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# The Star of Zion.

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### THE GLORIOUS SONG.

"The Church which is His body,  
the fulness of Him who filleth all in all."—1, 22, 23.

Round the Lord in glory seated,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Filled his temple, and repeated  
Each to each the alternate hymn:  
"Lord, Thy glory filleth heaven,  
With its fulness earth is stored;  
Unto Thee be glory given,  
Holy, holy, holy Lord!"

Heaven is aye with praises ringing;  
Earth has heard the angel's cry,  
When the Lord, salvation bringing,  
Came from heaven to earth to die—  
Came to purify his temple,  
For Himself a meet abode:  
His own body its ensample,  
Filled with light—The Word of God.

Now with angels and archangels,  
Cherubim and seraphim,  
Now with His church wherein he dwells,  
Let us swell the solemn hymn:  
"Lord, Thy glory filleth heaven,  
With its fulness earth is stored;  
Unto Thee be glory given,  
Holy, holy, holy Lord!"

### RETURN FROM CALIFORNIA.

LETTER NO. 2.

BY BISHOP HOOD.

Precisely on time, on Saturday July 25th, we reached Wamega Station, 1994 miles east of San Francisco. This distance was made in a little less than four days. If, however, we deduct two hours lay over at Ogden, one at Cheyenne, five at Denver and four hours stops for meals to say nothing of the numerous one to five minutes stops, we had for actual running time only about 81 hours, making an average a little over 24 miles to the hour.

Wamega is in the State of Kansas, about 100 miles west of Kansas City, Mo. We have no church at this point. Both the M. E. and A. M. E. have been making efforts to establish a colored church here, but have not succeeded much. There are quite a number of well-to-do colored people here. One colored man who lives just across the river, raised 19,000 bushels of corn last year, and has a prospect for a larger crop this year. He has two corn fields a mile square each. He sold 80 hogs a few weeks ago, weighing from 400 to 800 pounds each. He has several horses and a large number of cattle. Another man has cleared enough in five years to buy him a farm of 160 acres.

If five hundred thousand of our people could move from the South and settle in Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho and Oregon, it would be much better for all. The best time to go to Kansas is about the last of February or first of March. In this country, our people are absolutely free. Public conveyances, public houses and public institutions are all open to white and black alike and the ballot is free. And yet, so far as social intercourse between the races is concerned, there is but little more of it here than in the South. This western country, nevertheless, is the natural outlet for the over-crowded and poorly paid labor of the South. I would say as Greeley used to say: "Go west young man." Go west and hew out your own destiny. Build up with these new and rapidly progressing sections.

At the memorial services held at the M. E. church Sunday night July 26th, as a tribute of respect to the memory of General Grant, I was called upon to deliver the opening address. Never did the language of the Apostle Paul, recorded, Timothy iv 7-8, seem so suitable as a text for a funeral discourse, as when applied to

that prince of soldiers, Gen. U. S. Grant: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day."

To make a good fight you must have a good cause. No man ever battled for a better cause, nor did man ever fight better than Gen. Grant. His was, therefore, pre-eminently a good fight. No man ever more completely finished what he undertook. He finished the business for the Confederate Generals at Donaldson, Vicksburg and Appomattox. He finished the rebellion and restored peace to the land. He finished his book to his own satisfaction.

No man was ever more faithful to his convictions of duty. He never betrayed his trust. A good man who possessed his confidence had nothing to fear, he was an unfailing friend, so far as a mortal man could be. He gained many victories, but his greatest was the victory over Satan and sin, by which he was counted worthy of the crown which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give him.

He was not a temperance lecturer, and yet he rebuked intemperate rulers by turning his glasses upside down, at the first feast tendered him in his journey around the world. He was a great smoker, yet by his example, he taught that the habit can be overcome. The Christian world rejoices in the fact that the greatest hero of the age acknowledged his faith in the despised Nazarene, and died in conscious enjoyment of the religion of Jesus, "The Christ."

