

BISHOP PAYNE GOING SOUTH.

Our friend Daniel A. Payne, Bishop in the African M. E. Church, is on his way to Charleston, for the purpose of gathering the freed people of the South into churches of his own order, as far as they may choose to unite in that way. In slavery times they were not generally permitted to form churches by themselves, but were required to receive white preachers for their pastors. But the M. E. Church South is virtually dissolved, and the restriction upon the religious freedom of the people removed, and it becomes a question, which each individual has to determine for himself, to what church he should attach himself. The great M. E. Church is in the field, proposing now to receive the black members and preachers to equal membership in conference with the whites, while Bishop Payne, with his accompanying presbyters, offers the advantages which they may derive from a closer union among themselves. As both parties are alike our friends in a common cause, we have no preferences to indicate between the two courses. If called upon to advise, we should naturally recommend our own more simple polity, which would remove all occasion for the rivalry of denominations. The character of Mr. Payne is a sure guarantee that the claims and objects of the African organization will be pressed with uniform courtesy, candor, and conscientiousness. He has the advantage of being himself a Carolinian, and returns to his native city for the first time after an enforced absence of thirty years. In the year 1833, he was employed in Charleston as a teacher of youth, having a highly prosperous school, approved by the civil authorities, until the excitement arose in regard to abolition publications, when he was compelled to leave the place. We have before us, in an album, several interesting testimonials which were then given him by Rev. Dr. William Capers, afterward a bishop of the M. E. Church South; Dr. Benjamin M. Palmer, senior, long the honored pastor of the Circular Church, and father or uncle of Dr. Palmer of New Orleans, the ranting secessionist of 1861; his daughter, Miss Mary Palmer, afterward Mrs. Dana, widely known at the North by her musical publications; and Dr. Bachman, of the Lutheran Church, distinguished in Europe, as well as this country, by his scientific attainments. We should be glad to give these papers entire, did our limits allow. They express the fullest confidence in his character, the strongest assurance of his future usefulness, and the kindest wishes for his personal welfare.

Dr. Palmer says: "My best wishes attend you. My confidence is strong that your door of interesting usefulness in your native state is closed by a Providence that orders all things well, only that a wider field elsewhere may afford scope for the exercise of your talents, and the influence of your piety. Bear on your heart, wherever you go, your colored brethren, on whom the light of hope begins auspiciously to dawn." This is dated May 4, 1835, when the whole North was upheaved with mobs against the abolitionists.

Miss Palmer writes: "It is with melancholy pleasure that I comply with the request of my friend, by inserting a few lines in his Album. The tenderest sympathies of my heart have been awakened in your behalf, while contemplating the mysterious Providence which separates you from your affectionate and beloved pupils, who are profiting under your faithful instructions. * * * When you leave the land of your nativity, you will carry with you the respect and esteem of the wise and the good. Many will follow you with their prayers and best wishes. May Jehovah Jesus be with you to bless you. * * * May he open before you an extensive field of usefulness, so that you may have occasion to bless his holy name for causing light to spring out of darkness—that you may have occasion to say, with Jacob of old, when you review all the way through which his Providence has called you to pass: 'With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.' And when it is well with you, O remember your brethren whom you leave behind, and do them good. Farewell." Dated 'Charleston, May 6, 1835."

This closing wish now seems almost prophetic, when the humble schoolmaster has become the head of a large and respectable body of churches, and the poor exile returns to his native city to his brethren whom he left slaves, in the hope to do them good as free men and free women.

The following lines were written in Bishop D. A. Payne's album, at a later period:

"Oh! when above my weary breast
The gloomy turf rests dark and chill,—
The feverish spirit lulled to rest,
The pulse now throbbing cold and still,—
One simple legend let the stone
Tell to all time, above my grave—
'He loved reproach, and hate, and scorn,
In pity for the outcast slave!'

Signed

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

PHILADELPHIA, 15th, 4th mo., 1857.