

J. B. Smith



MINUTES

— OF THE —

FORTY-FIRST SESSION

— OF THE —

BERMUDA

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

— OF THE —

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HELD AT

RICHARD ALLEN A.M.E. CHURCH

— ON THE —

Sixth to Tenth of August, 1924.

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THE RIGHT REV. W. T. VERNON, D.D., LL.D., Presiding Bishop.

REV. W. A. RATTERAY, Pastor.

REV. R. J. STOVELL, Secretary.



An announcement by the Bishop, followed, wherein the Conference was notified that he desired to hold an Executive Session at 9.30 a.m. the following day.

This most inspiring meeting was brought to a close by the singing of the Doxology. Benediction by the Bishop.

SECOND DAY'S SESSION.

The Executive Session of the Conference convened in accordance with previous announcement by the Bishop.

Session opened with Hymn No. 12 "A Charge to Keep I have", lined by Rev. J. W. Miller; Prayer, led by Rev. J. S. Johnson; Scripture Lesson, by Bro. F. Lapsley; Psalm XLII followed by one stanza of hymn 20 "Come Thou desire of all Thy Saints".

DISCIPLINARY QUESTIONS.

- 1.—What preachers are admitted on trial?—None.
- 2.—Who remain on trial?—Bro. E. A. Darrell.
- 3.—Who are admitted or re-admitted to full connection?—Bro. F. A. Lapsley.
- 4.—Who are the deacons?—Revs. John S. Johnson, W. A. Ratteray.
- 5.—Who have been elected and ordained Deacons and Elders this year?—Bro. F. Lapsley as Deacon; Bro. W. A. Ratteray Elder.
- 6.—Who have located this year?—No one.
- 7.—Who have been elected by the General Conference to exercise the Episcopal office in, and to superintend the A.M.E. Church?—Bishops B. F. Lee, D.D., LL.D., J. L. J. Coppin, D.D.; H. B. Parks, D.D.; J. S. Flipper, D.D., LL.D.; J. A. Johnson, D.D.; W. H. Heard, D.D.; John Hurst, D.D.; W. D. Chappelle, D.D., LL.D.; J. H. Jones, A.M., D.D.; James M. Connor, D.D., Ph.D.; W. W. Beckett, D.D.; Isaac N. Ross, D.D.; W. D. Johnson, A.M., D.D., A. J. Carey, D.D., W. Sampson Brooks, D.D., W. T. Vernon, D.D., Wm. A. Fountain, B.D. Ph.D., A. L. Gaines, D.D., R. C. Ransom, D.D., John A. Gregg, D.D.
- 8.—Who are the supernumerary preachers?—None.
- 9.—Who are the superannuated preachers?—None.
- 10.—Who have been expelled from the connection by this Conference?—None.
- 11.—Who have withdrawn this year from this Conference and the connection?—None.
- 12.—Are all the preachers blameless in life and conversation?—Yes.
- 13.—What members of the Conference have died this year?—Rev. John S. Simmons.
- 14.—Have all the preachers subscribed to one of our Connectional Weekly Journals, and also to the Quarterly Review or Voice of Missions?—Yes.
- 15.—What preachers are indebted to any of the Departments or Church Publications?
- 16.—When shall we hold the next Annual Session of this Conference?—At the Bishop's appointment.
- 17.—Where shall our next Annual Conference be held?—Bethel Shelly Bay.
- 18.—Where are the preachers stationed this year?—With reference to question 17: it was moved by Rev. C. A. Stewart and seconded by Rev. J. S. Johnson that the next Annual Conference be held at Bethel. Motion carried.

At the Bishop's instigation, Rev. Richardson, having acknowledged that he erred in judgment in not following the directions of the official capacity of Rev. Stewart as Presiding Elder of the Eastern District, offered his hand to the latter, and the rather unpleasant episode was brought to a close by a mutual and hearty hand-clasp of the two brethren.

(THE EXECUTIVE SESSION).

The Bishop brought before the Conference a circumstance which made it obligatory on his part to enquire into the case of Rev. P. E. Woemack. After a lengthy discussion it was found that the Rev. Woemack's case was not conducted in regular order according to the law, there being no charge regularly preferred against him. Moved by Rev. C. A. Stewart, seconded by Rev. A. Richardson: that in view of the fact that the record does not show any regular trial, and that there was no jurisdiction in the case of Rev. Woemack that his name be replaced on the Conference Roll. Motion carried.