On Thursday July 30th, we reached St. Louis. We spent three days with Elder Claiborne and his amiable lady, who did all they could to make the stay pleasant. We found St. Louis exceedingly hot, and comfort almost out of the question. Our special visit at this time, is to the Coronadet, or South St. Louis church, about 5 miles down the Mississippi. Elder J. B. Kidd has charge. He has his people well in hand, and secured for us more comfortable accommodation than could have been obtained elsewhere in the city.

Sister Julia Russell, with whom we are stopping, has by hard work and good management, secured for herself a nice home, pleasantly situated on a high bluff, far enough from the river to be healthy, and yet the boats playing upon the river, are in full view. Sister Russell is one of nature's noble women. She has a body weighing between two and three hundred, and a heart large in proportion. Her mother-in-law and other members of the family seem generally to possess the spirit of hospitality in a large degree. In fact, the entire membership here, though small in number, are as fine people as we have met. It seems providential that we should have fallen among such people at this time.

We were hardly settled in this pleasant home, when Mrs. Hood was taken quite ill. She has not quite regained her usual health, but is improving. As she began to sit up a little, I was compelled to yield to an attack more severe than here. I have had the experience which is said to be general with those who go to the Pacific slope in bad health and are restored: if they return to the malarial section before cold weather, they are sure to have a relapse. My malady returned in a three-fold form. Malaria, introduced by chills and a stubborn attack of rheumatism, from which I have not yet fully recovered. I had a narrow

escape of what is called the break-bone fever. It has been just 20 years since I had so hard an attack of fever. Through all this affliction, lasting over three weeks, we have wanted for nothing that these kind ministering angels could provide. Sister Russell has never tired watching over us and doing for us. If Elder Kidd had been an own brother he could not have done more for us. We hope to get to Indianapolis in a few days, but cannot hope to do much more, before conference.

### FROM ABINGDON, VA.

Mr. Editor:  
I have just closed a revival at this place. The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad. The result is 35 converts and 47 additions to the church. We are preparing for the annual conference which will convene here on the first Wednesday in October. We hope the brethren will not bring any more of their wives than possible. We have no reference to our Bishop's family. Pray for us. Yours for God and Zion, Aug. 25th. F. R. WHITE.

### FROM MOCKSVILLE, N. C.

Mr. Editor:  
The Statesville District conference assembled here on the 16th inst. The entire delegation endorsed the union of the A. M. E. Zion and the A. M. E. churches, as essential to the success of Methodism both in America and in Africa. Timely steps have been taken to properly inform and secure as far as possible a united ministry. Forewarned is forearmed for the coming crisis. Methodism cannot afford to remain divided, as disaffection, discord and division will continue, to infect and distress so long as Methodism remains divided as it now is.

Ambitious and vain-glorious men who are more desirous for office, fame and unmerited worth, than for the glory of God and the spread of the church, will take advantage of every difference that may occur in either branch of the Methodist church to lead off the disaffected. That learned and patriotic Bishop S. T. Jones has spoken in unmistakable terms. He has struck the key-note and sounded the death knell to ambitious and incompetent aspirants for leadership in the Methodist church. We will follow in the footsteps of such a leader as Bishop Jones. Thousands in both churches may be jostled out, but the sensible, the good and the pure Episcopal Methodists, will remain in the First United Methodist Episcopal Church. Revolt, combinations and confederations may come, but as sure as the Union reigned, despite enemies and forces united to destroy the Union, so will Episcopal Methodism reign.

The blending of these two grand bodies will shake the nations of earth and force every combination to yield before the powerful influence of the grand army of bishops, presiding elders and elders should speak out, allow no man who may secretly oppose the union, to prevent a free and full expression upon this subject. Follow no man but be guided by reason and common sense. I shall hail the blending of these bodies of Methodists as being the happiest day Methodism ever witnessed. The news will flash like lightning over the wires from Maine to Texas and reverberate from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and Africa will smile when united Methodism shall overflow that land with churches and schools. Let goodbye say goodbye.

