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**Roots of Black Rhetoric: African Methodist Episcopal Zion's
Pioneering Preacher-Politicians**

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Pioneering Preacher-Politicians**

by

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**Roots of Black Rhetoric: African Methodist Episcopal Zion's
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In his seminal work *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B DuBois aptly states, “The Preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil.” At once a spiritual leader, social-political activist, educator, idealist, and businessman, the antebellum black preacher was the idiosyncratic product of a soil contaminated with racism and sullied with hate. Despite this antagonistic environment, what enabled his ascension to the head of black culture was “a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness” and “tact with consummate ability.” As shepherd and statesman, the black preacher embodied virtues and talents representative of the potential of his people and set the standards for community investment and civic action. He was the model of character for the race.

My dissertation introduces scholars to an overlooked yet monumental institution in African American history, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, as well as two of its pioneering preacher-politicians, Bishop Jermain W. Loguen and Bishop James W. Hood. My study of these nineteenth-century AME Zion preacher-politicians exposes overlooked features of black rhetoric, challenges predominant perceptions of the black

preaching tradition, and provides an alternative perspective on how to examine the persuasive appeals of black rhetoricians. Through rhetorical analyses of letters, speeches, and sermons—archival materials from the Schomburg Library and Union Theological Seminary in New York—I show that in addition to employing emotional appeals to draw the sympathies of whites and allay the lamentations of blacks, these black ministers also effectively wielded logical arguments to demonstrate their capabilities as reasoners in philosophical debates and intellectuals with original thoughts. However, most importantly, these black preachers’ ethical appeals in written texts, public sermons and speeches, and actions as model citizens served multiple practical and salutary ends for the uplift of African Americans.

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Introduction:

Men of Letters, Ministers of Character

Introduction: Men of Letters, Ministers of Character

The Negro church of today is the social centre of Negro life in the United States, and the most characteristic expression of African character.

W.E.B. DuBois

The Souls of Black Folk

Besides leading thousands of African American slaves of the nineteenth century to freedom, playing key roles in abolitionist movements and the Underground Railroad, what *else* do freedom fighters Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass have in common? They were all active members of an African Methodist Episcopal Zion church. Founded in 1796 in New York City by James Varick and Abraham Thompson, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, like its denominational *rival* the African Methodist Episcopal Church, spawned from the dissatisfaction among people of color congregating at predominately white churches. Denied religious liberty and subjected to various discriminatory practices, black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City felt it necessary to form their own church (and denomination), one “dedicated to the liberation of the human spirit.” Known as the “Freedom Church,” the AME Zion church endeavored for spiritual, social, political and economic emancipation among people of all races and stood at the forefront of the antislavery movement.

William Walls, a historiographer of the A.M.E. Zion Church, notes that:

When the doors of all the other churches and the public halls and theaters were closed to abolitionists and friends of emancipation, the doors of the Zion church were always open to them. It naturally became the forum of the proudest triumphs of Afro-American orators. (141)

While most northern white and black churches shut their doors to heated slavery debates, AME Zion churches welcomed and fueled the fiery orations of abolitionists in search of public forums. By far the most eminent speaker ever to deliver an oration in a Zion

church was Frederick Douglass. In fact, it was in a little school-house church, known as Zion, in New Bedford, Massachusetts where Douglass first received the training that would prepare him for his career as an orator and abolitionist. For four years, between 1838 and 1841, Douglass served as sexton, Sunday school superintendent, steward, class leader, clerk, and lay preacher (Hood, *One Hundred Years* 542). These years at Zion, where he fostered his talents as a leader and speaker, indubitably prepared him for his breakthrough speech at the Nantucket Antislavery Convention, where the renowned abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison would discover him.

In one of Douglass's last and most reflective letters, written the year before his death, he writes to AME Zion bishop and historian, Rev. James W. Hood, who wished to include his biographical sketch in Zion's historiography. Douglass recalls his years at New Bedford's Zion Church:

My connection with the African Methodist Episcopal Church began in 1838....I joined a little branch of Zion, of which Rev. William Serrington was the minister. I found him a man of deep piety, and of high intelligence. His character attracted me, and I received from him much excellent advice and brotherly sympathy. When he was removed to another station Bishop Rush sent us a very different man, in the person of Rev. Peter Ross, a man of high character, but of very little education. After him came Rev. Thomas James. I was deeply interested not only in these ministers, but also in Revs. Jehill Beman, Dempsy Kennedy, John P. Thompson, and Leven Smith, all of whom visited and preached in the little schoolhouse on Second Street, New Bedford....

It is impossible for me to tell how far my connection with these devoted men influenced my career. As early as 1839 I obtained a license from the Quarterly Conference as a local preacher, and often occupied the pulpit by request of the preacher in charge. No doubt that the exercise of my gifts in this vocation, and my association with the excellent men to whom I have referred, helped to prepare me for the wider sphere of usefulness which I have since occupied. It was from this Zion church that I went forth to the work of delivering my brethren from bondage, and this new vocation, which separated me from New Bedford and finally so enlarged my views of duty, separated me also from the calling of a local preacher....My

connection with the little church continued long after I was in the antislavery field. I look back to the days I spent in little Zion...as among the happiest days of my life. (Hood 541-542)

Countless scholarly texts investigate Douglass's legendary oratorical career, but only recently have researchers discovered the crucial role the AME Zion church and its ministers played in his development as a superior orator. By far the most extensive and meticulous study of the AME Zion's influence on Douglass's oratorical style appears in Gregory Lampe's *Frederick Douglass: Freedom's Voice, 1818-1845*, where he traces Douglass's footsteps through New Bedford and accounts for his roots in abolitionism and oratory through involvement in the town's black anti-slavery community and AME Zion Church. Lampe's study also includes short biographies of those Zion ministers who most closely interacted with and influenced Douglass during his four-year tenure at the "little branch of Zion"—asserting that Douglass modeled his public speaking style after these veteran political and religious exhorters. Primarily Lampe examines Douglass's emergence as an orator, noting particularly his contemporaries' observations regarding his "powerful physical presence, his captivating delivery, his forceful voice, and his use of satire, humor, and vivid illustrations to portray the atrocities of southern slavery and the injustice of northern prejudice" (Lampe 58). This type of analysis, however, does not critically distinguish between Douglass's oratorical techniques and his rhetorical repertoire as a writer. After all, upon leaving New Bedford Douglass not only embarked on a lifelong journey as an abolitionist and orator but he also began a prolific career as a writer and public intellectual.

Douglass's rather nostalgic and poignant letter regarding his "connection" with New Bedford's Zion Church and ministers prompted my investigation of the following

questions: What attracted Douglass and other prominent leaders to this denomination? What about the AME Zion Church fostered their interest in and passion for abolitionism? Besides emulating Zion ministers' oratorical patterns, adopting their sermon cadences, and appropriating their styles of delivery, what writing practices did Douglass and others employ that were characteristic of AME Zion's preachers? And in addition to cultivating their oratorical skills, how else did the Zion church prepare them for "the wider sphere of usefulness" in public forums—that is, what rhetorical skills and techniques did these figures appropriate from the Zion church that likely facilitated their ability to successfully mediate the marginalized African American community with the larger public sphere?

Volumes of research address African American oratory—as a revered practice in African American culture, as a primary form of social and political power for African Americans during the Antebellum, as a phenomenal example of cultural survivalism—and many have examined how various legendary African American orators share similar sermon styles with comparable cadences, parallel figures of speech, and analogous Bible-based thematic emphases. And almost all of these texts identify African American religious communities and practices as the common denominator between these orators. However, almost none have examined *rhetoric* as it was negotiated and managed by African American churches and ministers in "the public and pragmatic context of crafting a national political identity" (Condit ix).¹ As Bruce Herzberg notes in *The Rhetorical Tradition*, African Americans "had to develop rhetorical strategies for heterogeneous and

¹ In the context of my study, rhetoric refers to the "art of persuasion," whose aim involves "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" for the purpose of social cooperation. Furthermore, rhetoric should be differentiated from oratory. The latter is a sub-category of the former—whereas rhetoric involves all modes of persuasive acts, oratory regards speech.

hostile audiences, to claim a hearing that their very appearance would often seem to deny them, and thus to add entirely new elements to the Western rhetorical tradition.” In light of this, my dissertation focuses on the rhetorical strategies of two preacher-politicians of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Rev. Jermain Loguen (1809-1872), reputed as “the Underground Railroad King,” and Bishop James Walker Hood (1831-1918), both of whom corresponded with Douglass by letter and/or interacted with him personally. Both Loguen and Hood appear in recently published scholarly texts that focus on their social and political accomplishments as abolitionists, preachers, and educators. However, no scholarship regards the wide-ranging and encompassing role the rhetoric of these men played in affecting social and political change. Hence, my project examines the rhetorical practices of these two preacher-politicians whose discourses—sermons, speeches, letters, and essays—and symbolic acts (e.g., socio-political actions) influenced others’ beliefs, values, and attitudes in order to secure preferred outcomes for African Americans during the nineteenth century.

Methodology

Roots of Black Rhetoric is an excavation project, if you will, that uncovers valuable material in African American rhetorical, religious, and literary history and sheds light on overlooked features within this rich tradition. Whereas major studies in the field of rhetoric consider the oratorical roots of black rhetoric that stretch back to and reflect traditional African practices and customs, focusing primarily on black “orature,” my project investigates the writings of Revs. Loguen and Hood who sought to further the expansion of a black public sphere by raising the social-political consciousness of blacks and improving their ethical standards through printed texts. In a sense, these idealistic

men used texts to present themselves as prototypes of the race, as examples of proof to white society of black moral and intellectual merit and exemplars of character worthy of emulation by blacks. My project examines the rhetorical strategies that they utilized to contradict racist stereotypes and *citizenize* recently freed slaves who were uneducated and unequipped to engage in civic affairs. Through rhetorical analysis of their letters and sermons I reveal how these “men of letters” and leaders of one of the most powerful and progressive religious institutions in America not only aimed at uplifting the spirits of downtrodden blacks but also facilitated their moral improvement by encouraging them to read, acquire jobs, and qualify themselves for public use. Thus, my investigation also illumines a lineage of literate ministers in the black preaching tradition who employed persuasive appeals outside of our historically narrow perception of black homiletic practices.

When we think of black preaching, for example, we often imagine a sanctuary of emotional ecstasy, a preacher shouting and sweating, as he or she pours out rhythmical riffs of metaphorical wonder; the congregation responding and chiming in with “Amen” and “hallelujah,” some of them falling out, some dancing. In short, we think of passionate, stylized discourse that might even border on sensational and contrived. While such invoked images of black protestant worship services are not far from the truth, they represent neither the whole story nor the entire history. My project shows that there is more to black rhetoric and black preaching than stylistic discourse, pathos, anaphora, and chiasmus. There is more to black rhetoric than the eloquence of words. There is the rhetor himself or herself, the charismatic power of the individual, and the ethical appeals that move and change people. Or, in Douglass’s case, there is the “deep piety,” “high

intelligence,” “brotherly sympathy,” and character that “attracted” him and prepared him for “the wider sphere of usefulness.”

In my study of the rhetoric of AME Zion ministers Revs. Loguen and Hood I use the phrase “preacher-politician” to describe their double-role as agents bestriding sacred and secular spheres in the fight against racism and socio-political oppression. Douglass’s letter, in fact, sheds a distinguishing light on the concept of the preacher-politician, as he clearly delineates the transition from his own calling as a preacher to his “new vocation” as an abolitionist/politician. Evidently, his “enlarged” perspective on his duty to humanity involved working exclusively in secular state affairs rather than sacred church matters. Upon leaving New Bedford, Douglass grew steadily disenchanted with religion and glaringly critical of black churches for their apathetic efforts in the fight for freedom, which explains why he considered the vocation of a politician a higher calling than that of a preacher. In my study I use the phrase preacher-politician more flexibly than literally. Although historically the phenomenon of the black preacher-politician occurred during the Reconstruction when Mississippi elected Rev. Hiram Revels as the nation’s first black senator, my usage of the term includes those ministers who did not necessarily occupy public/elected office. As preacher-politicians, Loguen and Hood were well informed of governmental laws, the judicial system, and the rights of citizens and they used every legal means necessary to dismantle prejudicial laws restricting black freedoms and establish new *humane* laws that ensured equality among the races. They assumed public roles as agitators, advocates, and apologists in contentious socio-political milieus and saw the calling of a preacher as providentially intertwined with engaging in social

politics. In effect, both were called by God to save sinners and “elected” by Him to convert slaves to citizens.²

I also use the phrase “men of letters” in a liberal sense, although this is not necessarily uncommon. Between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries men of letters culturally evolved from merely literate men to those who earned a living as writers (essayists more so than creative writers) to public intellectuals, or *literati*, the most modern incarnation (see Clarke; Gross). Before the twentieth century a man of letters exclusively applied to literate white men whose literary productions contributed to the germination of original, critical, and progressive thought that influenced the ever-evolving intellectual consciousness of society. For the purposes of my study, it refers to literate African American men who exploited the black press, including black-owned newspapers and publishing companies, in order to achieve the same ends and others—such as disseminating their views on social and political issues relevant to the black community, fostering ethnic solidarity, promoting collective and civic responsibility, advocating education and training in skilled labor, spreading the “gospel of moral improvement,” and demonstrating the use of powerful rhetoric to effect change. As my study will show, Loguen and Hood employed the black press to craft a national identity for African Americans that represented their true talents and virtues and, at the same time, created a legacy of literary production worthy of study and emulation by future generations.

² To be clear, the term accurately applies to Bishop Hood, who served as North Carolina’s Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1868 and delegate to the Republican Convention in 1872.

However, besides being men of letters Loguen and Hood also served as ministers of The Letter. They followed in the footsteps of a long line of slave preachers who found clandestine means of learning how to read in order to unlock the hidden truth about slavery in the Bible. From 1830 to 1865 laws in slave states such as Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia banned teaching slaves to read, which prevented them from fully exercising their mental capabilities, one the one had, and confined them to spiritual darkness on the other. Slave masters exploited the Biblical illiteracy of slaves by mis-educating them about the Bible's stance on slavery—teaching them distorted stories like the Myth of Ham, claiming that God cursed Ham and his descendents, the people of Africa, by condemning them to eternal enslavement and contempt by European peoples. Prohibited from learning their “letters” blacks remained ignorant of The Letter and God's stories of deliverance from oppression. Slave preachers, once able to read and interpret the Bible on their own, sermonized about freedom and God's promise of justice and countered the blasphemous hermeneutics of southern white preachers. Thus, as black men of letters and ministers of The Letter, leaders such as Loguen and Hood facilitated the mental and spiritual growth of their brethren by interpreting the Bible in ways that helped blacks survive in a hostile white world (Fordham 10).

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, because antebellum African Americans resistant to the oppressive slave system faced particularly complex and constricting circumstances as public exhorters, protest speakers, and activists, more radical and inventive rhetorical strategies had to be conceived. In light of this, Molefi Asante writes:

As a protest speaker, he is met with limitations placed upon all protest speakers, but because he is black, a further constraint, based on socio-historical factors, exists. What rhetorical materials he chooses as a rhetor—in fact, the available materials—are limited, and making-do or

creating with the strategies and alternatives prescribed by the social conditions is the real challenge to the African American rhetor. (111)

Regarding rhetorical invention, the discovery and formulation of arguments most likely to persuade a particular audience in a specific situation, Rev. Loguen offers an intriguing example of how black “protest speakers” and writers used “available materials” from their own lives to create formidable claims in argumentative contexts. My study of Loguen’s rhetoric reveals how the process of “making-do” involved “self making,” whereby he exploited the materiality of his life experiences to substantiate both logical and ethical proofs about the mental capabilities and citizenship potential of African Americans. Like his intimate companion Douglass, whose autobiographies demonstrate the process of literary and rhetorical self-making, Loguen used his life as text and *logos* in letters documenting his accomplishments as an Underground Railroad “agent” and abolitionist in central New York in order to construct a public persona that countered the prevailing racist stereotypes of African Americans. My analysis of Loguen’s ethos-based rhetoric, thus, broadens our conception of nineteenth-century black preachers’ persuasive strategies and contributes to the recent burgeoning attention to abolitionist rhetoric.

My analysis resonates closely with Jacqueline Bacon’s work on rhetorics of the abolitionist movement in *The Humblest May Stand Forth: Rhetoric, Empowerment, and Abolition*, where she demonstrates how the discourse of marginalized rhetors challenges and expands conventional notions about rhetorical theory and practice (4). In fact, I found Bacon’s methodological approach to examining primary documents very useful in discovering what distinct elements AME Zion’s black preacher-politicians employed that reflect the “diverse, empowering, and theoretically complex array of rhetorical strategies” of other marginalized rhetors who assumed agency in a socio-politically suppressive

society. While these strategies—self-help rhetoric, identification, jeremiadic rhetoric, and rhetoric of agitation—comprise the argumentative repertoire of Revs. Loguen and Hood, my study further enhances our understanding of how these persuasive appeals function psychologically, spiritually, and socially. I particularly examine the use of identification, which served as a primary rhetorical strategy for Loguen and Hood who not only sought to foster group consolidation between blacks and black communities, but also strove to convince whites of their shared human characteristics, human rights, and *humane* interests.

My work also engages with Bacon's most recent publication, *The First African American Newspaper: Freedom's Journal*, which elucidates how *Freedom's Journal* transformed African American life, letters, and activism by addressing issues encumbering the black community, circulating proposals on how to resolve crises affecting black status, generating cultural self-awareness, self-help, and self-elevation, and fostering a national identity. The first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal* shares a special connection with the AME Zion Church: for one year it operated "from the commodious and spacious facility of Zion Church at 152 Church Street" (Walls 92). In fact, James Varick, Zion's first bishop, endorsed the newspaper and advised its editors, Samuel Cornish and John Russworm (92). This early political, personal, and pecuniary connection between Zion and *Freedom's Journal* and the newspaper's impact on northern black communities sheds light on the similarities between the journal's rhetorical agenda and Rev. Loguen's, as expressed in his letters. My rhetorical analysis of Loguen's letters exposes the influence of this short-lived but powerful vehicle of black thought, for Loguen also sought to "nurture group identity and community consciousness,

empower [blacks] to take control of their lives and destinies, connect communities divided by geography, and mobilize activism” (Bacon, *FJ* 72).

As a project that unearths historical figures that complicate our conception of African American rhetorical and literary traditions, *Roots of Black Rhetoric* responds to the call of Joanna Brooks and Elizabeth McHenry, whose works recover and resurrect disregarded and “forgotten” African American literatures, writers, and readers. In *American Lazarus: Religion and the Rise of African American and Native American Literatures*, Brooks reveals how “early black and Indian writings mattered to black and Indian communities, documenting and instrumentalizing movements toward common identification and community regeneration” (15). My study shows that these aims are evident in the manuscripts of Loguen and Hood. Brooks also portrays how African American communities “appropriated and reinvested Christian worship with their own distinctive spiritual and cultural values” and used the church to develop “positive and resistant corporate identities” (48-49). These findings support my conclusions regarding the impact that Loguen’s and Hood’s published letters and sermons had on the construction and “incorporation” of black national and denominational identities. Likewise, McHenry’s *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* demonstrates how nineteenth-century black literary societies proved instrumental in the promotion of literacy among blacks and the establishment of a uniquely black literary tradition, one that accurately describes the black experience and reflects the community’s cultural values. As prolific men of letters, Loguen and Hood “furthered the evolution of a black public sphere and a politically conscious society” (McHenry 4) and contributed to Zion’s legacy of literary production. Also concerned

with the recovery of lost black voices and their literary practices are Jacqueline Jones Royster's *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women*, Shirley Wilson Logan's *We Are Coming: The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women*, and Carla L. Peterson's "*Doers of the Word:*" *African American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830-1880)*, all of which defend the importance of recuperating the under-recognized experience of literate blacks and expand our understanding of African American identity, history, and forms of resistance.

My study also augments current efforts to re-conceptualize conventional notions of African American rhetorical traditions. In addition to those mentioned above, scholars such as Elaine B. Richardson, Ronald L. Jackson, Molefi Asante, Ella Forbes, and Glen McClish have contributed invaluable research interrogating the shortsighted delineations of rhetorical studies that fail to recognize the unique contributions of African Americans. These scholars present useful theoretical approaches—Asante's "afrocentric" theory, for example—that broaden the scope of African American rhetoric and celebrate its rich and distinctive heritage.

