

The Star of Zion.

ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH IN AMERICA.

Volume XXII.

Charlotte, N. C., Thursday, October 20, 1898.

Number 44.

ZION IS IMPREGNABLE.

I Cannot Assent To Bishop A. Walters' Admissions.

BY BISHOP J. W. HOOD, D. D., LL. D.

Mr. Editor: I have kept out of the denominational controversy which was being going on for some time, because I have felt that what I have said in a published history will stay said, in spite of any attempt from without to gainsay it.

But when a distinguished man among us, who is likely to be quoted as authority, in his commendable desire to promote peace and good feeling, makes an admission, which is not warranted by the record, duty compels me to call attention to the record. Should I be silent now, it may some time be claimed that I assented.

Bishop Walters will do well to read Bishop Payne a little more carefully. I am going to let, not only Bishop Payne, but also Bishop Allen speak for himself.

Bishop Allen, according to Bishop Payne's History of the A. M. E. Church, (vol. i, chapter xi,) made no attempt to organize an independent A. M. E. Church in 1793. And what he did attempt, proved a failure. This is what Bishop Allen says:

"We intended it for an African preaching house or church. But finding the elder stationed in the city was such an opposer of our proceedings, of erecting a place of worship, though the principal part of the directors of the church belonged to the Methodist Connection, and that he would neither preach for us, nor have anything to do with us, we held an election to know what religious denomination we would unite with. At this election it was determined. There were two in favor of Methodist; Rev. Absolom Jones and myself; and a large majority in favor of the Church of England. This majority carried."

Thus it is seen that Bishop Allen had no thought of forming an independent A. M. E. Church in 1793. What he did attempt at that time, according to his own statement, was to erect a preaching place for the African people who belonged to the M. E. Church. He says the principal part of those with him belonged to the Methodist Connection. There was no Methodist Connection at that time except the M. E. Church. They would have erected their house of worship and remained in that Church but for the opposition of the Elder who would have nothing to do with them.

Now Bishop Allen tells us that only he and Absolom Jones voted in favor of remaining in the Methodist Church. Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, accepted this congregation, and ordained Absolom Jones as its pastor. And thus Mr. Allen, who said he could be nothing but a Methodist, was left alone.

This statement of Bishop Allen is in full accord with the history of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, and there can be no doubt of its correctness.

The year 1793 was a bad one to select. And the man who asserts that Bishop Allen organized the A. M. E. Church in that year must have very little regard for his reputation as an authority on Negro Church history in Philadelphia.

The movement, in which Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, took advantage of the refusal of the Methodist Bishop to ordain a colored man for a congregation of colored people and thus formed the St. Thomas Episcopal Church in 1793, is too well known. Absolom Jones was their first pastor. That church with its history stands to-day as a witness that Bishop Allen's statement is correct.

According to Bishop Allen's statement, he began again in 1794 to build up a congregation under the Bishop of the M. E. Church. He says he bought a black smith shop and had it fitted up for a house of worship. Bishop Asbury accepted it as such, preached in it, and thus encouraged the work. If it is true, as they tell us, that Mr. Allen was ordained a deacon in the M. E. Church in 1799, it is evident that he had not formed an independent A. M. E. Church up to that time.

There is one other statement which I cannot accept, namely, that our itinerant system was first formed in 1821. It is true that the first Conference of which we have any record was held in that year. But there have been Conferences held long since that time of which no record can be found. Is it not quite likely that there were some held before that time of which there is no record?

Now there are two facts which indicate that our itinerant system was formed before that time. First, there were seven churches represented in that Conference. When were they formed? Four of the churches were formed at least 8 years earlier—Zion, Asbury, and two churches on Long Island. This shows that some kind of work had been done, in the way of forming a Connection, long before 1821. It must be borne in mind, too, that only one of these seven churches had been served by a white preacher. The entire affairs of six of the churches, had from the first been managed by our own preachers. Is it not likely that they had Conferences to arrange these appointments?

But the other fact is that the first Discipline was published in 1820. By good fortune, Rev. W. T. Biddle, D. D., came across a copy of that Discipline, possibly the only one now to be found. This shows that there must have been a General Conference as early as that year. I, therefore, cannot accept 1821 as the beginning of our Itinerant System.

With these two corrections I am quite willing to unite with Bishop Walters in favor of peace with all who want peace. I am not suing for peace, nor will I accept peace on any terms not based on truth and righteousness.

Zion has come up through great tribulations, and I do not know that she is any the worse for her scars. She has gotten used to assaults and can stand a lot of them yet.

Y. P. SOCIETY OF C. E.

Why The A. M. E. Zion Church Adopted The C. E. Society.

BY BISHOP A. WALTERS, D. D.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

We are in favor of the Christian Endeavor Society because it stands for Christian unity. If there is one thing above another that has weakened the Christian Church in its work of soul-saving and development of Christian character, it is the denominational strife which has been kept up in one form or another for years, but is now rapidly disappearing before the floodtide of Christian unity put in motion by the Christian Endeavor Society.

Our Lord in His memorable prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of John, prayed "That they all (Christians) may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou has sent me."

