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BETHEL AND ZION.

REJOINDER TO DR. J. M. HENDERSON--FACTS, NOT FIGURES, ARE TO WIN IN THIS DISCUSSION.

BY BISHOP A. WALTERS, D. D.

In the *Christian Recorder* of December 3rd, in reply to my article, "Bethel and Zion," Dr. J. M. Henderson makes a puerile appeal to the members of the A. M. E. Church for sympathy by expatiating on the deeds of the departed heroes of the Church. One who had not read my article would suppose that I had assailed their integrity and underrated their ability. Nothing was further from my mind than an attack upon the fathers of the A. M. E. Church. Facts, not eloquence, are to win in this discussion.

My heart is too big and my love too great for the Negro race to wantonly reflect upon its heroes, whether in Bethel or Zion. I honor the memory of the sainted Allen. He was a great Negro leader, strong in intellect, firm in purpose, lofty in thought, exemplary in his life, forceful in the presentation of Gospel truth—a worthy founder of a great church. There is nothing else for me to do but to honor and reverence such a man. It thrills me with delight to read of the Herculean efforts of such heroes as Bishops Morris Brown, Edward Waters, Wm. Paul Quinn and Jabez Campbell, and of the tremendous difficulties they had to surmount in order to extend the borders of their church and lift up a degraded and oppressed people.

I revere the cultured and scholarly Bishop Brown, the eloquent and poetic Ward, the sweet Gospel preacher and able parliamentarian, Wayman, and that prince of educators, peerless race leader, great historian—the most brilliant star in Bethel's constellation, one that sheds its dazzling and benign rays throughout this entire nation—Bishop Daniel A. Payne, D. D., LL. D., founder of proud Wilberforce. What Negro with a grain of common sense or a particle of race pride would not delight to honor such geniuses?

I will not cease to sound the praise of Negro heroes, whether in Church or State, until my lips are sealed, my tongue paralyzed and my voice silenced in death. God forbid that I should strive to pluck one garland from the brow of the founder of Bethel Church. I would to God that Dr. Henderson possessed some of the noble traits of the departed heroes of his Church; if he did, he would not be continually slandering the institutions and eminent men who are struggling so zealously to perpetuate the church which Allen founded, and which he (Henderson) professes to love so dearly.

In the first place, Dr. Henderson has but little regard for the truth. In his reply he says of the subject of Incorporation: "Begone with your irrelevant (our unanswerable) questions." He forgets that he raised the question of Incorporation in his article of October 15th, when he said that Bethel Church was incorporated in 1793. We requested him to inform us where the record of such incorporation was to be found, the book, page and date. He has found this to be an impossibility, (I knew this at the time) and now gives us for ingenious argument: "Begone with your irrelevant questions." Finding his mistake he says that the property secured in 1793 was Richard Allen's own personal property, and hence there was no need of incorporation. It is a great pity the Doctor was not aware of this fact before his statement of October 15th. Recognizing his defeat he says: "What has the incorporation of a Board of Trustees, whose highest functions is to hold title to real estate, got to do with the birth of African Methodism?" By the above he shows his ignorance of the whole question under discussion. Why did he boast in the beginning that Bethel Church was incorporated before Zion, if incorporation does not amount to anything? As soon as he discovers beyond a doubt that Zion was incorporated in New York before Bethel was in Philadelphia, he turns ecclesiastical acrobat and cries out, "Begone with your irrelevant questions!"

In the second place the Doctor erred when he stated that Zion had no ordained ministers in 1820. Zion had at that time four regularly ordained deacons, viz: James Varick, Wm. Miller, Abraham Thompson and Levee Smith, and it was no fault of hers that she did not have elders. For years prior to 1820 she had petitioned Bishop Asbury and other Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to ordain elders for her. Dr. Henderson is aware that Bethel had about the same difficulty in securing ordination for her men.

In the third place the Doctor is in error when he strives to make the impression that Bishop Allen on his visit to New York in 1820 did not urge the Zionites to unite with his Connection. In *Rush's Rise and Progress of the A. M. E. Zion Church*, page 44, is the following:

"A letter was read which was sent by Richard Allen, directed to William Brown, advising them (the Zionites) to unite with him, but there was very little said about it, notwithstanding." The Zionites refused to unite with Allen, but not because he declined to ordain their men, whom the Doctor says desired to remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church. They had already withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church at the time of Bishop Allen's visit to New York.

Dr. Henderson says we were kicked out. If the statements made by Bishops Allen, Payne and Turner are correct, Bethel was also kicked out; for Absalom Jones and others were pulled from their knees during prayer in St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. They begged to be allowed to remain until the prayer was over, but their request was not granted. Those who did remain during the prayer left immediately after. (See Payne's History, page 79.) This looks like they were forced out.

