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A REPLY TO REV. GEORGE L. BLACKWELL, S. T. B.

BY REV. T. A. WEATHINGTON.

Having noticed two articles in the columns of our organ, written by Rev. G. L. Blackwell, S. T. B., I think it due to the candidates, as well as the church and her dignitaries, that a reply in defence of these, however humble and insignificant should be made, as their mouths are virtually closed. Therefore, I essay to perform the duty and do so out of no disrespect to the ability of the gentleman who has thus seen fit to write; but out of the highest regard and the familiar acquaintance that I entertain for some of the gentlemen, I must rise up in their defence. Again I feel myself free to do so, since I am not a candidate for any office in the church. I propose to set forth the facts, and allow the church to speak for herself since she is of age. According to Rt. Rev. J. W. Hood's history she is too old to be deceived and gagged, too honorable to be bribed and too strong to be controlled by any one man. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, as we reason with our Dean.

Possibly there is no question that will present itself to the consideration of Zion in the general conference of 1896, of more vital importance than the Bishopric—the propriety or impropriety of the election of more bishops. Already is this question being discussed *pro* and *con*. It is a matter concerning the well being of our beloved Zion, and therefore should be duly and wisely considered, (candidates excepted) especially as to themselves, for both the world and the church make it an almost unpardonable sin for you to appear to raise your voice in self defence, or for any position in church or State which thing ought not to be, especially in the church, for we are taught in Holy Writ, "Whatsoever ye stand in need of ask for it." Isaiah, the prophet was not ashamed, nor was he censured for answering "Here am I, send me, send me." The Apostle Paul, in speaking to Timothy says: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work." And, now hoping these remarks and quotations of scripture will suffice as an introduction to my article, I proceed in answering articles No. 1 and 2, written by Rev. G. L. Blackwell, S. T. B., Dean of our Theological Department.

ARTICLE NO. 1.

At the close of this article Rev. Blackwell says:

"Instead of any more bishops we need to make an appropriation of $15,000 for the purpose of supporting 15 or 20 first class missionaries in such cities as Durham and Greensboro, N. C., Charleston S. C Savannah, Atlanta and Rome, Ga., Chicago, Ill., Cleveland, Ohio." Mark you, the brother is pleading for economy, (money saving to Zion.) Does the above argument support his theory? I answer no; and with these figures and facts before me I answer thrice, no. Hold your breath for a moment and listen. The salaries of our bishops are set at $2,000 per year. Three more bishops would cost Zion $6,000 per year, or $24,000 a quardrunium. To elect or appoint twenty missionaries, at the very least we could offer with propriety would be $700 per year each. This sum would aggregate $14,000, and for four years $56,000, $32,000 more than three bishops' salaries, and really more than we now pay the entire present board under our pro rata system. Is this econemy? Is this sound theory? Let Zion's watchmen answer.

In article No. 2, the writer says: "That very nearly ever man who is likely to be a delegate to the general conference agrees with him that we need no more bishops (except those who are candidates.) We shall not doubt the veracity of this statement, but shall assume the right and boldness to investigate the judgement of it. In the general conference of 1892 Brother Blackwell with all the men, perhaps, who have allowed him to button-hole them, and the general conference composed of the aged and intelligent men of our church, together with our able and farsighted bishops voted to a man for two more bishops, namely Rt. Revs. I. C. Clinton and A. Walters, if this election was a necessity then, does it not stand to reason and common sense that since we have lost two of our bishops by death, Rt. Revs. J. J. Moore and J. P. Thompson, that their offices should be filled at least? Answer ye bishops and candidate fighters. But, again, is it not a fact well known to Zion that one of our beloved bishops by reason of failing health is retired from active service? and that the care of his district, with that of the deceased bishops is laid upon the present board, whose districts are fully large to require their entire services, so considered and decided upon by the general conference of 1892? Would it be fair and just to continue this imposition. I say imposition because they are salaried to perform a designated service, and to have them do more without increase of salary and traveling expense is certainly an imposition and Zion can ill afford to do a thing of this kind, and certainly not longer than 1896.

