

# The General Conference of 1820

by Nathan Bangs

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*The General Conference of 1820 addressed various issues affecting the Methodist Episcopal Church, including the state of the episcopacy, education, and the use of spirituous liquors, and made decisions regarding the establishment of seminaries and the Canadian mission.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 133:1, Proverbs 15:22, 1 Corinthians 14:40, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 3:16

**Topics:** "Church History", "Worship Music"

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## Description

Nathan Bangs preaches at the General Conference in Baltimore in 1820, where delegates from various conferences gather to address important matters. Bishop McKendree's ill health is a concern, leading to resolutions for his relief and continued service. The conference discusses the state of education, leading to the establishment of seminaries of learning. Efforts are made to resolve disputes in Canada, resulting in a division of labor between American and British missionaries. The conference also approves an improved edition of the Hymn Book and a collection of tunes for sacred music, aiming to enhance worship experiences.

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## Transcript

This conference assembled in the city of Baltimore, May 1, 1820, and was composed of the following delegates: --

New York Conference: Nathan Bangs, Samuel Draper, Freeborn Garrettson, Samuel Merwin, Daniel Ostrander, Phineas Rice, Marvin Richardson, Peter P. Sandford, Eben Smith, Joshua Soule, Henry Stead, Ebenezer Washburn, Elijah Woolsey.

New England Conference: Oliver Beal, Daniel Fillmore, Elijah Hedding, David Kilbourn, Joseph A. Merrill, Timothy Merritt, Erastus Otis, George Pickering, Main Ruter, Solomon Sias.

Genesee Conference: William Case, Israel Chamberlin, Abner Chase, Charles Giles, Loring Grant, Marmaduke Pearce, Henry Ryan.

Ohio Conference: John Collins, Alexander Cummins, William Dixon, James B. Finley, Walter Griffith, James Quinn, Jonathan Stamper, Jacob Young.

Missouri Conference: John Scripps, Samuel H. Thompson, Jesse Walker.

Mississippi Conference: Thomas Griffin, John Lane.

Tennessee Conference: William Adams, James Anley, Peter Cartwright, Jesse Cunningham, Charles Holliday, Marcus Lindsey.

South Carolina Conference: James Andrew, Daniel Asbury, William Capers, Samuel Dunwody, Samuel K. Hodges, William M. Kennedy, Lewis Myers, James Norton, Joseph Travis.

Virginia Conference: Peyton Anderson, Edward Cannon, William Compton, Matthew M. Dance, Ethelbert Drake, Daniel Hall, James Patterson, John Weaver.

Baltimore Conference: Thomas Burch, John Emory, Lewis R. Fechtig, Joseph Frye, Alfred Griffith, James McCann, Nelson Reed, Stephen G. Roszel, Beverly Waugh.

Philadelphia Conference: James Bateman, Ezekiel Cooper, Joseph Lybrand, Stephen Martindale, Lawrence McCombs, Andrew Monroe, Gerard Morgan, James Ridgway, William Ryland, Solomon Sharpe, James Smith, Thomas Ware, Joshua Wells, George Woolley.

Bishops McKendree, George, and Roberts were present, and the conference was opened by Bishop McKendree by reading a portion of the word of God, singing, and prayer; and he then informed the conference that, in consequence of ill health, he should not be able to discharge the duties of the chair, but should avail himself of every opportunity which his health might permit to assist his colleagues in guiding the counsels of the conference. I regret that I am not able to find a copy of the written address which he afterward presented, containing recommendations of such subjects as he considered worthy the attention of the conference. From the character and duties of the committees, however, it appears that the address referred to the state of the episcopacy, -- the local preachers, -- to the instruction of children -- to the condition of the slaves, -- to the cause of missions -- to the use of spirituous liquors, -- to the condition of our houses of worship, and to the boundaries of the annual conferences -- all which were referred to appropriate committees.

Bishops George and Roberts, in a verbal communication, called the attention of the conference to the state of things in Canada, and to the subject of locating traveling preachers without their consent, which were referred to committees.

The following is an extract from the report of the committee on the episcopacy: --

After approving of the manner in which the bishops had discharged their onerous duties during the past four years, the committee add --

"In relation to strengthening the episcopacy, they have regarded with deep and affectionate concern the declining health and strength of our senior superintendent. Worn down by long, extensive, and faithful labors in the service of God and the Church, your committee feel a solicitude, which they doubt not is equally felt by the conference, that every practicable provision may be made for his relief and comfort, hoping that by a prudent relaxation from labor for a time, the Church may yet be blessed with the benefit of his very desirable services and counsel."

Whereupon the following resolutions were submitted by the committee and concurred in by the conference: --

That it is the wish and desire of this General Conference that Bishop McKendree, during his afflictions and debility, should travel in such directions, or remain in such places, as he may judge most conducive to his own health and comfort, and that he be accordingly, at the close of the conference, respectfully and affectionately requested so to do.

That, whenever Bishop McKendree shall think himself able, it is the desire of this conference that he should continue, so far as his health will permit, the exercise of his episcopal functions and superintending care.

That the committee appointed by the last General Conference, to make provision for the families of the bishops, are hereby continued, and that the same committee be directed to take into consideration the present state of Bishop McKendree's health, and to provide for defraying any extra expenses which, in their judgment, his afflictions may make requisite."

This affectionate regard of the conference for the bishop was a source of great consolation to him, and counterbalanced, in some measure at least, the mental anxieties he suffered at this conference, in consequence of the conflicting opinions respecting the manner in which the presiding elders should be appointed, and in what their duties should consist. But as all these things, together with the election and resignation of another bishop, have been fully detailed in vol. ii, page 330 [separate pages not transcribed into the electronic text -- DVM], I shall add nothing more in reference to them here, only to say, that Bishop McKendree expressed his high gratification for the respect and sympathy thus manifested toward him by the conference in his afflictions, and for the confidence reposed in the integrity with which he had administered the government of the Church.