The Doctor is guilty of duplicity when he strives to make the impression that Bethel Church was not under the immediate control of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1793 to 1816. Every intelligent A. M. E. minister and layman knows that Bethel did not withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church till 1816. Why continue to mislead the people? It cannot be proven that the A. M. E. Church as a society was organized in Philadelphia in 1787. The earliest date given by Bishop Payne in his history of the organization of the A. M. E. Society in Philadelphia is in 1793. On page 4 is the following:

"In 1793 the numbers of the serious people of color, having increased, they were of different opinions respecting the mode of religious worship, and as many felt a strong partiality for that adopted by the Methodists, Richard Allen with the advice of some of the brethren, proposed the erection of a place of worship on his own ground and at his own expense as an African Methodist meeting-house."

In Tanner's Outlines of History, page 144, we read:

"May 5th, 1794.—A number of us, citizens of Philadelphia, descendants of the African race met together at the house of Richard Allen in order to consult together upon the most eligible means to provide for ourselves a house to meet in for religious worship agreeable to our own desire, according to the light which God, through grace, has given us—separately from our white brethren—for reasons hereinafter mentioned. It was proposed to purchase a frame that was for sale at the time and remove it to a lot of ground that was offered and appeared convenient for the above purpose. Brothers Robert Green, Joseph Houston, William Hogin, Isaac Miller, York Byers, Anthony Robinson, John Allen, Richard Allen, Thomas Martin, Solomon Benjamin, Prince Prudence, Philadelphia, May 18th, 1794.—At a stated meeting of the committee it was unanimously agreed to proceed to prepare the frame for the purpose, and that the frame be put in order to move it next Saturday. Brother Robert Green, for reasons which he rendered, resigned as a member of the member of the committee, and Broth-

er Phillip Johnston was chosen in his stead." The above statement differs materially from that made by Dr. Henderson. I again state briefly our claim to priority. It is generally admitted that African Methodism was born in New York City in 1766, and that Phillip Embury and Captain Webb were its first preachers. Their meeting place was a rigging loft in William Street. Peter Williams, a colored man, who with his own hands laid the corner stone of Zion church, (see *Lost Chapters of Methodism*, page 44), was a leading spirit in its formation and was one of the first converts. Now any unprejudiced reader will see that Zion is in direct succession. All colored Methodists of America rejoice in the fact that they were represented in the original Methodist organization in America in the person of Peter Williams. Bishop Arnett in his *Budget* of 1891 says: "Peter Williams was the first colored man that was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York." And further says: "He was converted under the preaching of Phillip Embury, and was the first sexton of Wesley Chapel, from 1778 to 1795."

Bishop Arnett rejoices in the fact that when the foundation of African Methodism was laid, a colored brother was there; he claims that he was represented in Methodism through this colored brother, and does not raise any serious objection to his being a Zionite.

He (Peter Williams) was the leader of a colored class as early as 1780; from that time till 1795 he was preparing his people to strike out for themselves. In 1796 they organized the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, but, like Bethel in Philadelphia, remained under the care of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1800 incorporation was secured, and recorded in February, 1801. Incorporation gave the colored trustees of Zion church entire control of the property, which they have retained from that time until now (except by change of location). By the way, we have a very desirable location in New York City, and not in the slums, Dr. Henderson to the contrary notwithstanding.

Dr. Henderson slurs the Episcopacy of the A. M. E. Zion Church in the following words: "Zion is truly a Methodist body, but Zion is not an Episcopal body." Before discussing the Episcopacy of the A. M. E. Zion Church let us turn the light upon the Episcopacy of the A. M. E. Church.

Richard Allen was ordained a deacon in 1799 by Bishop Asbury, but I have searched the histories of the A. M. E. Church in vain to find when he was ordained an elder. Bishop Arnett in *Budget* of 1891 says that Richard Allen was ordained by Bishop Asbury in 1799, but does not state to what order. Bishop Tanner in his *Outlines of History*, page 17, gives the following ambiguous question and answer:

"Did Bishop White ordain Richard Allen to be Bishop? No; Richard Allen was ordained by Bishop Asbury of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and seventeen years after he was ordained a Bishop by five regularly ordained ministers; among them was Absalom Jones, whom Bishop White had previously ordained an elder or priest."