I do not believe that the unity prayed for in the foregoing by Christ Jesus is an external organization, but a spiritual unity of believers. An absolute external unity never was and never will be. The doctrinal difficulties which separated Calvin and Arminius will perhaps ever exist. The main pillars which are to support the visible Church are liberty of conscience and liberty of opinion. This is why the Christian Endeavor Society uses the term "Interdenominational."

The unity prayed for is a spiritual one. It is the being encompassed by the Trinity, and the dwelling in the unity of that Trinity of all believers. This complete oneness of believers with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is the end of Christ's coming into the world.

I am of the opinion that so far as faith is concerned, the formal of faith expressed in the Apostles' creed come nearer than any to the unity of faith prayed for by Christ.

I also believe that the Master had in view the unity of affections of believers.

Our sentiments, desires and affections are to be influenced, directed and controlled by a feeling of friendliness and good will: that the one all-pervading, all-controlling and predominating spirit which disposes us to deal prudently, friendly, kindly, and even magnanimously with each other at all times, and under whatever real or imaginary provocation, shall hold its ascendancy over every other feeling that would seek to antagonize it, with its banner joyfully thrown to the breeze, floating in triumph over all human selfishness, emblazoned with "Good will to men." However widely we may differ in opinions, our creeds, our views of Church polity, our modes of administration; however diversified

our gifts, graces and calling in life; whatever may be our denominational divergencies, we may be firmly and harmoniously united in a spirit of fraternal love.

Again, I believe our Saviour in this prayer had in view a unity of purpose or concert of action in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom on the part of His followers. The one aim of all Christian Churches is to make the world better and happier. It is to develop mankind from zero to complete spiritual manhood. All evangelical Churches are struggling to present their worshipers holy and unblamable in the sight of God. And if they are not, they ought to be doing so.

INTER-RACIAL.

It is our lot to live amongst a people whose laws, traditions and prejudices have been against us for centuries. Some people dislike us because we were once slaves and have not been able in these few years of freedom to rid ourselves of all the baneful effects of slavery; others are against us because of our color, notwithstanding some of us have only one-sixteenth part of Negro blood in our veins; still others hate us simply because we exist and succeed in spite of all their efforts to "down" us.

If we enter a hotel, restaurant or places of amusement, we are told by the proprietor that he has no objection to accommodating us, but that certain guests object, hence we cannot be accommodated. In this case we are the victims of caste prejudice. In other words, he refuses to accommodate us because he thinks it will injure his business. If a white man stops to hold a conversation with a colored friend on the street or in a public place, or invites him to his home as his guest, some of his white friends are indignant because he dares to practice what he preaches. In this instance the white man becomes the victim of caste prejudice. We are hedged in on every side by prejudice. It is carried on ad infinitum.

A series of articles are being published in a Chambersburg paper by Rev. G. C. H. Hasskarl, D. C. L., pastor of the second Lutheran church, Chambersburg, Pa., asserting that we (the colored people) are not human, but beasts; that Adam and Eve were not our foreparents; that we were created prior to them, on the day that the beasts of the field were created; that we went into the ark as monkeys, and by a system of evolution through the ages have developed into the semblance of men. He deprecates all efforts to develop the Negro morally and spiritually because he has no soul. He declares all this in the face of the fact that we look like men, talk like men, walk like men, love like men, worship like men, have a human, anatomical construction, and possess all the attributes of a human being.

[CONTINUED ON FIFTH PAGE.]

SOME ODDS AND ENDS.

Some Things Which Had Better be Considered in Time.

BY REV. J. H. McMULLEN.

In his "Searchlight Scenes," the Rev. J. Harvey Anderson had better reflect over his sayings in these words: "No man who is delicate in the exposure of his ignorance will think of mentioning the matter of woman ordination in the General Conference, or he may find that 'the exposure of ignorance' will be manifested, or rather the cowardice, on the part of those, and those only, who try to cater to the bishops, not knowing how they stand on the subject, by refusing to 'mention the matter.'"

Dr. Anderson may find some of these days that men who have the courage of their conviction will receive as much at the hands of our Church as those who are fearful of a supposed "unit" (?) to which he refers.

The reference made to the ignorance of men who offer "resolutions not to ordain any more females, to confirm the ordinations already made, to limit the ordination to deacon's orders, etc., would only spring from that body of ignorant thought," we think was untimely and very unthoughtful in Dr. Anderson. The majority of the ministers of Zion are against woman ordination. And the General Conference will be composed of delegates largely opposed to it; and when Dr. Anderson refers to these gentlemen as an "ignorant body," he may be building a submarine mine under his own ambitions.

With most of the men with whom we have conversed on general topics of late, all are agreed that the manner in which our general fund is disbursed is unfair to Zion and her institutions.

For example: Two-thirds or nearly so, of the general fund never passes through the treasurer's hands only in receipts, and these receipts not until the end of the year, or the first of December. This gives those collecting and using this money about five chances to the other departments' one. This is bad enough, but by order of the Board of Bishops the General Secretary shall not pay out a single dollar in December to anybody, or department, of the Church until the Bishops who have been collecting the general fund all the year are paid up in full, therefore depriving the other departments of their just dues.

Now it seems to me that the General Conference should so amend the financial plan, that every dollar of the general fund be sent to the Steward; that collected by Bishops as well; and then prorated out monthly, giving every one an equal chance in the distribution of the funds.

In my next I shall tell why the general fund is not collected.

Harrisburg, Pa.