We have before remarked that the cause of education had been abandoned by our Church since the destruction of Cokesbury College the second time by fire, and that the consequences of this long neglect of so important a cause began to bear injuriously upon the character and prosperity of the Church. This had been painfully felt and feelingly expressed by some of the most enlightened members of our Church, both ministers and people, and some incipient steps had been taken by the New England and New York conferences to remedy the evil. In 1817 an academy had been established in Newmarket, N.H., under the patronage of the New England conference, and another in the city of New York in 1819, under the patronage of the New York conference. Wishing to secure also the patronage of the General Conference, as far as might be consistent, and likewise to awaken a spirit favorable to the cause of education generally, the friends of these institutions presented to this General Conference their respective constitutions and plans of procedure, praying that the bishops might be authorized to appoint principals from among the traveling preachers for a longer space than two years. This authority was granted, and the whole subject was referred to a committee, the report of which, in the following words, was adopted by the conference: --

"The committee appointed to take into consideration the propriety of recommending to the annual conferences the establishment of seminaries of learning, having had the subject under deliberation, beg leave to submit the following report: --

"Your committee regret the want of time, as well as talent, to take that extended and comprehensive view of the subject which its importance demands; but it is cause of greater regret still, considering the rapid improvement of society in almost every science, and the extension of our Church through the propagation of those divine principles which we consider so unspeakably precious, that this subject has not sooner

claimed the attention of the General Conference.

"Almost all seminaries of learning in our country, of much celebrity, are under the control of Calvinistic or of Hopkinsian principles, or otherwise are managed by men denying the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. If any of our people, therefore, wish to give their sons or daughters a finished education, they are under the necessity of resigning them to the management of those institutions which are more or less hostile to our views of the grand doctrines of Christianity.

"Another capital defect in most seminaries of learning, your committee presume to think, is, that experimental and practical godliness is considered only of secondary importance; whereas, in the opinion of your committee, this ought to form the most prominent feature in every literary institution. Religion and learning should mutually assist each other, and thus connect the happiness of both worlds together.

"On account, however, of the different usages which prevail in the several sections of our widely extended country, originating from state regulations, &c., your committee think it impossible for the General Conference to adopt a system of regulations on this subject uniformly the same for each annual conference. But that each conference should exert itself to adopt some method for such advantages to the rising generation as may be had from literary institutions which combine religion and learning together, it is thought, there can be no doubt.

"Your committee rejoice in being able to say, that two of your annual conferences, namely, New England and New York, have established seminaries, which, in a good degree, answer the description your committee would recommend. These institutions afford an encouraging prospect of usefulness. Your committee therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolutions, viz.:

Resolved, by the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, that it be, and it is hereby, recommended to all the annual conferences to establish, as soon as practicable, literary institutions, under their own control, in such way and manner as they may think proper.

Resolved, &c., That it be the special duty of the episcopacy to use their influence to carry the above resolution into effect, by recommending the subject to each annual conference.

Resolved, &c., That the following amendment to the second answer of the third question of the fourth section of the first chapter of the Discipline be adopted, viz.: after the word preachers, let there be added, And the presidents, principals, or teachers of seminaries of learning, which are or may be under our superintendence.

Resolved, &c., That the principals of the Wesleyan Academy and Wesleyan Seminary be requested to forward a copy of their constitutions to each of the annual conferences.

Resolved, &c., That a copy of this report be recorded on the journals of the several annual conferences."

The adoption of this report by the General Conference, no doubt, tended greatly to subserve the cause of education, and to diffuse among us more generally than heretofore a desire to avail ourselves of the advantages to be derived from literary and scientific improvement.

That opposition should be manifested to these efforts to raise the standard of education, by any of the disciples of the illustrious Wesley, whose profound learning added so much splendor to his character as an evangelical minister, may seem strange to some. This, however, was the fact; and their unreasonable

opposition, exemplified in a variety of ways, tended not a little to paralyze, for a season, the efforts of those who had enlisted in this cause; while the apathy of others retarded its progress, and made its final success somewhat uncertain. And it has not been without much labor and persevering industry that this opposition has been measurably overcome, and the dormant energies of the Church awakened and excited to action in favor of this noble enterprise. Its onward march, however, has been hailed with no less delight by its friends than deprecated by its enemies, while its success thus far has added greatly to the character which Methodism was acquiring in the public estimation. All we now want, to place our literary institutions on a permanent foundation, and make them eminently useful, is the simultaneous and general effort of the members and friends of the Church to contribute liberally for their support and endowment.

It has been seen in a preceding chapter that difficulties had arisen in Canada, growing chiefly out of the state of things which had been brought on by the war of 1812. In compliance with the request of the brethren in Quebec, and some members of the church in Montre, the British conference had supplied these places with missionaries; and through the solicitations of some individuals in Upper Canada missionaries had also been sent into that province, where our preachers had long labored with great success, amid many privations and sufferings, and were still working to the satisfaction of the great majority of the people.

This state of things had been productive of much irritation among the societies in Upper Canada, protesting conflicting views and interests mutually injurious, and of course tending to impede the progress of pure religion.

At this General Conference the subject came up for consideration, by numerous memorials and petitions from the several circuits in Upper Canada, protesting against the interference of the British missionaries, and praying that they might still be supplied with the ministry and ordinances of religion by the American conference. After a due consideration of the subject, the following resolutions were adopted: --

Resolved, by the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That it is the duty of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to continue their episcopal charge over our societies in the Canadas, all except Quebec.

Resolved, &c., That the following address be sent to our brethren in Canada: --

"Dear Brethren: -- We have received and read with deep interest the affectionate memorials and addresses from the several circuits in the provinces of Canada, in which you have expressed your strong attachment to us, and your ardent desire for the continuance of our ministerial care over you. We most cordially reciprocate the sentiments of brotherly affection and Christian attachment you have expressed, and pledge ourselves to use our best endeavors for your spiritual and eternal interest.

