

PRESIDING ELDERS IN COUNCIL

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Presiding Elders in Council by Anonymous

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IN COUNCIL**

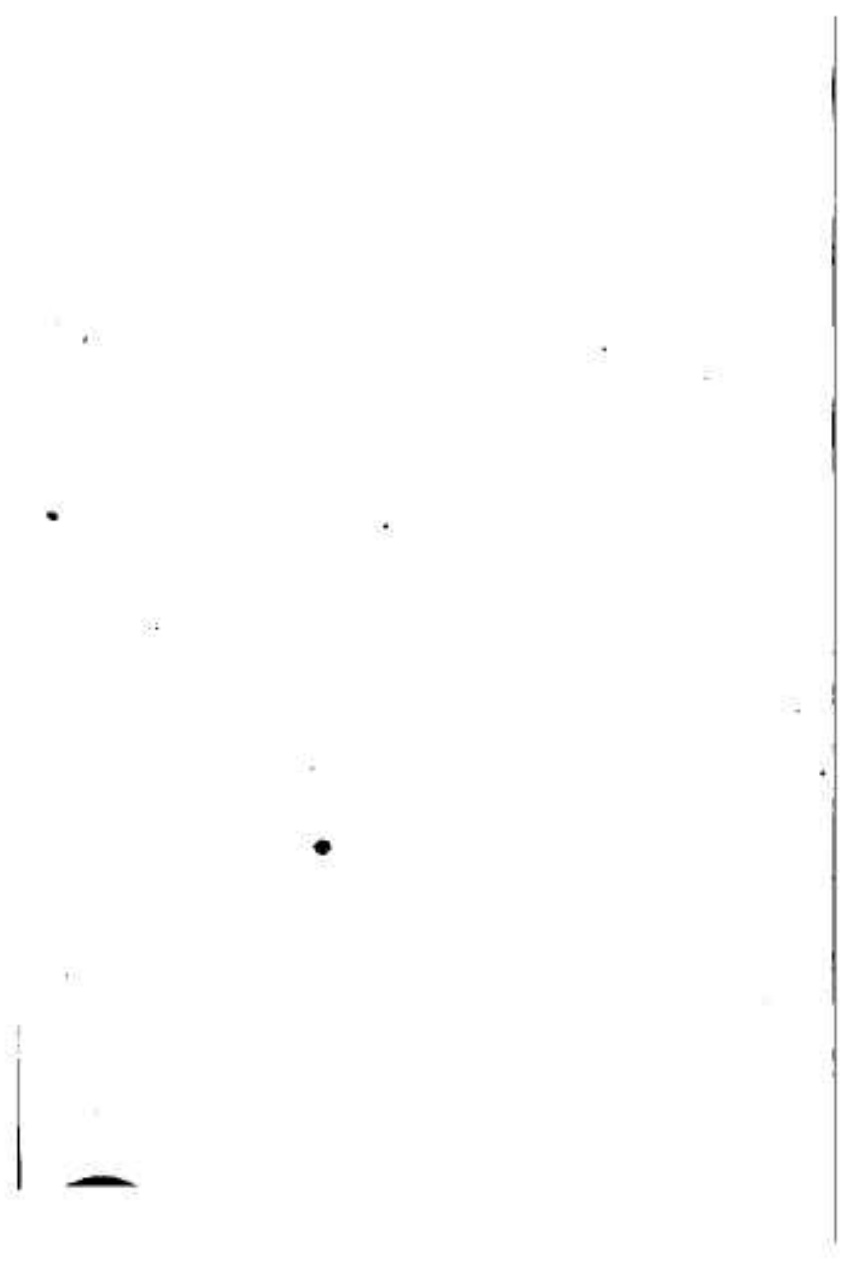
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MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE M. E. CHURCH,
805 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.
1884.



PRESIDING ELDERS IN COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY night, Dec. 19, 1883, witnessed an important meeting of the presiding elders of the New York, New York East, Newark, and New Jersey Conferences. They met at the residence of J. B. Cornell, upon the invitation of the Committee on Ways and Means, appointed by the Missionary Board, at the request of the General Missionary Committee. This committee is composed of the following gentlemen: John B. Cornell, G. H. Gregory, O. H. Tiffany, C. B. Fisk, J. H. Taft, Oliver Hoyt, J. M. Reid, and C. H. Fowler.

At half past five dinner was served by the liberality of Mr. Cornell, and it was evident that he understood what was involved in the presence of so many sub-bishops, veteran presiding elders.

There were present of the Committee on Ways and Means: Secretary J. M. Reid, D.D., LL.D.; Secretary C. H. Fowler, D.D., LL.D.; Rev. O. H. Tiffany, D.D.; Rev. G. H. Gregory; J. B. Cornell; Gen. C. B. Fisk; and J. H. Taft.

