

The Star of Zion.

ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH IN AMERICA.

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CHURCH PROPERTY.

The Charlotte Church Case.—Its Important Lesson.

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

The end of the long church lawsuit at Charlotte is just what I predicted it would be from the start. The suit might have been much shorter if our lawyers had known the case, as I knew it, at the beginning.

What we proved was, that the A. M. E. Zion Church was organized in that city in 1865, and that the church property was bought by that organization, and that the same organization had continued in possession of the property. The fact that the deed was not drawn correctly, did not affect the right of that organization to the possession and control of the property. The man who had the deed drawn was ignorant of the exact title of the denomination for which he was acting. His intention was to make the deed as strong as possible for the people for whom he was acting, but he missed it. It is the prerogative of the courts, in such cases, to give the parties, who are thus unfortunate, a corrected deed. This is what has now been done in Charlotte.

Our enemies, by taking us into court, have really done us a favor. It is true it has cost considerable, but it has given us a title which can never again be questioned. And that church will enjoy a state of peace and prosperity, we hope, which it has not known since one troublesome man began to play the boss there.

The lesson I would like to have all learn from this is, that the courts do not permit people to take church property away from the denomination for which it was originally purchased. What the courts do, is to find out what denomination the property was purchased for, and whether the deed was correct or not, they maintain the right of that denomination to hold it, even though the majority secedes. In Knoxville, Tenn., we had a case somewhat like this. In that case, however, a large majority withdrew, and tried to take the property with them. But they were not permitted to do so. In giving the final decision the judge said:

It does not matter whether that deed was drawn incorrectly, through ignorance or fraud, the fact remains, that the original purpose was to establish an A. M. E. Zion Church; and those who have seceded from that denomination have no more right to take the church than Jeroboam had to take Jerusalem from the son of Solomon.

This was going pretty well back and digging pretty deep for a foundation, but it is a very solid one. It is in harmony with all the decisions which have come under my notice in church cases. This was the ground of my confidence in the final result of the case in Charlotte.

Some of our people may save

something by keeping this in mind. There is one other church in this State, in which there has been some talk about shutting out ministers. They say it is not deeded to the Connection. I have never seen the deed and cannot speak for that, but I know that it belongs to the Connection. Some time ago the minister wanted to adorn the front with a date stone with the title of the Connection on it. The trustees refused to have it done. They might as well have had it put in. It would not have made any difference.

I organized that church in 1865, soon after the Federal army passed through that city. And all our church property there has been purchased by that organization. The ministers also will show that the church has been represented in the annual Conference ever since its organization. The first church we bought was burned down, but we got a small insurance, with which the present lot was purchased. On this lot we first built a frame house, which was also burned down. We now have there a brick church, toward the building of which I contributed \$20 at one time, and other amounts at other times. Since the property was bought by this organization which was founded under the Discipline of the A. M. E. Zion Church, there can be no doubt as to how the courts would decide in that case, if it should ever come into court.

Fayetteville, N. C.

WHAT WE NEED.

BY REV. S. M. JACKSON.

Zion needs more strong, able, gospel ministers that care for their Christian characters and religious purity; men that consider themselves not Negro preachers, but ministers of the gospel and will take care of this great and grand Connection. It is believed by the people of this place that the A. M. E. Zion Church is the greatest Church on earth. We are satisfied that it is.

We have had some of Zion's best preachers in the West Tennessee and Mississippi Conference such as: Revs. W. L. Carr, W. Jones, A. M. White, M. W. Waters, W. L. Lewis, W. S. Cooper, J. H. Marable and others. Since that time our church here has not progressed much. We need a church close to town, which we are now preparing to build. We have purchased the land. We have a fine people at this place. We are in hopes that the Rt. Rev. Geo. W. Clinton will pass through and preach one of his stirring and able sermons.

Our next annual Conference will meet at Webb, Mississippi. We would be glad to have present our bright and brilliant Editor who is making the STAR shine so bright and brilliant in the Southland. The STAR is a balm to a sad and weary heart.

Torrence, Miss.

THEME--IDLE WORDS.

A Heavy Account Will Be Against Us at the Judgment.

BY REV. FRANCIS H. HILL.

"Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."—Matt. 12:36.

Death, at the farthest, can't be far from any one who hears my voice to-day; and the general judgment might immediately succeed so far as the issues thereof affected your soul's everlasting future. That there will be a general judgment, many believe; still, there are thousands who act and speak from day to day as if they did not believe it.

Even many professing Christians do not believe this plain and positive declaration of the blessed Lord in the text, that every man shall give account at the judgment for every idle word spoken. Men reckon idle words to be of no account, but the text makes it clear that they will have a heavy account. In the book of God's remembrance all your words are written, and "by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Concerning the use of idle words, how many are ready to exclaim, "Oh, I can't help it." Having allowed sin to reign in their members, they endeavor to ease conscience by concluding that "no one can help using idle words," implying that it is impossible to avoid this sin, therefore, the Lord doesn't mean what He says about judging men for it.