"We sincerely deprecate those evils of which you complain, and which have grown out of the conduct of the missionaries sent by the British conference to labor in Canada. Confiding, however, in the integrity of that conference, and believing they have been misled by partial and erroneous statements, sent by interested persons in Canada, we still hope that the existing embarrassments will be removed, and that an amicable adjustment of this unhappy affair may be brought about.

"We can assure you that no means which, in our opinion, will be likely to produce this desirable result, shall be left untried.

"That you may be convinced that we have neither been inattentive to your interests nor unmindful of the respect due to our British brethren, we beg leave to lay before you a brief statement of what has been done in reference to this subject.

"It is doubtless well known to you that your case was fully laid before us at our last session in this city, and impartially considered in the presence of brothers Black and Bennett, who were sent as representatives by the British conference; and after hearing all that could be said on both sides of the question, it was resolved most expedient, among other reasons because we understood it was your earnest desire, to continue, as we had done heretofore, our ministerial labors among you. That the British conference might be fully apprised of the course we had taken, an address was sent to them, stating the reasons which had directed our decision in relation to Canada, and requesting that some arrangements might be made for an amicable adjustment of the existing difficulties. To this Communication we have received no direct answer.

"Similar communications have been since sent, by Bishops McKendree and George. The letter sent by Bishop George contained a full development of the affairs of Canada; but neither has an answer to this been received. As some of the circuits have petitioned to have a separate annual conference in Canada, this subject has been considered, and it is thought to be inexpedient for the present, because, among other reasons, it might prevent that interchange of preachers, so very desirable, and so essential to your prosperity.

"After assuring you of our unabated attachment to you as a branch of the Church over which we are called, in the providence of God, to extend our oversight, and of our determination, at your earliest request, as well as from a consciousness of imperious duty, to continue to afford you all the ministerial aid in our power, we exhort you to steadfastness in the faith, to unity and love, and to perseverance in all holy obedience.

Resolved, &c., That the following note be inserted in the Discipline, under the twenty-third article of our Church, viz.: 'As far as it respects civil affairs we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be: and therefore it is expected that all our preachers and people who may be under the British or any other government will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.'

Resolved, by the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That this conference address the British conference on the subject of a mutual exchange of delegates, as representatives of the one conference to the other."

The first resolution was afterward so modified as to authorize the delegate who might be sent to England to allow the whole of the lower province to be given up to the British connection: and then the following was added: --

That the episcopacy be requested, if practicable, to send a delegate to the British conference at their next session in July, or at any time thereafter, and furnish him with the requisite instructions, and also to draw on the Book Concern for the amount necessary to defray the expense.

Resolved, &c., That the episcopacy, by and with the advice and consent of the Genesee conference, if they judge it expedient, previous to the sitting of the next General Conference, shall have authority to establish an annual conference in Canada."

The Rev. J. Emory was appointed delegate, who, in addition to an adjustment of the existing difficulties in Canada, was instructed to convey to that body the affectionate attachment of the American conference to their British brethren, and to request a regular interchange of delegates from one connection to the other, at such times as might be mutually satisfactory. As an assurance, however, that there existed a disposition, on the part of the missionary Committee in London, to remove all just cause of complaint, and to prevent any improper interference of their missionaries in the houses and places occupied by our preachers in Upper Canada, the following document had been received by Bishop McKendree and submitted to the General Conference: --

"Wesleyan Mission House, 77 Hatton Garden, London, 25th February, 1819

"Dear Sir: -- We transmit for your information the following resolutions, lately entered into by the committee of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, relative to the British missionaries in Canada, and which resolutions have been transmitted to those missionaries.

"Resolved, That it be recommended to the brethren in Canada to preach in a chapel which is now jointly occupied by the American brethren, and, for the sake of peace, to pursue their labor separately, and not to continue their labors in any station previously occupied by the American brethren, except when the population is so large, or so scattered, that it is evident a very considerable part of them must be neglected.

"Resolved, That they are to act under the general instruction of the committee of June 26, 1818, viz.:

"1. That it be communicated to the missionaries there that the conference and the committee never intended that the missionaries sent out by them should invade the societies raised up by the preachers appointed by the American conference, and to divide them; but that they should communicate the benefits of the Christian ministry to those parts of the country where the inhabitants are destitute of them, and to labor in those towns and villages where the population is so large that the addition of their labors to those of other ministers is demanded by the moral necessities of the people.

"The foregoing resolutions will, we hope, satisfy yourself and the American conference that the British conference and the missionary committee in London feel sorry that any interference should have ever taken place between your missionaries and those sent by the British conference, who most earnestly wish that their missionaries may labor in harmony with all good men.

"Praying that Christian kindness and good-will may prevail and abound, we are, dear sir, with Christian affection, your obedient servants,

"Jabez Bunting, Richard Watson, Jos. Taylor, General Secretaries."

Though the final result of this negotiation could not be known until some time after the adjournment of the conference, yet it seems most proper to finish the account of it in this place. And it is recorded with the more pleasure, because it evinces the disposition and determination, on the part of both the English and American conferences, not to allow the collisions which had unhappily occurred in Canada between individual preachers of the two connections to interrupt their harmony, or to weaken the strength of their friendship and fraternal regards.

Mr. Emory bore with him to the British conference the following address: --

"Baltimore, May 27, 1820

"The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, to the British conference of ministers and preachers, late in connection with the Rev. John Wesley.

"Reverend and Dear Brethren: -- Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, and to the Israel of God under your charge, both at home and in foreign countries. With a sincere and earnest desire to establish and preserve the most perfect harmony and peace with you, our elder brethren, we have adopted measures for opening such friendly intercourse as will, we devoutly pray, tend to the accomplishment of this desirable end.

"Situated so remotely from each other, and under different forms of civil government, it is believed that no mode of correspondence will so effectually unite the European and American Methodists as an interchange of delegates from our respective conferences.

We are encouraged to hope that such correspondence will be acceptable to you, from the consideration of the visit of Messrs. Black and Bennett, at our last session, and from the friendly opinion of our dear brother, the Rev. William Black, who has been with us during our present sitting in this city.