Bishop Harris was also present, and the following presiding elders:

Rev. G. H. Gregory, New York District, New York Conference.

Rev. A. H. Ferguson, Poughkeepsie District, New York Conference.

Rev. L. H. King, Prattsville District, New York Conference.

Rev. J. W. Ackerly, Ellenville District, New York Conference.

Rev. M. D'C. Crawford, Newburg District, New York Conference.

Rev. B. M. Adams, New York District, New York East Conference.

Rev. W. T. Hill, New York East District, New York East Conference.

Rev. I. Simmons, Brooklyn District, New York East Conference.

Rev. J. H. Knowles, Newark District, Newark Conference.

Rev. A. Craig, Jersey City District, Newark Conference.

Rev. E. Hewitt, New Brunswick District, New Jersey Conference.

Rev. D. H. Schock, Trenton District, New Jersey Conference.

Rev. J. B. Graw, Camden District, New Jersey Conference.

Rev. W. Walton, Bridgeton District, New Jersey Conference.

After dinner the time, for more than five hours, was devoted to an earnest and very thoughtful consideration of the claims of the Missionary Society, and the duty of the Methodist Episcopal Church in reference to the salvation of the world, and how to meet that duty.

Mr. Cornell, chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, opened the council by well-chosen words, as follows:

"I am directed by the committee to make a statement as to the reason for calling you together. Before I do that I want to say that it affords me great satisfaction to have you here to-night on this business. These rooms were never occupied before for a more noble cause, and I heartily welcome you here to-night.

"At the meeting of the General Missionary Committee, in November, the pressing demand of the missionary work led the committee to increase the appropriations about fifty thousand dollars over last year's appropriations. At the close of their meeting they requested the Board of Managers to appoint a Committee on Ways and Means. This committee is to aid the Secretaries, and was appointed on their suggestion to the General Committee. In compliance with that request, the Board appointed the following Committee on Ways and Means: Secretaries Reid and Fowler, Elder Gregory, Dr. O. H. Tiffany, General C. B. Fisk, Oliver Hoyt, J. H. Taft, and J. B. Cornell.

"After informal meetings and consultations the committee met December 1, and organized by appointing J. B. Cornell as chairman, and Dr. Tiffany as secretary. A general interchange of views was had and the general conviction of the committee was that the elements of success in working up the collections rested largely with the presiding elders. The committee, therefore, resolved to request the presence of the presiding elders of these four Conferences

to meet here to-night, for consultation as to what can be done to keep up and advance the collections for the missionary cause.

“It must be evident to all that the financial prosperity of the country is not now, nor likely to be the coming year, any thing like equal to the past two years; and unless special effort shall be made, there is great danger that the missionary cause will not receive the attention it deserves.

“That you may get the line of our thoughts, we submit the following questions, and ask the elders, in speaking, to give their views on these points through the course of the evening:

“1. What difficulties are most in the way of securing liberal missionary collections in the charges on your district?

“2. What can the office do further than has been done to aid you in advancing the work?

“3. What can be done to secure a contribution from each member of the Church and congregation, according to paragraph 275 of the Discipline?

“4. How can we secure a more general application of paragraph 276 of the Discipline, which requires the pastor to secure and preserve in the charge a list of the contributions, with the amounts, and to furnish a copy of said list to the Conference Missionary Secretary for publication?

“5. Would it be wise for the presiding elder, as far as practicable, to preach on missions to each charge on his district each year?

“6. Would it not be well for the presiding elder to

have a full and earnest talk on missions in the Quarterly Conference at least once a year ?

“ Would it not be well for the presiding elder to have a consultation with each pastor as to the needs of the Missionary Society, the duties of the charge in the matter, and how best to meet those duties ?

“ I will say now that, in the minds of a good many, the falling off in New York and New York East Conferences had a very unfavorable effect throughout the country; that the Church looks particularly to these Conferences, it being the seat of government, as we may say, of the missionary cause; and as New York shows lack of zeal, it bears upon the outside Conferences. On the other hand, many of you will recollect the effect that was produced by the very great zeal and effort that was put forth in New York, and particularly in the Board of Managers, some seven years ago. It was talked of all over the country; and if we can, with the four Conferences about New York, get up an increased interest, there is no doubt in the minds of the committee that it will have great weight throughout the whole Church. We are ready to hear from any of the brethren on any of the suggestions we have made, or on any other line that they will talk on.”

As soon as the business of the meeting was opened by these remarks of Mr. Cornell, Rev. L. H. King, D.D., Presiding Elder of the Prattville District of the New York Conference, responded that the greatest need on his district was information on the subject of missions. That if the people know what the Missionary Society is doing, and how the work is succeeding,