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# The Star Of Zion.

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## SHALL METHODISTS UNITE?

### BISHOP JONES ON THE MOTIVES FOR ORGANIC UNION.

A STRONG MANLY PLEA BY A BISHOP OF THE ZION CONNECTION FOR THE ORGANIC UNION OF ALL COLORED METHODISTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

To the Editor of the Freeman.—Nothing however important is likely to succeed without an impelling motive. Where this power is wanting or weak, in any enterprise, there will be a corresponding want of interest, if not an actual indifference to the success of such enterprise. What, then, is the motive which is to prompt the necessary interest and effort to bring about the consummation of organic union between the two principal bodies of colored Methodists in America?

These two bodies have stood against the jostle of long and trying years; and stand today the brazen monuments of successful Negro endeavor in originating, planning, and sustaining religious organizations—they constitute the "Jachin" and "Boaz" on the porch-way of their religious effort and success—the visible proofs of the "establishment" and "strength" of the genuine Christian worship, every where on earth. Not that these two bodies furnish the only example of true scriptural worship among the Negro element—I make no such claim, what I claim is, that in organization, numbers, and appliances, as well as in adaptation to the religious peculiarities of the Negro race, they stand at the head of the great army of colored Protestants just as Methodism stands the advance guard of the universal Protestant host—the leading column.

Having gained this laudable height may not ambition—if that be the object whose gratification is mainly sought, which I disclaim here rest? With the connective machinery of each in tact—all interest on the increase; with reasonably encouraging prospects looming up in the near as well as distant future—may not even laudable ambition be thought to have reached its objective point?

What motive then is to prompt to commendable endeavor in this new and untried experiment? It would have been as easy, and quite as commendable to their public spirit and patriotic to country and race, if the revolutionary fathers had thus mutually congratulated each other, long before independence was fully fought out. They might have stayed the effusion of blood (their own included) and might have obtained increased and tempting concessions from the parent government, if they had ceased. But they found a motive sufficient to goad them on to heroic effort, and to sustain them amid the hardships and privations of that long and bloody struggle—in their indomitable will, and unswerving purpose—God helping them—to leave to their progeny and the rest of mankind the most noble and brilliant example of popular and free government the world ever knew. True, many of them shed their life-blood as a sacrifice to their purpose, and never lived to enjoy its blessed fruit, but living or dying they succeeded grandly, in erecting a temple of liberty into which all nationalities and all people may now all gather, and unite in singing—"America."

The arts and sciences and all the recent grand achievements of our higher civilization, might have long since ceased to unfold their wonders, and those by whom they were projected and fostered might now be found resting on the undeveloped discoveries of half a century gone by, but for the motive found in the insatiate on the part of age and experience—not to be contented simply to gloat over the accomplishments of the past, but to lend their ripe age and experience to the developments of the future. Not for themselves was this necessary, for history must have accorded them an enviable meed of praise for the accomplishments of their stalwart manhood, without the more difficult and brilliant achievements of age; but the inspiring and sustaining motive which bore them on to heroic efforts, and crowned them with success, even in their grapple with death—was their all-absorbing interest in the race, combined with an in-

flexible purpose to divide, if need be, the last breath of life in an effort to serve that race.

If the nation's hero, whom we have just laid to rest, who was honored in life—no less than in death as no son of earth was ever honored—it be upon whom the glittering glories of earth were lavished when living, whom all nations mourned when dead—could find a motive in the very embrace of death to nerve him to almost superhuman effort that he might finish a work devoted specially to the complete unification of the nation; surely there would be no difficulty on the part of colored men, and especially colored Methodists, in finding a motive to manly Christian endeavor, to preach, pray, speak and work, while God gives us the ability, for the unification of a people, on whose united effort morally, socially, intellectually, materially and religiously, (with Divine aid) depends the lifting of the inhabitants of a whole continent, five times as great, numerically, with a destiny equal, if not more brilliant than the American nation has yet reached or even dreamed of—the civilization and Christianization of Africa.