Legacy of Black Preachers: The Second Lineage

As several scholars of history and religious studies have noted, during the nineteenth century the church stood as the single most important institution in the African American community—and the preacher its principal figure (DuBois, *Souls* 155-157; Lincoln and Mamiya 7-9; Frazier 16). Henry Mitchell states in *Black Preaching*:

By tradition, the black preacher has always enjoyed the status of being the natural leader of the black community. His leadership role has at times assumed a variety of forms with concomitant responsibilities: pastor or spiritual leader, political leader, social leader, and very often the leading

proponent and exemplar of education. (6)

A number of nineteenth-century black preachers who fulfilled “concomitant responsibilities” have been the subject of scholarship, namely prominent figures such as Lemuel Haynes, Richard Allen, Daniel A. Payne, Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, and John Jasper.³ These studies—in History, African American Studies, African American Literature, and African American Religious Studies—some of which I discuss later, tell us much about the contributions these men made to abolitionism, moral reform, black theology, and black philosophy, focusing primarily on their speeches, narratives, letters, and pamphlets. However, rhetorical analyses of their sermons are few. Gerald L. Davis outlines the reasons for scholarly neglect of African American sermons in *I Got the Word in Me and I Can Sing It, You Know*. He observes that besides the general “disdain” of the American folk sermon, whether by black or white preachers, there is a marked “underestimation” of the African American sermon (39-40). Scholarly treatments of black sermons do not fully appreciate their complexity, often making summative and descriptive claims about them. The most significant studies on black sermons—in American folklore, anthropology, ethnomusicology, religious studies, and sociology—concentrate on their literary and/or affective characteristics and generally concern folk sermons rather than “manuscript” sermons by literate and/or theologically trained ministers like Hood. This is due to the limited number of published sermons by

³ I include John Jasper because he is the most famous “folk preacher” of the period, whose sermons were transcribed by congregants. See William E. Hatcher’s *John Jasper: The Unmatched Negro Philosopher and Preacher* and Cleophus LaRue’s *The Heart of Black Preaching*. For recent scholarship on black women preachers such as Julia Foote, Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, and Rebecca Cox Jackson see Richard J. Douglass-Chin’s *Preacher Woman Sings the Blues: The Autobiographies of Nineteenth-Century African American Evangelists*.

antebellum black ministers, on the one hand, but also because scholarship on black preaching showcases “black folk sermons” and “old-time country preaching” (Raboteau 141) as if they are *representative* of nineteenth-century black preaching in general.

In *Can These Bones Live: The Art of the American Folk Preacher*, Bruce Rosenberg observes that most preachers fall into one of two categories—“manuscript” preachers or “spiritual” preachers (11-12). Also called “folk preachers,” “slave preachers,” or “old-time Negro preachers” the latter group includes illiterate or partially literate ministers who memorized and recited large portions of the Bible and extemporaneously performed or “chanted” their sermons (See Davis; Raboteau; Rosenberg; Hubbard; Pipes). Folk preachers “communicate among the commoners through the spoken word that is never set down in writing but rather passed from generation to generation through oral tradition” (LaRue 31). These non-scripted performances honor African oral and religious traditions while they also show influences of eighteenth-century revivalists such as George Whitefield, whose affective sermons provoked “outcries and bodily distresses” (Brooks 22). Gerald L. Davis observes that, “It is the preacher’s task and duty to charge the preaching environment with dynamic energies and in so doing to induce the congregation to focus oral and aural mechanisms on the content and structure of the sermon performance” (17). The intensity of cathartic release in this “aesthetic environment” (17) of “call and response” determines the effectiveness of the preacher’s delivery, and black congregations, often critical of a preacher’s style and ability to rile them, do not hesitate to express their disappointment with either silence or a perfunctory “Amen.”

While Rosenberg and Davis examine, respectively, the folk sermon's linguistic structures and the black "performed" sermon's formulaic structures, Albert Raboteau illuminates the context, structure, and performative characteristics of the African American "chanted" sermon in *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History*. "Chanted," Raboteau argues, describes the folk sermon's "defining characteristic, the metrical, tonal, rhythmic chant with which the preacher climaxes the sermon" (141). Practiced by black and white ministers, this oral rather than literary form "remains popular among literate and 'sophisticated' congregations" and reflects black culture's appreciation of verbal artistry and the preacher's ability to *perform* God's Word with "skill, fluency, spontaneity, and intensity" (141-142). Such performances are reminiscent of African religious customs and worship styles, where rhythmic inflections and tonalities of the spiritual leader's voice, accompanied by drum beats, invoke spirits in the listeners, causing them to dance and fall into convulsions. In the context of African American Christian worship, as Dolan Hubbard states, "one hears in the voice of the preacher the beat of the tom-tom," as he calls upon the Holy Spirit to move and excite the congregation (7).

A number of studies conclude that the black preacher's role involves creating this atmosphere of "excitement and emotional abandon" through preaching in order to bring about cathartic release (Pipes 74; Raboteau 146; Spillers 4). In *Say Amen, Brother! Old-Time Negro Preaching: A Study in American Frustration*, William H. Pipes investigates the rhetorical features of folk sermons recorded in the late 1940s in Macon County, Georgia and claims that, "Negroes...come to church with this emotional spark already within them; they only want the minister to fan it into a flame—to encourage them to let

this light set them on fire with shouts and groans” (110). Through rhetorical analyses of seven folk sermons, Pipes finds the emotional appeal the key feature that ignites the congregation’s “emotional spark.” He states that, “the immediate purpose in the Macon County sermons is to impress and to arouse the audience...” (74). Pipes asserts that black congregations “cling” to old-time preaching because they possess an “emotional, superstitious temperament whose historical roots reach back through the days of slavery to the jungles of Africa; and this emotional nature has always needed a means of outward expression” (156). As reductive as these generalizations appear, they represent prevailing beliefs among students and scholars of African American culture and religion.

In *Black Preaching*, Henry Mitchell, a well-regarded theologian and preacher, states that, “Black culture as a whole, and Black religious culture in particular, is emotional” (194). As one of the most cited sources in contemporary scholarship on black preaching that accounts for folk and manuscript preachers, Mitchell targets the “Black preacher concerned to learn and maintain the great tradition that is his” (18). This tradition demands that the preacher satisfy the emotional needs of his audience. Like Pipes, Mitchell suggests that black preachers create an ecstatic worship atmosphere through emotional preaching because black congregations come to church to “open up and let out feelings safely” (111). He rightly observes, “The healing catharsis inherent in Black worship service has enabled many generations of Blacks to keep their balance and sanity” in a “hostile white world” (111). In order to meet the psychological needs of his congregation, the preacher, filled with the Holy Spirit, does everything in his power to ensure a therapeutic experience that absolves his listeners’ earthly burdens and turns their hopes toward Heaven. Always at the black preacher’s immediate disposal are “well-

turned phrases,” “rhetorical flair,” and “highly poetic language” (173) used to “reach, hold, and lift his Black audience” (169).

Relying heavily on Mitchell’s work, Lyndrey A. Niles concludes in “The Rhetorical Characteristics of Traditional Black Preaching” that the “true nature” of black preaching is,

...the careful orchestration of the needs of the congregation, the satisfaction of those needs through carefully selected materials related to the congregation’s experiences and presented vividly and descriptively to awaken their highest intellectual ability and touch their deepest emotions as they look forward with enjoyment to a heaven free from bigotry, pain, sorrow, and death of this world. (52)

Like Mitchell and Pipes, Niles argues that the “orchestration” of the black sermon, through strategic selection of biblical passages and personal testimonies and employment of vivid and descriptive language, is intended to meet the congregation’s emotional needs based on their current circumstances. In achieving this end, several rhetorical features commonly appear, including: an early effort to “touch the deep emotions of the audience”; “extended description or re-creation of a Bible story,” often a familiar one; a celebratory climax; use of “the in-language” or Black English; skillful use of cadence; and timely repetition of phrases to prompt “call and response” dialogue (Niles 47-51). This study does not, however, sufficiently demonstrate how any of these devices “awaken [the congregation’s] highest intellectual ability” nor does it give full consideration of the differences between folk sermons and manuscript sermons. In short, Niles’s study supports Mitchell’s summation of black preacher’s persuasive strategies: “when Black preachers are most persuasive, they are apt to seem more to plead out of passion than to argue out of logic” (114).

Gary Layne Hatch's "Logic in the Black Folk Sermon: The Sermons of Rev. C.L. Franklin" dispels the pervasive belief that "logical persuasion is largely absent from Black folk preaching" (228). Hatch's study directly counters Pipes's claim that inductive and deductive reasoning are features utilized almost exclusively by "highly educated ministers." Through rhetorical analysis of Rev. C.L. Franklin's (1915-1984) recorded sermons Hatch proves that logical appeals in Black folk sermons are "embedded in the narratives, examples, comparisons, and biblical references chosen by the preacher" rather than in explicit theses with claims, support, and warrants (228). Although Hatch examines a contemporary black folk minister, his notion of "poetic logic," a type of analogical reasoning, provides a key theoretical frame for identifying and appreciating complex rational appeals in black preaching in general. His study proves particularly helpful in my analysis of Hood's sermons.

However, of the recent scholarship regarding black preaching the most relevant to my study is Cleophus LaRue's *The Heart of Black Preaching*. In searching for the distinctive characteristics of black preaching, particularly in nineteenth-century sermons, LaRue discovers strong biblical content, creative uses of language, appeals to emotions, ministerial authority, a communal and celebratory message, and a hermeneutic lens that exposes the "meaningful connection between an all-powerful God and a marginalized and powerless people" (9-19). What sets LaRue's study apart from others is his inclusion of literate, theologically trained ministers from the post-Civil War era—namely, Alexander Crummell, Francis J. Grimke, Daniel Alexander Payne, and Elias Camp Morris. Acknowledging that these published, manuscript ministers were anomalies among the majority of black ministers, he also considers John Jasper, "a folk preacher in

the truest sense” (31). LaRue’s work is important because it threads a biblical hermeneutic through the history of black preaching in America, conjoining the folk and literary lineages within a distinctive preaching tradition. In addition, his study ushers in to current scholarship post-Civil War black ministers who worked hard to earn theological degrees in order to help their people survive and thrive during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras. From LaRue’s delineation of the black preaching legacy we learn that despite how ecstatic or staid a black preacher’s sermon might be or how responsive or aloof a congregation may be, their perception of God and the Christian gospel remains intact.

* * *

Considered the anomaly in this cultural lineage of literate black preachers is Rev. Lemuel Haynes, the first ordained African American minister in America and the author of the polemical sermon, *Universal Salvation* (1795). Born in 1753, the abandoned son of a white mother and black father, Haynes grew up within a pious and loving white family of farmers in Massachusetts where he worked as an indentured servant and attained a meager formal education in the village school (Newman xx). Primarily self-taught, Haynes took an early interest in religion, memorizing several biblical texts, psalms, hymns, and writings of George Whitefield, and eventually received formal preparation for ministry with instruction in Latin and Greek. In 1785 the Congregationalist Society ordained Haynes and three years later he accepted a call to minister in Rutland, Vermont, where he served as pastor of an all-white church for thirty years (Saillant, “Revolutionary Origins” 79).

Despite being the first ordained black minister in America whose sermons enjoyed wide popularity during his time,⁴ because Haynes did not preach to predominately black congregations during the antebellum, scholars in African American history and theology have not acknowledged him as a contributor to the founding of Black Theology in America (Saillant 80). In fact, Haynes's sermons are not even considered in major studies of black preaching; most often he is included as a historical footnote. John Saillant argues in "Lemuel Haynes and the Revolutionary Origins of Black Theology, 1776-1801" that Haynes's unique confluence of republican ideology and New Divinity theology in defense of liberty establishes him as a founding father of Black Theology (80). In Haynes's writings we see the beginning threads of common themes in the sermons of educated black ministers of the Reconstruction era such as Alexander Crummell, Daniel Payne, and James W. Hood. Drawing from his schooling in New Divinity theology, Haynes emphasized reason, conversion, and benevolence, delineating "an important sphere for reason...by 'rational conviction'" (81). This privileging of reason and "rational conviction" over the emotional and dramatic conversion exposes the divide between educated black ministers as opposed to black folk preachers of the nineteenth century with minimal reading and writing skills, whose sermons often consisted of pathos-laden exhortations that exploit the moment of emotional frenzy leading people to conversion. Saillant notes that as a Congregationalist trained in "rational sermonizing," Haynes's sermons characteristically appealed to reason and theology (84).

⁴ *Universal Salvation*, Haynes's most famous sermon, was reprinted in over seventy editions, between 1795 and 1865 (Newman xiv).

Three legendary ministers from the AME Church—Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Daniel A. Payne—illustrate the spectrum of black preaching styles, particularly in relation to educational backgrounds. Of these three, AME founding father Bishop Allen was the least educated, having learned to read and write at church and religious camp meetings while still enslaved (Allen 5-6). Bishop Payne once described him: “though not learned, intelligent; though not brilliant, solid” (Wesley 116). Regarding his preaching, historical accounts suggest that although Allen was not a “great preacher,” he was an effective one (115). John M. Langston (1829-1897), a black abolitionist, lawyer, and Oberlin College graduate, wrote of Bishop Allen’s preaching,

Possessing solid rather than brilliant and dazzling powers of mind...Bishop Allen, was, nevertheless, a pulpit orator whose style was marked by tender and lively sensibility, a vigorous and vivid imagination, a deep and moving pathos. The power of his eloquence was demonstrated in the effect produced upon the multitudes moved and converted through his preaching... (136 – 137)

Known for his moving sermons, Bishop Allen often drew large crowds to hear him, converting tens of listeners, both black and white, on many occasions. When elected bishop in 1816, Allen attracted even greater numbers to hear him. On this historic day, AME historian James A. Handy (1826-1911) observes that, “perhaps the largest colored congregation that had ever assembled in Baltimore” was present; however, “it was said by some who were present on this occasion that he fell a little below the expectation of many of his hearers” (Handy 337). Following this sermon, Rev. Daniel Coker commented before the assembly, “While Bishop Allen was not such a great preacher, he was a very useful man, and calculated to do a great deal of good” (337).

Notwithstanding Bishop Allen’s ability to meet the expectations of his hearers, he was intentional in his delivery and style. Allen designed his extemporaneous sermons to

be “simple, pointed, practical, and instructive” so that “the most illiterate hearer would know what he meant” (Wesley 116) and in his autobiography, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of Rt. Rev. Richard Allen*, he attributes this practice to the Methodists:

We are beholden to the Methodists, under God, for the light of the Gospel we enjoy; for all other denominations preached so high-flown that we were not able to comprehend their doctrine. Sure am I that reading sermons will never prove so beneficial to the coloured people as spiritual or extempore preaching. (Allen 17)

Allen clearly favored the “plain doctrine” of Methodist preachers and disdained the “high-flown” sermonizing of other preachers “who would act to please their own fancy.” In a number of instances in his autobiography Allen emphasizes his indebtedness to the Methodists: for being “the first people that brought glad tidings to the coloured people”; for teaching him “the plain doctrine and having a good discipline”; and for being “born and awakened under them” (16-17). Knowing that many of his people were illiterate worshippers who would respond to a charismatic leader with a simple message, rather than a highly intellectual one, he emulated his Methodist mentors by fulfilling the needs of his congregants in “evangelistic effectiveness” (Wesley 115); Allen’s evangelical and extemporaneous style of preaching, Carol George claims, “combined the speaker’s inspiration in a fortuitous blend with the congregation’s reaction” (161). In short, Bishop Allen’s “call and response” preaching style, often accompanied by lively music, created an emotive atmosphere that would incite cathartic release, which he believed his African American worshippers needed and expected.

Directly opposed to the preaching and worship style that Richard Allen advocated, “where spontaneity and emotional outbursts were the order of the day,” Rev. Daniel Alexander Payne argued that reducing religion to “an endless round of emotional

releases accomplishes nothing” (Campbell 40). In fact, the correlation between educated ministers and reason-based sermons and less-educated preachers and emotional sermons constituted the basis of debates between and critical characterizations of black churches/denominations and preachers, beginning after the Civil War. Addressing the rivalry among churches regarding “emotionalism,” W.E.B. DuBois would write, “Now, the preachers who have had some advantages of study, who have come into contact with the learning of the schools, and have in their intelligence gotten above the ignorant preacher of the country, know that the old order of things is wrong” (58). Payne’s position was quite clear. When asked to join the AME Church in Philadelphia in 1840, Payne, a free-born mulatto who was self-taught but later trained at a Lutheran seminary, initially declined on account of the church’s low educational standards and the “distasteful” tone of its services, where men and women made “noise” and “extravagant gesticulations” (Campbell 37-39). Although he eventually joined the church in 1841 and two years later became ordained into full ministry, he did so with full intentions of transforming the AME Church into a national force against white racism and slavery; education was his first item of development, worship “tone” his second. Over the next fifty years Payne served dutifully as a minister and as president of the first AME college that he founded, wrote the denomination’s first historiography, and ascended to bishop in 1852. Other than Richard Allen, no one in history did more to “shape the trajectory and tone of African Methodism” (Campbell 38, Sernett 217). Perhaps Payne’s most memorable influence on the denomination involved his reforms regarding an educated ministry and orderly worship service.

Daniel Payne's sermon "Welcome to the Ransomed" reflects his views on education and order, as it also exposes the differences between prepared and extemporaneous sermons. Delivered on April 3, 1862, in Washington D.C., before a congregation of newly freed slaves and refugees from the surrounding area, Payne's sermon celebrates the "redemption" of D.C.'s enslaved population, acculturates and welcomes them to the "great family of Holy Freedom," and instructs them on how to live. This sermon delineates his belief that if the colored people of the United States live morally according to God's Word, work hard, live frugally, and get educated then they will be "prepared to recognize and respond to all the relations of civilized and Christianized life" (LaRue 172 -174). In addition, as civilized Christians they should "beseech the God of Nations to send the spirit of wisdom, justice, [and] liberty" to governmental authorities, which will induce God to bless the "weak, despised, and needy people" (176). Basing his sermon on St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (I Timothy 2:1-4), Rev. Payne opens with a summation of Paul's main points and their relevance to the present crisis of his listeners. He then states, "Let us briefly trace out this line of thought," and explains the God-logic behind Paul's advice, which would seem counter-intuitive to a people despised and beaten by tyrannical rulers. Payne's sermon is methodic and intentional. It follows the argumentation outlined in St. Paul's epistle, defining the apostle's terms and concepts when necessary, explains the reasonableness of heeding his advice and trusting God's Word, and enumerates God's motives for investing in the edification of humanity. It is logical in argumentation and thoughtfully organized. In short, it does not fit the paradigm of an extemporaneous, pathos-laden collection of digressions; rather, it systematically inculcates a sobering lesson on education, Christian

duty, and decorum. As my study will show, Rev. Hood most closely follows this trajectory of black preaching traditions.

While Allen and Payne stand at opposite ends of a spectrum of black preaching styles, Rev. Absalom Jones (1747-1818), AME's co-founder and the first African American Episcopal priest, occupies the middle. A staunch humanitarian and abolitionist, Rev. Jones was an industrious and well-respected man who, like Allen, made a strong impression on his master while enslaved. Initially self-taught, Jones expressed an eager interest in learning to read and write. After saving enough pennies he bought a primer and "begged to be taught by anybody that [he] found able and willing to give [him] the least instruction." In 1766, Jones convinced his master to grant him "the liberty of going one quarter to a night-school," where he improved his reading and writing skills and also learned Arithmetic (Douglass 119-120). At the age of thirty-eight, Jones purchased his freedom (after purchasing his wife's freedom five years prior), left his master's church, and began attending St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church where Allen served as minister to the colored members (Nash 67-70, 98).

While not an outstanding preacher, Jones is remembered for his "impressive" style:

Mr. Jones is said to have been very earnest and impressive in his style of preaching; but, it was never thought that his *forte* was in the pulpit. It was his mild and easy manners, his evenness of temper, his repeated visitations among the people, especially the sick of his flock, his active cooperation with every effort put forth for the advancement of his people...that endeared him to all who knew him. (Douglass 122)

On January 1, 1808 in Philadelphia, PA, Rev. Jones delivered "A Thanksgiving Sermon" at St. Thomas's African Episcopal Church to commemorate the abolition of the African Slave Trade. Jones's homily is a classic, incorporating nearly every feature that scholars

believe distinguish a black sermon (as discussed earlier). In a masterful and creative fashion, Jones mines these features from the passage found in Exodus 3:7-8, which describes God's merciful condescension on the Jews held in bondage by the Egyptians. In short, Jones signifies on the common histories of enslavement and emancipation between God's chosen people, the Jews, and His *new* chosen people, African Americans. Relying heavily on the rhythmic pacing of anaphora, in phrases such as "He has seen" and "He came down," Jones catalogues the afflictions suffered by the Israelites in order to create identification between the two peoples, while he also paints a picture of God's character and power by declaring that He sees their suffering, hears their cries, and responds by supernaturally changing their circumstances.

While Jones employs emotive language and imagery throughout this sermon, it is also structured in its argumentation. He divides the sermon into two major parts, each with its own sequence of sub-divisions and points. Part One is divided into past and present—the common histories of Jews and African Americans and the present plight of the latter. Part Two focuses on "the duties which are inculcated upon us, by the event we are now celebrating" and is organized into "five heads" (Porter 339). Thematically woven together with Jones's most emphatic use of anaphora, these "heads" all begin with "Let us," urging his congregants to continue striving and fighting towards total emancipation. Hence, Jones shows us that nineteenth-century black ministers with limited education composed affective sermons that also appealed to reason.

Arguably the most profoundly influential African American thinker and writer of the nineteenth-century preachers considered in my study is Rev. Alexander Crummell. Born to "Free Africans" in New York City in 1819, Crummell attained a "classical

education” at the New York African Free School while also learning from private tutors (Moses 3). Between 1835 and 1838 he studied at Oneida Institute, under the presidency of staunch abolitionist and American divine Beriah Greene, and here underwent a conversion experience that would set his life course towards becoming a man of principle through rigid discipline and evangelizing to instill the same kind of spiritual and mental regiment in others (Oldfield 3, 21). Refused admission at the General Theological Seminary in 1839, Crummell attended classes at Yale Theological Seminary until 1841 before leaving to pastor Christ Church, a black Episcopal congregation in Providence, Rhode Island. By 1844 he was ordained a minister of the Episcopal Church and in 1853 received a bachelor’s degree from Cambridge (4-5).

