

of whom have died, all were slaves except one. One of them, Willis Nazrey, has episcopal charge of the Colored British Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, now an independent body. In the United States they have (in 1867) ten Conferences, 550 preachers, including five bishops, but exclusive of 1,500 local preachers, and about 200,000 members, nine tenths of whom live in the southern states. They have Church property to the amount of four millions of dollars, a Book Concern in Philadelphia, a weekly newspaper, and a college in Ohio.

A later organization of colored Methodists, with the title of Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, has also acquired some importance, reporting more than sixty thousand members, with nearly three hundred traveling and many local preachers. It sprung indirectly from the "Allenite" secession. The latter established a congregation in New York city, over which their bishop appointed a colored local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, first giving him ordination. There were about eight hundred and forty Africans in the city Methodist churches in 1818, but in 1821 only sixty-one remained. A schism had been working during the interval by the influence of Allen's congregation, but became hostile to his jurisdiction, and resulted in the second African Methodist Episcopal Church, distinguished usually by the prefix "Zion," as the first usually is by that of "Bethel," taken from the titles of their original Churches in the respective cities. The two denominations are quite distinct, though maintaining cordial relations with each other.

As these bodies differ in no fundamental respect from the parent Church, and as a difference of the human skin can be no justifiable reason for a distinction in Christian communion, the time may come when the parent Church may have the opportunity of making an impressive demonstration against absurd conventionalism, and in favor of the sublime Christian doctrine of the essential equality of all good men in the kingdom of God by receiving back to its shelter, without invidious or discriminative terms, these large masses of the American people, and by sharing with them its abundant resources for the elevation of their race.

\* In the preface to their Discipline they say he declared them "disowned by the Methodists." His letter was temperate and kindly, and simply stated the facts of the case as affected by the charter and the laws of the Church.

## The African Methodists.

We gave last week some intelligence of the late rapid progress of the two African Methodist Episcopal Churches in the South. But few of our people, and probably but few of theirs, know the historical relations of these bodies to our own Church.

While Dr. Emory was in charge of the Union Station, Philadelphia, in 1814, he had a reluctant agency in the events which gave rise to the first of them. An unchristian public opinion had always repelled and oppressed the free men of color, North as well as South. With all its devotion to their religious welfare, Methodism had not dared to fully recognize their Christian parity in its congregations, and thousands of its African members, gradually advancing under its care in intellectual and moral improvement, justly felt the disabling and humiliating disparagement. As early as 1787 some of them, in Philadelphia, convened to consider their grievances. Withdrawing from the Church, they undertook to build a chapel for themselves, and Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, ordained a colored preacher for them. Richard Allen, once a southern slave, but self-redeemed, had become wealthy, and influential among his people in Philadelphia, and, in 1793, erected for them a church on his own land, which was dedicated by Asbury, and named Bethel. In 1799 Allen was ordained a deacon, and in 1800 the General Conference made provision for the ordination of colored men in similar cases. Allen and his brethren entered in 1796 into an engagement, by a "charter," to remain under the disciplinary regulations of the Church, and the jurisdiction of a white elder, appointed in the Philadelphia Conference; but contentions soon arose respecting their relations to the conference; an appeal was made to the law, and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania responded in favor of the Bethel society. They thus became independent.

Emory in 1814 addressed to them a circular letter, announcing that the white preachers could no longer maintain pastoral responsibility for them.\* They called a general convention of colored Methodists in April, 1816, to organize a denomination; and "taking into consideration their grievances, and in order to secure their privileges and promote union among themselves, it was resolved that the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and all other places, who should unite with them, should become one body under the name and style of the "African Methodist Episcopal Church." Thus arose the most important Protestant body of Africans in the United States, or indeed in the world. Later events in our national history indicate that it was a providential provision, and it depends only on its leading minds, under God, to secure to it a sublime mission and destiny among the liberated African population of the nation. It adopted substantially the discipline and doctrines of the parent body, modified by lay representation through the local preachers. Allen was elected bishop by its General Conference in 1816, and consecrated by five regularly ordained ministers, one of whom was a presbyter of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He died in 1831; but the denomination has had a series of able superintendents, some of whom have been remarkable for administrative talent and pulpit eloquence. Of its eight bishops, three