No fears, no dread. Let Zion stand for union; there is no need of dead issues. The past will go down into oblivion amidst the joys of the First United Methodist Episcopal Church.

H. WILLIAMS.

### THE GIFT OF CHARACTER.

BY THE REV. F. MASON BROWN.

It is a prevailing habit to speak of character as something made, rather than as something given. Genius and exalted talent are considered gifts—however men may differ as to the giving and better, be God or heredity. In common phrase, the poet, the orator, the composer, is a gifted man—a man of great gifts. But character—if we feel correctly the under-lying of much popular teaching—is not reckoned a gift. We are talked to by our many instructors—socialistic, practical-philosophical, culture-religious, and evangelical—as though every man had somewhere in his keeping the plastic mass called character, and needed only good will and right methods to work the same into shape. Thus they tell us to build character, the material is all at hand, and waits simply to be put together. We are told that character grows; the seed is already in the soil, and now needs merely rain and sunshine and cultivation. In effect, the chief concern of many of these advisers of the race seems to be to tell us how to use that which they have failed to direct us how to get; for witnesses put upon the stand Carlyle Smiles, Matthew Arnold, Harison, Greg, and a score of others. Nor are the moralists and humanitarians alone in this kind of teaching for it certainly is also in our pulpits and in so called Christian ethics.

But who has worked far into the secrets of human being without discovering what is meant in these teachings by character is utterly wanting in some sense? Sink your shafts and run your tunnels into the being of some of the humanity about you and find only empty darkness. There are all the requisites of the mind except paying etc. Develop character? But where is the seed? Build character? But there are neither foundations nor materials. Mold character? But there is no lump—no plastic matter. In some men seem to inhere qualities or powers of being by which they can take hold of and be held; in others you seek for such qualities or powers through the years of inspiration and opportunity, and, baffled, see them die as characterless as they have lived.

It is at once admitted that there is much liability to confusion here, from the fact that character eludes exact definition. No one who has attempted completely to define it has succeeded to any one's satisfaction but his own. But, of course, in the absence of definition, we must keep ourselves free from the error which identifies character with individuality. In no normal human being is the absence of character the destruction of individuality; the man lives and thinks and acts, though he be practically without character. Practically we say, for in matters so subtle imperfection of discernment warns against absolute decision, and it is unsafe to deny that possibly there is character where we do not see it. But neither is it wise to deny to even the lowest specimen of the race the possibility of lofty eloquence or of exalted conceptions or of noblest action. Sometimes, let circumstances beat the dark forests or the bleak shores of a human soul, and they start by words of awe, strength and discovery the man's lain. The hair

that seems barren may be only fallow and the inlying powers of a nature must not be denied simply because they are hidden. The grooves in which these powers run traverse all human spirits—in some filled up until they are but lines of indication, in others deepening until they become channels through which surging forces leap and rush. But the man of lines an idiot or a boor. And thus, within similar limitations, we may properly speak of some men as possessed of character and of others as destitute of character. It is not a distinction between the sinful and the holy, the vicious and the virtuous, the ignorant and the wise, the rich and the poor. The character line runs athwart all these division lines, and you will find it as difficult to discover character under silk growns under rags, in the halls of learning or in the royal palaces as in the unpainted hovel, for the lack of it may not justly be reckoned among the necessary privations of poverty and ignorance, nor its possession among the vested privileges of rank and learning.

