



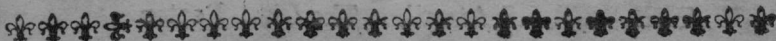
THE STORY OF
OLD ST. STEPHEN'S, PETERSBURG, VA.,
AND THE ORIGIN OF
THE BISHOP PAYNE DIVINITY SCHOOL.



BY THE
REV. GEORGE F. BRAGG, JR., D. D.

Rector of St. James First African Church, Baltimore, Md., and
Historiographer of Conference of Church Workers among Colored People.

1917.



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THE REV. J.S. Atwell, The First Rector.

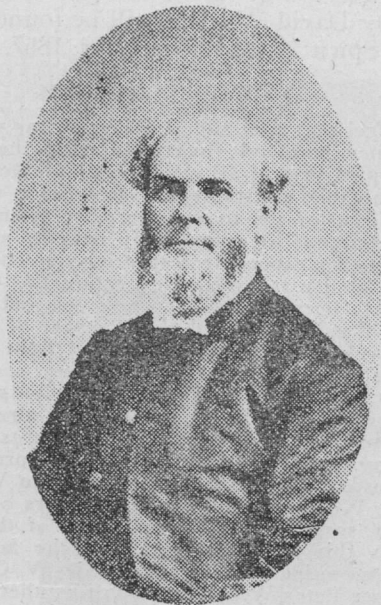
THE STORY OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, PETERS-
BURG, VA., AND THE ORIGIN OF THE BISHOP
PAYNE DIVINITY SCHOOL, OF THE
SAME CITY.

Old St. Stephen's is now a half century old, and having been brought up therein it is no less a duty than a pleasure for us to give forth our testimony. The only member of the first Vestry now living, and one of the original founders, is our aged father, now in his 86th year, spending the eventide of his life with his son bearing the same name. His mother, our venerated grandmother, was a friend of Bishops Moore, Meade, Johns, and Whittle. From the time that the late Rev. Dr. Churchill J. Gibson started the present congregation of Grace Church, Petersburg, Va., over a baker shop, until almost the time that Dr. Gibson officiated at her funeral in St. Stephen's Church, were they intimately, yea, affectionately associated together in Church work. She gave the first money for the erection of the present Grace Church, Petersburg, Va. Dr. Gibson made mention of this fact on the day that he officiated at her funeral. About the earliest thing which we can distinctly remember was, when a boy a little past four years of age. It was the "baptism" of our youngest sister, "Sallie Coombs" which occurred in the basement of the present Grace Church. The main portion of the Church had not been completed, and the congregation was worshipping in the basement. I can see my infant sister in Dr. Gibson's arms, playing with his beard. The three other children of our family had been baptized in Emmanuel Church, Warrenton, N. C., where several generations of the family received the holy offices of the

Church. After the war, our immediate family removed to Petersburg. We attended Grace Church. St. Stephen's was yet to come into existence. "Sallie Coombs" was the name of one of the northern ladies who had come South, and with others were teaching the day and night school for the benefit of the people recently emancipated. My sister was named for her, and from my earliest recollection, this good lady called me her "little preacher." Among the adult pupils of this lady was one of my mother's sisters, the mother of Rev. Robert H. Tabb, rector of the Church of the Crucifixion, Philadelphia. This aged lady is still living, and strange to say, her beloved husband, Mr. W. Graham Tyler, is one of the Church wardens of the Church of the Crucifixion, Philadelphia.

Our family, and connections, were quite large and most of them were communicants of Grace Church. Some few, were members of St. Paul's. When the white ladies from the North came to Petersburg they were soon drawn to Rev. Dr. Gibson, and Dr. Gibson drawn towards them. With the opening of the school work, in the old Stringfellow Chapel, on Sycamore street, by these good ladies, most all of the colored communicants, both from Grace and St. Paul's went thither, where divine services were regularly conducted by the Rev. Dr. Gibson, assisted by a layman, and member of his vestry, Mr. Alexander W. Weddell. And there should be no single name dearer to the people of St. Stephen's than Alexander W. Weddell. It is hardly conceivable for any white man to be more affectionately loved and venerated by black people than was the afterwards Rev. Dr. Alexander Weddell.