"Should such a friendly intercourse be approved, we shall receive with cordiality your representative at our succeeding sessions, and, with the most sincere friendship and affection, reciprocate the visit.

"The prosperity of your missions, both at home and in foreign countries, is matter of praise and thanksgiving to the great Head of the church; and our unceasing prayer is, that they still may increase more and more.

"The last four years have been distinguished by no ordinary success within the field of our labor: our borders have been greatly enlarged, and the wilderness has budded and blossomed as the rose. The last year especially has been attended with an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the increase of our numbers has exceeded that of any former year.

"The field of missionary labors is opening and extending before us, and the Divine Providence appears to be preparing the way for the conversion of the Indian tribes on this vast continent.

"The bearer, the Rev. John Emory, has been appointed our delegate to your body, and will be able to give you a more particular account of the work under our charge, and especially of our commencement and progress in the missionary cause.

"Most earnestly praying that the Methodists may be identified in their doctrine, experience, and practice, in every part of the world, and that the Father of lights may pour upon you and upon us the Spirit of grace, and preserve us in the unity of faith, and in the fellowship and peace of his Son Jesus Christ, we remain, reverend and dear brethren, yours in the gospel of our common Lord.

"Signed by order and in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church,

Enoch George, President, Alexander McCaine, Secretary."

To this address the following answer was sent, together with the resolutions in relation to the existing difficulties in Canada: --

"To the General Superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America

"Dear Brethren: -- We inclose to your care the resolutions passed by the conference after the letters addressed to us by the American General Conference, and delivered by the Rev. John Emory, had been read and considered.

"In addition to the expression of our sentiments contained in those resolutions, on the renewal of intercourse between the two conferences, we are directed to request you to convey to your next General Conference our Warmest thanks for those declarations of unabated brotherly affection toward us and the connection which your letters contain, and for the appointment of Mr. Emory as your representative.

"In him we have recognized the purity of your doctrine and the fervor and simplicity of your piety. We have received him, not as a stranger, but as a 'brother beloved.' Our hearts are as his heart; and it will be remembered as one of the most pleasing circumstances connected with the conference held in this town, that our personal intercourse with you was here restored, and that this 'work of love' was committed to so able and excellent a brother, whose public ministrations and addresses in our conference have been equally gratifying and instructive to us and to our people.

"From the statements made by Mr. Emory as to the progress of the work of God in the United States, we have received the greatest satisfaction. We offered our united thanksgivings to God that the doctrines of primitive Methodism, the preaching of which God has so eminently owned in the salvation of men and the edification of believers, are not only continued among you in their purity, but have been so widely extended by your great and persevering efforts; and that the same holy discipline, in all its essential parts, continues, wherever you form societies, to guard and confirm the work which God has made to prosper in your hands.

"For the state of our affairs in Great Britain and Ireland, and in our missionary stations, we refer you to Mr. Emory, who, as health would allow, has attended our sittings, and to those publications with which, before his departure, we shall be happy to furnish him, to be laid before you.

"You will see that we have had to rejoice with you in the great extension of the work of God into the various parts of the British empire, and that the institutions of Methodism, which we have proved to be so well adapted to promote and to preserve true religion, are known and valued in every quarter of the globe. May we, with you, be the honored instruments of turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just in every place, and of hastening the universal kingdom of our Lord.

"The resolutions on the disputes in the Canadas were adopted after a calm and patient consideration of the case, in which we were greatly assisted by Mr. Emory. We hope that they will lead to a full adjustment of those disputes, and that the affection which exists between the two connections generally will extend itself to the brethren and societies in the Canadas. This is the disposition which we shall earnestly inculcate upon those under our care in those provinces, and we have full confidence that the same care will be taken by you to extinguish every feeling contrary to love among those over whom you have control and influence.

"With earnest prayers for you, dear and honored brethren, in particular, on whom devolve the general direction of the affairs of the great body of Methodists in the western world, and labors so severe, but so glorious, -- that you may be filled with wisdom for counsel, and strength to fulfill the duties of your great office; -- and also praying that all your churches may have rest, and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in

the comforts of the Holy Ghost, be abundantly multiplied, we are, dear brethren, yours most affectionately in Christ Jesus,

"Jabez Bunting, President, George Marsden, Secretary. Liverpool, August, 1820."

"Resolutions of the British Conference on American Affairs

That the conference embraces with pleasure this opportunity of recognizing that principle which, it is hoped, will be permanently maintained, that the Wesleyan Methodists are one in every part of the world.

That the British conference has frequently rejoiced in the very favorable account which they have received, year after year, of the great and glorious work which God is graciously carrying on in the United States of America; but that it is with peculiar pleasure that they receive a representative from the General Conference in America. The statement given by our beloved brother, Mr. Emory, of the present state of Methodism in America, has been received with much joy; and the conference also expresses its high satisfaction, not only in the declaration, but in the proof, of the love of our American brethren in fully opening the way for a brotherly intercourse between the European and the American societies.

The conference particularly rejoices in the zeal which is manifested by our American brethren in carrying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Indian tribes, and in the success which God has already given to their labors in that natural and moral wilderness; and hopes that the time is drawing near when the aborigines of that vast continent shall become the mild and gentle followers of our gracious Redeemer.

That it is the earnest wish of this conference that the kind and friendly intercourse which is now opened between the British and the American conference should be continued; and that, prior to the time of holding the next General Conference in America, the British conference will appoint one or more of their body to visit our brethren in America, to be present at their General Conference.

That a letter shall be sent to the American brethren, containing these resolutions, and strongly expressing our high approbation of the selection of our highly esteemed brother, Mr. Emory, as their representative to our conference, and of our earnest desire and prayer that, in the spirit of Christian love, we may ever be one in Christ Jesus.

That there shall be a regular exchange of Minutes, magazines, missionary reports and notices, and all new original works, published by the European and American Methodists, from their respective book rooms.