While there are several sermons to consider in Crummell’s corpus, all of which demonstrate a predominant use of logical appeals, his untitled sermon dated, “12th Oct. 90,” addresses the point I make regarding the differences between educated black ministers and folk ministers of the nineteenth century. Wilson J. Moses notes that this sermon, which he entitles, “Piety, Moralism, and Enthusiasm,” “placed [Crummell] in opposition to the majority of black American preachers, who appealed to converts with frenzied ‘ring shouts’ and ecstatic experiences in which the convert was first ‘struck dead’ by the power of God and then ‘born again’ during an intense experience of seeing Jesus” (14). The following is an excerpt from this sermon:

You have all heard, I am sure, the expression from the lips of some overzealous Christians—“Now we don’t want your morality. Give us the Gospel; what we are seeking is religion!” This is the language of enthusiasts; the saying of excitable and hysterical pietists, people who think that godliness consists in emotion, and manifests itself in feeling.

The unfortunate thing in such language is that it is a repudiation of moral

obligation, as a cardinal element in the religion of Jesus. This religion does not set aside the emotions and feelings. They are an important feature in the Christian system. But it should be noticed that they are only *secondary*, alike in place and requirement; while, on the other hand, the spiritual and moral qualities of our nature are the *primary* and foremost. It is *truth*, and not feeling which is sought by the Holy Spirit. It is *conviction*, not emotion; sacred *principle*, and not excitement; high morality, instead of glowing sentiment; solid character in the place of vivid sensation, which are the prime characteristics of our holy faith.

For what is true religion? It is bending back the errant mind of man to the majestic mind of God—who is a spirit. And when we speak of the mind of God we refer to that fountain of truth from which all things real proceed...to that eternal Reason, which is the spring of every grand idea and every lasting principle...(Moses 140)

Much like Daniel Payne, Crummell harbored strong opinions against “frenzied” and “ecstatic” worship services that exploit congregants’ emotions as well as “hysterical pietists” who think “godliness consists in feeling.” Rather, he argues, like Rev. Hood, that conviction, principle, morality, and character (all rooted in reason) are crucial components to “our holy faith.”

According to Crummell, God reasons with us through His Word. In “The Day of Doom,” preached on December 17, 1854, he teaches his parishioners: “But a fact always becomes more distinctly a fact to the human mind, when the reasons which give it verity and reality are set distinctly before us. Now some of the facts of Scripture are declarations, without any reasons given us whatever, yet they are believed. But it has pleased God to give us *reasons* for certain other of the great truths of Scripture” (Moses 108). Moses suggests that this sermon “demonstrates his only moderately successful attempt to appeal to his less-educated parishioners” (13). If this is the case, then Crummell appears to utilize logical arguments in order to teach his listeners, regardless of

their educational background, how to understand scripture, conceive of God's purpose for humanity, and commune with God in spirit and mind.

* * *

As descendants of these pioneering ministers, Loguen and Hood bear some of their homiletic traits, while they also depart in ways that broaden our conception of this overlooked lineage. Part I of my study focuses on the rhetorical practices of Bishop Jermain Loguen, whose letters to various African American communities in central New York expose the development of a public mind and a black identity and demonstrate a commitment to social and political values espoused by the northern black middle class. Like his ideological forebears Samuel Cornish and John Russworm and his contemporaries Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet, Loguen circulated his radical ideas on sociopolitical thought and action through the black press, sounding a wake-up call for his dejected people. In addition, reminiscent of the Apostle Paul's epistles in the New Testament, Loguen's sermon letters exhibit a paternal and pastoral ethos that reflects his desire to improve his readers' moral standards, increase their social and political consciousness, and consolidate their cultural values and sense of community—in effect, preaching a “gospel” of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. Finally, this section includes an analysis of Loguen's speech announcing his defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law, revealing how his radical and charismatic public persona, backed by strong appeals to manhood, persuaded residents of Syracuse to protect him and other fugitives from governmental tyranny.

In Part Two, I examine the rhetoric of Bishop James W. Hood whose sermons exhibit a pronounced departure from stereotypical notions of nineteenth-century black

preaching, showing an allegiance to a tradition of intellectualism and piety rather than emotionalism and psychological escapism. Hood believed that the church should not merely serve as a space for spiritual exultation, emotional venting, and commiseration, but it should function as an institution of learning: of literacy development, leadership building, and citizenship training. Recognizing that his newly freed congregants were still shackled by the sinful mark of slavery and the alleged Curse of Ham, Hood designed theologically sound sermons comprised of logical claims that “set the record straight.” Like his contemporary and friend Alexander Crummell, Hood believed that “the religion of Jesus Christ appeals to...that which is the highest and best in human nature,” and, thus, he utilized reason-based arguments to suggest how black Christians can achieve communion with God through exercising their mental capabilities and fostering a faith based on biblical knowledge. My analysis of Hood’s sermons also shows his teleological aims of equipping his parishioners with practical wisdom that would help them deal with the oppressive socio-political realities of the time and prepare them for their roles as agents in civic affairs.

The Conclusion to my study urges scholars to avoid and critique essentialist notions that pervade scholarship on black preaching by recognizing a second lineage of powerful black ministers, men of letters and ministers of freedom, who enabled African Americans to flourish during times of social, spiritual, economic, and political degradation. In sum, my study shows how AME Zion’s preacher-politicians moved blacks to rattle the grounds of rhetorical engagement in the public sphere by re-inventing themselves and “creating their own sense of character, agency, authority, and power” (Royster 65).

Part One:

Man of Letters, Minister of Freedom: Rhetoric of Reverend Jermain W. Loguen

J.W. LOGUEN is laboring in Madison Co., and is highly appreciated among the friends of freedom in that region. Mr. Loguen is now the only fugitive slave in the United States, who is regularly and constantly in the lecturing field, and he deserves, on that account, as well as on the score of his talents, and untiring zeal, in laying before the public the accumulated wrongs of his race, to have his hands upheld and his spirit cheered by the generous aid of those among whom his services are bestowed. Mr. Loguen has a large family to support and to educate - he has no regular salary from any society or organization, but goes forth on his own motion, with the heart of a genuine philanthropist in his breast, and the spirit of an apostle in his soul, putting his trust in God and the lovers of humanity. We know not the man throughout our extended ranks who is doing more in the lecturing field, in school houses and chapels, to disseminate right views and to promote right feelings on the subject of slavery than he.

Anonymous, *Frederick Douglass's Paper*
December 3, 1852

Let him so order his life that he not only prepares a reward for himself, but also so that he offers an example to others, and his way of living may be, as it were, an eloquent speech.

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*

In a letter to Frederick Douglass, dated August 21, 1851, Rev. Jermain W. Loguen writes:

I never saw the time during the last ten years that I have been in the anti-slavery field when the public ear was so ready and willing to hear on American slavery. The Fugitive Slave Bill has had a good effect in making the people willing to hear on the subject, and I hope it will drive them to action, as action is what we need at present. (*FDP* Aug. 21, 1851)

Loguen was a man of action. As an abolitionist, educator, and preacher, Loguen responded wholeheartedly to the exigencies of enslaved and free African Americans of

the nineteenth century. Regarded for his boldness, charismatic personality, and passion for freedom fighting, he was the most famous “conductor” of the Underground Railroad in central New York during the antebellum period and served as bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church from 1864 to 1872. Though relatively unknown among students of African American history, Loguen was a socio-political figure whose life and deeds, arguably, parallel those of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Henry Highland Garnet. Loguen makes an intriguing character study. While historians deem him the Underground Railroad King whose house served as a “depot” where fugitive slaves could receive comfort and blessings on their way to freedom, rhetoricians will regard him as a fascinating rhetorical figure, one whose *ethos* reflects his honorable and heroic deeds. He was a man whose character was as persuasive as his actions.

However, despite Loguen’s accomplishments as both a preacher and political activist, Carol M. Hunter’s *To Set the Captives Free: Reverend Jermain Wesley Loguen and the Struggle for Freedom in Central New York* is the only full-length study that recognizes his historical significance. Hunter’s text documents Loguen’s life from childhood to death—assessing the validity of his slave narrative (written by an amanuensis), outlining his educational background, ministerial and political training, and activities as a preacher-politician, as well as examining his views on the Fugitive Slave Law, U.S. politics, and religion. This chapter on Loguen, however, focuses on his letters published in abolitionist newspapers and a speech declaring his defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law. These contain exhortations both religiously and politically bent, and offer fertile material for rhetorical analysis.

In assessing Loguen's rhetorical strategies I rely on a wide array of ancient and contemporary rhetorical theorists and scholars, primarily Aristotle, Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, and Jacqueline Bacon. My work is particularly informed by Bacon's *The Humblest May Stand Forth: Rhetoric, Empowerment, and Abolition*, which outlines the principal rhetorical strategies marshaled by marginalized abolitionists—African American men and women as well as white women—during the nineteenth century. Bacon discusses methods such as “self-help rhetoric,” the “rhetoric of agitation,” and jeremiadic rhetoric, all of which Loguen utilized as a socio-political activist and preacher-politician. For the purposes of my investigation of black preachers' rhetorical practices, I examine Loguen's letters as preaching manuscripts. As my study will show, Loguen employed the press as a pulpit from which he preached the Gospel of salvation and the “gospel” of moral improvement and social reform. In analyzing Loguen's letters, I also show how Loguen used his life as text and personal testimony. For instance, both literary and rhetorical critics have noted how Frederick Douglass used his experiences, as well as his body, as the text upon which to base his arguments and exhortations. For Douglass, testimony constituted the *logos* of his arguments; it was the hard, cold truth of his insufferable past that formed the basis of his claims about the treacherous effects of slavery. In the same manner, Rev. Loguen used his courageous feats as a fugitive slave and his accomplishments as an educator and minister to refute claims regarding the inferiority of blacks. This chapter reveals how Loguen strove to, in Augustine's words, “order his life” in such a way that would secure the reward of freedom for himself and his enslaved brethren, as he also purposefully lived “to offer an example for others” who might emulate him.

While Loguen follows a legacy of freedom fighters in African American history—Rev. Richard Allen, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, and Sojourner Truth—whose charismatic appeal, Christian faith, and emboldened actions inspired thousands to fight for freedom and, thus, make them intriguing subjects for rhetorical study, I believe Rev. Loguen distinguishes himself from this group because of how he exploited his circumstances to make public arguments. That is, Loguen responded to his life crises in radical ways that called attention to the fundamental inconsistencies and immoralities inherent within American slavery. By refusing to purchase his freedom, openly defying the Fugitive Slave Law by remaining a fugitive in his hometown of Syracuse, NY, and publicizing his home as an Underground Railroad depot, Loguen behaved in ways that underscore the connections between ethos formation and rhetorical action (Royster 50). Loguen’s numerous published letters in national newspapers and speeches along the abolitionist circuit, demonstrate his construction of a public persona intended to speak *to* and speak *for* his race. This chapter shows how he employed strategies of identification, communion, self-help, and charisma to present his life as living proof (*logos*) of the great potential and merit of African Americans. My examination of Loguen’s rhetoric, consequently, focuses largely on his character, or *ethos*, and contributes to the current scholarship on the argumentative force of a rhetor’s character or personality, thus prompting a re-examination of how we’ve understood and conceptualized *ethos* as a rhetorical proof. Moreover, as my study shows, analyzing the relationship between ethos formation, context, and text exposes new ways to conceive of nineteenth-century black preachers’ rhetorical performances and productions.

A Sketch of Loguen's Life

Born to Dave Logue, his white master, and enslaved mother, Cherry, on a small plantation just outside of Nashville, Tennessee, in 1812, Jermain "Jarm" Loguen experienced the severe brutalities of slave life, even witnessing the frequent, bloody whippings of his mother. At age 21 his father's brother, Manasseh Logue, hired him out to the "Prestons" (pseudonym given in Loguen's biography), a white family of socio-politically conscious and well-educated Methodists. Unlike many southern whites, the Prestons advocated the equality of races and held strong antislavery views. For almost three years Loguen worked for this family and through several religious and philosophical discussions with them gleaned an enlightened perspective on the social dynamics between master and slave. He also learned for the first time that not all whites espoused white supremacist views, which piqued his determination and hope of one day escaping to freedom. In about 1835, after enjoying a relatively independent work-life with the Prestons, Loguen and a few of his friends posed as free blacks with forged free passes and escaped to Canada (Hunter 31-43).

During this period in his life, Loguen realized the liability of illiteracy and explored opportunities to learn to read and write. In Ancaster, Canada West, he received his first formal education and graduated as a Bible reader. After moving to Rochester, New York, in about 1837, Loguen met Elymus Rogers, a student at the Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York, who recognized his exceptional mental abilities and urged him to attend Oneida Institute. In 1839 Loguen enrolled at Oneida Institute, where Rev. Beriah Green, a Presbyterian minister, served as president. Under Green's administration Oneida had earned the reputation of an abolitionist institution, thus making it the perfect

place for Loguen to excel and foster his development into a social and political leader. In fact, Green's most critical influence on Loguen's thinking involved the use of religion to effect social change. After three years at the institute, Loguen married Caroline Storum and later joined the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, a denomination founded by blacks in New York whose principal aim was to fight for the freedom of slaves (Hunter 49-55).

As an AME Zion minister, Loguen taught and preached throughout central New York, founding three or four church societies during the 1840s. He and his young wife settled in Syracuse, where they raised eight children and built a church. Loguen's church eventually became known as the "abolition church" and through his labors and devotion as a freedom-fighting minister the AME Zion church gained reputé as the leading anti-slavery church of the country. In fact, because of Loguen's assiduous dedication as a full-time Underground Railroad conductor—he advertised his home as a "station" for fugitive slaves in local newspapers—*The Weekly Anglo-African* dubbed him the "Underground Railroad King" in 1860. Loguen also published his own slave narrative, *The Rev. J.W. Loguen as a Slave and as a Freeman* (1859), in order to fund his fugitive slave operation. Under Loguen's leadership, the Syracuse depot of the Underground Railroad reportedly assisted more fugitive slaves than any other in the state of New York. AME Zion historian William J. Walls writes, "His and Douglass's was one of the closest relationships in the work of the Underground Railroad, and they shared a passionate desire for freedom of their people from their suffering in slavery. . . .[It] is estimated that he aided over 1,500 slaves to escape to freedom" (Walls 162-165, 573).

Loguen and Frederick Douglass became intimate friends through their work as abolitionists in central New York. When the two were not laboring jointly on the Underground Railroad, they were either lecturing together on the anti-slavery speech circuit or exchanging letters of encouragement and support. Several published newspaper editorials written by each of them demonstrate their deep mutual respect as well as their earnest desire to hold each other accountable for their efforts in the work of emancipating their enslaved brethren. Their relationship became even more significant when Loguen's daughter, Helen Amelia, married Douglass's son, Lewis, in 1869 (Hunter 65, Walls 163).

Adamantly opposed to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Loguen played a principal role in one of the most inspiring events in Syracuse history, the Jerry Rescue. On October 1, 1851 five officials, three of them federal marshals, arrested William "Jerry" Henry, a fugitive slave from Missouri, on the false charge of theft. News regarding this unjust arrest quickly reached the Liberty Party Convention and the Syracuse Vigilance Committee, both of which responded immediately by marshalling a crowd of abolitionists and local townspeople opposed to the Fugitive Slave Act. Loguen, himself a fugitive from slavery and a member of both organizations, played a critical part in Jerry's rescue and flight into Canada. In a two-year trial, twenty-seven people were indicted for violating the fugitive slave law, including Loguen and eleven other blacks, though only one man was convicted. Loguen was never summoned to court (Hunter 122-138).

From about 1840 to 1855, Loguen supported the Liberty Party, whose platform declared the Constitution an anti-slavery document and unequivocally advocated complete abolition. As a Liberty Party activist, Loguen served on finance committees, delivered speeches and rendered opening prayers at conventions, often with Douglass at

his side. In 1855 Loguen and a faction of Liberty Party members reorganized into a more politically extreme group, the Radical Abolitionist Party. While affiliated with this party, Loguen often met with John Brown, who appealed for this party to help convert Kansas into a free state. During the year 1858 Loguen worked closely with Brown, as they drafted plans to permanently absolve slavery and proscription. Loguen, in fact, was one of the few former slaves who influenced Brown's thinking. However, despite sharing many radical views, Loguen did not participate in Brown's seizure of the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry on October 17, 1859. Although Loguen considered Brown a venerable political hero and martyr, he nonetheless felt this plan too risky (Hunter 181-190).

During the final period of his life, from 1864 to 1872, Loguen served as bishop of various AME Zion districts, while preaching, teaching, and lecturing in Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. He died of tuberculosis in 1872 (Hunter 228).

The Letters of Loguen: An Epistolary Rhetorical Analysis

Besides Loguen's narrative, *The Rev. J.W. Loguen, as a Slave and Freeman: Narrative of Real Life*, written by an amanuensis, the bulk of his extant materials consists of letters submitted to various antislavery newspapers, a number of which he addressed to Frederick Douglass. In determining a way to rhetorically examine Loguen's letters, most of which document his critical observations as he traveled and planted churches throughout central New York, I was struck by the remarkable similarities between Loguen's life as a preacher and church-planter and that of the Apostle Paul, who authored the majority of the New Testament's letters, or epistles. In addition to being prolific letter writers, both men felt commissioned by God to spread the Gospel and fight against the injustices of oppressed people. Like the Apostle Paul, who was hounded by Judaizers

(an ultra-legalistic group of Jewish Christians who followed Paul, refuting his teachings and denouncing his credibility) and even twice imprisoned, Rev. Loguen was a fugitive slave constantly living in the face of capture or death, but continued his mission as a prophet of justice. The content of their letters is also comparable. According to William G. Doty in *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, the Apostle Paul “wrote to instruct, to give advice, to encourage or reprimand; he taught, preached, and exhorted in the letters” (Doty 26). In a similar manner, through letters Rev. Loguen repurposes, praises, rebukes, and “preaches” to his black and white brethren congregated as readers and believers in the cause of freedom.

Loguen’s letters also exhort his reading congregants to make concerted efforts to overturn the system of oppression condemning his people. Numerous preachers and religious officials of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alluded to or loosely modeled their correspondences on Pauline epistles. In *Epistolary Practices: Letter Writing in America before Telecommunications*, William Decker notes that Puritans and Quakers wrote letters “meant to admonish and encourage....to settlements in the New World....correspondence in affirming a religious social identity flowed among scattered communities” (Decker 74). Assuming St. Paul’s rhetorical position of being “absent in body, but present in spirit” (I Corinthians 5:3), pastors, clerics, and religious leaders sought to “achieve a truer unity with fellow believers than could ever be attained in the mutual pursuits of an earthly existence” (Decker 74). Or, as St. Paul puts it: “whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6). As an itinerant preacher and church builder, Loguen’s frequent travels kept him away from his family and home church in Syracuse. However, while his letters express his regretful

absence and homesickness, his target audience included not only his family and Syracuse friends but abolitionists and free and enslaved black communities throughout New York as well. Like the Apostle Paul and his epistolary descendents, Loguen wanted to unify his readers in spirit that they might act as one “body” in Christ to fulfill His will; however, what distinguishes Loguen’s letters from Paul’s, but aligns them with Puritan and Quaker epistles, is the hermeneutical lens through which God’s Word was received and used to justify the war against social and political oppression, in particular, slavery. That is, Loguen’s letters sought to mobilize Christian soldiers in the spirit of Christ *and* liberty to obliterate the sin of slavery and “set the captives free.”

The letters highlighted in this chapter were printed in two prominent African American newspapers of the antebellum period: *The Colored American* and *Frederick Douglass’s Paper*. The former, published weekly from 1837 to 1841, is regarded as one of the most important early black newspapers, whose readership included primarily the northern free black community. Launched in New York City by Charles B. Ray, Philip Bell, and Samuel E. Cornish, *The Colored American’s* motto was “**RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION**” and its editors designed it to be:

the organ of Colored Americans—to be looked on as their own, and devoted to their interests, through which they can make known their views to the public, can communicate with each other and their friends...to maintain their well-known sentiments on the subjects of Abolition and Colonization, viz. emancipation without expatriation, the extirpation of prejudice, the enactment of equal laws, and a full and free investiture of their rights as men and citizens. (Jacobs)

Although *The Colored American* hired Loguen as an agent to solicit subscribers and raise funds for its maintenance and success, he enabled the newspaper to meet its other goals

as well. As my analysis of his letters will show, Loguen sought to foster a group identity among African Americans by instilling in them a critical self-consciousness and concern for their demoralized condition. The majority of the letters included in this chapter first appeared in the columns of *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, originally known as *The North Star* and regarded as the most influential black antislavery newspaper of the antebellum period. Established in Rochester, N.Y., in 1847 by Frederick Douglass, this rhetorical vehicle allowed Douglass and co-editor Martin Delaney to voice the unadulterated, unfiltered, and raw views of “the immediate victims of slavery and oppression.” Professing the motto “Right is of no sex – Truth is of no Color – God is the father of us all, and we are all brethren,” Douglass’s paper reached a readership of over 4,000 subscribers in the United States, Europe, and the West Indies. Loguen personally addressed his letters to Douglass through this newspaper, many of which reveal his intention at reaching multiple audiences—both private and public—and all of which espouse his unyielding belief in the God-given rights of his enslaved brethren and express his determination to fight for their freedom.

* * *

Like the Apostle Paul, the “great pioneer of the Gentile mission” who “crisscrossed Asia Minor and plunged into Europe” (Roetzel 15), spreading the Gospel and building churches along the way, Loguen was a missionary and church-builder. In 1841 the AME Zion Church ordained Loguen to preach and soon after assigned him to cities in upstate New York—Bath, Ithaca, Little Falls, and Troy. For the next twenty years he preached and built churches and schools throughout New York, thus contributing to the exponential growth of black churches during the pre-Civil War period,

regarded as “the most important in the history of the Negro Church in New York” (Hunter 208).