Under the conditions above narrated in connection with the work of these white ladies of the Freedmen's Committee, St. Stephen's Church was then and there organized. Miss Aiken was the chief lady in charge, and the following account of the organization of the work was written by our uncle for Miss Aiken, and shortly afterwards the same account appeared in the "Spirit of Missions." My grandmother had four sons, two Cains and two Braggs. David was the younger of the Cains, and he it was who wrote the first sketch with respect to the organization of St. Stephen's. David Cain never had



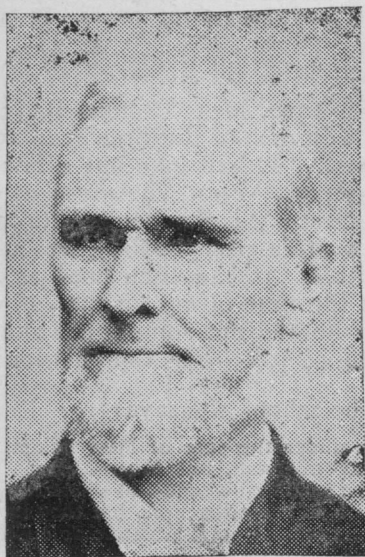
REV. DR. C. J. GIBSON.

as much as a year's schooling during his entire life; and yet he was naturally gifted, a forceful debater, and truly eloquent. He took part in the work of "reconstruction," was a member of the Constitutional Convention, and also a member of the City Council of Petersburg. If we mistake not, the following account written by David W. Cain will be found in the March number of the "Spirit of Missions," for 1857. It is as follows:

"Miss Aiken: I feel that it is highly necessary, as well as my duty, in behalf of the members and congregation of the Colored Episcopal Church, to report first of all, you will please accept our sincere thanks for your valuable assistance in our efforts to establish our church. It is needless for me to say more, or attempt to show the height of our appreciation for your many benefits and favors, since you have been among us, especially respecting our church. For these both language and ability fail me. Respecting the Church, I thank my God that He hath been pleased, through you and your friends, to lift the dark cloud that so obscured the prospect of our ever having a church to ourselves. Now the long desired light appears not far distant. I trust, shining brighter and brighter seeming to promise, by God's assistance and our perseverance, sure success. I can scarcely believe but that we have a church already. Mr. Alexander Weddell, a member of Grace Church, lectures or preaches for us every Wednesday night. The Rev. Mr. Cosby promises to preach for us next Wednesday night, and Mr. Gibson the Wednesday night following. On last Wednesday night the members of the church had a business meeting, some twenty-five or thirty of the members, and brother John Cain (his eldest brother, and the father of the late Rev. T. W. Cain) was called to the chair, and D. W. Cain was appointed secretary; Brother Peter W. Bragg (a half brother, and my father's youngest brother), was made treasurer.

A temporary standing or business committee was appointed, consisting of the following-named brothers: William M. White, Elijah Eley, Thomas W. Cain, George Howard, George F. Bragg, Oscar Johnson, and D. W. Cain. We thought it also good to raise a choir, seeing it is much needed, and made D. W. Cain leader. Members: P. W. Bragg, Elijah Eley, George F. Bragg, Peter R. Cain, Thomas W. Cain, Augustus Tabb (the father of Rev. Robert H. Tabb), James Wilkerson, Mrs. Nellie Tabb, Sebina Barnes (mother of Rev. Mr. Tabb), Mrs. Bright, Miss Caroline Cain, Mrs. Wilkerson, Miss Mary Agnes Cain, Mrs. Perham, Miss Emma J. Cain, Mrs. Eley, Mrs. George F. Bragg (our beloved mother).

After business was over we took up a collection, from which we realized two dollars—this being the first we ever attempted. We are thankful for small favors and again we tender you our sincere thanks for the sum of two dollars, subscription to the church, which



BISHOP WHITTLE.

raised our exceedingly small figures to four dollars. The committee is invested with the power to tax each member of the church with any reasonable sum, to be paid monthly, according to their respective ability. This is to be independent of any collection taken up from the congregation. There have been as yet no great expenditures in the contemplated church, save lights, freight of stoves and some other little trifles, which I think we can manage very easily by the plan which we have adopted, through the committee, and what we can beg. I am happy to say, that in our opinion, the prospect is very bright for success. You will please excuse the broken manner in which I make this statement as it is the first I ever made out, so I am sure you will pardon my many errors. In behalf of the Church, very truly, &c.,