Prof. Blackwell certainly has held no communication with the men of Zion who live down in this section. I think I am right when I say the following States and conferences think differently: Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina (in part) Tennessee, Texas, Louisana, Kentucky, Mississippi, and I think I am warranted in saying New Jersey. But I call attention to another fact. If all of our bishops were alive and active, would there not be good reason even then, for an increase of the Bench? I answer unequivocally yes, because there is unexplored territory to be acquired for Zion, together with the fact that accestions have been made to our membership, both in the ministry and layety. Our conferences are being divided in order to make room for the growth and development of Zion. I think it is fair and feasable to conclude with the above facts before us, that the gentleman is mistaken in his aspersion, or terribly misled in judgment. The opponent further avers, "That the men who dares to ask their friends to support them for the bishopric, are not prepared, intellectually, experimentally, hardly religiously, nor *commonsensecly*. No one but themselves believe they are called, for neither their natural or acquired ability would warrant such a conclusion on the part of thoughtful men." We wonder if the gentleman thought of all this acquisition of ability, and profound knowledge, when he sought either by election or appointment the deanship of the Theological Department of our Livingstone College? The fact, is, he says "in the history of our church, we have had but few occupants of that high office whom we would be justifiable in calling ideal bishops." Some people may be of the same opinion respecting our college dean, in the person of Brother Blackwell. But Alabama has given her voice, vote and money, in behalf of Brother Blackwell and she has no apologies to make for her actions, in premises, and why: because he is ours, and we could do no better at the present. We cannot live by fighting ourselves, but must, as loyal sons of Zion, throw the mantle of charity around the intellectual shortcomings, and imperfections of our progressive and rising men, for upon them, and among them, the hope and glory of Zion depends. Knowing as I do that Alabama has a candidate, I feel called upon to rise up in his defense and refute the unceremonious as well as the very unkind attack made in the allegations above. In these averments I am forced to believe that the writer not only strikes at our prominent candidates for the bishopric, but makes a blow at some of the present board of bishops, or some of those who now sleep in their graves. Can this be true of the writer? Can he look our bishops in the face, and affirm his statement? Men whose ability and moral worth he dares not question, can he? I ask in Zion's name, and in the fear of God? Can we submit to this without rebuke? I answer no, for we are admonished to speak lightly of no man, and to see that our youth be not despised. Remember Brother Blackwell took his first peep into this world in 1861, and is therefore but a youth in Zion. From this argument I see no reason why we should have no more bishops for 1896. We are further told by our brother, "that a bishop must be broad minded, far seeing, even tempered, having honest convictions, a liberal education, sound religion, good character, pious habits, not given to strong drink, not a lover of filthy lucre, not a pessimist, not having too many idiosyncrases, a man of pronounced executive ability, a good deviser, and one capable of executing his devices, he must be able to read human character from faces as well as from actions, must know the fittest, when he sees, it, must be the equal of any of his peers on general principles, and must excel them in executive ability. These qualities are necessary and should be possessed."