The good Bishop is careful to state that Absalom Jones was ordained an elder, but omits to inform the reader to what order Bishop Asbury ordained Richard Allen in 1799. However, this difficulty is cleared up by Bishop Payne, (page 69 of his History.) Speaking of a quotation from the *Journal of the Philadelphia Conference* in 1831, on the death of Allen, he says: "He (Allen) was born in Philadelphia in 1760, ordained deacon in 1799 and a Bishop in 1816." What we desire to know is, by whom was Richard Allen ordained an elder.

The ordination of Rev. Richard Allen as a bishop is also somewhat cloudy and needs clearing up. Bishop Payne in his *History*, (page 14,) says after speaking of some preliminaries of the first Conference:

"The next thing of importance was the election of a Bishop. The votes being polled, Rev. Daniel Coker was declared the Bishop-elect on the 9th of April, 1816, on the 10th he resigned, or

rather declined the office, and Rev. Richard Allen was chosen in his stead, and was therefore consecrated a Bishop of the A. M. E. Church on the 11th of April, 1816."

On page 18 he informs us that the Conference was composed of sixteen members, namely: From Baltimore—Ministers Daniel Coker, Richard Williams, Henry Harden; Laymen Edward Williams, Stephen Hill, Nicholas Gilliard; From Philadelphia—Ministers Richard Allen, Clayton Durham (or Drayton), Jacob Tapscio, James Champion; Laymen Thomas Webster: From Wilmington, Del.—Minister Peter Spencer; From Attleborough, Pa.—Minister Jacob Marsh, William Anderson, Edward Jackson; From Salem, N. J.—Reuben Cuff, Bishop Turner in his *Church Polity* and Bishop Tanner in his *Outlines of History* give the same list. There is no mention of Absalom Jones, the Protestant Episcopal priest, or elder, being present. Up to the time of this meeting none of the ministers present were elders except, possibly, Peter Spencer. Revs. Allen and Coker had been ordained deacons by Bishop Asbury, but not elders. In the case of Rev. Allen we have not been able to find any record of his ordination as an elder; hence the inference is that he had not been ordained an elder up to 1816. For proof that Coker was not an elder, see Payne's *History*, pages 28 and 29.

Richard Williams and Henry Harden were elected to elders' order in 1818. James Champion and Jacob Tapscio were ordained elders in the same year at the Philadelphia annual Conference. (See Payne's *History*, page 26.) Henry Durham (or Drayton), Edward Jackson and Reuben Cuff were ordained deacons at the same time. Peter Spencer, who was the only elder present, (if any,) seems to have taken no part in the proceedings; indeed, he was the founder of what is known as the Union A. M. E. Church. Jacob Marsh and William Anderson were so insignificant that you never hear of them again. Now I desire to know from whence came the three or five elders who were said to have ordained Rev. Richard Allen a Bishop.

In Bishop Tanner's *Outlines of History*, page 152, quoted from *Excerpts of the First Edition of Lorenzo Dow's Works* (1815) is the following: "If Mr. Wesley had a right to ordain Dr. Coker, by the same rule Absalom Jones might ordain Richard Allen, and the ordination must be equally valid."

Mark you, he does not say that Absalom Jones *did* ordain Richard Allen, but *might*. He speaks as if there was some discussion as to whether his ordination was valid under such circumstances. The foregoing quotation shows that there was some question concerning the validity of Allen's ordination as early as 1816, the very year he is said to have been made. In the midst of so much obscurity in regard to the ordination of Bishop Allen, I don't think that our sister Bethel has any room to sneer at the validity of Zion's Episcopacy.

A word concerning Zion's Episcopacy: In the beginning, we adopted the Superintendency, believing we were following the ideas of Mr. Wesley. In his letter of commission to Dr. Coker, he (Mr. Wesley) says:

"Know all men that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to His glory, I have this day set apart as a Superintendent, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers), Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work, etc. John Wesley." (See *Emory's Defense of the Fathers*, page 38.)

Again, in his letter to Bishop Asbury Mr. Wesley says:

"How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called a Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a Bishop! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!" (See *Stevens' History of Methodism*, page 220.)

After such denunciation of the term Bishop by Mr. Wesley, did not Zion have very good reason to adopt the term Superintendent? But time has shown that for American Methodism,

Providence has ordered otherwise; hence we have the term Bishop. When Zion discovered that fact, she dropped the term Superintendent and adopted the term Bishop. This was done in 1868.