D. W. C. Secretary.

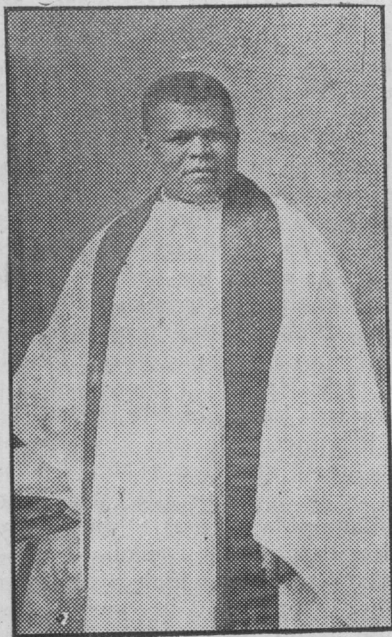
Just about this time, Mrs. Thomas P. James, president of the Pennsylvania Branch of the Freedmen's Commission, paid this mission a visit. I shall give but a few paragraphs from her interesting report. First, she gives us some idea of the building. She says: "St. Stephen's Church, as it was called (this letter was written after the fire), was a large board building unceiled within. It had been used as a hospital during the war, and at the time of my visit, was held by the Freedmen's Bureau, who had put some repairs upon it, and kindly granted the use of it to our Commission for four years."

Speaking of the school, she says:

"This School is under the care of Miss Aiken, who was absent at Washington during my visit, but Miss Coombs was left in charge, having four teachers under her and 320 scholars. So earnest has been the missionary spirit of these teachers that they have gathered together a large Sunday School, and quite a respectable Colored congregation."

She continues:

"Two boys of nineteen and twenty-three years of age (Cain and Morgan), who have been taught by Miss Aiken and Miss Coombs, and who only two years ago could neither read nor write, are now very desirous of continuing their studies to become candidates for Holy Orders. These young men, the first fruits of the religious teachings of the church school in Petersburg, have, through Miss Coombs' exertion, and my own, been sent to Pennsylvania to study for a year, trusting that their earnest desire to become of use to their race at the South, by conveying to them the Gospel of Christ, may eventually be realized. Less than a week from the time I saw their interesting school at Petersburg, the church that sheltered it was burned to the ground by an incendiary. It was late in the evening and there was only time to rescue from the flames the books and benches.



REV. MESSRS CAIN AND MORGAN.

The Colored Episcopalians are thrown into great grief by this event."

Miss Amanda Aiken in writing to the Commission in Pennsylvania, among other things, thus alludes to the fire:

"Of course the keenest disappointment is felt by the little flock who after so many longing years rejoiced at last in having a church of their own. In anticipation of the Bishop's visit, next month, Mr. Weddell was having the interior made more church-like, and they were to have the rite of Confirmation administered at an altar of their own. Mr. Weddell, who considered them as his congregation, and who has given his **whole heart** to their cause, is exceedingly disappointed, but like myself, more determined than ever to work until they have another church edifice of their own."

The building which was destroyed by fire was located on Sycamore street. Under the leadership of Mr. Weddell, a site was soon obtained, and a new and attractive edifice erected on Perry street. This building, in May 1868, was consecrated by the late Bishop Whittle. It was either the first or second church which he consecrated, following his admission to the Episcopate. There never was a Bishop, anywhere more devoted to the work of the Church among the Colored People than the late Bishop Whittle. His Episcopal addresses witness to this fact. But a year or two before, while rector of a church in Louisville, Ky., he had met with the Rev. Joseph S. Atwell and had become very much attached to him. Soon after Mr. Atwell took up the work in Louisville, Miss Cordelia Jennings came from Philadelphia to assist him in the school work. They shortly afterwards became man and wife. Rev. Dr. Whittle performed the ceremony which proclaimed them thus. Thus, when Bishop Whittle had become the assistant to the venerable Bishop Johns, he soon secured the consent of the Rev. Mr. Atwell to remove to Virginia, and accept the charge of St. Stephen's Church. Mr. Atwell came and was well received on all sides. The church had been built, and consecrated, and now the congregation had a minister of its own race. At the very next meeting of the Council in Fredericksburg, 1869, the Rev. Dr. Gibson, who was chairman of the committee on new parishes, made a stubborn and persistent fight for the unconditional admission of St. Stephen's Church, as a parish, entitled to all the privileges enjoyed by other parishes, with lay representation in that body. It was a memorable fight, but St. Stephen's was not admitted, but