We fully agree with the writer, that these qualifications are necessary, but not exclusively so to the extent that a man cannot serve this office to the glory of God and to the prosperity of the church. As for me and the candidates whom I know and whom I verily believe will be elected to the office in 1896, we prefer the standard and qualifications requisite as laid down by the Apostle Paul. Read first Timothy 3rd chapter, 1st to 7th verses. According to this inspired writer Zion can produce her men now as she has heretofore, men of ability whose moral character no man dares to question, not even Brother Blackwell. He further declares: "If possible he ought to have taken a thorough course in Theology, for he is supposed to be a model, both as a preacher and lecturer. If not a master in theology, he certainly must be a good English scholar, using the Queen's English, he needs to be a representative man in every respect, if possible, not one from whom we will hide our faces in shame when he rises to preach or when scholars of other denominations happen to call in during the conference. We have had too much of this aleady." In this Brother Blackwell uses the mantle of charity to advantage, under the title "if possible" this is where humanity and religion always meet, hence the absurdity of all this talk above, but again he says, "we have had two much of this already." Is this true of any of the present bishops, surely not for I believe our bishops will compare favorably with any of the Afro-American Methodist bishops. Then why this stigma? If in reference to some of the dead, I ask in all candor and love, is it not ingratitude and shameful thus to speak of the fathers and founders of our Zion? Read and reflect, ye men of Zion. But why all of this, I answer simply to strike down the worthy men whom the church desires to honor. As an evidence that the writer feels the force of this language, he says: "the church will please pardon this last remark, for somebody must say it in public print and I have decided to be the scape goat if needs be." I think the gentleman should ask the Board of Bishops to pardon this hasty and unthoughtful expression that reflects upon the glory of our church, and enough to cause the dead (like Elisha) to turn over in their graves if such be possible. We are further told by the reverend gentleman that "a majority of the candidates are under forty years of age, for once in the history of the church, and some have attended only one general conference, legally as a delegate, and yet felt that they are called to the sacred office of bishop." It seems to me just here that the gentleman has left the track. Instead of discussing the subject as to the propriety or impropriety of the election of more bishops, he takes up the age and competency of the candidates, let us admit for arguments sake that neither the age or competency of the candidates whom he knows, and evidently refers to, are insufficient. I ask is this the reason why Zion should not elect two or more bishops to carry on her mission, the work of soul-saving and the elevation of the race? The question is plain and simple. Do we need more bishops or not? Do we need the present candidates? Let us with an unbiased and unprejudiced mind settle the question as it presents itself to us. Is it a necessity? decide and I am satisfied that the church can supply the office. But again, for arguments sake let us agree that the church, in justice to herself, will and must elect more bishops, then I ask is it fair and equitable on the part of Rev. Blackwell or any other, to stigmatize, censure and ridicule our good men, men who if there be an election, some of whom are sure to be elected. Are we not taught by Him who knows us in every part; "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Let reason and sagacity be exercised in the premises. But again we are informed as a reason why there should be no election of bishops because some of the aspirants "have not served more than three charges in the connection, and have given the connection scarce ten years service as an ordained minister, yet feel called to give appointments to the hoary haired, and direction to the fathers, who have been in service 30, 40 and 50 years.

Will Brother Blackwell tell us what has this to do with Zion's wants? Does it stand to reason that no more bishops are needed because the candidates whom you know and refer to have not served the connection all their lives, or even ten years? Is this logic? But might not some of these gentlemen with as much propriety give the aged men of our Zion appointments, as the young man of thirty-four years in the world, nineteen in the church and fourteen in the traveling ministry essay to dictate to this great church and to set himself up as the standard of her ministry, judging and prejudging the qualifications and religious status of her men? Why fight the men or candidates? It's not an issue on men, but office. Let us keep the issue before us, with an eye singled to the glory of God, and the promotion of Zion. The general conference will see to it that the man the most competent and faithful will be its choice, and Alabama is willing to rest her claims and man to the Godly judgment of that Christian body. The position we take is that an increase of bishops is a necessity. We admire the ability of our young men and are willing to accord to them the privilege of standing in the forearanks of the church, and to receive advice and counsel at their hands, but can not with impunity accept superficial knowledge, bigotry and indignity to control Zion connection. Speaking of hiding your face when the educated of other denominations come into our conferences, turn to the catalogues of the different schools, colleges and universities and let us see how many colored bishops you find in other churches or denominations who are classical graduates, more than Zion's. Alabama is not ashamed of her bishops. She only asks for two or three more to assist these in the work of our church. The general conference of 1892, in which Rev. Blackwell was an honored and useful member, decided in its wisdom and Methodistic experience that eight bishops on the bench was a desideratum to the further development and growth of the church and accordingly the election of two more was made. Now then, since two have died and one not able to travel because of his health, does it not in the open light of common sense stand to reason without prejudice, judgment, without wavering, voice the justice of my position and the truthfulness of these statements and facts, that three more bishops are a necessity to the future well-being and glory of our Zion? I answer with the truth above me and around me, with the unprejudiced to corroborate me—yes, yes, with a hearty amen, amen.

Gentility, humility, piety and charity have ever been the cardinal principles in Zion, hence her rapid growth and onward march. I doubt very much that she will ever have better men than those who have led her thus far.

We conclude by saying that Rev. Blackwell has failed to make out his case as to the issue. The propriety or impropriety of electing more bishops. We therefore ask a verdict at the hands of every man who is likely to be elected delegate to our general conference of 1896. Do not we as a great denomination, stretching as we do all over this country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the lakes to the gulf, stand in great need of three additional bishops to prosecute the work of our church? Without fear or favor of men I call upon you to answer, and now having said what I think is true and right, I close my article and with the kindest regards to Brother Blackwell I say —adieu.