"On the subject of the unpleasant circumstances which have occurred in the Canadas between the American preachers and our missionaries, referred to the conference by the missionary committee in London, with their opinion that Upper Canada shall be left in possession of the American brethren, and that our missionary exertions shall be confined to the lower province, this committee recommend to the conference the adoption of the following principles and arrangements

That, as the American Methodists and ourselves are but one body, it would be inconsistent with our unity, and dangerous to that affection which ought to characterize us in every place, to have different societies and congregations in the same towns and villages, or to allow of any intrusion on either side into each other's labors. That this principle shall be the rule by which the disputes now existing in the Canadas, between our missionaries, shall be terminated. That the simplest and most effectual manner of carrying this rule into effect appears to us to be, to accede to the suggestion of the American conference, that the

American brethren shall have the occupation of Upper Canada, and the British missionaries that of Lower Canada, allowing sufficient time for carrying this arrangement into effect, with all possible tenderness to existing prejudices and conflicting interests on both sides; the arrangement to be Completed within a period to be fixed as early as possible by the missionary committee.

But should insuperable difficulties occur in the attempt to execute this plan, (which, however, we do not anticipate,) either party shall be at liberty to propose any other mode of accommodation which shall assume as its basis the great principle laid down in the first of these resolutions, and which we are of opinion should be held most sacred in every part of the world. That if hereafter it shall appear to any of our brethren there, either British missionaries or American preachers, that any place on either side the boundary line, now mentioned, needs religious help, and presents a favorable opportunity for usefulness, the case shall be referred by the Canada district meeting to the General Conference, or by that body to the Canada district; and if either shall formally decline to supply the place on their own side the boundary, then the other shall be at liberty to supply the said place, without being deemed to have violated the terms of this friendly compact.

And it shall be explicitly understood in this arrangement, that each party shall be bound to supply with preachers all those stations and their dependencies which shall be relinquished by each of the connections, that no place on either side shall sustain any loss of the ordinances of religion in consequence of this arrangement. That the missionary committee be directed to address a letter to the private and official members, trustees, &c., under the care of our missionaries in Upper Canada, informing them of the judgment of the conference, and affectionately and earnestly advising them to put themselves and their chapels under the pastoral care of the American preachers, with the suggestion of such considerations, to incline them to it, as the Committee may judge most proper.

That the bishops of the American connection shall direct a similar letter to the private and official members, trustees, &c., under the care of the American preachers in the province of Lower Canada, requesting them to put themselves and their chapels under the care of the British missionaries." The instructions to the missionaries, sent out in pursuance of the above arrangement, are so replete with Christian urbanity and kindness, and so fully exemplified the spirit by which all Christian associations should be actuated in their intercourse with each other, that I am persuaded the reader will be gratified with their perusal They are as follows: --

"Copy of a letter of instructions from the Missionary Committee in London, to the Rev. Messrs. R. Williams and the other British missionaries in the provinces of Canada."

"Dear Brothers: -- Herewith we transmit you a copy of resolutions, passed at our late conference, on the subject of the disputes which have unhappily existed between our American brethren and us, relative to our missions in Canada.

"The preceding resolutions are general, and refer to the renewal of the intercourse, by personal deputation, between the American and British conferences, by the visit of Mr. Emory. We have given you the resolutions in full, that you may see that we have recognized the principle that the Methodist body is ONE throughout the world, and that therefore its members are bound to cordial affection and brotherly union.

"The resolutions of the committee, passed some time ago, and forwarded for your guidance, prohibiting any interference with the work of the American brethren, would show you that the existence of collisions

between us and them gave us serious concern, and that the Committee were anxious to remove, as far as they, at that time, were acquainted with the circumstances, every occasion of dispute.

"Certainly the case of Montreal chapel was one which we could never justify to our minds, and the committee have in many instances had but a partial knowledge of the real religious wants of the upper province, and of its means of supply. The only reason we could have for increasing the number of missionaries in that province was, the presumption of a strong necessity, arising out of the destitute condition of the inhabitants, the total want, or too great distance of ministers.

"On no other ground could we apply money raised for missionary purposes for the supply of preachers to Upper Canada. The information we have had for two years past has all served to show that the number of preachers employed there by the American brethren was greater than we had at first supposed, and was constantly increasing.

"To us, therefore, it now appears, that though there may be places in that province which are not visited, they are within the range, or constantly coming within the range, of the extended American itinerancy; and that Upper Canada does not present to our efforts a ground so fully and decidedly missionary as the lower province, where much less help exists, and a great part of the population is involved in popish superstition.

"We know that political reasons exist in many minds for supplying even Upper Canada, as far as possible, with British missionaries; and however natural this feeling may be to Englishmen, and even praiseworthy, when not carried too far, it will be obvious to you that this is a ground on which, as a missionary society, and especially as a society under the direction of a committee which recognizes as brethren, and one with itself, the American Methodists, we cannot act.

Because, as a missionary society, we cannot lay it down as a principle that those whose object is to convert the world shall be prevented from seeking and saving souls under a foreign government, for we do not thus regulate our own efforts.

To act on this principle would be to cast an odium upon our American brethren, as though they did not conduct themselves peaceably under the British government, which is, we believe, contrary to the fact.

That if any particular exceptions to this Christian and submissive conduct were, on their part, to occur, we have not the least right to interfere, unless, indeed, the Americas conference obviously neglected to enforce upon the offending parties its own discipline. Upon any political feeling which may exist, either in your minds or in the minds of a party in any place, we cannot therefore proceed. Our objects are purely spiritual, and our American brethren and ourselves are one body of Christians, sprung a common stock, holding the same doctrines, enforcing the same discipline, and striving in common to spread the light of true religion through the world.

"In conformity with these views, we have long thought it a reproach, and doing more injury, by disturbing the harmony of the two connections, than could be counterbalanced by any local good, that the same city or town should see two congregations, and two societies, and two preachers, professing the same form of Christianity, and yet thus proclaiming themselves rivals to each other, and, in some instances, invading each other's societies and chapels, and thus producing party feelings. The purposes of each, we are ready to allow, have been good, though mistaken; and we rather blame ourselves for not having obtained more accurate information on some particulars, that intimate any dissatisfaction with the missionaries in the Canadas, with whose zeal and labors we have much reason to be satisfied.