In 1822 Revs. James Varick, Abraham Thompson and Leven Smith were ordained elders by Dr. James Covell, Sylvester Hutchinson and William L. Stillwell, all regularly ordained elders of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (See *Rush's Rise and Progress of the A. M. E. Zion Church*, page 78.) According to Mr. Wesley's letter of commission to Dr. Coker, and Lord King's Primitive Church, this ordination was valid. These brethren in turn ordained others, and so on down the line. In 1838 we adopted the life time tenure. All the living Bishops of the A. M. E. Zion Church received the third ordination. I am sure that I was set apart for a Bishop by the laying on of hands of Bishops who had been ordained by more than three elders, and I am truly a Bishop as any living Episcopos. If Absalom Jones, a colored priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church, could make Rev. Richard Allen a Bishop, (notwithstanding Bishop Hood in his *History of the A. M. E. Zion Church*, page 144, says his daughter declared that he affirmed before his death he had nothing to do with the ordination of Rev. Richard Allen, but was simply present when he was ordained), then a half dozen Bishops who had been ordained by more than three elders had the right to ordain the present Bishops of our Church, and our ordination is valid.

Dr. Henderson shows his ignorance and narrowness when he says that Zion is not an Episcopal body. If not, why did the General Conference of the A. M. E. Church in 1892, by an almost unanimous vote, agree to unite with the A. M. E. Zion Church, provide the annual and quarterly conferences consented to it? If we are not an Episcopal body why did the Board of Bishops of the A. M. E. Church meet in joint session with the Bishops of the A. M. E. Zion Church at Washington City in 1892 and agree upon a platform to be submitted to the ministers and members of both churches?

But why discuss the matter further with poor Dr. Henderson, since he has no regard for the truth? A minister who pays \$81,000 for a lot and church building and in a few months afterwards publishes that the same property is worth \$165,000, (when property generally depreciates in value where colored congregations locate) is certainly devoid of Christian integrity. But what more can be expected from a man who over his own signature confessed a short while ago that he had been guilty of almost every crime in the catalogue of crimes since he had been a minister? Some of us thought that he had reformed in these last years, but since he has prevaricated so much recently, we have come to the conclusion that his reformation is not very thorough, and his preaching of moral ethics is all bosh. What he needs is some old time Methodist religion, or in other words, to be born again. More anon. New York.

NOTES FROM MISSISSIPPI.

This makes my second year on this circuit. When I came here the membership was very small at both points. At Zion we had no house to worship in and the membership had gone down to 30. We had hardly any house at Sime's Chapel and 30 members there, making 60 members on the circuit. On January 7th, 1894, the South Mississippi Conference convened at Kosciusko, Miss.; Bishop Pettey wanted a man to send to this circuit. After looking over his roll of preachers for a man, he asked the presiding elder to select a man they centered on me.

I came to the work and found our people laughing at by other denominations and entreating them to come in and join their churches. Some of the members told me they could not help me and that it would pay me to return home. I told them that the Bishop sent me here and I would stay until the next annual Conference assembled. I met the boards of my respective churches and told them of my intention to build at each of these

points. They agreed and promised me their hearty support. So Rev. B. S. Simes, a local deacon, and a member of the church, encouraged me and to-day that church takes the name of Sime's Chapel after him. He soon got the members in line and commenced to build. He (Rev. Simes) owns a plantation and sold the lot on which the church now stands. His house is always a home for the Zion ministers who chance that way. I cannot say too much for this good Christian gentleman.

I got all of my plans in order and began to blow the trumpet of Zion and the people heard the alarm with joy and with eagerness they began to pour in to see us and stayed, and when they went home they told others, and they came. We did so well up to July, 1895, when I started a revival at Sime's Chapel and added 26 converts, 10 accessions, making a total of 36. At my next point, Zion Chapel, we gained 23 converts, 11 accessions, making the grand total of 70 members added. In September we began to take up money for the building and raised \$100, and in November we gave another rally and took up \$50. Then we went to building and December 4th, the church was completed and it was so nice until Zion Chapel was the choice by the brethren for the annual Conference to be held in. On the 4th of December, 1895, the South Mississippi Conference met and the members of Conference were nicely cared for and at the same time we had on hand \$65.00 to build a new church at Sime's Chapel. At the adjournment of the Conference the members of both churches were so well pleased with my work until they all asked my return. Bishop Pettey re-appointed me the second year. We have been moving along nicely and added to the circuit 20 member this year. I have Zion Chapel in a first-class order and now we are building a first-class church at Sime's Chapel at a cost of \$1,500, and we want to have it finished by the annual conference.

Now, Mr. Editor, you see we have been wide awake on all lines and intend to make Zion second to none. We have been looking for Bishop J. B. Small, D. D., for the last ten or fifteen days, but he has failed to come. We are now getting ready for the annual conference which will meet at Durant, Mississippi, December 16th, 1896. Now to all the brethren of the South Mississippi Conference, we must remember that we have 9 bishops and 7 general officers and all of them are to be supported out of the general fund. Let us rally and collect it.