The Executive Session being over, the doors were opened and crowds of people streamed in from practically every charge on the Island. The Minutes of the previous day's sessions were then read and severally adopted with the necessary corrections.

A very large number of persons from the various charges, was next brought forward and introduced. Short pertinent remarks were made by Brothers Charles Simons and C. B. Smith, of St. Paul's, Hamilton; Brother Alexander Richardson, of Richard Allen, St. George's; Brother Smith, of North Shore Mission, and Dr. Cann, M.C.P., of Allen Temple, Somerset.

The Bishop responded. In the course of his remarks, he stated that the A.M.E. Church is the finest example of self-government in the world. He also commented on a statement of Dr. Cann's which he thought needed amplification.

The Bishop then called for subscribers to the General Conference Delegates' Travelling Expense Fund. This appeal met with a hearty response.

Total amount contributed:

Session closed with singing of the Doxology and Benediction by the Bishop.

AFTERNOON SESSION. — Mite Missionary Convention.

This session was given over to the Woman's Mite Missionary Society for the purpose of a Convention. At the time appointed the auditorium was thronged with an expectant audience. Practically every charge on the Island was represented.

Mrs. W. T. Vernon presided in her own inimitable way. The outstanding features of the Convention was the re-organization of the Conference Branch of the W.M.M. Society. During the Convention Dr. J. W. Cann, M.C.P., brought forward for introduction to the Conference the Hon. S. S. Spaulding, M.C.P., O.B.E., one of Bermuda's foremost citizens. The distinguished gentleman gave a timely and practical address. In the course of his remarks he admitted that he had misunderstood the A.M.E. Church, and thought she rather stood for race antagonism, but now that he understood her aims and purposes, he had changed his opinion and was convinced that she stood for the spiritual and material uplift of the people. He also extended a warm welcome to Bishop and Mrs. Vernon.

Mrs. Vernon's missionary address was full of pathos, and supplied much interesting information. As the audience listened with rapt attention to the recital of her adventures on the mission-field some were moved to tears.

The Finance report exceeded that of last year. Offering £3. 11. 1½.

Mrs. Rosa Bell, wife of Rev. Chas. H. Bell, was elected President of the Woman Mite Missionary Society of Bermuda Conference.

EVENING SESSION.

Opening sentences read and Hymn 175, "Awake Jerusalem, Awake" lined by Bro. Ainsworth Darrell who also offered the Prayer. Selection by the Choir.

Scripture Reading, XXVIII, St. Matthew's 16th: 20th verse; Hymn 436, "Over the Ocean Wave, far, far away," lined by Bro. Lapsley. A few preliminary remarks were offered by the Bishop relative to the stand the great A.M.E. Church takes, respecting the sacred cause of missions, and he then introduced Rev. Austin Richardson to preach the Annual Missionary Sermon. The preacher's text was taken from: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth".

The preacher enumerated several powers abroad in the world—intellectual power, muscular power, the power of wealth; but none of these had the power to rescue the souls of men. He ended with an appeal to all to help the worthy cause of missions by sending means of support to those who labour in heathen lands.

The Bishop then gave some of his thrilling experiences in South Africa in his impressive way, recounting that on one occasion, in the midst of gloom and discouragement, a native woman was heard singing, "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah", which restored the faith and revived the heart bowed down with care and anxiety. Wonderfully stirring and affecting it was to hear such incidents related. No wonder that when the appeal for the offering was made it met with a liberal response.

Dr. Cann was next called upon to offer some remarks. He informed the audience that he had something of an important nature to bring before them. The address proved to be both informative and interesting. Some revelations were made re the Rhodes' Scholarship which, while they occasioned surprise, were most educative and helpful.

This momentous session closed with the singing of the Doxology and Benediction pronounced by Rev. A. Richardson. Offering \$3. 11. 14.

THIRD DAY — MORNING SESSION.

Session opened with singing of Hymn 204, "I heard the voice of Jesus say". Rev. J. S. Johnson led in prayer. Scripture Lesson read by Rev. W. A. Ratteray, Psalm X. Hymn "Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine".

The minutes of the previous day's sessions were read and severally adopted with the necessary corrections.

LITERARY REPORTS.

Report on Temperance presented by Bro. F. Lapsley.

Moved by Bro. J. W. DeShield, seconded by Rev. A. Richardson that the report be adopted.