"A part of the evil has also arisen from the want of personal communication, by deputation, between the two conferences, now happily established. These considerations had long and seriously occupied our minds before the arrival of Mr. Emory, charged by the General American Conference to bring these matters under our consideration. The committee, previous to the conference, went with him fully into the discussion of the disputes in the Canadas, and recommended those principles of adjustment which the conference, after they had been referred to a special committee during the time of its sitting, adopted, and which we now transmit to all the brethren in the Canada station.

"You will consider these resolutions as the fruit of a very ample inquiry, and of serious deliberation.

"None of the principles here adopted by us do indeed go farther than to prevent interference with each other's labors among the American and British missionaries, and the setting up of 'altar against altar' in the same city, town, or village; but, knowing that circumstances of irritation exist, and that too near a proximity might, through the infirmity of human nature, lead to a violation of that union which the conference has deemed a matter of paramount importance to maintain, we have thought it best to adopt a geographical division of the labor of each, and that the upper province should be left to the American brethren and the lower to you. The reasons for this are, --

That the upper province is so adequately supplied by the American conference as not to present that pressing ease of necessity which will justify our expending our funds upon it.

That Mr. Emory has engaged that its full supply by American preachers shall be, as far as possible, attended to.

That this measure at once terminates the dispute as to Montreal.

That it will prevent collision without sacrifice of public good.

That Lower Canada demands our efforts rather than Upper, as being more destitute, and the labors of the brethren there being more truly missionary.

"A transfer of societies and places of preaching will of course follow. Our societies in Upper Canada are to be put under the care of the American brethren; theirs in the lower province under yours.

"It is clear that this, under all circumstances, will require prudent and wise management, and we depend upon you to carry the arrangement into effect in the same spirit of kindness and temper in which the question has been determined by the conference and Mr. Emory.

"Feel that you are one with your American brethren, embarked in the same great cause, and eminently of the same religious family, and the little difficulties of arrangement will be easily surmounted; and if any warm spirits (which is probable) rise up to trouble you, remember that you are to act upon the great principle sanctioned by the conference, and not upon local prejudices. The same advices Mr. Emory has pledged himself shall be given to the American preachers, and you will each endeavor to transfer the same spirit into the societies respectively. When the preachers recognize each other as brethren, the people will naturally fall under the influence of the same feeling.

"We have appointed our respected brethren, Messrs. Williams and Hick, who are to choose as an associate a third preacher in full connection, to meet an equal number of preachers to be appointed by the American bishop, who shall agree upon the time in which the chapels and societies shall be mutually

transferred, and the arrangements of the conference be carried into effect. The place of the meeting they are to fix for their mutual convenience, but the meeting is to be held as early as possible after the receipt of the instructions of the committee, that the report of the final adjustment of the affair may appear in your next district minutes.

"We conclude with our best wishes for your personal happiness and usefulness. May you ever go forth in the 'fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace,' and be made the honored instruments of winning many souls to the knowledge and obedience of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"We are, dear brother, yours very affectionately,

"Jos. Taylor, Richard Watson, Secretaries. " Wesleyan Mission House, 77 Hatton Garden; 23d August, 1820."

As it was agreed that our bishops should send similar instructions to those brethren to whom the carrying the above resolutions into practical effect should be committed, the following communication was sent to the Rev. William Case: --

"Alexandria, (D. C.,) Oct. 16, 1820.

"Dear Brother: -- I transmit you herewith a Copy of the resolutions of the late British conference, received through brother Emory, our representative to that body, on the subjects embraced in his mission; and also of the instructions of the missionary committee in London to the Rev. Messrs. R. Williams and the other British missionaries in the provinces of Canada, predicated on those resolutions.

"From these documents you will perceive that the desire of our General Conference, both for the establishment of a personal intercourse by deputation between the two connections, and for the amicable adjustment of the afflicting differences in the Canadas, has been happily accomplished. Indeed it appears, not only from those papers, but from the communications of our representative, that this desire was met, both by, the British conference and the missionary committee, with a promptness and brotherly affection which we should take equal pleasure in acknowledging and reciprocating.

"This it now devolves upon me (my colleagues being necessarily at a great distance, in the discharge of their official duties in the south and west) to enjoin it upon you to do; and to promote the same spirit of kindness toward our British brethren, among all the preachers, traveling and local, and all the official and private members within your district, to the utmost extent of your power.

"To remove the prejudices and allay the unpleasant excitements existing will, no doubt, require much prudent care. But in this 'labor of love' I expect in you a ready mind. Let the difficulties you may meet with only stimulate you to the exertion of your best and most persevering efforts in this behalf. Remember, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' 'Seek peace, then, and ensue it.' If it even seem to flee from you, follow it: 'Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be deified.'

"In the present state of things, (your acquaintance with which renders detail unnecessary,) we have thought it best to agree to a division of our field of labors in the Canadas by the provincial line. In the expediency of this measure you will see that the missionary committee in London and the British conference have concurred; so that our labors there are to be confined, in future, to the upper province, and those of the British missionaries to the lower.

"A transfer of societies and places of preaching will of course follow. Our societies in Lower Canada are to be put under the care of our British brethren, and theirs, in the upper province, under ours.