In October of 1840, shortly before Loguen was licensed to preach, *The Colored American* publicized his appointment as a traveling agent for the paper, wishing him “a favorable reception among all classes of the people who have a heart to aid in the cause of Liberty and equality” (October 24, 1840). In 1841 Loguen would publish two letters in this paper, which offer evaluative reflections on “the condition of the colored portion”—in Ithaca and Syracuse, where he built his home church and settled with his family for more than ten years.

Printed in its entirety is Loguen’s “Letter to the Editor,” dated March 4, 1841, in *The Colored American*:

MR. EDITOR. - I had occasion a few weeks ago to visit Ithaca, where I remained for several days. Being aware sir, how much interest you always take in everything which concerns our people, and having a desire to contribute by every possible means to your noble object, I availed myself of the opportunity to inquire into the condition of the colored portion of the population of Ithaca, and its immediate vicinity.

They are making praiseworthy improvements in every thing relating to them. They have a Chapel of their own, the Rev. Mr. Washington, of the A.M.E. Church, Pastor. The congregations are respectable, and very generally attentive. They have a flourishing school numbering about - scholars. They have formed two Benevolent and Moral Improvement Societies, in which they manifest a deep and becoming interest. They are for the most part endeavoring to become possessed of property, and all have some honest occupation which they pursue with commendable industry.

I reminded them of the great utility to us of your valuable Journal, and of the many claims it has upon our patronage. I procured some subscribers whose names you have, &c. I was delighted to see how much favor the “American” has gained among them, how justly they appreciate your valuable services, and how generally agreed they are to sustain you in a continuance of them.

My school here, is in a prosperous state, with a comparatively large number of scholars. Believe me sir, that no opportunity will be omitted by me of advancing your cause, and consider me with high esteem,

Your obedient servant,
J.W. LOGUEN

Like the introductions to several of St. Paul's letters, which, as Ben Witherington and Darlene Hyatt argue, "attempt to establish both rapport with the audience and Paul's authority in relationship to them" (Witherington 30), Loguen's opening seeks to establish rapport with his readers by expressing his (and the newspaper editor's) "concerns [for] our people." Despite the fact that Loguen was hired as a traveling agent to canvass for newspaper subscribers, he intimates that he did not visit Ithaca with the intention of seeking patrons. Rather, while he "had occasion" to visit he remained in order to "inquire into the condition of the colored portion of the population," thus implying that he was not simply a commissioned agent of the newspaper's "noble object," but more importantly, an "obedient servant" of his people. Loguen's *ethos* as the concerned servant of colored people pervades this letter, as he summarizes his evaluation of their "condition."

Loguen's inquiry into the condition of Ithaca's black community previews the rhetorical agenda of his subsequent letters. By "condition" Loguen means welfare. His letter discusses three facets of a people's welfare that he feels are most crucial: its spiritual welfare (do they attend church?); their moral and mental welfare (do they attend schools and moral improvement society meetings?); and their socio-economic welfare (do they have jobs and own property?). According to Loguen's report, the people of Ithaca were making "praiseworthy improvements in every thing relating to them." They were a church-going people with "flourishing" schools and had even formed Benevolent

and Moral Improvement Societies. In addition, Ithaca's black population was employed and sought to possess property.

Ownership is a key factor in Loguen's evaluation of condition. He stresses: "They have a Chapel of their own"; "They have a flourishing school"; "They have formed two Benevolent and Moral Improvement Societies;" and "all have some honest occupation." Such an emphasis on self-determination demonstrates Loguen's use of "self-help rhetoric," or the rhetoric of "racial uplift." According to Jacqueline Bacon, "moral advancement through education, economic self-sufficiency, and religious commitment was, in many cases, part of the antislavery agenda of African American abolitionists" (Bacon 24). Thus, Loguen's claim of the "praiseworthy improvements" of Ithaca's black population in religious morals, education, and commerce suggests to *The Colored American's* readership that group solidarity in these areas is crucial to the advancement of their race. The elevation of the race also depends on the community's awareness of available resources and Loguen notes that he "reminded [them] of the great utility" of the Journal, a resource that procures "valuable services." Unlike the subsequent letters included in this chapter, Loguen's letter about the Ithacans does not mention the help or assistance of people *outside* of the black community. While this point does not imply that the community was entirely self-contained, it does suggest a high level of self-sufficiency and consolidation, which warrants Loguen's positive evaluation of their condition. Moreover, in writing this letter Loguen not only wishes to applaud the Ithacans on their accomplishments; he also intends to instruct other communities on what they need to aspire to. Ithaca's model example should inspire

black communities throughout central New York to pursue endeavors for their own self-improvement and self-sufficiency.

Loguen's letter on the "Colored People of Syracuse," also written in March of 1841, is appropriately more substantive and critical, as this was considered Loguen's "home turf." While some readers might have expected a favorable report from Loguen about his hometown, he instead proves how conscientiously objective he is when evaluating the condition of his people. In the case of Syracuse he demonstrates how the more concerned about and invested in a people/place he is, the more critical he will be of it. When he and his family settled there earlier that year he found the black community "comparatively uncared for...deprived of social and mental culture, [forming] a suburban girdle of moral and intellectual darkness about the city" (Loguen 371-372). This characterization of Syracuse appears in his *Narrative of Real Life*; additionally, he describes the town in this letter as "not very flattering" and encumbered by the "existence and operation of impartial laws and their concomitant evils" (*The Colored American*, March 20, 1841). With the "rough and rowdy characteristics of a rapidly growing canal town," Syracuse inhabited only 200 blacks, "one thirty-fifth of the entire population" (Hunter 57), according to Loguen. Loguen probably thought that Syracuse's population growth might include more blacks, especially since the town contained a significantly sized and active abolition community, which could draw fugitives en route to Canada and free blacks looking for jobs. He also likely anticipated that his own presence and diligent efforts to improve the community would attract more blacks.

Although Loguen saw great growth potential for blacks in Syracuse and felt that he could facilitate their social, economic, and moral improvement, he also recognized that

they could benefit from external aid. He writes: “we are by no means without our friends. Syracuse has its philanthropists, and those who can feel for the colored man” (*The Colored American*, March 20, 1841). As much as Loguen might have wanted the black community in Syracuse to enjoy the self-sufficiency of the Ithacans, whose consolidated resources enabled them to thrive independently, he did not oppose the aid of white philanthropists. He also alludes to the presence of these “friends” in the city because it would more than likely encourage other blacks—who might be searching for a more race-friendly environment—to settle there. Loguen, after all, wanted the population of blacks to increase in order to augment the variety of resources available to the community, as newcomers might bring trades and services lacking in Syracuse. This ambition is made concrete when he states that his community is “building a chapel which will accommodate about 400 persons,” to be completed only a few months later.

Loguen’s evaluative criteria concerning the condition of blacks in Syracuse are not unlike those put forth in his letter about the blacks in Ithaca. Again, he begins with an assessment of the church. He writes, “Perhaps there is no where to be found a more Church-going people than we have, and no where a people evincing a deeper interest in religion.” That the Syracuse blacks embodied religious piety not only impressed Loguen but it also proved to him their potential to develop into one of the strongest, most active abolitionist churches in the region. That is, because Loguen saw belief and practice of religious principles to be inherently intertwined with the fight for justice and equality, the church represented the most vital organ in the community. Within the walls of the church, the dejected spirits of blacks could be nurtured, souls could be saved, and morals could be improved. Moreover, soldiers in God’s army could be trained as warriors on the

antislavery field. Loguen felt the Syracuse church community was in the good hands of A.M.E. Zion minister Rev. John Chester, “one of the ablest of pastors,” who had ordained Loguen to preach.

Despite their praiseworthy level of religious devotion, Syracuse blacks possessed “a most reprehensible apathy in regard to education.” Loguen laments that even “parents have yet to learn its true value, and how to rightly appreciate it.” Such a lack of interest in learning frustrated Loguen, as he believed knowledge to be the stepping-stone to self-improvement and elevation of the community as a whole. In this letter he earnestly states:

...nor can we but shudder at the thought when we know that knowledge is power, and the only means whereby we shall be able to efficiently contend for our rights, or to enjoy them when secured....it seems to me that we are more in want of education than any other people on the globe, not that we are the most ignorant, but because our lot is cast among a highly enlightened people with whom we aspire for equality.

Here, Loguen forthrightly employs self-help rhetoric to inculcate a principle that he considers most urgent for the uplift of the black community: a desire to learn. While at times he exudes a pastoral *ethos*, as a ministerial shepherd leading and protecting his flock, here he simultaneously embodies the *ethos* of a socio-political leader, one signaling a wake-up call to his people and reproaching their lackadaisical attitude. The inherent logic in this statement gently rebukes those despondent people who might have settled for less-than-equal status. Loguen is careful not to condescend, as he reminds them of what they already know—“that knowledge is power”—while, at the same time, he bluntly points out their desperate need for education. Imbued with a sagacious tone, this passage

beckons readers to critically examine their present condition, as it also urges them to look forward to where they hope to be. Loguen illuminates the state of Syracuse's black population quite plainly: we have a great need for education and an even greater desire for equality; what we need now is action. He states, "I might say much more, but I trust we shall have a change for the better—that those concerned will wake up to the subject."

Continuing to assess the condition of Syracuse's black population, Loguen writes:

We should like to see our females forming improvement societies. The young men too ought to do something—will they not take example of our people in almost every other village? Or will they be forever content to remain in the background? We shall see.

By the 1840s, free blacks in major cities of the north—Baltimore, Boston, Albany, New York City, and Philadelphia—had formed a number of "beneficial societies" designed to foster, acculturate, and improve their individual social values (Porter 555). These organizations included missionary and moral reform societies, temperance, educational, and welfare societies, as well as debate and literary societies. Women headed a number of these groups, especially literary societies, and some were exclusively organized by and for women (McHenry 187-190). Cognizant of the psychosocial benefits these progressive groups yielded to black communities, Loguen expected the same for his Syracuse community.

A closer look at Loguen's word choice in this passage reveals the poignancy of his rebuke. He uses the phrase "We should like to see" purposefully, I believe, for rhetorical ends. First, "we" and "should" expose a deficiency in the fundamental values of the community. "We" suggests that it should not solely be Loguen's desire to see beneficial societies formed, but it should also be the community's. There should be a

consensus on what is crucial for the group to survive and thrive, thus affirming the community's shared values. "Should" implies the absence of want or desire. Loguen attacks the will and attitude of the community here. The underlying rhetorical question expressed is "do you want to advance as a people?" Or, as he puts it, "will they [you] be forever content to remain in the background?" Complacency is unacceptable to Loguen and he rounds out this short barrage of criticism with the rather biting remark "We shall see," which informs the community that he will be monitoring their progress.

Furthermore, Loguen uses the phrase "we should" to implicitly argue the community's need to foster a group *ethos*. In the same manner that Loguen manifests his *ethos* through articulations of good will toward his neighbors, so should the community invest in the welfare of its individual members. Through Burkean identification he affirms his membership and leadership role in the community, as he also aligns himself with values the group shares but have not sufficiently upheld. If the community would develop the moral improvement of its members, create an education-oriented environment, and exhibit mutual benevolence, then it would naturally advance itself. Hence, Loguen's use of self-help rhetoric shows his concern for community development through character building.

Loguen spotlights those marginalized within the black community—women and young men. He asks, "Will they be forever content to remain in the background?" He beckons them to come out of the shadows and assume positions on the frontline, thereby following the "example of [our] people in almost every other village." This statement reflects what would become yet another issue taken up by Loguen as a socio-political leader—women's rights. Thirteen years after writing this letter, he would serve as vice-

president of the Rochester Women's Rights convention and at the State Council meeting, where on both occasions he spoke as an advocate for women's rights (Hunter 96). In another letter printed in *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, dated April 6, 1855, he writes, "Would to God that woman's voice might every where be raised against the damning wrongs which crush our race. How eloquent might it be in hastening the hour of our deliverance." Loguen thus fought for human rights, irrespective of gender or race, and in this letter he presents himself as a leader in the community who has no hesitations conveying his social and political beliefs.

Moreover, through this sermonic letter the black community of Syracuse could sense Loguen's triadic *ethos*, at once paternal, pastoral, and political. Such an epistolary stance begs comparison to the Apostle Paul, who assumed similar ethical stances in his letters to various churches in Rome and Greece. For example, in his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul presents himself as "father":

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you to imitate me. (1 Corinthians 4:14-16)

The verses previous to this passage show Paul chiding the Corinthians—just as Loguen chides the blacks of Syracuse—thus warranting the clarification, "I am not writing this to shame you." Paul also directly appeals to his audience as a father by calling them his "dear children," and he explains how he came to such a position of authority: "through the gospel." Whereas Paul acts as the reproving father who brings the Gospel of Jesus Christ to his "children," Loguen presents himself as a paternalistic leader bringing the "gospel" of social and political truth to the "colored people of [his] village."

Furthermore, Paul forthrightly advises the Corinthians to “imitate” him or, as he suggests in verse 17, to follow “my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.” The subtext of Loguen’s letter urges the same point, that the blacks of Syracuse should follow his lead. While this message is understated in the lines of this letter, Loguen’s subsequent letters more explicitly foreground his activities and successes on the antislavery field in order to present himself as a model fit to be imitated.

Loguen’s letter enlightens the community about who they are, how they are, and where they are, at present as well as who, how, and where they hope to be in the future. Like a “contemporary griot,” Loguen functions as the community’s voice of enlightenment, praise, and prophecy. He offers a retrospective assessment of the community’s failures and shortcomings, beckoning everyone to heed what experience has taught them, while he also praises the community for its accomplishments. His constructive criticism primes the community for future challenges, ones he believes will result in victories. In addition, Loguen’s letter reveals the perspectives of insider and outsider. As a local minister he was privy to confidential information about individual families and as an itinerant preacher he could assume the objective viewpoint of one living beyond the community margins. With inside and outside knowledge, he makes authoritative and legitimate claims. However, Loguen did not wish to be perceived as a marginal figure (like the traditional griot), as his repeated use of “we” proves. Even his closing, “your obedient servant,” imparts a sense of his belonging to the community. The semantic resonances of “servant” within this salutation, while conventional to nineteenth-century epistolary practices, also reach as far back as biblical times. As Ben

Witherington notes in *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, Old Testament figures and prophets were customarily identified as “servants,” which suggests that “servant” is an honorific title (Witherington 30). And he states further that St. Paul calls himself a slave or servant of Christ, “making it clear that he is a man who belongs to and is under the authority of Jesus. His will is not his own, and his mission, his apostleship, is a task to which he has been called and assigned” (Witherington 31). Similarly, Loguen, as both prophet of Christ and apostle of justice, felt called to the mission of abolition. This letter represents an early stage in Loguen’s evolving sense of his leadership roles within, not only the Syracuse community, but the central New York region as well. Loguen draws the colored population together by critically auditing their strengths and weaknesses, assets and liabilities—in terms of character and material goods. He praises and admonishes, encourages and chides, as he urges his flock to look forward and take action in order to secure the social, economic, and political advantages they seek.

In 1851, Loguen wrote a rather charged letter to Frederick Douglass that appeared in the newly named *Frederick Douglass's Paper* on August 21, during a period when both men made consequential life choices. With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill in 1850, Loguen, a fugitive himself, had to choose whether or not to flee and seek safety in Canada or purchase his own freedom. He chose neither option, but instead opted to openly defy the law, which he felt indignantly legitimized his slave status. Thus, he remained in Syracuse among his family and friends and accepted an appointment from AME Zion presiding Bishop Christopher Rush to serve there at a newly erected Zion church. Loguen begins this letter by expressing his general support in the public presses

regarding Douglass's breach with Garrison—some writers supportive of Douglass, others critically opposed. Loguen expresses his view with sincerity and directness:

MY DEAR FRIEND DOUGLASS: I have no congratulations to offer you on account of your new position in the anti-slavery field at the present time. I think that I am one of those that have admired your course from my first acquaintance with you some eight or nine years since. I always regarded you as candid and honest in your course, let others say what they may. I, today, regard you the same Frederick Douglass that I did in former years, candid and honest in your purpose, and true to the poor slave in all his wrongs and degradation. I have feelings of gratitude always to God for raising up such men... (*FDP*, Aug. 21, 1851)

This short testimony on behalf of Douglass's character targets not only Douglass but *Frederick Douglass's Paper* readership as well. Cognizant of how dissension within the black community would threaten its socio-political mobility and advancement, Loguen quells whatever doubts Douglass's constituents might have had regarding his integrity and intentions with regards to his enslaved brethren. Without advocating or criticizing Douglass's "new position in the anti-slavery field," which would draw focus on the fissure between the two opposing camps, Loguen instead redirects the readers' attention towards his central claim: that Douglass is the same "candid and honest" freedom fighter that he always has been. Loguen wanted to bolster Douglass's credibility for the sake of the black abolitionist community, which could not afford to lose such an influential leader, and for the sake of his own grassroots campaign for the abolition of slavery, for which Douglass's paper served as a principal vein of communication. If Douglass's reputation were called into question nationally, then his paper's readership might substantially decline, thus jeopardizing Loguen's mission of manumission.

Following this appraisal of Douglass's *ethos*, the body of this letter makes evident Loguen's purpose in supporting Douglass and retaining a loyal readership among

freedom fighters. Loguen's letter documents the efforts and successes of what was his own grassroots campaign for the abolition of slavery and protestation of the Fugitive Slave Law. For two months, from June to August of 1851, Loguen traveled throughout Pennsylvania, holding "grand" and "glorious" meetings in nine counties of the state. Along this speech circuit Loguen found "many and true friends" who were made so "by the wicked Fugitive Slave Law." He writes:

I never saw the time during the last ten years that I have been in the anti-slavery field when the public ear was so ready and willing to hear on American Slavery. The Fugitive Slave Bill has had a good effect in making the people willing to hear on the subject, and I hope it will drive them to action, as action is what we need at present. I never had a better hearing.

With the public's piqued interest in the new controversial law, Loguen garnered social and political support throughout Pennsylvania, convincing both blacks and whites of its corrupt nature and purpose. In his opinion, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law heightened the exigency of American Slavery, which Loguen capitalized on by responding oratorically and literarily to "the public ear so ready and willing to hear." Moreover, Loguen sought to rally political "troops" willing to take revolutionary measures to fight against the law. His statements represent a call to action: "as action is what we need at present." He writes: "O that we had twenty-five living, traveling lecturers in the field at this time....Would to the Lord that they were all on the ground with their sword and battle axes in hand, to do battle against the foul monster of hell!" Loguen's call to action is essentially a call to arms—not by means of physical violence, but of rhetorical insurrection. Historian Carol Hunter describes Loguen's non-violent approach:

Loguen's personal position on violence was consistent throughout his life. Just as he had practiced in his escape from slavery, he advocated utilizing every means possible before resorting to violence, but if violence were the only means to achieve freedom and human rights, it was the right choice. (Hunter 78)

The "living, traveling lecturers" who Loguen envisions wielding "their sword and battle axes" in the anti-slavery field do not carry literal weapons of war, but oratorical armaments of argument. Loguen further emphasizes: "I would that we could have force sufficient to commence a war upon this State, by the way of holding conventions in every county in this State, this fall. We might, by so doing, make a great change in favor of equal rights." Though couched in language suggestive of violence, Loguen's incendiary claims propose concerted civic action. Conventions, he avers, constitute forums of deliberation where abolitionists might gather to articulate revolutionary plans for the dismantling of slavery. As Dorothy Porter notes, conferences and conventions held by free people of color during the 1830s "signaled a fresh effort to take the initiative in deciding and shaping their own destiny" (167). Aware of the success of these meetings⁵, Loguen campaigns for an onslaught of conventions in hopes that such organized activity would not only intimidate their enemies through "concert of action" but also enable abolitionists to consolidate their rhetorical stance on particular issues and come to agreement on potential maneuvers in the war against slavery. For Loguen, ideally justice would prove victorious in wars with words, as more people would be persuaded to favor equal rights.

In *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, John Bowers and Donovan Ochs outline the strategies and tactics of agitators who seek to effect social change when

⁵ This letter does not clearly indicate whether Loguen envisions the conventions that characterized the Negro Convention Movement or one organized and attended by black and white abolitionists.

opposed by “the establishment,” or the body of “decision-makers in which resides the legitimate power of the organization (Bowers 4). According to Bowers and Ochs, agitation exists when:

people outside the normal decision-making establishment (2) advocate significant social change and (3) encounter a degree of resistance within the establishment such as require more than the normal discursive means of persuasion. (4)

Loguen was an agitator: as a marginalized black fugitive slave deprived of legal rights and privileges, he stood “outside the normal decision-making establishment” advancing abolitionist causes as well as women’s suffrage. However, because of the stout “resistance within the establishment” to honor the humanity of his people, Loguen, like other social-political agitators of his time—Henry Highland Garnet, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Tubman—resorted to strategies beyond “the normal discursive means of persuasion.”

One strategy utilized by Loguen is *polarization*. According to Bowers and Ochs, polarization:

assumes that any individual who has not committed himself in one way or another to the agitation is supportive of the establishment...Since the agitators need a high proportion of explicitly sympathetic individuals, any uncommitted one is not neutral, but is actually counted in the establishment column. The strategy of polarization encompasses tactics designed to move him out of that column and into the agitation ranks, to force a conscious choice between agitation and control. (26)

During Loguen’s abolitionist campaign across Pennsylvania, he discovered many individuals who previously occupied the politically neutral territory that, ideologically, associated them with “the establishment way,” i.e., pro-slavery and pro-Fugitive Slave Bill. However, he notes that the “wicked” nature of this divisive bill forced a significant faction of people to, consciously and definitively, choose the side of the agitators. Thus,

the Fugitive Slave Bill operated as a “flag issue” that Loguen exploited in order to win new agitators who no longer *wished* to be linked with the unjust and inhumane ideology espoused by pro-slavery groups. As new inductees to Loguen’s abolitionist group, they would benefit greatly from the rhetorical reinforcement of anti-slavery ideology inculcated through speeches, deliberations about strategies, and in-group publications.