taken under the care of the Council, and a Standing Committee on Colored congregations annually appointed to care for the interests of congregations situated as St. Stephen's. The defeat of the petition of St. Stephen's had just the effect its most ardent white friends feared. Many years expired before there were any other colored congregation. Mr. Atwell was received and given every privilege. At one session of the Council he assisted in the administration of the Holy Communion. But, he, and the people of St. Stephen's felt the defeat most keenly. He remained in the diocese for some five or six years, during which time the rectory was built and improvements made in the church. We distinctly remember the Sunday morning when a strange gentleman occupied one of the front pews in the church. Afterwards we learned that it was a "Mr. Giles," who had come from Savannah, Ga., and had extended a call to Mr. Atwell to the rectorship of St. Stephen's Church, that city. And we remember with still more vividness the Sunday night when Mr. Atwell preached his "farewell" sermon. As a boy, it peculiarly impressed us, for we all loved Mr. Atwell and there was genuine and loud weeping.

The Rev. Giles B. Cooke, who had been recently ordained to the diaconate, and who was more generally known as "Major Cooke," was anxious to succeed Mr. Atwell. "Major Cooke" was then conducting a private school for Colored pupils at the "Old Oak," which was extremely popular, and comprehended the children of the best citizens of color in the community. He was finally called, and on assuming charge amalgamated his school with the parochial school which had been conducted at St. Stephen's. Out of the consolidation sprang the St. Stephen's Normal School, which proved a very great factor in furnishing teachers for the Colored public schools of Virginia. Among the very first sent out by Mr. Cooke was a young man by the name of John H. M. Pollard. Mr. Pollard taught in northern Virginia, and eventually, located in or near Alexandria. It was while he was engaged thus in teaching that he was privately prepared for the holy ministry by the Rev. Dr. William M. Dame, of Baltimore, but then rector of Christ Church, Alexandria. At the regular June (1878) ordination, at the Theological Seminary of Virginia, with the graduating class of that year Mr. Pollard was

ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Whittle. It was the first ordination to the diaconate of a Colored man in Virginia. Mr. Atwell entered the diocese as a deacon, and nine years before had been advanced to the priesthood by the late Bishop Johns. Mr. Pollard was placed in charge of Meade Chapel, Alexandria. For a year or so he never attended a meeting of the Council. In fact, it was only after the ordination of the Rev. Thomas W. Cain, that in company with him he attended a Council for the first time. About the same time, he gave up his work in Alexandria and came to Petersburg as the assistant of his former instructor, Rev. Giles B. Cooke.

It was the year after Mr. Pollard's ordination, that a certain matter was brought to the attention of the Virginia Council which paved the way for the "Negro Bishop" agitation, and the necessity of making some provision for the theological education of colored men. To be more accurate, this condition matured the year before (1878), but it was brought up in the Council of 1879.

The late Rev. Dr. Packard, Dean of the Theological Seminary of Virginia, at this Council, was chairman of the Committee on the State of the Church, and the following paragraph from his most admirable report will give light upon the matter we are considering: It says:

"The remarkable work in Brunswick and adjoining counties under Mrs. F. E. Buford, has awakened great hope as to our being able to reach, on a large scale, and to influence for good this class of our population. Through the efforts of this refined and modest church woman, under God, we call attention to the fact that an entire congregation, called the Zion Union Apostolic Church, consisting of their Bishop, more than twenty preachers and about 2000 communicants, is seeking to be placed under the care of our church."

During the previous fall a branch school of the Theological Seminary of Virginia, had been opened upon the premises of St. Stephen's Church, under the direction and leadership of the late Rev. Thomas Spencer, at that time assistant of the Rev. Dr. Gibson. The immediate necessity was for the theological training of Rev. Dr. James S. Russell, Archdeacon of Southern Virginia. Colored students were not admitted at the Alexandria Seminary, and it was certainly generous and kind upon the part of the Trustees of that institution to open this "branch" school. Later, through the liberality of the Stewart family of Richmond, Va., and the Rev. Dr. Saul, of Philadelphia,