A REPLY TO O. D. HILL.

Mr. Editor: I see in the *STAR* dated November 12th, an article by O. D. Hill stating that none of the preachers of the State of Mississippi have performed their duty, and have not sent in their Easter moneys but one, and that was Brother G. W. Johnson; but I say that statement of O. D. Hill is a false. He has furthermore said that our Publication House has been slighted by the preachers of Mississippi; I say that is a false. He said that they were not able to lead a portion of the race because they were ignorant, but when he said that he told what the old people make soap out of. Now, permit me to tell you who O. D. Hill is. He was a member of Sime's Chapel and has not attended preaching in church in four or five months; he failed to pay up his general fund last year and also his presiding elder and pastor, and also this year the same; and the church holds a charge against him for neglecting the means of grace. He was once a superintendent of Sime's Chapel Sunday-school and he was turned out for insubordination. He was a trustee and was dropped because he was also elected delegate to the district conference and he failed to go.

Now the reason I say this is I have sent in all of my Easter money to Rev. G. L. Blackwell and have my receipt at home; and how O. D. Hill could write such an article to the *STAR* like that—and I am his pastor—I cannot see; and if O. D. Hill had come to me I would have shown him my receipt. It will be best for him after this to know what he is publishing when he is publishing a whole conference of preachers.

AN APPRECIATED GIFT.

I desire to say a few words for the encouragement of our young people here, and let the readers of the *STAR* know that we are still alive and at work. We had quite a successful time Thanksgiving Day. I only wish to mention at this time the success of our baby society, entitled the Home Circle. We have a number of twenty-two, including the manager, the eldest being 18 years of age.

This Society was organized October 27th, by Mrs. J. P. Wade, a lady of no small ability and fore-thought; one that knows no failure. They undertook the Thanksgiving entertainment; proceeds for the benefit of the pastor. To the surprise of all, with a noble speech from the President, a girl 16 years old presented to the pastor \$50. I shall give you the address as it was with the names of the members of the club:

"Rev. T. H. Slater, the members of the Worker's Home Circle, only one month old on the 27th inst., has appointed me the president of said Society, to voice to you the sentiment of our hearts. Our observation, Sir, of your work and Christian examples has not passed our young minds without thought. We, the members of the Circle assemble here Sir, to show to you our regards and warmest love for the work in which you are engaged by presenting to you through our treasurer, Miss Annie E. Fleming, this purse containing \$50. Trusting that you will receive it with the same feeling of triumph as we feel."

This was signed by Mrs. J. P. Ward, general manager; Maud B. Lewis, president; Alice Fields, secretary, and Annie E. Fleming, treasurer. The members: Maritha Kirk, Grace Brown, Stella Gilkinson, Nellie Jackson, Grace Jackson, Carrie Gilkinson, Ada Bowler, Lettie Lilly, Lizzie Parker, Alfonso Barnard, John Lewis, Garry Grice, Wm. Turner, Edward Brooks, Rev. Kirk, Wm. Ford, Frank Turner and James Matthews.

When the purse reached the pastor's hand he felt that no word could express the thankfulness of his heart. May the Circle live long to work for God and Zion. Enclose find one dollar donated for the *STAR*. Seavickley, Pa.

FAIR PLAY IN THE CHURCH.

BY REV. H. F. MARTIN.

One thing ought to be aimed at by all men; that is the interest of each individually and all collectively. When I balance all things in my thoughts, I grow more favorable to Plato, and do not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things; for so wise a man could but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation happy.

So the members of the church ought to pay their connectional claims, and the ministers ought to see to it, and also see that each member takes the *STAR* OF ZION, or at least that one member in the family takes the paper. The last General Conference has made it a law that each minister must take the paper or be left without an appointment. The minister ought not to be satisfied by just paying his general fund at the annual conference, but to pay his pro-rata share of the connectional claims and should lead out in the collection first and the members will follow. I know ministers that will meet every day train and buy newspapers but will not take the *STAR*. This is not fair play in the church; and then they will get up in the pulpit on Sunday and brag about our literature. What in the name of God does he know about our literature? This is not a fair play in the church. Rockwood, Tenn.

AN EXPLANATION.

Winston, N. C., December 9th, 1896. DEAR MR. SMITH—I beg for a short space to explain that some of my presents received on the occasion of my marriage were not put in the list of last week, simply because that list was sent from Fayetteville, and my presents from Winston, and one or two other places came after my arrival in Winston, too late to be inserted in that paragraph. I wish to thank my friends most sincerely for their kindly remembrances. Most truly, MARGARET HOOD-BARNES.