If the aged sire, burdened with the weight of years of anxiety and toil, finds a motive at the very threshold of the grave, for increased effort to improve, beautify and adorn his estate that the condition of his children may be bettered when he is no more—we may well pity that selfishness which destroyed all motive to labor for the betterment of the religious condition of a race, simply because we shall soon cease to be individually benefited thereby. "Not unto themselves but unto us did the prophets minister, when they testified of the coming of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Not for Himself did Jesus offer the sacrifices of the universe, but, "He loved us."

Not for themselves did the heroes in the field and in the councils of the nation toil, suffer and succeed, but for future generations. Not for the own personal benefit does the sire enlarge his grounds, improve his mansion, replace his fruit-trees and fertilize his fields. So far as he and his consort are individually concerned, the few remaining days of their busy, eventful lives might be spent in quietness and ease; for themselves they have enough and to spare; but, impelled by the lofty motive which had left them such a rich inheritance—such an almost endless variety of accumulated resources with which to begin life—they toil on to the end, sowing that others may reap. Let us, as far as in our power imitate their noble example, and as we have no broad acres, no stately mansion, no hoarded wealth to leave as an inheritance to our children, let us at least find a motive sufficiently strong to prompt us to the highest endeavor of which we are capable—to leave for them the rich and hopeful patrimony of a "united church." More than this we may not be able to leave them; to leave them less because we allowed our selfishness to shut out from view every commendable motive that would aid us in securing them this, will be a crime committed upon posterity, for which it will, at least mentally, exhumate the presumably guilty parties, try and condemn them at the bar of popular opinion, and consign them to ignominious graves. And who does not say "the proceeding will be just?"

S. T. JONES  
Brooklyn, N. Y., Sept 4, 1885.

### BISHOP HOOD ON THE UNION.

HE THINKS MEN WHO WRITE OUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES.

It seems to me that men who write on the subject of union between Zion and Bethel ought to understand the position of the church for which they pretend to speak. Elder Blackson, in his article, in which there are some good things, falls into the error of presuming that we have not the third ordination. Whatever we may have had up to 1868, it cannot be questioned that we established the third ordination in that year. Each of the persons made bishop at that time, had received deacon's and elder's orders

before—had received the second ordination. What then could the ordination which they received at that time be, but a third ordination? The ceremony was almost the same as that found in the discipline of the M. E. church. The word "install" was used, because it was preferred by some of the delegates from New York and New England. The Southern and Western delegates preferred other terms, but yielded because they regarded mere terms of little consequence.

In 1872 "consecrate" was put in, which term is used by the Protestant Episcopal church, which is regarded as pretty good authority on the subject of episcopacy. The ceremony as adopted at that time was silent on the subject of laying on hands. Watson, the best Methodist theological authority, says that the laying on of hands is non-essential, that the ordination is complete without it. Taking this view of the subject and to conciliate a feeling which then existed in some parts of the connection, the ceremony of 1876 was silent on that subject. And the published ceremony stands in the last issue of the discipline nearly the same as then. As to what has been the practice is another question, and one hard to settle, since we have not made a bishop for several years and men are forgetful. There are men who will swear that they laid their hands on the head of a bishop, others certain that they saw it done; and there is at least one bishop who fully believes that he felt the weight of hands upon his head.

Our position, however, is that the laying on of hands is non-essential in the ordination ceremony, that the ordination is complete without it. This was the position taken by our delegates at Washington, which position the delegates elected by the A. M. E. church unanimously accepted. Our delegates took the position that there could be no question as to the validity of our episcopacy—that we could not negotiate with a body for union which raised this question. When this was fully understood by the commissioners on the part of the A. M. E. church, they retired and brought in a proposition which our commissioners accepted. This proposition is not fairly stated by the "Recorder." It does not state that Zion's Bishops shall not be re-ordained. It is, that the persons holding that office shall continue to hold it during good behaviour. And then, there is a proviso, that future bishops will be made according to American Methodism. That, I presume will be our course, whether we unite or not.