AKRON, O., NOTES.

BY LENA TOWCY.

By the request of quarterly conference I send to you for publication the following:

It pleased Almighty God through our esteemed and worthy Bishop, J. W. Hood, D. D. LL. D., to send to us at the beginning of the conference year, a man, thro whose untiring energy and Christian deportment linked with intelligence have been the means with the assistance of Trustees J. S. Robinson, J. S. Morrison, F. A. Simpson and Isham Smith of revolutionizing Zion in this city. For some years the church has been dropping until it had reached its lowest. Armed with the sword of faith and the temporal guide of our pastor Rev. R. J. Strothers, she today fills her place among the leading churches of Ohio conference. In one of the most central locations of Akron today is to be found the first A. M. E. Zion church, a building 60x30 with a lecture room 40x29 and a pastor's study 16x15, with a stairway leading to the auditorium. This building which cost us $1,800 was dedicated on the 21st day of April by Bishop J. W. Hood assisted by Rev. J. H. Trimble, presiding elder, Rev. C. E. Keller, of the Trinity Lutheran church, Rev. H. Jones, of Massolin, Dr. E. R. Willard, of Grace Reform church and Judge U. L. Marvin, of the circuit court. The occasion was one long to be remembered and the first time in the history of the connection can we boast of having a church of which we are not ashamed to invite the highest guest to. It is seated with new opera chairs and painted and frescoed with a seating capacity of 450 persons. Just behind the pulpit sits the choir of nine persons assisted by the church orchestra lead by Prof. Levi Pulin. On Monday night 22nd of April the following presents were presented to the church by the different societies. The daughters of Elias, through Mrs. Emily Martin as president, presented fourteen fine stained windows. Response by Presiding Elder J. H. Trimble. The Daughters of Jerusalem, through Mrs. Ella Simpson, presented the pulpit set complete. Responded to by Rev. B. Sims. Miss Isadora Hyman presented a fine chandelier with four lamps. Mrs E. Herrick, one with six lamps and the city council, one through its president Hon. J. H. Palmer with four lights. Mr. B. F. Hamlin two and Mr. F. M. Hailstock one church bell. So the event is one long to be remembered. The church is lighted with eighteen lights of different colors. The congregation has wonderfully improved. The church has added eighteen persons to of worth others are followers or congregation members composed of the leading families in the city. It is due to the church to say that the membership is nearly doubled. As an expression of the esteem in which the pastor Rev. R. J. Strother is held. The trustee board previous to dedication presented him with a $40 broadcloth ministerial suit. The choir presented the pastor with a chiviot suit for every day wear. The Daughters of Jerusalem gave him a pair of fine shoes. The Daughters of Elias gave him a fine silk hat, and the secretary of the conference a pair of gloves, collars and handkerchiefs. The church has raised to the conference $1,000, paid the presiding elder and the pastor will go to conference with all of the conference claims. We feel it our duty to say this through the columns of THE STAR, as we have been misrepresented before by laymen whether intentionally or not we leave the reader to judge. Perfect peace and harmony between pastor and church, yea even among children prevails.

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

BY REV. GEO. S. ADAMS, D. D.

The seventy-fourth session of the New York annual conference convened in Newburg, N Y, May 8th. Conference was called to order by Bishop Hood, D D, LL D. Devotional exercises were held and the roll was called. Many were present. Officers were elected and committees appointed. Rev J R B Smith, of Troy, was appointed to preach the annual sermon at 8 p m. The fraternal delegates and visitors were introduced. Considerable business was transacted and conference adjourned.

Conference reassembled at 8 p m to hear the annual sermon. Rev Smith took his text from Zech. 4:10—"Who has despised the day of small things?" The sermon was forcible and logical and brought forth many amens from the congregation. After prayer, a collection was taken up by Hon J C Dancy, who continued to take up big collections during the whole session and, tho having left Wilmington as collector of customs, he convinced us that he was still a good collector.

On Thursday, the second day, many of the lay delegates reported, showing the churches to be in a good condition spiritually and financially. The various committees reported and the subject of the W H and F Missionary Society was brought up and discussed by Revs Jacob Thomas and S Caldwell. The Bishop explained the nature of it.