Loguen also employed the strategy Bowers and Ochs call *solidification*: “the rhetorical processes by which an agitating group produces or reinforces the cohesiveness of its members, thereby increasing their responsiveness to group wishes” (Bowers 20). In distinguishing solidification from Burke’s notion of identification, one might imagine the two as points on a continuum based on intensity of unity; in the case of identification constituents in a group are “substantially one,” but in a nascent stage of union. Solidification, on the other hand, represents a more developed and intense point of unity, where various symbolic activities have reinforced group “consubstantiality.” Under solidification, then, persuasion is almost superfluous because group members already have common “sensations, concepts, images, ideas, [and] attitudes” (Burke, *Rhetoric* 21). Loguen’s grassroots campaign across Pennsylvania is one instance on his life-long abolitionist itinerary—speaking at churches, holding meetings, and organizing conventions. Wherever he traveled he made it his mission to mobilize agitators in order to reinforce group unity, reinvigorate morale, and reify the group’s goal of the complete manumission of slaves. This letter to Douglass clearly demonstrates his attempts to solidify his troops “by way of holding conventions in every county in this State,” in hopes that such meetings would “make a great change in favor of equal rights.” Action,

in fact, was a crucial criterion for membership to an agitating group; and Loguen felt that the circumstances called for immediate “concert [of] action.”

Loguen’s defiance of the Fugitive Slave Bill also demonstrates his use of non-violent resistance, which “places agitators in a position in which they are violating laws they consider to be unjust, destructive of human dignity” (Bowers 28). As part of the Compromise of 1850, an attempt by Congress to preserve the Union, the Fugitive Slave Act jeopardized fugitives and free blacks, who could be apprehended by any citizen deputized by a U.S. Commissioner to help enforce the law. Loguen, known for publicizing and even flaunting his fugitive status, heard of this new legislation while working in Troy, New York, and immediately returned to his home in Syracuse, “where he felt more confident of the willingness of his antislavery friends, both black and white, to support him” (Hunter 112). In response to the new law and in anticipation of the great danger likely to affect blacks both free and enslaved, Syracuse and other anti-slavery communities from Maine to Illinois formed vigilance committees to ensure the protection of blacks (Pease 14). While a significant portion of northern blacks fled to Canada in fear of the Fugitive Slave Law, Loguen and the Syracuse African American community remained in their hometown, defiant of the law and boldly outspoken about their stance:

We repudiate the idea of flight for these reasons; first that we have committed no crime against the law of the land, second resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, and third that liberty which is not worth defending here is not worth enjoying elsewhere. (Loguen, *Syracuse Daily Standard* Sept. 27, 1850)

Although non-violent resisters of the law, Syracuse blacks were cognizant of the incendiary nature of this law and how resistance might incite aggressive encounters

between marshals and fugitives; consequently, they predicted violence and resolved to defend themselves at all costs. Similarly, towns with strong abolitionist contingencies like Boston and New York City “urged disobedience and advised fugitives to arm themselves for self-defense” (Pease 14). Prominent white Unitarian ministers—Samuel J. Mays of Boston and Theodore Parker of Syracuse—known for their pacifism, kept loaded pistols handy, not to instigate violence, but to defend and rescue fugitive slaves apprehended by officers attempting to return them to bondage (Pease 15). In the same spirit of defiance and resolve for self-defense, Syracuse blacks carried “daggers in their belts,” girded also with the belief that their united front of resistance would successfully impede the new law.

Loguen’s return to Syracuse in the face of imminent danger and his decision not to flee to Canada, while inspiring his local community, also demonstrate the instrumental nature of his non-violent resistance. He writes, “I, under God, am determined to stand my ground and fight until the war shall end” (*FDP* 21 Aug. 1851). Here, “to stand my ground” denotes the *presence* of Loguen’s body as a rhetorical symbol of agitation and resistance. Loguen’s presence expressed the strength of his convictions about the Fugitive Slave Law, as he sacrificed his physical self in order to convince those apathetic blacks of their dire circumstances and the urgency to respond wholeheartedly. Jeopardizing his body through civil disobedience also proved to law enforcers Loguen’s position against the immorality of the law, which denigrated the human status of blacks. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said regarding the philosophy of non-violence: “For while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to

persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive nonresistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil” (King 107). Known as a spirited and moral man of action, Loguen espoused the same philosophy, as he sought to undo the “evil” perpetrated by governmental laws, while not making the government itself (or law enforcers, for that matter) the enemy to be destroyed. Through “concert of action,” that is, the unified front of black and white bodies, Loguen hoped to “defy the infernal Fugitive Slave Bill, and through God, make it a dead letter” (*FDP* Aug 21, 1851). Aware that their united acts of resistance would not constitute an end in itself—that resistance alone would not repeal the law—Loguen and his “true friends” employed their bodies as rhetorical symbols to argue, extra-verbally, that the humanity of blacks was worth dying for. Such a statement of moral solidarity, they hoped, would divest the life and legitimacy of the law, thus making it a “dead letter.” However, despite Loguen’s determined and conscientious effort to strategically use agitation to fight slavery, he was also prepared for bloodshed: “I go for agitating, and agitating again. I believe slavery has to be done away with, whether by agitation or bloodshed. And I sometimes think that I care not which” (*FDP* 12 Aug. 1853).

One of the most inspiring and dangerous events in Loguen’s life—one that indelibly tagged him as an agitator—was the Jerry Rescue, which took place in Syracuse on October 1, 1851. As mentioned earlier, the arrest of fugitive slave William “Jerry” Henry by federal marshals on the false charge of theft ignited Syracuse’s abolitionist community, which coincidentally hosted the Liberty Party Convention on that same day. Loguen heard of this news while attending a Syracuse Vigilance Committee meeting and openly declared:

Now is the time to try the spunk of white men. I want to see whether they have courage only to make speeches and resolutions when there is danger. Let us be here at nightfall, and if white men won't fight, let fugitives and black men smite down Marshals and Commissioners—any body who holds Jerry—and rescue him or perish. (Loguen, *Narrative* 402)

To Loguen, the Jerry Rescue would prove a polarizing “flag issue” among black and white abolitionists in the city, dividing the “speech-making” agitators from the more courageous agitators of action. Separating the wheat from the chaff, Syracuse’s rescue mission involved agitators willing to obstruct federal law, thus constituting an act of treason. Loguen and other fugitive slaves in the city risked much more than their white counterparts; while the latter would face a substantial fine and imprisonment, the former would suffer penalties for severe crimes such as murder or treason, in addition to being relegated once again to be “beasts of burden for life” (Loguen 426). However, such consequences did not prevent Loguen from participating with his “heart and hand in the rescue” (Loguen 426). He would later state, “I am willing to encounter perils and conflicts in the cause of freedom” (Loguen, *Douglass’s Paper* 8 Jan 1852). Ultimately, as Loguen and his fellow agitators had hoped, Jerry’s successful rescue proved one of the most momentous political acts of agitation to follow the revised fugitive slave law and Syracuse made a significant statement by being the site of one of the few successful rescue missions.⁶ Hence, Loguen’s prophetic words rang true: “May God grant that Syracuse be the honored spot, whence it shall send an earthquake voice through the land” (Loguen, *Narrative* 394).

⁶ According to Stanley Campbell in *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850-1860*, from 1850 to 1860, 166 fugitive slaves were returned to the South, while only 9 rescues were successful.

Just as biblical scholars note how the Apostle Paul's letters reflect his progression in theology, a deepening in his understanding of God's mission for him, and an exceptional rhetorical skillfulness that enabled him to reach diverse audiences, so, too, do we find in Loguen's letters an analogous development in mission, political philosophy, and rhetorical dexterity. Loguen's letters trace his abolitionist crusade to spread the "gospel" of freedom, justice, and equality. Through encounters with black and white abolitionist communities across upstate New York, he gleaned their needs, shortcomings, strengths, and resources and delivered wise counsel and praise accordingly. At the same time that he formulated a clearer vision of the spiritual and emotional state of his oppressed brethren he crystallized a social and political "gospel" that he felt could save them. As best he could he practiced what he preached and his letters model the courage and fortitude required to achieve the rewards of equality and justice. By documenting his travels, accomplishments, observations, and reflections, he provided thousands of readers, black and white, with a life to be examined and imitated. His literary construction of a public persona was highly rhetorical, intended to encourage his spiritually downtrodden brethren, provoke them to action, and consolidate communities of believers for the manumission of slavery. While Christians have studied the letters of Paul, who kept his faith despite encountering countless hardships during his ministry, for inspiration and guidance in their spiritual walk and battles, antebellum African Americans could have studied the life of Rev. Loguen as a kind socio-political gospel. Loguen's *life as text* infused Christian faith, American beliefs about freedom, and universal principles on justice to prove that "Truth and righteousness will ultimately triumph" when people live accordingly.

A Character Study

It is of the utmost consequence that the Speaker firmly believes both the truth and the importance of those principles which he inculcates in others and not only that he believe them speculatively but have a lively and serious feeling of them.

Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters*

As the previous section shows, Loguen's letters exhibit his "lively and serious feeling" for the truths and principles he defended and inculcated. The fact that he perpetually put his life in danger and openly defied what he felt were unjust laws proves his sober and relentless dedication to the cause of abolition. Freedom was his passion. However, in Loguen's case, passion is not solely a "lively and serious feeling," an instance of *pathos*, it also represents his character. In "Responsible Citizenship: Ethos, Action, and the Voices of African American Women," Jacqueline Jones Royster contends that,

...in the ephemeral space between vision and action, ethos forms. Individuals in a particular place and time come to voice, exhibiting a desire to have agency in the world. They take a stance...in response to social and political conditions and mandates and as an enactment of their own desires and imperatives, and they act, in this case, as speaker and writers. Ethos formation can be framed thereby as a constituent part of a process which links dynamically viewpoint, whether characterized as vision or positionality, and action as it is rendered broadly to include rhetorical action. (48)

My analysis of Loguen's letters highlight his vision of an ideal world, free of racism and sexism, while it also exposes his construction of a dynamic ethos that he hoped would persuade his readers to assume agency in society. In this section I focus on the "ephemeral space between vision and action" by examining Loguen's unconventional stance on the Fugitive Slave Law and how his rhetorical actions comprised a distinct and radical ethos.

As mentioned earlier, current research on *ethos* asks us to re-conceptualize our understanding of it and how it functions in rhetorical discourse. In “Self-Structure as a Rhetorical Device: Modern *Ethos* and the Divisiveness of the Self,” Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., succinctly addresses this point: “Although our understanding of *ethos* has changed over the years, one feature remains constant: thinkers as diverse as Aristotle and Kenneth Burke agree that often it is not a person’s *ideas* but a person’s *character* that changes people” (Baumlin). In this section I will use Loguen as a case in point—as a figure whose character persuaded people—as I further substantiate the claim that “character, in many instances, *is* the force of an argument” (Baumlin 4). Because Loguen was an African American preacher-politician, many scholars would expect his discourse to resemble the style of many African American leaders, orators, and activists—metaphorically savvy, rhythmic, and full of pathos-laden prose. When analyzing a black speaker or writer the ear seems attuned to the emotional and emphatic, primed for words that provoke tears, laughter, or elation. This is the case because scholars with narrow conceptions of black rhetorical practices distinguish black orators and speakers by emphasizing their emotional appeals; consequently, students of rhetoric and literature are trained to look for these stereotypical features. From Douglass and Truth to Malcolm X and King, emotionally cathartic prose is often considered conventional and characteristic. However, what’s striking about these four historical figures is their *ethos*. They were all charismatic leaders whose characters persuaded people as much as their words and rhetorical acts. Loguen, I argue, is one predecessor in this lineage of African American leaders (i.e., prototype of the preacher-politician) whose *ethos* constituted a significant portion of his

overall rhetorical force. History will remember Loguen as a man who inspired and moved people by embodying high principles and vivifying abstract ideas of freedom and justice.

A Defense of Defiance: Loguen's Speech on the Fugitive Slave Law

On October 4, 1850, a group of white Syracuse residents gathered locals, both black and white, for an ad hoc meeting to discuss their reactions to the recently passed Fugitive Slave Law. Held at City Hall and chaired by Syracuse's Mayor A.H. Hovey, the group considered whether or not Syracuse would permit federal marshals to return local fugitives to their owners or continue sheltering them as they passed en route to Canada. Two local fugitives addressed this meeting, Samuel R. Ward and Jermain Loguen. Ward warned: "if any one should come to take him or his family into slavery, it would be well for him to first perform two acts for the benefit of himself and his family—*He should first make his will, and then make his peace with his Maker*" (*Syracuse Standard*, Oct. 7, 1850). In a similar vein, Loguen delivered a powerful personal testimony arguing why local citizens should not allow the government's "soulless agents" to turn the city into a "hunting field for slaves."

Wasting no time with conventional salutations, Loguen assumes the stance of a man on trial, testifying on behalf of his alleged crimes. In essence, he delivers a defense of defiance—he confesses to his premeditated act of defying the Fugitive Slave Law, admits that he sought no "counsel" from any legal advisors, and explains his reasons for willfully and mindfully taking the defiant "course" of actions that he did. Trusting that the majority of the white people assembled before him were local citizens who knew him or knew of his reputation (as an abolitionist and fugitive), Loguen begins his speech by emphasizing the fact that after living among black and white Syracuse residents he felt

very much a part of the community. He pleads: “My neighbors! I have lived with you many years, and you know me. My home is here, and my children were born here. I am bound to Syracuse by pecuniary interests, and social and family bonds. And do you think I can be taken away from you and my wife and children, and be a slave in Tennessee?” Here, Loguen’s emotive call to his “neighbors” drives at his communal bond with his audience, i.e., the “consubstantial” relationship between them. In his effort to identify with his audience of both black fugitives and white citizens of Syracuse, Loguen avers that they all share “substance”—in property and “social and family bonds.” As Burke states, “Man’s moral growth is organized through properties, properties in goods, in services, in position or status, in citizenship, in reputation, in acquaintanceship and love. But however ethical such an array of identifications may be when considered in itself, its relations to other entities that are likewise forming their identity in property can lead to turmoil or discord” (Burke 548). By highlighting the correspondence in properties between him and his neighbors, Loguen precludes the potential for “turmoil or discord.” He stresses that, like his neighbors, his investment in the community is economic, emotional, and existential; they are “bound” to the community because of their common interests. The correlation between identity and property, as Burke suggests, is an ethical one; and Loguen conveys his “moral growth” through his use of “bound,” which implies his moral obligation to remain at home. This would especially appeal to his male-dominant audience, whose identities were primarily circumscribed by “goods,” “position,” “citizenship,” “reputation,” and their sense of duty to provide “properties...in acquaintanceship and love” to their families. However, while Loguen states that his life is “bound” to Syracuse, he also stresses that to “be a slave in Tennessee” is to be “bound”

with no life and no freedom, thus implicitly showing the limits of identification between his white neighbors and him and exposing the dialectical tension between black fugitives and whites in citizenship and status. The former bond (economic and familial) his white neighbors could understand and relate to; the latter (existential) they could hardly imagine.

Furthermore, as he spurs their imagination to think of his existential crisis, he also pricks their conscience by forewarning them of betrayal: of breaking their communal bond only to send him into bondage. He poses,

Did I think so meanly of you—did I suppose the people of Syracuse, strong as they are in numbers and love of liberty—or did I believe them so sunken and servile and degraded as to remain at their homes and labors, or, with none of that spirit which smites a tyrant down, to surround a United States Marshal to see me torn from my home and family, and hurled back to bondage—I say did I think so meanly of you, I could never come to live with you.

To the 21st-century listener such long sentences might seem to drag and wear one's limited attention span; however, Loguen's nineteenth-century audience more than likely remained engaged and perhaps felt their interest piqued by the emotionally laden tone of his frank rhetorical questions. At the same time that he appeals to their sense of loyalty to him as a "neighbor," he also beseeches them to remain loyal to "that spirit which smites a tyrant down," the very "spirit" that not only made them nationally known for their "love of liberty" but also persuaded Loguen to live among them. According to Loguen, the *ethos* of the city is at stake and, in effect, he puts the character of Syracuse's residents on the stand. Would they become "so sunken and servile and degraded" to betray one of their own and thereby demean their reputation in an act of hypocrisy?

However, Loguen is prudent not to implicate his audience in such offenses. Rather, he expresses his belief in the strong ideological bond shared among his townsmen, who were the majority anti-slavery advocates, and evokes a sense of trust he feels in them, thus establishing “communion” with them. He states, “If you will stand by me, and I believe you will do it, for your freedom and honor are involved as well as mine...you will be the saviours of your country.” Loguen employs a number of rhetorical maneuvers succinctly and skillfully. He continues to remind his listeners of their shared position and principles by drawing out the critical nuances of the term “stand.” He suggests that to stand by him in his politically defiant position against the Fugitive Slave Law is to stand on the principles that they had historically upheld as an abolitionist community. Implicitly, Loguen encourages his listeners to maintain their integrity by practicing what they preach, especially during such exigent times that called for principled fortitude and commitment, or, as Loguen puts it: “The time has come to change the tones of submission into tones of defiance.” He also appeals to their sense of moral integrity by arguing that their “freedom and honor” are inextricably tied to his and that standing by him would not only benefit him but satisfy their sense of ethical accountability as well. This philosophical notion of the Syracuse community’s interconnectedness, or organicity, invokes once more the consubstantial relationship shared between Loguen and his audience. He argues that the substances of “freedom and honor” are just as important to his free white neighbors as they are to him as a fugitive slave, thereby suggesting that, by virtue of their organic connection as humans, any infringement of his freedom would naturally jeopardize theirs as well.

Loguen's indication to his audience that they both value "freedom and honor" also establishes "communion" with them. According to Perelman, a rhetor "tries to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience, and to this end he uses the whole range of means available to the rhetorician for purposes of amplification and enhancement" (Perelman 51). Having already established communion with this audience at the beginning of his speech, by addressing his listeners as "neighbors" and appealing to their emotional attachment to their community, Loguen here attempts to intensify that sense of rapport by referring to the values of "freedom and honor" that, in effect, become more concrete as he juxtaposes them with the notion of community. According to Burke, "God terms" such as Freedom and Honor "designate the ultimate motivation, or substance, of a Constitutional frame" (Burke 355). In using these "god terms" Loguen draws his audience toward him in order to show that they are all motivated by the same principles, constituted of the same substance, and stand within the same "Constitutional frames" viz. the Constitution and Bible. Such argumentative strategies demonstrate Loguen's primary motive: to become one with his audience, hoping that such a union would result in "acting-together." Burke states that "a way of life is an *acting-together*; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*" (Burke 545). Loguen wanted his fellow Syracuse residents to join forces with him. Who would not stand by such a resolute and courageous man? And who would not want to be "saviours" of their country?

Loguen strikes another ethical chord with his audience of patron saints by assuring them that beyond advancing his cause local resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law

would help bring about national redemption. Loguen offers Syracuse the chance to instigate a redemptive process whereby the nation would be purified of its transgressions against the oppressed. He exhorts, "...you will be saviours of your country. Your decision tonight in favor of resistance will give vent to the spirit of liberty.... and shout for joy all over the North. Heaven knows that this act of noble daring will break out somewhere—and may God grant that Syracuse be the honored spot, whence it shall send an earthquake voice through the land" (Loguen, *Narrative* 394)! Here, Loguen's appeal to his audience's sense of patriotism, as he questions the authenticity of their devotion to the nation's "spiritual" welfare, works in conjunction with his claim that participating in the nation's redemption would make them "saviours"—that is, redeemed agents fighting for a "noble" cause. Having already outlined the nation's political and religious transgressions, Loguen infuses the politically charged phrase "spirit of liberty" with religious import in order to show that the mission of saving the country is both an "act of noble daring" and an act of civil responsibility. Citizens of a country founded on the principle of liberty should not only protect and defend their individual liberties but they should also preserve the "spirit of liberty" that permeates the land and affects its collective members. Since slavery constituted both a heinous crime against individual freedom (and constitutional rights) as well as a "hellish" sin against the people of God, the nation stood in desperate need of "saviours." Loguen wanted Syracuse to seize the opportunity to ignite the country in a purifying fire, one that would not only free the enslaved and oppressed people of God, but also free the nation of its sins—and thus resurrect the "spirit of liberty." This was a chance for glory, not only in the eyes of a spiritually corrupt country, but also in the eyes of God, who would "grant that Syracuse

be the honored spot” whereby His sovereign hand of justice would begin the work of saving the weak and enslaved from tyrannical oppression. In fiercely prophetic tones, Loguen avers the inevitability of God’s intervention—“Heaven knows that this act of noble daring will break out somewhere”—while he urges his community to step up to the charge and, thereby, step into the will of God and become his instruments of justice. Given the largely church-based leadership in Syracuse, whose ministers headed the city’s vigilance committee organized to protect fugitives—Loguen’s ethical appeals enveloped in religious language would strike their moral and religious sensibilities.

