr. E. Lyon, former minister to Liberia, Dr. I. L. Thomas, field missionary of the Church Extension Society, Dr. A. B. Burroughs, of Charleston, S. C., Rev. Dr. R. S.

Lovinggood, president of Samuel Huston College, Austin, Texas, and others.

After full and thorough discussion, a Committee on Address to the Church, composed of two delegates from each Conference, with five members at large, of which Dr. M. C. B. Mason was chairman, was appointed. As there were eighteen Conferences represented, this meeting was composed of forty-one persons, or a little more than one fifth of the entire membership of the convention.

After careful consideration, the committee made the following report, which was adopted by a vote of 152 to 1:

Two hundred ministers and laymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church, representing eighteen colored Annual Conference territories, in council assembled at Clark Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, at Nashville, Tennessee, Wednesday and Thursday, October 21 and 22, 1914, rejoicing in the mercies of Almighty God vouchsafed unto us, expressing our sincere appreciation for the Christian and philanthropic work done in our behalf by the church and other agencies, and facing the problems which confront us, hereby record our sincere purpose and determination to do our share in ushering in the good day when the kingdom of truth and righteousness shall ultimately triumph throughout the earth.

OF ORGANIC UNION 63

To this end we pledge our most earnest endeavors, and urge the cooperation of our churches to secure a ten-per-cent annual increase in membership and Sunday school enrollment, and we so urge a more systematic work among our young people through the Epworth League, and further recognizing the place of Christian education in permanent race building, call upon our members and the friends of our cause for a more hearty support and the early endowment of our educational institutions.

And, further, we feel deeply our obligations to Africa and its millions who are still in darkness and heathenism and earnestly recommend larger giving and the deeper consecration of the young people of the church for service in this particular field. We are in deep sympathy with the missionaries and people of our various foreign fields who are undergoing privations and making unusual sacrifices as the result of the European war; hence, we ask a liberal and speedy response to the appeals of our Board of Foreign Missions on their behalf.

We also note with great satisfaction the advance of the prohibition movement throughout the country, and rejoice in the fact that our people in larger numbers have everywhere given hearty support to the overthrow of the common enemy of mankind.

We are neither unmindful nor unappreciative of the great services and personal sacrifices of our general superintendents, and more especially of those whose episcopal residences are in the Southland. Nevertheless, it is our sincere and earnest conviction that indigenous and racial

64 THE NEGRO'S VIEW

supervision is absolutely essential for the fullest development of the work of our field, and we therefore approve of the proposed amendments for bishops for races and languages, and request our Board of Bishops to submit the same to the Annual Conferences of the fall of 1915 and the Spring Conferences of 1916, and earnestly pray for their adoption.

We also rejoice in the growing movement for church federation and unity. The colored man has nothing to gain by sectionalism, and, therefore, is willing to treat on organic union upon the New Testament basis. With the light now before us, we approve of the plan of the Federation Commission of Methodism for the reorganization providing for Jurisdictional or Quadrennial Conferences with identical powers and privileges, one of which is to be composed of the affiliated colored membership.