Now, whether our God be Universal Law, or the All-Father, character as here understood, as a gift. Men do not acquire character any more than they acquire natural faculty or genius. Wealth, learning, faculty, reputation are acquisitions, but so is not character. Some men bring it with them when they appear. Some appear with out it, and this without the exercise of personal choice in either case. The distinction is equally clear in mature life and childhood—it even shows itself in the maneuvers and facial contortions of babes in arms. Common languages has devised a thousand expressions to mark this contrast. A man has "no backbone," he is a "good-for-naught," a "n'er do-well," he is "like a weather-cock." You cannot "reach him," he is "not to be depended upon," there is "nothing in him," you "need expect nothing of him." And this weakness, this negativeness, is not a matter of exterior, but of the interior and refers, not to what has come to him while here, but to what he brought with him, or did not bring with him when he came. In a word, this gift of character, some men seem to have been endowed with a tolerably complete equipment, and other men with none worth mentioning. And for the justness of these conclusions the appeal is made, not to theorists nor sentimentalists, but to men whose business it is to deal with human character.

In this awful equality of character endowment is a problem which those who make rules for human conduct should first solve. For of what possible use is a rule of conduct where there is no character to be ruled by it? What lookout is there for those that have come into the world practically characterless? It must be confessed that to them the culture and development schemes offer nothing. The fatal weakness in this whole contrivance for the uplift of humanity by natural process is the unwarranted presumption that every man has enough to begin on. A nerveless hand cannot grasp the rope, no matter how skillfully it may have been thrown or how strong it may be. The fact is that much of our training is being wasted in showing an ideal man how excellent a life saving scheme modern philosophy has devised, while all the while in the ears of the teachers are the cries and before their eyes the outstretched hands of real men actually drowning. Even granting that some men may be saved

by the educative and self-lifting processes of the current teaching, the masses of men have no chance, for they positively cannot raise even the small amount of capital necessary to go into the business at all. Salvation by culture is a greater travesty upon Divine justice than salvation by elective decrees.

But Christ meets this original inequality in the gifts of character with a solution. Prisoners and wayfarer's deaf men and blind, beggars and rich fools alike have a chance. Helplessness secures help. Character is, indeed, a divine gift. However some may come into this world without it, no man need enter the next without having obtained it. To some there is, in accordance with God's own laws and purposes, a richer endowment, but to none is the gift denied. Salvation through Christ begins with the gift of Christ, and when in any man—even "the wayfarer, though a fool"—it has come to pass that "Christ is formed in him the hope of glory," the foundation of character have been laid. The power of the Gospel is not that of education alone, but creation first, and then of development. Christ's purpose is not to lead some men through the processes of self-help up to moral perfection, but to give to every man who will trust him the basis of a true character and the plan and materials, and power wherewith to build upon it. And here the Gospel meets company with all other systems.

But there follows from all this an important conclusion which directly effects Christian practice. Many men through conditions of blood or circumstances or training, or by special endowment are greatly gifted in character. They are geniuses here, as others are in art of letters. Their force of character is recognized in trade, in politics, in society. The world consults their wisdom, the weak lean up on their strength, they "seem to be pillars." And yet, how frequently such force is felt in every direction but that of actual Christian work! Other endowments become the willing instrument of God. Men lay their money and talents upon the altar of consecration, but the very gift which is reckoned at the highest worth by the Divine giver is withheld. The humility that keeps it in veiled seclusion is false; for true character is not the acquirement of man, but the gift of God. Not in his words or his works but in himself, does the Christ reveal the character of God. And never more urgently has he invoked the aid of true character in the rebuke and the destruction of the falseness of the world than now. The most important lesson for the church to learn in this age is that character must be consecrated to God. Its eloquence reaches ears which are shut to human speech; where learning fails it teaches; it convinces where argument bewilders. The Bible has no such interpreter, sin as such rebuke, virtue no such inspiration, as godly character. And so this greatest gift—with the lesser acquirements of money and learning and art and all the thousand ministering talents of men—should be also held for the high uses of Redeemer, for while money spreads the truth and learning expounds it, and art reveals its beauty, and ministry directs its power, character is more than all, for character is the incarnation of divine love.

"To whomever much is given, from him shall much be required."

A wit once asked a peasant what part he performed in the great drama of life. "I mind my own business," was the reply.