Loguen’s speech also evinces his sense of autonomy, volition, and vocation. While projecting the persona of a “self-made man,” Loguen believed God responsible for the creation of his “manhood and personality.” He exclaims:

Mr. President, long ago I was beset by over prudent and good men and women to purchase my freedom. Nay, I was frequently importuned to consent that they purchase it, and present it as an evidence of their partiality to my person and character. Generous and kind as those friends were, my heart recoiled from the proposal. I owe my freedom to the God who made me, and who stirred me to claim it against other beings in God’s universe. I will not, nor will I consent, that anybody else shall countenance the claims of a vulgar despot to my soul and body. Were I in chains, and did these kind people come to buy me out of prison, I would acknowledge the boon with inexpressible thankfulness. But I feel no chains, and am in no prison. I received my freedom from Heaven, and with it the command to defend my title to it. I have long since resolved to do nothing and suffer nothing that can in any way, imply that I am indebted to any power but the Almighty for my manhood and personality.

In this manifestation of Loguen’s *ethos* we find a very tactical use of the term “manhood.” In “Violence, Protest, and Identity: Black Manhood in Antebellum

America,” James and Lois Horton note that this particular term has enjoyed an intriguing transformative history in American culture, particularly during the nineteenth century, when American men “could choose from a variety of gender ideals” (80). They suggest that despite the cacophony of masculine identities available during the nineteenth century, nearly all of them included “self assertion and aggression as key elements” (Horton 80). For black men living as slaves, gender socialization was far more complex, since not all of them, particularly black male political leaders, fit the criteria of the *Masculine Achiever*, *Christian Gentleman*, or *Masculine Primitive* (male identities coined by Charles Rosenberg and E. Anthony Rotundo)⁷, as slave masters attempted to strip black men of their “manhood.” In *A Question of Manhood*, Darlene Hine and Ernestine Jenkins suggest that masculinity for antebellum black men had political and communal implications, particularly when resisting white oppression (2-3, 30-31). Various forms of rebellion against white tyranny, whether through physical violence or unlawful action (e.g. learning to read and write), constituted key components of black manhood that promoted freedom and equality. For instance, in his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Douglass regards his fight with the slave breaker Covey as the pivotal moment where he becomes a man: “You have seen how a man was made a

⁷ The Masculine Achiever ideal “was closely associated with the rapid economic growth of the nineteenth century...The man of action was unencumbered by sentiment and totally focused on advancement...He was the rugged individual succeeding in the world of commercial capitalism” (Horton 80-81). The Christian Gentleman, on the other hand, “arose in reaction to the Masculine Achiever...eschewing self-seeking behavior and heartless competition in the commercial world, this gentler ideal stressed communal values, religious principles, and more humanitarian action” (81). Finally, E. Anthony Rotundo’s concept, the Masculine Primitive ideal, “stressed dominance and conquest through harnessing the energy of primitive male instincts and savagery lurking beneath the thin veneer of civilization. This was the more physically aggressive ideal, based on the natural impulses of man’s most primitive state, and violence was its confirming feature” (81).

slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man....This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood” (Douglass 60). For Douglass, manhood consisted of physical power, independence (autonomy), and freedom, ideals historically reserved for white men.

Whether by revolting against their masters, avoiding being sold at an auction, or resisting a beating, antebellum black men demonstrated aggression and self-assertion in order to claim their manhood. In Loguen’s speech we find evidence of his radical, public construction of manhood. In defiance of the dehumanizing and emasculating practices of slave owners, the demoralizing ideology advocated by the institution of slavery, and the humiliating pretense of the Fugitive Slave Law, Loguen chose not to run but to stand his ground and assert his manhood. Arguably, the Fugitive Slave Law perpetuated a “forced migration” of sorts for fugitive slaves who would attempt to escape the hundreds of “man-hunters” after them, thereby further exacerbating the dilemmas of manhood for black men who would be perceived as “prey” hunted by white *men* (Baptist 137). While fleeing to Canada to protect himself and prevent undue harm to his family might not have made him less “manly,” it would have precluded the opportunity to publicly show that black men embody strength of character and principled action—which are alternative definitions of manhood (Hine and Jenkins 30). In contrast, other prominent black men of this period either purchased their freedom or were born free and, thus, could not exploit their circumstances to demonstrate manhood to the extremes that Loguen did. For example, Rev. Richard Allen and Frederick Douglass purchased their freedom, and militant abolitionists David Walker and Charles Lenox Remond were both born free.

While these four figures urged black men to fight for their manhood and found various ways to exhibit their own, their conditions and decisions did not permit them to assume Loguen's radical public position. Loguen's open defiance of the law, moreover, was not self-serving, as many antebellum African American men and women equated black manhood with the perpetual fight for freedom and equality (31). Loguen's actions exhibited the pride of the race.

In *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, Michael Kimmel states, "Being a man meant being in charge of one's own life, liberty, and property," a definition that almost exclusively privileged white men during the antebellum (18). Loguen's speech addresses the correlation between manhood and its race-restrictive ideals. He equates "manhood" with individual freedom and explains that because it is God-given, no person is entitled to purchase it (viz. him), infringe upon it, or take it. In other words, his liberty is not someone's "property" to purchase. In this sense, manhood is not gender specific, but inclusive of all humans; manhood belongs to all people because they are creations of God. He also associates manhood with his "soul and body" to emphasize both the corporeal and spiritual domains of freedom. The spiritual and psychological torment suffered by slaves was more detrimental than physical persecution. Stating that he "[felt] no chains and [was] in no prison," Loguen declares his total existential independence—slavery cannot claim his soul and body—thereby suggesting that the notion of slavery is essentially a superficial fabrication enforced upon slaves to keep them mentally imprisoned.

Loguen's use of the term "manhood" also reflects the hierarchical gender roles of the antebellum period. At a Liberty Party convention held in Syracuse in October of

1850, Rev. Loguen and five other party members (all men) composed a resolution explaining their reasons for practicing civil disobedience: “Resolved that having been compelled by our manhood and our religion to identify ourselves with these helpless poor, and to defend them even as we could defend ourselves, however imminent the danger of the dungeon or death, we have no other determination but to resist the execution of this diabolical law, cost what the resistance may of property, or liberty or life” (Hunter 116). While nuances of the term “manhood” had evolved since the revolutionary period and served different purposes for diverse rhetorics, black and white Christian abolitionists tended to equate manhood with masculinity and morality. Like the Christian Gentleman, they exercised agency through dynamic and aggressive action, “but in the name of moral values and self-sacrifice” (Horton 81). Loguen apparently exemplified the masculinity of the Christian Gentleman, as Douglass once wrote of him: “[He] is the embodiment of manly energy, a kind-hearted, gentle, good man, naturally a lamb yet evidently capable of playing the part of a lion” (*FDP*, July 30, 1852). Here Douglass envelopes Loguen in Christological symbols—lamb and lion—that show the dynamic duality in his character; while he “naturally” possesses the gentleness and meekness of the self-sacrificial lamb (he is willing to lay down his life for the welfare of his brethren), he also embodies the fierce, “manly energy” of Christ “the Lion of Judah,” who will return to bring judgment upon the earth.⁸ Loguen expresses this lamb-lion

⁸ Revelation 5:1-10 “And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals; (2) and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” (3) And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, (4) and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. (5) Then one of the elders said to me, “Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its

duality in his own words: "I would willingly yield up my life even on this consecrated soul of Syracuse, rather than be a slave again...death is sweeter than slavery" (*FDP*, Aug. 12, 1853).

Furthermore, like most nineteenth-century men, who saw themselves as "protectors and defenders of the weak," Loguen and his fellow party members, both black and white, felt it a violation of their "manhood" to allow the "helpless poor" to be abused and tyrannized without intervening. Loguen echoes this sense of "noble machismo" in his address to the President of the Syracuse town meeting, as he identifies himself with both protector and the "helpless poor." While he argues that practicing civil disobedience and resistance is justified self-defense, he also asserts that in preserving (or achieving) his freedom he would not compromise his character. Conscientiously conflating the God-given virtues of "freedom," "manhood," and "personality" (character), Loguen explains that allowing "over prudent and good men and women" to purchase his freedom would constitute a begrudging concession of his manhood and "personality," which would, more importantly, betray the very principle for which he stands, fights, and resists—his natural right to freedom.

seven seals." (6) And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth; (7) and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. (8) And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints; (9) and they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou was slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, (10) and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth."

Loguen, like the pos-Revolutionary generation of black rhetors who appropriated the language of God-given rights, the Lockean social contract, and the Declaration of Independence, appeals to natural rights to argue why he and his freedom cannot be purchased (Bacon and McClish, “Coker” 322). In particular, Loguen’s declaration echoes that of nineteenth-century African American abolitionists James Forten (1766 – 1842) and Daniel Coker (1780 – 1846). In his pamphlet *A Dialogue Between a Virginian and an African Minister*, Coker utilizes the character of an African minister to succinctly refute a white Virginian’s defense of slavery. Based on “natural rights,” “the common laws of justice and humanity,” “common sense,” “reason,” and “conscience,” the African minister avers that human beings differ from livestock and property because their freedom is God-given (Porter 6); therefore, since they are not the government’s property to be allocated they cannot be a slaveholder’s to own (Bacon and McClish 322). While Loguen marshals the same set of appeals to natural rights, he exemplifies his beliefs by refusing the offers of his “over prudent” friends to purchase his freedom and presumably save his life.

Such integrity and headstrong resistance in the face of danger, which defined Loguen’s *ethos* and sense of volition, also comprised his sense of vocation. Much like the Apostle Paul, Loguen’s self-description gives authority to his missions as a preacher and socio-political activist by emphasizing the divine origin of his character and individual purpose—God. In Galatians 1:11-12, Paul writes, “For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Similarly, Loguen believed that God created him free, called

him to be a freedom fighter, and received the gospel of freedom “through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” He expresses this belief in two ways. In the first statement, which carries deeper theological implications, Loguen makes the case that as a creation of God he “owe[s]” his freedom to God: “I owe my freedom to the God who made me, and who stirred me to claim it against all other beings in God’s universe.” Freedom belongs to God. Thus, when someone denies Loguen (or any other person) his freedom that person sins against God by taking what rightfully belongs to the Creator. This would strike the religious sensibilities of his audience, whose conscience would be pricked at the thought that endorsing slavery constituted a sin against the Almighty. As an endangered fugitive slave Loguen is “stirred...to claim it against all other beings in God’s universe” because his/God’s freedom has been threatened and revoked. And as a defender of God’s freedom Loguen must act in accordance to God’s will—it’s what God called and “stirred” him to do. Thus, the gospel that Loguen preaches from the pulpit and the gospel truth that he preaches from the podium originate from God.

In the second statement Loguen individualizes his mission from God by highlighting his entitlement to freedom. He declares, “I received my freedom from Heaven, and with it came the command to defend my title to it.” Instead of owing his freedom to God, where God is the principal proprietor of freedom, here Loguen “received” his freedom as a gift from God, thereby making him its rightful possessor. Furthermore, with this gift of freedom “came the command to defend [his] title to it.” This claim suggests to his listeners that legally, he has a God-given right and “command” to protect what is his and that it is both reasonable and lawful for him to do so. Whereas Loguen’s first articulation invokes the Bible’s dictates regarding the divine rights of

God's children, this statement alludes to the Constitution's statutes on the rights of "the people." Hence, any infringement on his individual freedom represents a "sin" against man, an offense many Syracuse citizens felt strongly about. Like a Christian soldier in God's army of freedom fighters, Loguen perceived his vocation as a charge to convert thieves of freedom into preservers of freedom, thus diminishing their proclivity to sin against God and man. Wielding a double-edged sword of religious and political rhetoric, he defends his "manhood" by appealing to his audience's sympathies towards the "helpless poor," their felt patriarchal and Christian duty to protect the oppressed, and their empathetic understanding of despotic rule.

In addition, Loguen's use of the word "personality" resonated on several levels with his patriotic and morally conscious audience, especially with men. Throughout Loguen's speech he exudes a sense of individual pride andchutzpah that many would find noble and respectful. For instance, when he states that he is "indebted" to the "Almighty" for his "personality" he re-emphasizes what many people already knew or believed about him: that he's a man of fervor; that he embodies the individualities of high moral character and autonomy; and that he's a nationally renowned freedom fighter. Such virtues Americans regarded highly and attributed to the "personality" of the nation and its revolutionary heroes—George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Samuel Adams, to name a few. However, why did Loguen—with his life threatened and the welfare of his family and other Syracuse fugitives at stake—thank God for his personality?

Loguen uses ethical appeals to draw his audience's interest in him and his cause. Invoking the spirit of the nation's iconic rebels he exclaims:

Whatever may be your decision, my ground is taken. I have declared it

everywhere. It is known over the State and out of the State—over the line in the North, and over the line in the South. I don't respect this law—I don't fear it—I won't obey it! It outlaws me, and I outlaw it, and the men who attempt to enforce it on me. I will not live like a slave, and if force is employed to re-enslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man.

Loguen's rhetoric reverberates with the ubiquitous rebel cry of a charismatic warrior standing on high moral ground, fearlessly facing the insuperable enemy, the immoral Fugitive Slave Law. Even without the physical and ideological reinforcements of his Syracuse community, he declares that he would stand alone on his "ground" and defend himself. In this section he conveys to his audience that the crisis and threat of the Fugitive Slave Law is personal: "It outlaws me." While most of Loguen's speech fosters a sense of communion and identification with his white Syracuse neighbors, here he brings to fore his singular and exigent reality—the law deems *him* an "outlaw." Despite the fact that the law applied to thousands of other fugitives, Loguen alleges that it singles him out. According to various published letters and newspaper articles about Loguen, this claim was not, in fact, implausible (especially following his participation in the Jerry Rescue, which would occur just a year later). During Loguen's first few years as a Syracuse resident, he quickly gained statewide celebrity status. "Mr. Loguen has made use of his mind and heart, so as fairly to have placed himself in the same ennobled category of Samuel R. Ward, Henry H. Garnet, and Frederick Douglass," writes O.A. Bowe in an article about Loguen in *The North Star* (March 10, 1848).⁹ However, the

⁹ This letter from the *North Star* was simply signed "Herkimer Freeman," which was an abolitionist journal published weekly in Little Falls, N.Y. from 1844 to 1850 by its editor and owner, O.A. Bowe, who most likely wrote the letter cited above (French 341). I strongly believe that Bowe was a white abolitionist, as the following statement suggests:

idea of a famous fugitive on the loose only the fueled the ire of the government, which supposedly sought to make an example out of Loguen's capture. One Syracuse resident announces in a letter that donations would be collected on Loguen's behalf: "...for the benefit of this worthy man...whom this superlatively despotic government has singled out for prosecution on the charge of having aided in the rescue of Jerry from the cruel hands of official kidnappers" (*FDP*, Jan. 14, 1853).

With the image of a national government attacking a single slave drawn in his audience's mind, Loguen projects his unflappable boldness, thus appealing to his audience's high regard for bravery and fearlessness. With tremendous moral courage he declares that his "ground is taken" and that it is known "everywhere." That is, his case and cause were not particular to Syracuse's ad hoc town meeting and the impact of his testimony was not circumscribed by the town's ultimate decision about the law. Rather, Loguen was larger than the moment at hand, and his rhetoric proclaimed the universality of his morally grounded declarations, which he would defend with his life whenever or wherever such a crisis would demand it. Who wouldn't support a man brave enough to take on the U.S. government *alone*? He exclaims, "I don't fear it—I won't obey it...and I outlaw it." Is such a claim hyperbolic? In Loguen's case it is not. He did not employ such a tactic for performative ends or sensationalism. He felt strongly that his moral ground was higher than the government's; consequently, he believed his intent to usurp the position of law-enforcer was justified. He also re-emphasizes his masculine bravado when he states, "I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man." In this

"Mr. Loguen has made use of his mind and heart, so as fairly to have placed himself in the same ennobled category with Samuel R. Ward, Henry H. Garnet, Frederick Douglass, and others *of their complexion*, who are not unknown to the people of the Empire State" [italics added].

case, he appropriates the ideals of the Christian Gentleman, the defender of communal and religious values, whose aggressive actions are sanctioned by God. Loguen's *ethos* demanded respect and admiration. He thanks God for making him a man of great conviction and integrity because without such men the world would continually devolve into an abyss of immorality and evil. Loguen's speech conveyed that his God-given personality would not consent to compromising his principles; would not allow him to back down from battles in defense of freedom; and would not permit him to prostrate himself before tyranny. In Loguen's case we see how his construction of manhood and personality persuade.

Moreover, the persuasive power of Loguen's manhood and personality draws from his charismatic character. In a letter written to *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, John Thomas, a white abolitionist and the amanuensis of Loguen's *Narrative*, attests to Loguen's appeal:

There is magnetism in genuine manhood, infinitely superior to the force of words. It is God, in his own place and person honoring his own image, and demonstrating its [His] sublimity and power. That is the spirit for these times....Loguen is the only slave in America who stands upon his manhood, turns upon his pursuers, and scorns emancipation from the hand of man. There is the secret of his power. (*FDP*, "Letter" 1855)

This "magnetism" that engenders more rhetorical "force" than words is an essential characteristic of charismatic leaders, according to sociologist Max Weber. In *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Weber states that "charisma" should be applied to individual personalities "endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary" (Weber 241).

Oftentimes considered prophets, “leaders in the hunt,” “saviors,” or war heroes, charismatic individuals are regarded as such by their “followers” or “disciples” (Weber 242). Expanding on Weber’s concept of charisma, sociologist Edward A. Shils notes:

The charismatic quality of an individual as perceived by others, or himself, lies in what is thought to be his connection with (including possession by or embodiment of) some *very central* feature of man’s existence and the cosmos in which he lives. The centrality...is constituted by its formative power in initiating, creating, governing, transforming, maintaining, or destroying what is vital in man’s life. That central power has often...been conceived of as God, the ruling power or creator of the universe, or some divine or other transcendent power controlling or markedly influencing human life and the cosmos within which it exists. (Shils 258)

Thomas’ encomium on Loguen regards him as a leader of “divine origin”—God honors His own image as manifested in Loguen. Embodied with the “very central feature of man’s existence,” God, Loguen sought to maintain and protect “what is vital in man’s life,” freedom. Consequently, Loguen felt indebted to God for his manhood and personality, as he needed such qualities to fulfill his vocation as a prophet of justice and defender of freedom. “Pure charisma...constitutes a ‘call’ in the most emphatic sense of the word, a ‘mission’ or a ‘spiritual duty,’ Weber claims (244).

In an article entitled, “An Incident in the Life of a True Man,” appearing in *The Christian Recorder* on August 20, 1864, an anonymous “old friend” of Loguen’s writes: “The great Architect, at birth, confides to some men a mission. Surrounding circumstances may be the most adverse, yet if the Master-builder intends that a certain idea shall be demonstrated by an individual, a magnetic fate attracts that one straight

onward to the accomplishment of that darling object.” Endowed with God’s “sublimity and power,” protected and directed by “a magnetic fate,” Loguen demonstrated and embodied the idea of freedom. In so doing, he responded to God’s call, using his charismatic appeal to assemble disciples for his mission of manumission. In his town-meeting testimony, he attempts to create a “charismatic community”¹⁰ ready to battle against governmental tyranny in the name of the Lord and thereby transform the cosmos in which they lived; as saviors of their country they would implicate the nation in a dramatic soul-redeeming conversion. Convinced that the nation suffered from moral corruption and disorder, Loguen feared that slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law would ensure the country’s doom and damnation; hence, he exploited this exigent moment to marshal Christian citizens invested in the nation’s political and spiritual welfare. Having established early in his speech that he and his Syracuse neighbors share familial and communal bonds as well as religious and political ideologies, he also emphasizes his belief in their common charismatic quality. Thus, Loguen manifests his charismatic appeal to inspire his audience, invoking Syracuse’s potential for charismatic action and spiritual predisposition to salvific work.

As mentioned earlier, Loguen’s strong personality evokes comparisons to Founding Fathers such as Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and Franklin. In particular, Loguen would remind many of the fiery Patrick Henry, whose “Give me liberty or give me death” speech, regarded as one of the most memorable and powerful rhetorical moments in American history, will forever burn in the hearts of Americans. Like

¹⁰ “An organized group subject to charismatic authority will be called a charismatic community (*Gemeinde*). It is based on an emotional form of communal relationship (*Vergemeinschaftung*)” (Weber 243).

Loguen, Henry, whose eloquence was largely influenced by his father's and brother-in-law's preaching, addressed "matters concerning the tyranny and oppression of the Crown" and, without compunction, urged attendants at The Second Virginia Convention to prepare for war against the British leviathan or else "retreat...in submission and slavery." In a similar jeremiadic manner, Loguen prophesied the impending battles between the enforcers of the Fugitive Slave Law and the steadfast defenders of liberty and attempted to rally his Syracuse constituents into an army prepared to fight. In his speech we hear echoes of Henry's resounding cry: "Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God—I know not what course others may take; but as for me—give me liberty or give me death!" However, whereas both men warned of wars, Henry's speech exemplifies deliberative rhetoric, while Loguen's most closely fits the purposes of an epideictic discourse.