and others, funds were obtained, a site purchased, and what was started as a "branch" school begun an independent existence of its own, as The Bishop Payne Divinity School. Several changes in location have been made since that time. From St. Stephen's Church it was removed to the residence of Prof. Spencer, then to South street, still again, to Washington street, and finally to its present situation. We have about finished our task. Yet we must add a word in grateful recognition of the splendid services of the late Prof. Thomas Spencer. Whether an oversight or not, yet it is a fact, that in connection with past reports of the Bishop Payne Divinity School very little mention has been made of his labors. For a long while, Prof. Spencer, single-handed and alone, prepared a large number of the men who have successfully wrought in our ministry. Not to mention a number of men, who, in the very nature of affairs, were to remain in the diaconate, and the strenuous effort in so preparing them for the greatest amount of usefulness, one has only to reflect upon the work of "Bishop Whittle's men," to appreciate the success and devoted labors of the late Prof. Spencer. We speak of "Bishop Whittle's men." While Bishop Whittle ordained a number of others to the diaconate, yet, the peculiar privilege was his of ordaining, both deacon and priest, only six colored men.

Prof. Spencer had to do with all of these, without assistance. For although Archdeacon Pollard was ordained to the diaconate before the birth of the "branch" school, yet all his preparations for the priesthood were made under the care of Prof. Spencer. The six clergymen to whom we refer as "Bishop Whittle's men," are: The late Archdeacon Pollard, the late Rev. Thomas W. Cain, Archdeacon Russell, the late Rev. William Patterson Burke, Rev. John Wesley Johnson, and the present writer. The good work of these men alone constitute an eternal praise to that little man whose heart was always true and sound. He was an Englishman by birth. He took a special delight in the work intrusted to him. And while he was no more infallible in his deliverances on the abiding "race-problem" than many others, yet he always left with us the conviction and the impression that he earnestly tried to be "fair."

Whatever may be the history of the Bishop Payne Divinity

School in the future, no faithful account can be given of its early origin which omits the faithful, laborious and ever-devoted services of Thomas Spencer.

APPENDIX I.

I have spoken at length of the splendid work of the white ladies from the North. By no means exhausting the list, I want to simply mention the names of a few distinguished Southern white men and women, who were conspicuously prominent in advancing this work in the State of Virginia. All of these I personally knew. A few of them were my early teachers; while nearly all of the men were warm admiring friends. The Misses Weddell, the Misses Beckwith, Mrs. Pattie E. Buford, Mrs. B. S. Brent, Judge Hugh W. Sheffey, Judge Parker, Col. J. H. Skinner, General R. L. Page, General Francis Smith, General Anderson, Col. Walter H. Taylor, Major Mann Page, and a number of equally distinguished, whose names we do not readily recall at this writing. The sweetest remembrance of all these devoted friends abides in the graciousness of their direct and elevating personal touch. I think I can with rare appropriateness, borrow words from the late learned Dr. Crummell, applied to other friends of the race, and make them my own with respect to these noble Southern characters, whose close and loving contact with the best of our race, inspired the marvellous output of good which has proceeded from them. Dr. Crummell says:

"A more ardent, devoted, unselfish set of men the world hath never seen. Such manifestations of philanthropy, such tokens of love, such displays of kindness to the lowly and the abject have rarely been equalled amid all the histories of goodness which time hath ever recorded on her ample page. Their disinterestedness is equal to their other virtues. It is almost in vain we look among them for the intrusions of selfish purpose or vaunting ambition. Their exhibition of self-sacrifice, and of fearless hearty zeal—their demonstrations of brotherhood and equality, are really touching and subduing. Honored and revered be these glorious men! They shed light upon our pathway in our day of darkness, and now as we are emerging from the gloom let us not forget their goodness."

As a sample of the spirit of very many Virginia Churchmen, of that period, I want to relate a pleasing incident in the life of Rt. Rev. Dr. Winchester, the present Bishop of Arkansas. This will the more be appreciated since he has the honor of

having his convention elect the first Negro Suffragan Bishop in this country. It was some time during the early eighties when he was rector of the Episcopal Church at Wytheville, Va. On a certain Sunday morning, through his invitation, the late Archdeacon John H. M. Pollard, although not an Archdeacon at that time, delivered an address or preached in his church. Among the communicants of that church, at the time, who were present at that particular service was United States Senator Withers and Judge Bolling. After the service Judge Bolling, not only congratulated the Rev. Mr. Pollard, but gave him a book with his autograph as a souvenir of the occasion.