"For the execution of these arrangements I have appointed brother Ryan and yourself, with authority to associate with you a third preacher in full connection, to meet the Rev. Messrs. R. Williams and Hick, appointed by the missionary committee, and such other preacher as they may associate with them. The time and place of meeting you will agree on with them, for your mutual convenience. The missionary committee have instructed their agents that the meeting is to be held as early as possible after the receipt of the instructions of the committee, that the report of the final adjustment of the affair may appear in the next district minutes. In this we concur. You will, therefore, immediately on the reception of these instructions, in conjunction with brother Ryan and your associate, correspond with the Rev. Messrs. Williams and Hick and their associate on the subject; and fail not to use every means in your power for the prompt execution of the arrangements in the best faith, and in the most harmonious and affectionate manner. In the language of the missionary committee we cordially unite to say, 'Feel that you are one with your' British 'brethren, embarked in the same great cause, and eminently of the same religious family, and the little difficulties of arrangement will be easily surmounted; and if any warm spirits rise up to trouble you, remember that you are to act on the great principles now sanctioned and avowed by the two Connections, and not upon local prejudices.' If each endeavor to transfuse this spirit into the societies respectively, the people will much more easily be brought under the influence of the same feeling, when it shall be found to possess and actuate the preachers. In any event, let there be no deficiency on your part in spirit, word, or deed. We commit to you a sacred work, which you are bound to perform, not only as to the matter, but in the manner, in the temper, in which, as these instructions are intended to show you, we ourselves would perform it, could we be present. Attend strictly to this, that we may have joy and consolation in your love, the bowels of the saints being refreshed by you; and forward to us, as early as possible, regular and full copies of all your correspondence and proceedings in this business.

"Should it be found practicable to complete the arrangements previously to the next Genesee annual conference, you will of course take care to provide for the supply of those circuits, societies, and places of preaching in the upper province which may be transferred to us by our British brethren, as they are to provide for those which are to be simultaneously transferred to them in the lower province. You will also take care, from time to time, to extend supplies to any remaining places which may be found destitute in the upper province, as far as possible.

"There are several circuits, I believe, in Lower Canada, attached to the New York and New England conferences. These are included in the arrangement. You will therefore forward a copy of these instructions to each of the presiding elders within whose districts those circuits are embraced, and request them to be prepared to cooperate with you in the final execution of the business, and to report the same at their ensuing annual conferences respectively.

"The missionary committee in London having kindly furnished us with a copy of their instructions, we shall transmit a copy of these I now send you to them. You will also show them, when you meet, to the Rev. Messrs. Williams and Hick and their associate, and, if they desire it, give them a copy, that you may go on in this good work as we have happily begun, with that frankness and kindness which become brethren in such a cause.

"By the sixth resolution of the British conference on the Canadian business, it is provided that the missionary committee be directed to address a letter to the private and official members, trustees, &c.,

under the care of the missionaries in Upper Canada, informing them of the judgment of the Conference, and affectionately and earnestly advising them to put themselves and their chapels under the pastoral care of the American preachers, with the suggestion of such considerations to incline them to it as the committee may judge most proper. And by the seventh resolution it is provided that we shall address a similar letter to the private and official members, trustees, &c., under our care. I accordingly inclose a letter which you will use for this purpose, after you have met with Messrs. Williams and Hick, &c., and agreed with them on the time of making the transfer of the societies, chapels, &c., but not to be used before. At the same time, after this meeting and agreement, you will also forward a copy of this letter to each of the presiding elders in the New York and New England conferences whose districts embrace circuits in Lower Canada, to be used by them.

"Confiding in your faithful discharge of the several trusts committed to you, I commend you to the Lord, and remain, dear brother, yours in love.

"Wm. McKendree."

The following was also addressed to the brethren therein mentioned in Lower Canada: --

"To the private and official members, trustees, &c., of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lower Canada

"Very Dear Brethren: -- You are aware that, for several years past, very unpleasant collisions have occurred in various parts both of the upper and lower provinces, between the British missionaries and some of our brethren. This has been a source of great affliction to us, and has led to the adoption of various and successive measures for the correction of the evil.

"Our late General Conference, being earnestly desirous of restoring the amicable relations of the two connections, authorized the deputation of a representative to the British conference for this purpose. One was accordingly sent. And, after a deliberate investigation, it has been mutually thought best, for the sake of peace and love, under all the circumstances of the case, to divide our labors in the Canadas in such a manner as to guard effectually against all collisions in future.

"With this view, it has been agreed that our British brethren shall supply the lower province and our preachers the upper; yet so that no circuits or societies on either side shall be left destitute by the other. This has been sacredly attended to, and mutual pledges for the performance of it have been passed. It now becomes our duty, therefore, to inform you of this agreement, and to advise you, in the most affectionate and earnest manner, to put yourselves and your chapels under the care of our British brethren, as their societies and chapels in the upper province will be put under ours.

"This communication to you, we confess, is not made without pain; not from any want of affection for our British brethren, but from the recollection of those tender and endearing ties which have bound us to you. But a necessity is laid upon us. It is a peace-offering. No other consideration could have induced us to consent to the measure. Forgive, therefore, our seeming to give you up. We do not give you up in heart, in affection, in kind regard, in prayers.

"The British and American connections have now mutually recognized each other as one body of Christians, sprung from a common stock, holding the same doctrines, of the same religious family, and striving in common to speed the light of true religion through the world; and they have agreed to keep up a regular intercourse by deputation, in future, for the maintenance of this brotherly union.

"Let any past differences, therefore, be forgotten. Let them be buried for ever. Confirm your love toward our British brethren, and receive them as ourselves; -- not as strangers, but as brothers beloved. By this shall all men know that we are Christ's disciples, if we love one another. Love is of God, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. May the God of love and peace be with you, and crown you with the blessedness of contributing with us to heal the wounds of the Church, and to establish that 'fellowship of the Spirit' which shall enable us to say, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountain of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.'

"For any farther information that you may desire I refer you to the presiding elder, to whom it is given in charge to make this communication to you; and remain, dear brethren, with the same affection for you, in the bonds of the gospel of peace, and the best wishes and prayers for your happiness and salvation,

"Wm. McKendree. "Alexandria, (D. C.,) October 16, 1820."

These proceedings gave general satisfaction, and tended not a little to allay the uneasiness which had resulted from the collisions of individuals in the two provinces, as well as to soften the asperities of those who had suffered the heat of party zeal to carry them beyond the bounds of Christian moderation. This result also shows how little the individual and local interests of a few affect those whose position gives them a commanding and impartial view of the whole ground of controversy, and who consequently feel for the whole as for every part, and for every part as for the whole. And it is no small commendation of the Christian spirit by which each of the contracting parties was actuated, to find them thus ready to sacrifice individual and local interests for the sake of binding the entire Methodist family together in one great brotherhood.