Loguen's speech exemplifies an epideictic discourse with dual approaches of praise and blame. While exalting virtues the Syracuse community had historically embodied and praising them for acting on these principles viz., protecting the fugitives who sought refuge in the city, he also suspended blaming them for the hypocritical and defacing act of turning their backs on fugitives at such a critical moment. By intensifying his audience's adherence to the values of loyalty, freedom, and justice, Loguen sought to influence the Syracuse community's disposition to act in accordance with these values, which would not only benefit him and the town's fugitive population but also incite a series of similar resolutions throughout the north and south. Using himself as an example of unbendable integrity, Loguen articulated how people should live up to and defend the

values they espouse. He gave his audience an in-depth outline of his own thinking, exposing not only the logic behind his ideas, but also the self-willed resolve required of one determined to act on his beliefs. This epideictic self-portrait also illustrates the passion in his personality. Loguen was a charismatic individual, a natural-born leader, heroic and worthy of emulation. And he expresses confidence that Syracuse's largely abolitionist community will follow his example, which, as he suggests, would be natural because they advocate the same values and possess similar virtues of character. Despite the differences between his white neighbors and him—in terms of class, race, and degrees of social-political freedom—the limits of his audience's ability to completely identify with him did not diminish his determination to help them sympathize with his circumstances and embrace the moral principles on which he stood. Having dwelled in Syracuse for many years, Loguen intuited the “substance” shared among his townsmen. Thus, by invoking the consubstantiality uniting him and his neighbors, he hoped to persuade them to support him in his stance of resistance. While the Fugitive Slave Law threatened to exacerbate the dissociation between black residents and white citizens, dividing the groups based on race and status, Loguen sought to eliminate this division by emphasizing the consubstantiality inherent in their commonness as humans, neighbors, and defenders of freedom and honor. Ultimately, his arguments proved effective. By a vote of 395 to 96, Loguen's position was upheld and Syracuse remained a city open to fugitive slaves (Aptheker 308).

Loguen as Preacher-Politician

This eloquent colored preacher of Syracuse preached in this city a few evenings ago, to a large audience, and with an energy and pathos rarely surpassed.

Auburn Advocate

Frederick Douglass's Paper, January 28, 1853

Although no preserved copies of Loguen's sermons exist, numerous historical accounts affirm where and when he preached and even offer commentary on his homiletic style. Historian Carol Hunter attests that "Loguen consistently preached on the twin themes of freedom and justice," and like many nineteenth-century African American ministers, his sermons primarily drew from the Old Testament (218). Basing his sermons on texts like Isaiah 58:6, "Is not this the fast I have chosen for you, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free," and Jeremiah 30:8, "I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds," Loguen catered to his congregations' needs, addressing the exigencies of people suffering overwhelming injustices and oppression. Through the prophet Isaiah, whose message to the Israelites gave them hope of God's deliverance from oppression and the nation's restoration, Loguen foretold the glorious day when slavery's "bands of wickedness" would be loosed and "the oppressed go free." In a similar vein, Loguen writes, "I can but hope that a new and better era is about to dawn before us. Let us thank God and take courage" (*FDP* March 25, 1853). It is also likely that Loguen preached on passages from Isaiah because his prophecies often allude to Zion (Jerusalem), the holy city from which Christ the King will reign and A.M.E. Zion's namesake. Similarly, the passage from Jeremiah speaks to God's promise to break the Israelites' "yoke" of Babylonian rule, which Loguen uses to forecast the emancipation of black slaves from white domination. A common hermeneutic strategy within the black preaching tradition, paralleling the existential plights of the Israelites with the predicament of African Americans encouraged blacks to believe in God's sovereign power—that is, his ability to act in a just and mighty way for the sake of the marginalized and powerless. Moreover, by suggesting that antebellum

blacks were the *new* Israelites, God's new "chosen" people, Loguen and other black preachers fostered their congregants' faith in God's promise of spiritual salvation and physical emancipation. Just as he brought the Israelites out of Babylonian bondage, so would he free African Americans from white oppression. Hence, Loguen's messages from Isaiah and Jeremiah served to instill hope in his congregants, to assure them that despite their present insufferable conditions, God would bring them through the night of subjugation and into the dawn of independence.

While Hunter claims that there is evidence of only one Loguen sermon based on New Testament scripture—an 1863 text featuring Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount"—I discovered an earlier account of his preaching from the same text as well as another sermon drawn from Acts 10:34-35. *Herkimer Freeman* editor O.A. Bowe praises Loguen's accomplishments as a "Temperance man," abolitionist, and preacher.

Referring to Loguen's visit to Little Falls, N.Y., he writes:

At each succeeding visit he has made a deep and broad impression by his talents, eloquence and evident sincerity. This worthy brother arrived here on the 12th, and spent nearly a week in the vicinity, preaching several times at the School-house, and attending one or two meetings out of town. On Sunday evening, the 13th, he gave us a powerful discourse from Acts X. 34,35—a discourse that richly deserves to be published, and which would put to shame four-fifths of the stuff that passes for pulpit oratory at this day. On Thursday evening, Mr. L. gave his closing address to his brethren at this place, taking as the basis of his remarks the Sermon on the Mount; and seldom have we heard a more earnest, faithful and truly admirable inculcation of Christian duty...we find him so clear-headed, sound and un-compromising as a Temperance man and an Abolitionist, and so eloquent withal, that we cannot withhold this brief tribute of our admiration.

As one of the few documented occasions where Loguen preached from the New Testament, this sermon on Acts 10:34-35 warrants particular consideration. This passage reads, "Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show

favoritism (v.35) but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”

Also translated or paraphrased as “God is no respecter of persons,” this verse is often mentioned in African American sermons on racial equality or social justice, as it proves that the Almighty Creator does not discriminate between men of different nationalities who revere/worship him and keep his commandments. Thus, it was well suited for Loguen’s rhetorical purposes, since his sermonic discourses typically focused on the political matters of racial discrimination and socio-political freedom.

In addition, Loguen probably used this verse more often than not because he frequently addressed bi-racial groups and did not wish to alienate his white brethren, who comprised a significant portion of the abolitionist community. Loguen even imbued his epistolary prose with this spirit of racial inclusion in the name of God: “I hope and trust in God, he will prove himself to be the friend of all mankind” (*FDP*, Jan. 8, 1852). The fact that this particular white congregant felt so impressed with Loguen’s preaching attests further to his ability to effectively accommodate black and white audiences, by invoking scriptures that prove the consubstantiality shared between all of God’s creation—in particular those who “do what is right.” While God does not show prejudice, Loguen would argue, he does pledge his providential grace upon those who follow those principles, which a Christian abolitionist such as Loguen would continually inculcate and press upon his hearers. Furthermore, this congratulatory writer even declares that Loguen’s sermon should be published (more evidence that the writer is probably white since sermon publications were not common among black ministers during this period), claiming that it was superior to the bulk of “pulpit oratory” during his time—that is to say, better than most sermons published by white men. Such a laudation

hearkens back to the writer's previous comment that Loguen should be placed in the "same ennobled category" with Ward, Garnet, Douglass, and "others of their complexion," which implies that Loguen is not only a talented orator and gentleman of "moral worth," but also an incredible preacher fit to be in an exclusive category.

The second sermon referenced in this letter reveals another aspect of Loguen's preaching style and content that places him in a distinct group of African American manuscript preachers of the Antebellum. Since most black ministers during this period drew their homiletic material from the Old Testament, Loguen's discourse on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount merits particular attention because it sheds light on his hermeneutical strategies. The Herkimer writer's commentary gives a sense of how Loguen used the text when he states that it was a "truly admirable inculcation of Christian duty." Here is the passage from which Loguen preached, called the Beatitudes or the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew 5:1-11:

1. Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2. and he began to teach them saying:
3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4. Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
5. Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
7. Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
8. Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
9. Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
10. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely
say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12. Rejoice and be glad,

because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

There are numerous interpretive and exegetical strategies a minister can employ when discoursing on this passage. However, according to several scholars of black preaching, there is a distinctive lens through which black ministers view and explicate scripture. For instance, in *The Heart of Black Preaching*, Cleophus LaRue states that “blacks also see a pattern in scripture to which they ascribe wholeness, and that pattern—a sovereign God who acts in concrete and practical ways on behalf of the marginalized and powerless—is the primary component that lends itself to distinctiveness in their preaching” (16). This “foundational biblical hermeneutic,” as LaRue puts it, is the lens through black preachers perceive the Bible’s relation to the black experience, which inspires creative metaphor and allegory to weave together biblical exposition with practical life lessons. Given this interpretive pattern among black preachers, who would primarily focus on passages of comfort, consolation, promise of God’s saving grace, and spiritual redemption,¹¹ one would assume that Loguen’s message on The Beatitudes would follow in this tradition. However, based on this witness’s account, the racial diversity of his audience, and what we know of Loguen’s propensity to “preach politics on Sunday,” (Hunter 219) I believe he may have preached an entirely *different* sermon. Reading the Beatitudes through LaRue’s proposed hermeneutic for black preaching, one would imagine a sermon designed to console African Americans who, in fact, were mourning, felt “poor in spirit” and “meek,” and thirsted and hungered for spiritual righteousness and bodily nourishment. Such an approach would proclaim God’s willingness to act on behalf of powerless and downtrodden people, would emphasize God’s omnipresence during dark

¹¹ See also Raboteau and Mitchell.

times of depression, and would assure God's grace and mercy for those who seek Him. Without question, this type of sermon would be meaningful and effective given the circumstances.

In light of Loguen's sermon epistolary discourses—which illuminate his overall rhetorical program of racial uplift, self-help, and socio-political elevation—a more kairos-conscious sermon is conceivable. Loguen wanted to prepare his fellow brethren of the cause, both black and white, for the soul-shaking ideological and spiritual battles facing them during the slavery debate and the possibility of war. As a man of action and persistent agitation, he would rather push forward than wallow in self-pity. In this regard his exposition of the Beatitudes would press upon his listeners to live up to their Christian duty by doing the work of the Lord rather than waiting for a blessing. Instead of seeking comfort, hoping to be fed, or wishing for justice to come, he urged his constituents to become agents: to comfort those who mourn, to feed the hungry, and to demand justice now. Loguen expounded upon the virtues of the Beatitudes in an effort to indoctrinate disciples who would fight in a 'holy war' against slavery. He assured them that as "persecuted," "pure in heart" "peacemakers," they would inherit the blessing of liberty on earth and even greater rewards in heaven. Thus, his concerns centered on the character of his congregants and fellow disciples of justice—because he knew that those weak in spirit, unsure of their faith, or doubtful of their duty would hinder the mission of the body of believers.

The Herkimer resident also writes that Loguen was "uncompromising as a Temperance man." In several letters Loguen addresses the problem of alcoholism destroying black communities and it became one of his primary speaking points in his

abolitionist lectures.¹² More often than not Loguen described drinking as a character flaw that impeded blacks from “attaining a higher elevation.” He writes, “We can never be respected by others till we demonstrate our self-respect to the world.” It stands to reason that Loguen, while preaching on the Beatitudes, would argue that a Christian’s duty is to maintain his character by embodying the virtues that both honor God and enable him to do God’s work. Such an approach to the Sermon on the Mount is unique in regards to the black preaching tradition because it underscores what God can and will do as it also emphasizes the role and responsibility of Christians, whether free or enslaved, to maintain their faith in God during trying times; to continue serving His people, the powerless and marginalized, who suffer for His name’s sake; and to become doers of the Word and not just hearers. Loguen himself served as a model example, as he writes: “I am trying to work for the Lord here with his poor; preaching the Gospel to them, and talking about slavery and temperance, and teaching them in night schools. They are very poor and can pay me nothing. My reward is their good attention to the Word” (*FDP*, Jan. 8, 1852). Thus, Loguen practiced what he preached and embodied the exemplary Christian virtues professed by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount.

* * *

While this chapter investigates the rhetoric of Rev. Jermain Loguen, by critically examining his monumental anti-Fugitive Slave Law speech and myriad abolitionist letters, it does not encompass all of Loguen’s roles as a social, religious, and political leader. Loguen wore many hats. Besides being a preacher and abolitionist, he was also a strong advocate of women’s rights, a fervent proponent of temperance, an elected leader

¹² Temperance was a common theme among nineteenth-century black rhetors.

of the Liberty Party, and a dedicated teacher. Dozens of letters and articles attest to his effectiveness in these roles. For instance, Samuel H. Brown, minister of the Methodist Colored Church, and John Anderson, minister and pastor of Zion Baptist Church, both of St. Catherine's, New York, wrote the following letter to Loguen published in *Frederick Douglass's Paper*:

As a minister of the gospel, you have labored successfully among us for seven months. As a teacher, you have devoted your nights to the instruction of adults and juveniles, in the elements of literature. As a workman, in the holy cause of temperance, you have been faithful. As a bold and fearless opponent of slavery, you have exposed the villainy of the oppressor, and advocated the rights of all men to freedom, and by your candid and talented advocacy, have, we believe, reduced the amount of prejudice heretofore existing even in this free land, against the colored race. (FDP, May 6, 1852)

This and other letters testify to Loguen's role as a prophet of God, a minister of justice, and a defender of freedom, proving that in every aspect of his public life he committed his mind and heart. Perpetually sacrificing his time and his life for the sake of his oppressed brethren and never compromising his principles, he always stood prepared to fight for what is right. While Loguen follows a legacy of freedom fighters in African American history—Rev. Richard Allen, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, and Sojourner Truth—whose charismatic appeal, Christian faith, and emboldened actions make them intriguing subjects for rhetorical study, I believe Rev. Loguen distinguishes himself through extreme efforts to reinforce an ethos that would awaken his people to the severity of their condition and provoke them to take action in creating a better world. Finally, Loguen's rhetoric cannot be reduced to sensationalism or mere stylistics—e.g. poetic and passionate prose with brilliant uses of anaphora, chiasmus, or paradox—for his persuasive power did not come primarily from stylistic

effects, but rather from his sincerity in heart, integrity of character, and his charismatic “magnetism” that only comes from God. Thus, his rhetoric is based on the *logos*/text of his life. Sated with self-less motivations and virtuous deeds, Loguen’s life is an eloquent speech.

Part Two: The Rhetoric of Bishop James W. Hood: AME Zion's Pioneering Preacher-Politician

In one of his last significant letters, just before his death in 1895, Frederick Douglass commends one of A.M.E. Zion's most instrumental ministers, Bishop James Walker Hood:

What I want to say in this letter is that I set a very high value upon the able paper giving a history of Negro education in North Carolina, contributed to the pages of your magazine by Bishop J.W. Hood, D.D., LL.D. That paper is worth the price of your Zion Quarterly for more than one year . . . he evidently possesses high intelligence, remarkable self-poise, elevation and dignity of thought. These combined with his earnestness of purpose and singleness of aim make him preeminently a leader. Few writers, I apprehend, can match him in the possession of judicial candor and calm impartiality . . . I am glad to see that he writes in plain English, so that a child can understand him. There are no labyrinthine mazes or metaphorical confusions in his composition. He has something to say and he says it. (Walls 626-627)

In effect, Douglass praises an “unsung hero” — one of the first African American ministers to publish his own book of sermons; creator of the *Star of Zion*, a newspaper that ran for 120 years; active bishop of the AME Zion Church for forty-four years; co-founder of Livingston College; North Carolina's Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State Board of Education; and elected committee member of the Constitutional Convention of North Carolina (Jenkins 37-39). In addition to holding several esteemed positions of leadership, Bishop Hood was also an accomplished writer and rhetor, as Douglass notes in his letter. Whether adjuring, admonishing, or advising his fellow Zionites on matters of civic duty, church policy, or moral temperance, Hood's

“judicial candor and calm impartiality” are evident in the hundreds of articles he published in the *Star of Zion* and *Zion Quarterly*. Contemporaries considered him an “eloquent and popular preacher,” and congregations throughout the country, both black and white, often invited him to preach. Regarding Hood as one of the most influential bishops in the denomination’s history, the AME Zion Church named Livingston’s theological seminary in his honor — and to this day includes his volumes of sermons in its curriculum. However, only recently have scholars recognized how this minister impacted thousands of African Americans who congregated, worshipped, and were educated in Zion churches.

As the first major scholarly work on Bishop Hood, Sandy Dwayne Martin’s *For God and Race: The Religious and Political Leadership of AMEZ Bishop James Walker Hood* examines Hood’s public career as one of the pioneering church leaders of independent black Christianity. Highlighting Hood’s political and religious leadership, Martin considers his missionary work throughout the South and Nova Scotia, his abolitionist feats and fieldwork, his endeavors as an AME Zion church organizer and bishop, as well as his accomplishments as an educator and key player in North Carolina politics. While Martin’s work contributes to our understanding of how nineteenth-century African American preacher-politicians perceived the relationship between the social, political, and religious, and how an important figure like Hood could help to advance his people, it does not investigate the richest source of primary materials—his sermons. Likewise, in “The Prince Hall Masons and the African American Church: The Labors of Grand Master and Bishop James Walker Hood, 1831-1918,” David G. Hackett investigates the social and political “labors” of Hood, arguing that his activities as a

Prince Hall Mason and AME Zion bishop complemented one another. Hackett shows how Hood's efforts countered white racial images and stereotypes, instilled meaning and hope in the lives of southern blacks, and helped them achieve agency to improve their communities (4-5). While both Martin and Hackett highlight Hood's "labors" as a social and political leader who successfully utilized the church and Masonry in the "struggle against racism and for the self-determination of the African American community" (Hackett 5), my study of Hood's sermons illuminates his modeling of language as a means of uplifting, empowering, and teaching his spiritually downtrodden brethren.

As Martin and Hackett illustrate, Bishop Hood fulfilled the multiple roles of race and civic leader, moral instructor, preacher, church builder, and educator with remarkable success. However, his two volumes of sermons constitute his most profound contribution as a preacher to his congregants, his denominational peers, and the legacy of black ministers in the U.S. Hood published his sermons to emblemize the character, spirit, and intellect of African Americans and to herald their ascension to respectable citizenry. My study examines how Hood's sermons served not only as religious exhortations, but also as vehicles advancing his social and political beliefs, empowering thousands of socio-politically marginalized people of color. Sermons have always served salutary purposes for African Americans in their struggle to advance themselves in an oppressive society. Sermons console, by providing a space for emotional catharsis and celebration; consolidate, by fostering a sense of group identity and monumentalizing a cultural heritage; create, by carving out room for the exercise of agency; and critique, by confronting the world as it is and "challenging the dominant culture's ordering of reality" (Hubbard 5). Sermons, therefore, are both a fecund resource of rhetorical material and a

primary source of discourse that not only influenced the rhetorical development of prominent church-raised African American leaders of the nineteenth century—including Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Henry Highland Garnet, and Nat Turner—but also enabled thousands of demoralized blacks to survive slavery and its aftermath. In light of the gap in research regarding the black preacher’s role in the development of African American rhetorical traditions, my work introduces a relatively unknown figure in black church history and Reconstruction politics whose rhetorical preaching style expands our notion of the variety in nineteenth-century black rhetoric(s) and black preaching, while it also highlights the second lineage within the black preaching tradition—of educated, “manuscript” preachers—one that scholars have scarcely considered.

* * *

In this chapter I examine the rhetoric of Bishop James W. Hood through analysis of his published sermons. Since most scholars are unfamiliar with Hood, I begin by outlining relevant biographical information related to his education and the forces and events that shaped his views on moral temperance, education of blacks, women’s ministerial ordination, and abolition, all encompassed in his illustrious career as an AME Zion bishop, educator, and politician. As the primary purpose of this chapter involves investigating Hood’s rhetorical techniques and style, I consider what historical figures and literary texts informed his compositions, including what books and manuscripts he might have read and what people he most likely associated with, and what devices he appropriated from the classical rhetorical tradition characteristic of Anglo-American preachers and politicians of his time. Since little is known about his life—his autobiography was never completed—my hypotheses concerning his influences derive

from comparative analyses of speeches, sermons, and texts to discern what he unequivocally mirrored or simply referenced in his writings.

Yet, this is not primarily an influence study; my investigation of Hood's sermons exposes the mind of a brilliant and accomplished black preacher-politician who used the power of spoken and written words to uplift and motivate thousands of downtrodden free blacks and former slaves, equipping them with principles necessary for surviving in an antagonistic and inhumane world. My analysis of Hood's sermons shows how, to some degree, he stands outside of historical stereotypes of black preachers, who often are characterized by their stylized, dramatic, and pathos-laden extempore performances. Rev. Hood, however, prepared extensively for the preaching event by reading broadly—biblical commentaries, historiographies, and different translations of the Bible—and reflecting deeply on how the Word of God could be used to address the exigent needs of his congregations. Through rhetorical analysis of his sermons, I illustrate Hood's emphasis on ethical and logical appeals rather than the emotional. While some folk ministers practiced the art of exhorting to the rhythm of "foot-stomping" in order to rile their audience to emotional ecstasy, Rev. Hood inculcated virtues of character to enlighten his audience. He utilized sermons to relay practical wisdom that would aid his brethren in the construction of their new identities as free people. Rather than rehearsing their "trail of tears" by bemoaning the tribulations suffered by blacks, Rev. Hood's sermons were farsighted, as they envisioned what he wished African Americans would achieve and what he hoped they would become. Hood's sermons, thus, complicate our understanding of nineteenth-century black rhetoric by illuminating the diversity in persuasive strategies among black leaders who wielded words to effect change.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born on May 30, 1831, in Kennett Township, Pennsylvania, James Walker Hood grew up in the religiously charged home of a minister, his father, Levi, and an evangelical abolitionist, his mother, Harriet. Levi pastored a Union Church of Africans—the first black denomination organized—for forty years, while Harriet, “a woman of keen intellect and profound interest in ecclesiastical affairs,” was among the first American women to deliver a public speech (Martin 23). Levi and Harriet both predicted young Hood’s entrance into ministry, and he was converted and baptized at age eleven. However, for years Hood doubted the authenticity of his religious conversion and did not reach a “spiritual peace of mind” until after consulting his sister Charlotte, regarded for her deep spiritual convictions. Hood’s early years were also heavily influenced by Quakers, who occupied a large portion of his hometown. For two years he lived with and worked for the Jacksons, a family of Quakers who provided him a portion of his limited formal education. While reflecting on his childhood in Pennsylvania and Delaware, Hood claimed that Quakers taught him “the discipline of quietness and moderation.” Like many Quakers in this region, the Jackson family supported black civic rights and gender equity (25). Thus, the religious influence of his mother and sister in conjunction with the Quakers’ belief in gender equality explains Hood’s support of women’s ordination as church elders later in his career as an AME Zion bishop.