While spending a portion of the summer, some years ago, in Campbell county, Va., on a Friday evening I went to Bedford City and preached for the Colored mission. There were only a few in the congregation. We had just begun when the door opened, and the Rev. T. W. Jones, the white rector, with a large number of white people poured in the little chapel. After the conclusion of the service, Mr. Jones invited me to preach for him the following Sunday morning in St. John's Church. I gracefully declined to accept the invitation. Very much to the irritation of the late Rev. Dr. Barten, of Norfolk, during my ministry in that city, I made a number of such declinations to appear in his chancel. I had firmly resolved with myself, in the beginning, not to do anything of the kind. I well knew that while some would be pleased, many would, most probably, be displeased. I wanted to accomplish something, and therefore I desired the friendship of **all**. Because I profoundly respect this feeling on the part of the whites, I am compelled, as a matter of self-respect, for myself and race, to stand firmly for racial autonomy, yet, nevertheless, fraternal co-operation.

APPENDIX II.

CAROLINE W. BRAGG.

The venerated widow of the late Bishop John Payne, of the African Mission, labored for a number of years in connection with the work of St. Stephen's Church, Petersburg, Va. At the time of the translation of our beloved grandmother, Mrs. Payne was still in the work, and in communicating the intelligence to the "Spirit of Missions," she wrote as follows:

"Dear old Mrs. Caroline Bragg passed away on the 9th, and at the advanced age of 85. When asked by someone how she felt when so near death, she answered firmly and sweetly: 'God's promises have been my support all my life, and now I can rest my heart entirely upon them and have peace.' And calmly she breathed her life out on her Savior's breast. St. Stephen's Church was crowded at her funeral with white and Colored persons, many of our best ladies and gentlemen delighting to show their appreciation of a singularly holy life. The Rev. Dr. Gibson preached her funeral sermon, a most beautiful tribute to departed worth. All who heard it wished that they could deserve such a tribute from such a man, and all felt that every word was true. We owe to her the Colored Episcopal Church here; but what do we not owe her? Truly, a holy servant of God has passed away, and may we be the better for such an illustration of God's grace among us."

APPENDIX III.

St. Stephen's Church (located on Perry street), Petersburg, Va., was duly consecrated by the late Bishop Whittle, on May 18, 1868. He was assisted by the Rev. Dr. Gibson and the Rev. Dr. Wingfield, afterwards Bishop of Northern California. The Bishop also preached, delivered an address to a class of four persons, confirmed at the same time, and celebrated the Holy Communion. His text upon that occasion was: "Like as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, God." In his address at the Council following, he gave a brief history of the work, and in giving it, he said, it "was prepared at my request by Mr. A. W. Weddell, who has been the principal agent in accomplishing it." A part of the narrative is as follows:

In the fall of 1865, by the aid of the Episcopal Freedmen's Commission, funds sufficient were obtained to organize and establish a day school for Colored children. It was held in the chapel erected by the Rev. T. Stringfellow, Jr., during the war, until the building was destroyed by fire in April, 1867. This school has been in constant operation and now numbers over four hundred scholars. The teachings of the school are positive and distinctive. Besides the usual opening and the closing services, every Wednesday is devoted to the Prayer Book. At 11 A. M., on this day, the full Church service is rendered, followed by catechising. The instruction furnished by these exercises, in connection with the regular Tuesday night service, conducted by Rev. Mr. Gibson, have rendered the Colored people familiar with the Prayer Book, and enables them to sustain their part in the responses.

The burning of the Stringfellow chapel necessitated some action to secure a house for the day school. In view of the fact that there were already over forty communicants connected with us, and that the accommodations in our churches for Colored people were filled to repletion—it was determined to undertake the building of an independent church. To the Freedmen's Bureau, through the courtesy

of Major J. R. Stone, we are indebted for the first donation of \$2,650. This was followed by generous donations from Mrs. James, of the Pennsylvania Commission, and many private individuals. The whole building cost \$5,214. The title is held by three communicants of our church in Petersburg, Va., "as trustees of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church." The congregation has purchased a fine new organ; a beautiful silver sacramental set has been presented to them, and everything has been supplied, save the minister. The necessity for the erection of this church was seen by the crowded attendance of the Colored people at our Episcopal Churches every Sabbath, and the manifest interest they exhibited in the Episcopal service. This fact has been noticed nowhere to such an extent as in Petersburg."

That same year, through Bishop Whittle, the minister was secured, Rev. J. S. Atwell, and took up his abode in Petersburg. The following year, 1869, two memorable events occurred.