An improved edition of our Hymn Book was ordered by this General Conference to be printed by the book agents. The first hymn book printed in this country for the use of the members and friends of our Church was small, containing, to be sure, a choice selection, but not a sufficient variety of hymns to suit the different states of the human heart, and the several subjects which might be introduced into the pulpit, and other exercises of social worship and private devotion. This had been remedied, as was supposed, by adding, in 1808, a second book, consisting chiefly of hymns taken from the original hymns of John and Charles Wesley; but, unhappily, those who made this selection had taken the liberty to alter many of the hymns, by leaving out parts of stanzas, altering words, shortening or lengthening hymns, without much judgment or taste. By this injudicious method the poetry was often marred, and the sentiment changed much for the worse.

These things led the New York conference, at its session in 1819, to request the book committee in New York, in conjunction with the book agents, to prepare a revised edition of our Hymn Book, to be presented to this General Conference, which was done accordingly. The conference approved of the copy, and ordered it to be printed. The following extract from the preface will show the extent of and reasons for the alterations: --

"The Hymn Book heretofore in use among us has been thought by many to be defective, partly on account of the mutilated state of some of the hymns, and partly because of its being divided into two books. To remedy these inconveniences, measures have been adopted to prepare a revised edition of our Hymn

Book, such a one as should exclude the defects and retain the excellences of the one heretofore published.

"The greater part of the hymns contained in the former edition are retained in this, and several from Wesleys' and Coke's collections, not before published in this country, are added. The principal improvements which have been made consist in restoring those which had been altered, as is believed, for the worse, to their original state, as they came from the poetical pen of the Wesleys; for the following hymns were, except a few which have been taken from other authors, composed by the Rev. John and Charles Wesley -- names that will ever be held dear and in high estimation by every lover of sacred poetry."

This edition of the Hymn Book has been in use ever since, unaltered, except the addition of the names of the tunes at the head of each hymn, and, in 1836, of a supplement, which was prepared in conformity to the recommendation of the General Conference of 1832. Up to this time our people had not been furnished with a tune book suited to the various meters of our most excellent hymns. This General Conference ordered the editors to adopt such measures as they might judge most fit to supply this deficiency; and they accordingly, soon after the adjournment of conference, appointed a committee of competent persons to make a selection of such tunes as were needed to enable our congregations to use, in their devotional exercises, any and every hymn in the published collection they might choose, without being compelled to omit, for the want of a suitable tune, those particular meters especially, which are among the most experimental, spiritual, and poetical in the book. The following preface to this collection of tunes will show the reasons for and the manner in which the work was accomplished: --

"Singing forms such an interesting and important branch of divine service, that every effort to improve the science of sacred music should meet with corresponding encouragement. Nothing tends more, when rightly performed, to elevate the mind, and tune it to the strains of pure devotion. Hence the high estimation in which it has been constantly held by the Christian church. Indeed, every considerable revival of true godliness has been attended, not only with the cultivation and enlargement of knowledge in general, but of sacred poetry and music in particular. Singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord is the natural result of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. The melodious notes of many voices, harmoniously uniting to sound the praises of God, cannot but inspire the heart of the Christian to devotion, and elevate the affections to things spiritual and divine. Who, then, can be uninterested in the improvement of a science so beneficial to the church of God! What heart that has ever vibrated to the inspiring sounds of sacred and vocal music, but must exult in every attempt that is made to cultivate and diffuse the knowledge of this useful auxiliary in spreading the knowledge of God our Saviour!

"Though the Methodist Episcopal Church has never been insensible to the advantages resulting from the knowledge and practice of vocal music, having always used it perhaps more than most other denominations of Christians -- in public assemblies and private associations; yet a suitable tune book, adapted to the various hymns and meters of its Hymn Book, has long been a desideratum in its spiritual economy. Several efforts, indeed, have been made, by individuals, to supply this deficiency. The subject was brought before the General Conference at its last session; and it was finally referred to the discretion of the book agents.

"Believing such a collection of tunes, as should be suited to the various meters and subjects of our hymns, would be highly advantageous to the members and friends of our Church, soon after the conference closed its session, the agents adopted measures to accomplish this very desirable object. For this

purpose a committee, consisting of members of our Church, was appointed, who, besides their competency to this undertaking, felt a deep interest in the reputation and utility of this very important part of divine service. They were requested, in conformity as nearly as practicable to the requisition of our Discipline, to make a selection of tunes from authors of approved merit, keeping in view the various sections of our widely extended connection, that the peculiarity of taste, in the choice of tunes, might, as far as possible, be gratified. They entered upon their labor with cheerfulness, and persevered with conscientious care and diligence until they brought their work to a close: and the tunes comprised in the following selection will evince the result of their exertions, and their communication to the agents, with which we close this preface, will explain the manner in which they executed the trust confided to them.

"Dear Brethren: -- Your Committee, whose task it has been, by your request, to compile a book of tunes for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, report: That they have been fully aware of the extreme difficulty of making such a collection of tunes as should in all respects be accommodated either to the fancy or taste of every section of our widely extended connection. In the use of any particular style of tunes, so much generally depends upon education, local feelings, or mental constitution, that, except with those who are skilled in the science of music, the choice of a tune is seldom Caused by a discovery of its intrinsic worth, or its adaptation to the solemnities of Christian worship. Your committee, therefore, will neither be surprised nor disappointed if their selection, in coming before the public, meet with some of those discouragements which have attended works of a similar nature.

"Your committee, however, have not been regardless of the partialities of our societies in different parts of the Union. They have availed themselves of standard works which have obtained celebrity in the eastern and southern states, as well as those that are in general use among us. The best European authors have also been consulted. Books edited by members of our Church, or with a design to suit our Hymn Book, have received particular attention. They have neglected no means of ascertaining the wishes of our friends,

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