The devil has been eminently successful in leading men, and some Christians, too, to believe, that to live an unusually pious and consecrated life, hastens death. Hence that expression, sometimes heard, "You can't be holy on this earth and live." From this delusion may we be delivered.

False views, and an inadequate conception of the nature of the final judgment, tend to obscure men's vision of the sinfulness of sin, and the dangers of it; hence many have little or no concern for idle words, because they do not believe they will ever be brought to judgment for them especially. The Master says: "For every idle word you shall give account." Everything in our talk which is vapid, useless and aimless; which profits neither the one who speaks, or those who hear, which ministers neither to recreation nor to profit, all shall be charged against us; and for all we shall give account in the judgment.

There are three classes of idle words of which we shall speak, and in connection therewith set forth their special guiltiness.

1st. Idle words of Uncharity. The world is full of uncharitable speech. It escapes from Christians' mouths, and so common is it that the Church beholds too many

examples of it in those who are members thereof. It is a pestilence and a poison. In its form it is either (a) open or secret. The tongue smites uncovered or deals its blows in secret. In the former it reviles openly and wounds the honor of a neighbor in his presence; in the latter it blackens his reputation in private with so much greater effect because it is in a place where no person appears to ward off its blows.

As to its causes, uncharitable speech is excited by (b) anger, hatred, envy or jealousy. These and all other specific causes are traceable to the one great source; a secret malignity of nature which can be changed only through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The design of those who indulge idle words of uncharity is (c) to avenge themselves of offences, either fancied or real; others to satisfy ill-humors, and others simply to pass time away.

So much addicted to gossiping, slander, whisperings, backbiting, etc., are some, that, like a vulture, who flies over fair meadows and flowery sweet-smelling fields only to alight on some old carrion, so do they pass over the good qualities and perfections of their neighbors only to expose, amplify and exaggerate the least defect. For every word of this kind all men shall be judged.

2nd. Idle words of Impurity. Words of such a kind are so shameful that there is no place for them in the manners of those who have the least honesty or gravity. An unclean tongue is not far from an unclean heart. The person who would attempt to kill an entire community by poisoning their water supply would be doing the devil's work less obviously and perilously than he, who, into the ears of another, pours the leperous distillment of his most evil thoughts. The influence of such words is mischievous, and their effects both terrible and often permanent. Be it remembered, for these words men shall give account.

3rd. Idle words of Irreverence. It is too common a fault among men to bring sacred things and even the holy name of God into connection with ludicrous associations. A portion of Scripture is frequently made use of to give point to a joke.

Idle words are like poisonous weeds that grow fast and thick; and if they are not uprooted from the heart, like weeds, they will kill all the good near them, and spread over all the garden of the soul, eat out all virtuous inclinations to be chaste in speech, and make you useless for all other good designs in holy living.

New Haven, Conn.

Rev. J. H. Hardin, of Newtown, Pa., says the STAR is improving each week.

We thank Presiding Elder D. T. Mitchell and his conference for a gift of two dollars.

NATIONAL COUNCIL.

Two Important Questions About Its Composition.

BY BISHOP A. WALTERS, D. D.

Shall the National Council be composed of representatives from the Afro-American organizations now in existence, such as religious denominations, societies (secret and otherwise), of national reputation, who will act as their agents in everything in which our Council is concerned, especially to collect funds to carry out the objects of the Council? Or shall it be composed of representatives from State and local organizations which may be organized in the future under the auspices of the Council? A great federation of societies now in existence, working harmoniously together, would be a mighty factor in the adjustment of a great many difficulties which now confront us.

I have decided to go in for Federation, to invite to become members of the Council all Bishops, presidents of societies, leading editors, presidents of schools, etc., etc. They certainly are the thinkers for the race; hence can speak successfully for their constituents. It is much better to utilize the organizations now in existence than to try to organize new ones. What an influence a great federation of leaders, such as is anticipated, meeting once a year, would have upon this country!

I ask for a discussion of the above questions.

Jersey City, N. J.

THANKSGIVING APPEAL.

BY REV. F. R. WHITE.

To the brethren of the Blue Ridge Conference: An appeal has been made by the Church Extension Secretary, Rev. A. J. Warner, for a collection on Thanksgiving Day for the Church Extension cause. Let us make a Thanksgiving rally on that day and night for the Church Extension Department and forward to Dr. Warner the next day at Birmingham, Ala.

Now, brethren, a man of your Conference has been appointed Assistant Secretary. Let the Blue Ridge Conference lead in this rally. Bishop Harris is watching us. Rally around the Connection. Brethren, rally once again. Shout is the battle cry of Zion.

Knowville, Tenn.

BISHOP HARRIS' APPOINTMENTS.

NOVEMBER.

16th	Elizabethtown
17th	(P. O. Winnie N. C.) White Oak
20th	Magnolia
22nd	Faison
23rd	Mt. Olive
24th	Beston
25th	(P. O., Washington, N. C.) Keysville
27th	Washington
30th	(Conference) Washington