On the 7th of May, the venerable Bishop Johns, in St. Stephen's Church, admitted Mr. Atwell to the priesthood. On the same occasion, Mr. Atwell presented the "first fruits" of his labors. A class of twelve persons received Confirmation. With respect to the Rev. Mr. Atwell, Bishop Johns said:

"I must express my gratitude for the favorable circumstances under which this congregation commences its course. I trust of increasing prosperity and usefulness. The rector in a long and careful examination, by the brethren who united in his ordination, gave satisfactory proof of his aptness and meetness for the work of the ministry, and, by his faithfulness, diligence, and his irreproachable conduct as a deacon, has secured the respect and confidence not only of his own people, but of the Christian community by which they are surrounded. This first complete organization of a congregation of the kind in this Diocese, commences with encouraging prospects. I trust that under God's blessing, it will prove a safe and edifying example and pattern, to be successfully followed by many others."

It is with genuine regret that I am compelled to chronicle the other important event, but a historian must record facts however painful they may be. At the very same Council where the above words were uttered by Bishop Johns, and where the Rev. Mr. Atwell took his seat for the first time, the petition of the rector and vestry of St. Stephen's, Petersburg, Va., asking for admission as a parish, was presented, and rejected.

This petition is dated "May 21, 1869," and is signed by the rector, and everyone of the vestrymen. It concludes: "And, therefore, respectfully pray your honorable body to receive us under your direction as a parish **with all the rights and privileges of other parishes of this Diocese.**" The Rev. Dr. Gibson, their warm and ardent friend, was chairman of the committee on the admission of new parishes. In making the report on the petition of St. Stephen's Church, Rev. Dr. Gibson said: "The committee are aware that the petitioners have not complied with all the requirements of the Eleventh Canon of the Diocese, they not having given the formal notice to the Bishop and vestries, which that canon requires; but they deem the favorable and

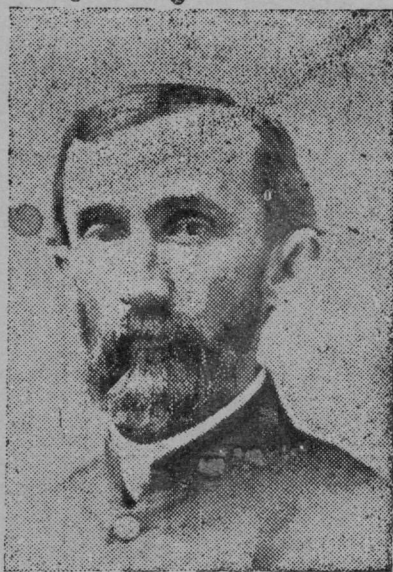
immediate action of the Council upon this petition a matter of such vital importance to the interests of our Church in their work among the Colored population of the Diocese, that they **unanimously** recommend that notwithstanding the informality, the prayer of the petitioners be granted." The debate was well sustained, and earnest, on both sides—but St. Stephen's Church was not admitted.

Mr. Atwell was much pained at this "defeat." A year or two before the Colored congregation organized by him in Louisville, Ky., was immediately and unanimously admitted. His great admiration for Bishop Whittle, more than any other thing, was responsible for his coming to Virginia. Both the rector and people tried to put the best phase upon the matter. Yet, the effect was just as Dr. Gibson had anticipated. A few years thereafter, Mr. Atwell removed from the Diocese, and a new and different situation obtained in the work. It was almost ten years after before the work recovered from the shock it received at its very birth. It is a significant fact that Virginia has never admitted into union with its Council one single Colored congregation; and it is equally significant, there is not, and never has been, a single self-supporting congregation of Colored people in that State.

GEORGE F. BRAGG, JR.



MRS CAROLINE W. BRAGG,
"The Mother" of S.Stephen's.



REV. GILES B. COOKE.
2nd Rector, S.Stephen's church.

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Beatty, George F.

The Story of Old St. Stephen's, Peters-
burg, Va. and the Organ of the Bishop
Cayne D'wenty School. by George F. Beatty
1917.

16 p. Photos.

Family history, ^{and} ~~and~~ of St. Stephen's;
John Cayne D'wenty school

Notes Episcopahan - Virginia
1 - Bragg, George F.

The story of Old St. Stephen's, Peter-
burg, Va. and the ^{outrage} ~~outrage~~ of the Bishop
Payne Denny shot by George F. Bragg,
1919.

16 p. photos

Family history, history of St. Stephen's and
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