Rev. C. A. Stewart rose and complimented the writer of the report. Report adopted. (See report).

Report on A.C.E. League was read by Bro. Ainsworth Darrell. Report adopted by acclamation. The Bishop commenting on the Report expressed his opinion that some member of the Conference should be appointed Conference Superintendent of the A.C.E. League. He also emphasised the importance of preaching the simple Gospel and refraining from preaching doctrines foreign to Methodism.

The Bishop explained why he had been led to re-investigate Rev. Weemack's case. It was with the view of ascertaining as to whether or not he had been given a fair trial, according to law, so as to be able to decide what measure of consideration, if any, could be accorded the brother as an aspirant for an important sphere of service in connection with our Church.

The Session closed with the singing of the Doxology and Benediction pronounced by the Bishop.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Session opened at the usual hour with the singing of Hymn 617, "My faith looks up to Thee". Repeating the Lord's Prayer.

The attention of the Conference was drawn to the fact that no Treasurer had been appointed.

Moved by Rev. R. J. Stovell, seconded by Rev. A. Richardson, that Rev. Chas. H. Bell be appointed Treasurer of the Conference. Motion carried.

Following a few remarks the Bishop appointed Rev. C. A. Stewart, Superintendent of the A.C.E. League.

Dr. J. W. Cann presented the report of Committee on Incorporation of the Church in Bermuda.

Moved by Rev. C. A. Stewart, seconded by Rev. A. Richardson that the Report be adopted. Motion carried. (See Report).

Report on the state of the Church read by Rev. C. A. Stewart. Moved by Rev. C. H. Bell, seconded by Brother F. Lapsley that the Report be adopted. The report was commented on by the Bishop, who pointed out that the decrease was not a healthy sign, and was one that required an explanation. Considerable discussion was raised—members striving to place the cause of the decrease. The Bishop then called the attention of pastors to the harmful practice of striking members off the Roll, except it is done in accordance with the law as per Discipline.

The Report, except so far as it referred to the church at Tucker's Town, was adopted.

The question re the sale of the church at Tucker's Town was next brought up for discussion.

Bro. B. D. Talbot, a trustee of the church in question, on being interrogated, gave valuable information with regard to the status and prospective sale of the church. The Bishop now proceeded to inform the Conference that the church could, at the present time, be disposed of on favourable terms, and advocated that we exercise promptness and despatch.

Moved by Rev. A. Richardson, seconded by Bro. Fred Richardson, that the Conference recommend the sale of the church at Tucker's Town. Motion carried.

On motion the Bishop appointed the following Committee on the sale of the church property in question: Revs. A. Richardson, C. A. Stewart, C. H. Bell, Bro. B. D. Talbot and Sister Talbot.

Report on State of the Country was read by Rev. Jos. Miller. Moved by Rev. A. Richardson, seconded by Bro. F. Lapsley that Rev. Miller's report be adopted. The Bishop, however, took exception to the tone of the report and suggested that it undergo a revision at the hand of the writer. Suggestion acted upon accordingly.

Committee on First Year's Studies reported. On motion the report was adopted by a standing vote of the Conference (See report).

Committee on Second Year's Studies reported. On motion the report was adopted by a standing vote of the Conference. (See report).

The Bishop then announced that he would ordain Bro. Lapsley to the diaconate the following Sunday at the morning service.

Session closed in the usual form: Benediction by Rev. Jos. Miller.

EVENING SESSION

Devotionals conducted by Rev. Jos. Miller. Opening hymn, 277, "Jesus the name high over all", followed by prayer. Scripture lesson, Eccles. XII.

Report on Missions read by Rev. J. S. Johnson. Moved by Rev. C. A. Stewart, seconded by Rev. A. Richardson that the report be adopted. Motion carried. (See report).

Report on Fourth Year's Studies presented by Rev. C. A. Stewart. Moved by Bro. F. Lapsley, seconded by Bro. A. Darrell that the report be adopted. Motion carried.

The Committee on Contingent reported. On motion the report was adopted. Report of Committee on Finance submitted by Rev. W. A. Ratteray. Moved by Rev. C. A. Stewart, seconded by Rev. Jos. Miller that the report be adopted. Motion carried. (See Report).

Report of Sunday Schools submitted by Rev. W. A. Ratteray. On motion the report was adopted and referred to the statistical committee.

Report on Education submitted by Rev. R. J. Stovell. Very favourable