

the absence of the majority - an absence entirely unavoidable - declared themselves the conference, and expelled their absent brethren without trial or hearing, from their body. Of course we who adhered to the action of the Conference at Stanton, both ministers and laymen, shared the same fate.

Our present position, you may clearly see from all this, is not owing to any want of promptness in recognizing and acting upon the principles which we now avow. That principle has been embodied in the action of our Conference ever since the session of the General Conference of 1860. We have had no connection with that body since the decisive action of the Baltimore Conference in March 1861, and by our fellowship with the Baltimore Conference, we meant then, as we mean now, fellowship with the majority of that body; for we cannot recognize the right of some thirty five or forty to declare more than twice their number to be no longer members of that body - a declaration beyond their power to make in the presence of the majority.

Instead of measures so extreme, common courtesy should have suggested to these ministers that which proposed by the few ministers of the majority in connection with the laity, who happened to be within reach of the place, appointed for the session of the Conference in 1862; namely, some measure of compromise by which the question at issue might be waived during these times of trouble, and the unity of the body preserved, without committing any man to a final position.

But we do not propose to judge those who differ from us. We only desire to show that we assert merely a Christian principle, having no connection with any principle or matter of State, and that, recognizing the extreme sensitiveness of the public mind to which you make allusion, we exhausted all the means in our power to prevent any division at that time, and only took our action when we were driven to it by the relentless spirit of the minority, who by these unforeseen circumstances acquired the power in this section of our Conference.

We deem it almost needless to reply to the charge alleged, if not in direct form, at least in the confusion of the terms applied to these movements in your Communication, of endorsing and abetting the doctrine and practice of political secession by our action.

We distinctly disavow any connection in theory or practice, with that or any other political or State doctrine.

We simply affirm and have acted upon the right, never before questioned in a civilized land, of withdrawing from any religious organization so soon as we cease to put faith in its doctrine or endorse its ecclesiastical principles.

We do not think it possible that you should now question that right. Our faith as to the Government is embodied in the twenty third article of Religion - the same received by the whole M. E. Church North - and reads thus -

"Of the Rules of the United States of America"

"The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors and the Councils of State, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made by the Constitution of the United States and by the Constitutions of their respective States."