In the afternoon Major T P Odell and Hon W H Kelley were introduced. The latter proceeded to deliver the address of welcome for the city. He complimented the Methodist ministers and paid a high tribute of praise to the sainted Bishop Thompson. He gave us a cordial welcome. "My country 'tis of thee" was sweetly sung by the choir. Hon J C Dancy was introduced and made a thrilling response pointing out some of our most distinguished race leaders and showing both the condition and position of the black man in America. A vote of thanks was tendered Mr Kelley. Several city pastors were introduced. Rev H G Biddle, S D, of the New Jersey conference was introduced as was also Rev Elias A Crook, A B, of the C N C conference. Bishop Hood urged the support of THE STAR and J C Dancy advocated the claims of the Quarterly.

At night Rev Pringle preached from Heb. 11:13—"These all died in the faith."

Much business was transacted on Friday. During the day, Rev J J Carlisle was introduced and made a fine speech on behalf of the city clergy. Among some of the many other good things he said, "We stand on a platform upon which all churches must rise. The colored man has a future and you are going to share that future." Dr Fuller said, "There is no color line in the Christian religion." Rev Josiah Caldwell responded in an eloquent manner, showing the status of the A M E Zion Church. Dr Safford was introduced and spoke and requested the Bishop to preach in the Trinity M E church on Sunday. Rev G. W. Clinton, A M, said, "We appreciate the expenses you incur, O ye brethren. Our fathers had a great salution to fulfill. The Apostle charged they [illegible] on the them [illegible] me." He continued by [illegible] may not have [illegible] but the throne is [illegible] our mouth [illegible] can hear it [illegible] (Much applause.)

Rev E D W Gass, A M, of Knoxville, Tenn, made a [illegible] speech full of thought and wit. He kept the house in an uproar of laughter and applause all the time he spoke.

THIRD MORNING SESSION.

At 11 a m, the Bishop delivered his episcopal address. He began by saying, "Through the mercies of God we are glad to have the privilege of coming together after another year's work. We are glad to meet one alive. Our minds have been broken. From the episcopal minds Bishop Thompson has been taken. According to the Scriptures he had lived out his days. No one in this section impressed himself upon the people more than he. Of the general conference of 1896, there are but then a half dozen of us. All those of the earlier days will soon have passed away. How long, some one will stand here to deliver the eulogy over the rest of us. He gave [illegible] to the living.

WORK OF THE FUTURE.—The events that lie closest to us now are the general conference and the centennial of our church. The centennial of our church will take place next year, in October, at "Mother Zion," New York City.

We have mapped out many large plans. We planned to raise $100,000. This should not be hard for we have 400,000 members from whom to raise it. If we could expect each member to do his part it would only take 25 cents each. It has been calculated that each bishop give $100, each general officers $50 or $25 Each minister $25 or $10 to be—(Dancy, a thank offering!) Bishop Hood continued, "God's ancient people gave THANK OFFERING. We will have a ten days conference in New York city next October. Much has been said about holding the general conference and the centennial at the same time and place. It seems this is for the lack of thought. Other general conferences will be held at the same time. The great M E church will have the right of way. This will receive the first place in the papers. Any thing else will be a side show. We want to occupy all the newspapers in the land. We want the world to know something about us. Our object is not to make laws but to sing and pray and shout. We want our best talent to take part. We don't want a few speeches in a bad paper. We want all denominations there.

UNIFORMITY IN WORSHIP

We should have uniformity in all things. Other denominations are coming to us, because we are humble. If we have dancers among us not in the Discipline, those who come to us cannot join in harmony with us. Let us put Hymn books in every pew. Some of you give out two lines of a hymn, and expect the congregation to sing the rest without a book. You had better give out two lines at a time. Down South they use to give but one line at a time. Brings rest, Amy. Keep the order of the Discipline. In all things we want, as far as we can to have uniformity. The history of Zion's success has been wondered at. From 1866 to 1872 Zion doubled herself five times. While 1866 and 1876 Zion increased from 5000 to 22500. The church of our choice is the Lord hath us. God has called Zion as he had Israel. God [illegible] out in the wilderness to do a great work. We

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