Elder Blackson must see that the worst enemy of our church could not propose a greater stultification than he does when he proposes the re-ordination of his Bishops. That will not be done by ourselves or any body else, because we do not believe in the fourth ordination. I, for one, have no fear for the standing of our Bishops in the new organization, should it be formed. Neither do I share Elder Blackson's fears for the standing of any grade of ministers. A man called of God to preach, can make himself indispensable, whether he is a college graduate or has been made in that harder school of personal effort. There is a class of men who are continual failures, because they lack the christian grace which sweeten their disposition and fills them with love for the souls of men; or the moral rectitude, without which no man is qualified for the ministry, or the energy which brings success to the tact which overcomes difficulties. Those who are honest, pure and holy and yet lack tact, might be

got along with, but if by the union of the two churches we can get rid of those who are too lazy to make the necessary effort or too immoral to sustain a good character, the good Lord hasten the day. Both connections have suffered from a class of hangers-on or hang-betweens. Both will go by the board if there is union.

In conclusion, I would say, that we should look to the commissioners appointed by the A. M. E. church (to meet ours) for an expression of the sentiment of that church and not to any single individual, though he be a bishop. It is presumed that the church in selecting its part of the commission knew its men, and selected them because it knew them. Judging the A. M. E. Church by the words and action of its commissioners, we have a right to presume that it is sincere in its profession of a desire for union on honorable terms, and unless the church through its bishops or otherwise, should repudiate the action of the commissioners, we should have no occasion to change this judgment. As a member of the commission appointed by our General conference (though not able to be present), I fully endorse the articles as shown me by the official stenographer elected by the commission.

No amount of criticism on the address delivered at the California conference is worth notice. No matter who indulges in it. Mea do not descend to personal abuse, when they have facts or arguments to present. We have no time now to consider side issues.

### WILL THERE BE A UNION?

BISHOP CAMPBELL AGAIN ON THE WAR-PATH—EPISCOFACY—THE ORIGIN OF THE A. M. E. AND THE A. M. E. ZION CHURCHES.

Immediately after the adjournment of the General conferences of the A. M. E. and the A. M. E. Zion churches, I put myself on record in the "Star of Zion" as favoring organic union between these two great connections upon terms of equality and upon Christian and friendly basis. I am for union on these terms (nothing else) first, last and all the time. I had hoped that the brethren of the two connections would not oppose the proposed union until they had seen whether or not they would like the platform adopted by the commissioners, which is soon to be published in the official organs of the respective churches. But already the black clouds of envy and devilry are seen, and the lightning of discontent playing their games across the clerical heavens. It is now evident, that that meeting like the others held in gone-by days, will not amount to a hill of beans.

Some of the leading men of Bethel church are already on the war-path and have sounded the tocsin, and it is natural to suppose that the best part of their soldiers will gird on their armor in time for the coming conflict. The editor of the "Christian Recorder" has led off. An editor's pen at times is mightier than the sword—and Bishop Campbell has followed suit. The mean and spiteful manner in which the Bishop has referred to our Bishops (calling them Rev.) is beneath the dignity of a Christian bishop and gentleman. Our Bishops were recognized by both the Ecumenical and Centennial conferences as Bishops—they are recognized to-day as Bishops the world over—and Bishop Campbell transgressed the bounds of common propriety when he calls them by any other title.

If this is the course that Bishop Campbell and his men propose to pursue, I see no need of the Bishops as-

sembling in Wilmington, N. C., Nov. 4th, for it will avail nothing. Already the Bethel brethren are saying they are not ready for union; that they believe each church has a mission to perform; that Zion has several objectionable features that will have to be removed before a union is effected. In reply, we will say that Bethel has several objectionable features to us; one is, they "blow" too much; another is, they are head over heels in debt and are constantly losing churches. Zion has no debts worth talking about. We never go all over the country blowing about our men, trying to make the people believe they are greater than the Saviour and his apostles. We propose to remain humble and make our work tell.

The main cause of all this bad feeling between two connections is about the episcopacy of the A. M. E. Zion church. Our Bethel brethren have been preaching for years that we have no bishops. This assertion is not only false, but strange, unless the position is taken that this assumed by the Greek church, the Roman Catholic church and the Protestant Episcopal church; that there is no episcopacy except it comes in direct line from St. Peter. But certainly Bethel would be the last church to set up such a claim when Bishop Allen (her first bishop) was ordained by two deacons. Common sense ought to teach them to sing small about this episcopacy business. I think they feel this, and that is why they are wild over ours in order to hide the weakness of their own. It is an undeniable fact that a man is to his church what his church makes him. If the church makes him a trustee or class-leader, he is that, in the eye of the law, both civil and ecclesiastical. If the church makes him a deacon, elder or bishop, it is just the same. All the ordination that Bishop Allen received was from his church, and surely Zion or any other church has as much right to their mode of making Bishops as Bethel.

Then, again, Methodism only recognizes two ordinations: that of a deacon and elder, and it has decided that the third ordination is non-essential. That being a fact, then Zion has taken the two ordinations. Did not the white Methodist church do away with the third ordination at their last General conference? Certainly. Did not Bethel church do the same at their last General conference? They did, and said the bishopric was only an office that brings both Bethel and the white M. E. church down to the position that Zion has always held. Now what is the use of Bethel insisting upon Zion to take what they have done away with before she is willing to unite with us on terms of equality? It is the height of nonsense. If Bethel will take the third ordination lawfully, so will Zion. We will let the bishops of the two connections be ordained by the church of England. But as the episcopacy now stands, before we will let Bethel ordain our Bishops, we will stay apart. It is useless for either church to say it will crush out the other unless a union is effected, for both churches will live in spite of men or devils and accomplish their God-given mission.

Mr. Editor, I know this letter is longer than usual, but you must bear with me. For 60 years, or ever since Bethel was organized, she has been carrying on a war with Zion, and while we have been in peace and quiet for some time, duty now compels us to open up this whole subject afresh, since they have renewed the conflict and since Bishop Campbell says he

has just commenced to write again on this subject. Mr. Allen left the M. E. church in 1816 and went to New York and opened a war upon Zion which his followers have kept up unto this day. The same tales that were told years ago are still circulated. Time and again have they declared that the Zion church seceded from Bethel. The fact is, the Zion church was organized 20 years before Allen left the white Methodist church, and her incorporation dates back to the year 1800, as the public record in New York city will show (see record in the office of the clerk of the city and county of New York, in Lib. No. 1, page 28). If you will search the "Preface" of the white M. E. Discipline, it will inform you that Allen was a preacher in their church about 1804. In 1816 the Bethels came out from the white church, and Bethel was first organized as an M. E. Church and dedicated as such.

In 1809, the Bishop of the M. E. church made an appointment that did not please them and they rebelled. Trouble arose which resulted in their separation from that church in 1816. In 1796 the Zion church was organized as an African M. E. church, so that the M. E. church had no claim upon it. The M. E. preachers served us for a time under a written contract, but not as part of our organization. So from the first, Zion was an independent African M. E. church; it came out from no organization. The founders of it, it is true, had been members of the John street M. E. church, but their design from the first was to form a separate church. This, it appears was not the design of the Bethel people; with them it was an afterthought an idea borrowed by Mr. Allen from the Zion church in New York. Having borrowed that idea from Zion church and his people having made him a bishop (as they say) in a manner that seemed good to them, he went to New York to persuade Zion to enlist under his banner and acknowledge him as Bishop. Zion refused to do so for good reasons.

The Zion connection in New York city at that time embraced two churches—Zion and Asbury. Mr. Allen, finding he could accomplish nothing with Zion, the mother of colored churches, turned to Asbury, the daughter, and succeeded in taking part of her members. This was the beginning of war between the two churches. Zion ministers retaliated, went to Philadelphia and succeeded in tearing Big Wesley away from Bethel, which we hold to-day. This, I presume, is the ground upon which Bethel say that we seceded from them. Nothing could be more false. Zion, the fountain-head of our connection, was never connected with Bethel; and the splitting off from us and going to Bethel, so that if there is anything in that, Bethel split off from us. We do not, however, make any such claim, for it would be treating the subject unfairly by either party. Zion in New York and Bethel in Philadelphia are the two respective churches from which the two connections have sprung. These churches have never been united, and consequently cannot be truthfully said to have separated. Having started independent of each other, they have ever remained so. I will stop for the present and say to our Bethel brethren, if they want to continue this subject, we are willing. I have another old gun loaded that wants to "go off."

J. W. SMITH,  
Baltimore, Sept. 13th.