In addition to the limited schooling Hood received from the Jacksons, he also acquired almost two years of training in a rural school between ages nine and thirteen, which consisted of arithmetic and reading (Martin 27). His mother taught him grammar and the art of public speaking (Walls 578). For the most part, however, Hood taught

himself through studying available textbooks, reading prolifically, and employing individual tutors to expand his knowledge base, including the study of Greek. This would seem to explain Hood's employment of Aristotelian rhetoric in his writings and sermons, a subject discussed later in this chapter. A bibliophile throughout his life, Hood compiled an impressive library of books covering myriad areas, some of which he invokes in his publications, including his sermons.

Although Hood felt called to the ministry around 1852, at twenty-one years of age, it was not until 1856 that he received a license to preach. Reverend William Cuncy, pastor of Union Church of Africans in New York City, granted Hood his license and in 1857 he relocated to New Haven, Connecticut, where he joined the ministry of an AME Zion church. For about sixty years Hood served as an AME Zion minister, forty-four of which he held office as a bishop. He ministered in Connecticut, New York, Nova Scotia, North and South Carolina, and Virginia—in many cases planting Zion churches in an effort to spread Zion Methodism. He was also the principal founder and supporter of the *Star of Zion*, the denomination's newspaper, as well as one of the key founders of Zion Wesley Institute (Livingstone College), where he served as president of the board of trustees from 1879 until his death in 1918 (Hackett 770-802). A prolific writer and profound thinker, Hood published five major books—*Negro in the Christian Pulpit: Two Characters and Two Destinies* (1884), *One Hundred Years of the AME Zion Church* (1895), *The Plan of the Apocalypse* (1900), *Sermons* (1908), and *Sketch of the Early History of the AME Zion Church* (1914)—in addition to the numerous letters he contributed to *Zion's Star*. His corpus demonstrates his acute eye for historical details, his strong concern for the social uplift of African Americans, and his indefatigable belief

in one's personal commitment to holiness, temperance, and integrity. Many of Hood's colleagues considered him "warm, generous, self-sacrificing, and diplomatic in dealing with others" (Martin 37).

In addition to his ministerial accomplishments, Hood was an active and respected social and political leader, loving husband and devoted father of six children. He contributed significantly to the formation of black Masonry in North Carolina and took on a number of prominent leadership roles—e.g. "Grand Master of masons of North Carolina for 14 years, Grand Patron Order of Easter Star for 19 years, and Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of World of Good Templars" (Hackett 772). At North Carolina's Black/Freedman's State Convention in 1865 he was elected "permanent chairperson" over an assembly of 115 southern black people (Martin 68). Historian Roberta Alexander notes that, as pastor of North Carolina's largest black church, the AME Zion Church of New Berne, Hood figured significantly in the social and political progress of blacks in North Carolina (Alexander 14, 24). Alexander also observes Hood's wisdom and vision while serving as president of the Freedman's State Convention, as he argued for the three crucial rights he felt blacks must have, even though "some blacks might not be fully prepared to use all these rights wisely"—namely, "the right to testify in court, the right to serve on juries, and the right to vote" (Alexander 25).

As a result of his profound presence and influence at this convention, Hood's political prominence in North Carolina burgeoned. In 1867 the assembly at the North Carolina Reconstruction State Convention felt Hood's role in framing and composing the new state constitution noteworthy enough to call it the "Hood Constitution" (Martin 71).

A fervent advocate of formal education for the uplift of his people, Hood earned an appointment as Assistant Superintendent of Education on North Carolina's State Board of Education; his primary responsibility involved establishing schools for black children (Hamilton 612). However, Hood reached the peak of his political career at the 1872 Republican State Convention, where delegates elected him temporary chair and later selected him as one of the at-large delegates to the 1872 Republican National Convention, where President Ulysses S. Grant was nominated for his second term (Martin 76). After serving as an active bishop for over forty years and a dedicated minister for sixty years, Bishop J.W. Hood died in Fayetteville, N.C., in 1918 at eighty-seven years old.

Hood's Rhetorical Training

Known for his "acerbic style of debating," Hood displayed his rhetorical talents in the logical constructions of his arguments and the acuteness of his historical references and examples from contemporary life (Martin 40). These rhetorical characteristics appear not only in Hood's church historiographies, editorial letters and articles, but his sermons as well. In assessing the rhetorical strategies and effectiveness of Hood's sermons, rather than impose a particular theoretical framework, I allow the texts themselves to reveal what analytical paradigms most appropriately apply. Since Hood's homiletic style to a great extent mirrors that of his contemporaries—that is, literate white and black ministers—it is not surprising that we find his compositional repertoire full of rhetorical tropes characteristic of nineteenth-century popular and religious literature. According to James Berlin, the theories of George Campbell, Hugh Blair, and Richard Whately "completely dominated" nineteenth-century American thinking on rhetoric (19).

So pervasive were their ideas that Berlin further claims that “the American rhetorics that appeared during this time were little more than restatements of the blessed trinity” (35). Hence, a brief characterization of the rhetorics of Campbell, Blair, and Whately is in order.

With regard to their endorsement of classical rhetorical theories, Campbell, Blair, and Whately all highly esteemed the work of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. To modern rhetoric students, they recommended “the systematic approach of Aristotle, the practical advice of Cicero, and the sound sense of Quintilian” and they often cited material from “the ancients” in order to illustrate one of their own principles (Corbett 12). According to Edward Corbett and James Golden, these three rhetoricians espoused at least five basic premises rooted in classical rhetorical theory:

- (1) they accepted the classical communication model which focused on the speaker, the speech, and the audience; (2) they recognized that effective ethical, logical, and emotional proof are essential to persuasion; (3) they felt that a well-organized address should have interest, unity, coherence, and progression; (4) they held that style should be characterized by perspicuity and vividness; and (5) above all, they suggested that while nature endows the orator with special talents, nurture or training is needed to improve and perfect these inborn traits. (13)

However, each also deviated from the ancients in important ways. Campbell, a clergyman and theologian, privileges the inductive method and advocates that we call upon the “faculties of the mind” to discover truth. He focuses less on invention—the “*discovery* of the available means of persuasion”—and more on “adapting the message, managing it, so as to affect the audience in the desired way” (Berlin 20-21). Often taught in tandem with Campbell, Hugh Blair, a Scottish clergyman and Regus Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Letters, focuses almost exclusively on stylistic principles. Rooted in “a positivist epistemology, a faculty psychology, and a mechanistic view of language,”

Blair's rhetoric teaches that invention "comes from a thorough knowledge of the subject, and profound meditation on it" (26). In addition, Albert Kitzhaber claims that Blair's distinction between convincing and persuading indelibly marked how American rhetoricians would understand and teach it in the next century. Delineated in terms of faculty psychology, Blair asserts that conviction "affects the understanding only; persuasion, the will and the practice" (Kitzhaber 51). Finally, Richard Whately's rhetoric differed from that of Blair and Campbell "chiefly by restoring to rhetoric the Aristotelian emphasis on logic (53). In *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828), he avers that the "proper province of Rhetoric" is *finding* suitable arguments to prove a particular point and *arranging* them skillfully. One of Whately's most influential precepts suggests that writing instructors should not assign topics to their students; rather, students should write about what interests them and "within their range of ability" (54).

While little is known regarding Hood's formal education, statements from his unfinished autobiography and personal letters and close analysis of his sermons expose the influence of prevalent nineteenth-century rhetorical theories on his writing. As noted earlier, Hood's mother gave him lessons in public speaking, which probably provided him with basic concepts shared between oratory and rhetoric, such as knowledge of one's subject matter, organization of key points, and incorporation of stylistic appeals to engage one's listener/reader. Baptized and brought up in the African Union Church where his father preached, Hood learned through hearing and witnessing what his mother taught him in theory. Another explanation for Hood's training in the art of persuasion is that he learned it on his own, as he was a voracious reader and zealous student, who even learned Greek with the help of a tutor (Martin 27). While fluency in Greek was standard in most

seminary curricula to enable New Testament translation and exegesis, it would also lead a conscientious student like Hood to other texts beneficial to an aspiring intellectual leader in social and political reform, i.e., texts on oratory and rhetoric by Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. I believe that he learned the basics of oratory from his mother and extended his understanding through reading style and rhetoric manuals popular during the nineteenth century. I also believe that the schooling Hood received from the Quaker family he worked for as an adolescent exposed him to reading material written by authors well versed in rhetoric. Whether or not he read any Aristotelian texts or consciously applied rhetorical theory, I contend that classic rhetorical principles capture the transforming power of words Hood utilized to move people to action.

Perhaps the most logical hypothesis regarding Hood's rhetorical training concerns his exposure to persuasive sermons, speeches, and writings throughout his adolescent and adult life. In a letter written to Rev. Jesse B. Colbert, an A.M.E. Zion preacher and historian, Hood provides a biographical sketch with some "personal reminiscences connected with [his] ministerial service" (*Sketch* 1). After receiving his calling to preach and his preaching license in 1855, the Quarterly Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church, under the charge of Rev. Samuel Giles, inducted him as a member in 1856. Hood writes, "I regarded Rev. Giles as one of the best preachers I have known and one of the best preachers the Church has produced. I owe much to him for my success in my calling. He was pious, progressive, and intelligent. No man in his day was more useful" (2). Though Hood published a copious amount of material, rarely did he cite anyone who directly influenced him. Sandy Martin, whose biography on Hood remains the most extensive investigation into his life, "found comparatively little material that reveals his private

conversations and actions among family members, friends, politicians, or even fellow church leaders” (9). Consequently, this reference to Rev. Giles is quite significant, as it gives us some insight into Hood’s development into a minister—who molded him and what about such persons he admonished.¹³ In the thirty-two years between his ordination and the publication of his first volume of sermons, Hood doubtlessly heard hundreds of sermons and speeches from his fellow Zionites and other ministers (most of whom were educated), especially during his years serving as bishop.

Through reading texts and hearing speeches grounded in classic and Belletristic rhetoric Hood gleaned the stylistic devices and argumentative strategies that would effectively reach the various congregations and delegations he would face as a preacher and politician, and he skillfully applied them in his sermons and editorials. For instance, three of Hood’s sermons provide evidence of his use of Aristotelian, Ciceronian, and Quintilian rhetorical principles, thereby situating him within the sermonic tradition of many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and American ministers, while at the same time distinguishing him from other preachers of the same periods, especially black preachers (not all of whom were literate). The critical factor that explains the difference between these two traditions is education. Unlike the large percentage of uneducated antebellum black preachers, especially those from the South, Hood apparently trained himself (was probably tutored in) in the art of persuasive discourse. In the three sermons, “The Character and Persuasive Power of Christianity,” “The Matchless Speaker,” and “The Helplessness of Human Nature,” Hood utilizes Aristotle’s three modes of

¹³ I return to Rev. Giles’s influence on Hood later in this chapter.

persuasion—ethos, pathos, and logos—as he demonstrates his understanding of the theoretical principles governing the relationship between rhetor, text, and audience.¹⁴

In the former sermon, Hood begins by identifying the perceived ethos of Christian believers—they are absent of vices such as “selfishness, bitterness, and hate” (Hood, *Sermons* 40)—and follows this discussion with an evaluation of the inherent rhetorical power of Christianity, as opposed to the Islamic faith, idolatry, and witchcraft. He entitles this second section, “The Persuasive Power of Christianity,” and draws his congregation’s attention to the key biblical passage in which King Agrippa “admitted that he was almost persuaded, that the apostle’s reasoning was so forceful that he could hardly resist it” (40). What follows is, in essence, a rhetorical analysis of Christianity and Islam. He suggests that one of the “distinguishing excellencies of the Christian religion” is that “it appeals to reason” and further argues that whereas “Mohammedanism appeals to man’s sensual nature” and “Idolatry and witchcraft appeal to human superstition,” “the religion of Jesus Christ appeals to...that which is the highest and best in human nature; that which brings man in touch with the Almighty and enables him to hold communion with his Maker” (40). According to Martin, Hood was a religious conservative who “had an especially low opinion of Islam, viewing it as the religion of the false prophet that had persecuted Christians and was preventing the spread of the gospel” (18). Furthermore, Hood and other Zion ministers felt that Islam encouraged polygamy, “which means destruction of the home” (Walls 238) and, from an uncritical perspective, is associated

¹⁴ This group of sermons comprises a thematic trilogy of sermons about the persuasion of divine rhetoricians: (1) the Apostle Paul is the gifted rhetorician in “Persuasive Power,” (2) Christ is the “Matchless Speaker,” (3) God is the audience-conscious rhetorician in “Helplessness,” which even concludes with direct references to the other two sermons.

with “man’s sensual nature.” Although obviously prejudicial in favoring Christianity over religions of superstition, paganism, and polygamy, Bishop Hood also privileges the faculty of reason above “man’s sensual nature” or pathos. And he continues on the same point:

The religion of Jesus does not ask you to accept assertions blindly or thoughtlessly; but it appeals to your judgment and calls upon you to exercise your thinking powers, and acquaints you with your exalted possibilities. It appeals to the dignity of your nature, as immortal beings. (*Sermons* 41)

Hood, therefore, believes that Christianity’s overall persuasive power rests in its appeal to man’s “highest and best” faculty, logos, and the “dignity of his [your] nature,” ethos. This hierarchical conception of ethos, logos, and pathos becomes more apparent in the latter part of this chapter, where I provide an in-depth rhetorical analysis of Hood’s sermons. My point here, however, is to show Hood’s surface-level application of Aristotelian rhetorical concepts in the construction of his sermons.

Another example of Hood’s grasp of classic rhetorical principles appears in the closing section of this sermon. He writes:

No wonder that Agrippa was almost persuaded. Paul was a great preacher, eloquent, and persuasive. He was discoursing upon a great subject, on a great occasion, before a royal audience. No doubt the occasion lent inspiration. (42)

Here, Hood’s choice of words—“eloquent,” “persuasive,” “discoursing,” “subject,” “occasion,” and “audience”—indicate his knowledge and appropriation of rhetorical concepts.¹⁵ His sermon not only assesses the rhetorical power of Christian faith, but it

¹⁵ These key terms in the study of rhetoric do not occur with any significant frequency in the sermons of other nineteenth-century black preachers and even when they do their inclusion is generally not in a theoretical context.

also evaluates the apostle Paul's capabilities as a rhetor. In short, Hood finds Paul to be a particularly gifted rhetor, one with "enrapturing eloquence" who successfully "[held] the attention of his audience" (42). In "The Helplessness of Human Nature" Hood describes God's persuasive methods—that is, "the many ways by which the Father draws souls to Christ." He states that there are "at least three strong cords, which operate upon the will to draw men to Christ—the cords of fear, the cords of interest, and the cords of love" and subsequently explains through three anecdotes how God influences people of various dispositions and "state[s] of mind" to receive Him.¹⁶ Acknowledging that not all souls are drawn by Christ's "cords" of influence, Hood concludes this sermon with a hymn entitled "Almost Persuaded," based on the text he explicated in "The Persuasive Power of Christianity," which warns of the impending "doom" suffered by those not persuaded by Christ.

In the sermon "The Matchless Speaker," Bishop Hood argues why he believes Jesus to be the greatest, most divine rhetor ever to walk the earth. Throughout the sermon he elucidates the historical and cultural context of the key scripture from John 7:40—"Never man [spoke] like this man"—as he also defends the claim put forth in the verse. After demonstrating through scriptural references that Jesus is eternally the "matchless speaker" by virtue of his authority over the ultimate truth, Hood suggests that Jesus' discourse is effectively persuasive because it is "simple, direct and plain"—such that "even a child could understand him" (129). Interestingly, as noted earlier in this chapter, this is the same laudation that Frederick Douglass gives Hood concerning his

¹⁶ I analyze this sermon in greater detail in the *pathos* section of this chapter.

rhetorical style. Furthermore, Hood argues that Jesus was always conscious of his audience:

He suited His discourses to the capacity of His hearers...when talking to shepherds, Jesus talked of “the lost sheep,” the “Good shepherd” and the “fold.” To fishermen, He talked of boats, of nets, and of great hauls of various kinds of fish. To those in higher life, He talked of marriage feasts, of wedding garments, and of the prodigal son. To the hungry multitude, He said, “I am the bread of life.” By thus suiting His discourses to the capacity of His hearers, He instructed all; and we are told that the common people heard him gladly. (129, 131)

What’s important to notice in this excerpt is Rev. Hood’s observation that Jesus consciously crafted his discourses according to the culture and class of his listeners, regarding Jesus as divine rhetor. Hood’s observation that Jesus suited “His discourses to the capacity of His hearers” clearly echoes the principles taught by Hugh Blair in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters*, considered “the most popular treatment of rhetoric until after the Civil War” in America (Berlin 25). Blair suggests “that we always study to adapt it [style] to the subject, and also to the capacity of our hearers, if we are to speak in public” (Corbett 86). In addition, Hood mentions that Jesus’ audience “heard him gladly.” This note also reflects Blair’s ideas on the effective use of language, as he often praises writing that “pleases” the reader. Blair writes, “For all that can possibly be required of language is, to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others, and at the same time, in such a dress, as by pleasing and interesting them, shall most effectually strengthen the impressions which we seek to make” (Corbett 67). One can deduce, then, that Hood’s educational training versed him in modern rhetorical theories grounded in the classical tradition, as he modeled his sermons with such a framework in mind.

Hence, because Hood himself performs a classical rhetorical analysis of Christianity, biblical texts and biblical writers in his sermons, I analyze his sermons with

the same methodological framework. That is, I will examine Hood's application of Aristotle's three modes of persuasion—ethos, pathos, and logos—as well as assess how his sermons addressed the needs and expectations of his audience, how his social and historical context informed the content and style of his sermons, and how he conceived of the relationship between text (Bible), preacher, and congregation. However, other rhetorical theories on black preaching inform my study of Hood's sermons as well, particularly those of Mitchell, Raboteau, Pipes, and LaRue. These scholars recognize the relevance of classic rhetoric in the examination of discourse strategies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century black preaching, as they also present additional theoretical models that explicate the distinctive features of African American rhetoric employed in black sermons.

Hood's Homiletics in Context

The sermons included in this chapter appear in Bishop J.W. Hood's two volumes of sermons entitled *The Negro in the Christian Pulpit; or, The Two Characters and Two Destinies, as Delineated in Twenty-one Practical Sermons* (1884) and *Sermons* (1908). Hood's first book includes an "Apology" where he explains his reasons for publishing such a work. He first notes "the absolute absence of such a work from the pen of a colored Methodist minister" (7). Although Hood was not the first African American minister to publish his sermons—individually in pamphlet form or as a collection—he was the first black Methodist minister to produce an entire volume.¹⁷ Renowned Pan-

¹⁷ Rev. Lemuel Haynes (1753-1833) is regarded as not only the first African American to be ordained by any religious denomination in America, but also the first African American pastor of an all-white church and the first African American to publish a sermon, *Universal Salvation* (1795). John Marrant (1775-1790) published a sermon in

Africanist and intellectual godfather of W.E.B. DuBois, Episcopal minister Rev.

Alexander Crummell (1819-1898) published the first volume of sermons authored by an African American, *The Greatness of Christ and other Sermons* (1882), preceding Hood's publication by only two years. Like Crummell, Hood recognized and responded to the great demand for African American pulpit performances to be "put in the form of a book for public criticism" (*Sermons* 7). In this regard, Hood and Crummell joined an extensive and esteemed legacy of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English and American ministers who flourished during the "golden age of English pulpit oratory" (Downey 3). During this period when sermonic literature was both popular and lucrative, Methodist and Puritan ministers as well as "religious-minded laity" published more sermons than in any other period in history, some for literary pleasure-reading, others for spiritual deliverance (Downey 3).

Clearly, Hood studied some of these texts because his "Apology" explicitly differentiates the purposes for his publication from those of the "golden age" of pulpit writing. Hood did not publish his sermons to enjoy popularity or prominence; his reasons were practical and pedagogical. Once more, Hood shows the belletristic influence of Blair, who believed that "effective writing is learned through studying examples of effective writing" (Berlin 25). In the same vein Hood writes, "In the course of studies laid down for our candidates for the ministry, the reading of sermons is included. It seems to me that if we require our young men to read printed sermons, we ought to produce them" (Hood, *Pulpit* 7). A staunch proponent of an educated ministry, Hood

London in 1785 and another is included with his journal, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful dealings with John Marrant, a Black (now going to preach the gospel in Nov published in 1790).*

believed the black church to be God's instrument for rearing African American leaders who would lead their people out of slavery; consequently, he outlined rigorous curricular guidelines for AME Zion seminarians, preparing them for their roles as preachers, community leaders, and intellectuals. Living during a period when black ministers participated heavily in civic affairs, Hood was dismayed by the few "intelligent leaders" of color active during the Reconstruction Period (Martin 16). Throughout his life Hood read incessantly and independently studied classic literature and languages; he expected no less from Zion's next generation of ministers.

In fact, as my analysis of his sermons demonstrates, Bishop Hood not only read sermons of his contemporaries and denominational forefathers, but he also kept abreast of current theological scholarship on interpretations of scripture. Two prominent theologians are referenced in Hood's sermons, Dr. Adam Clarke and Dr. Albert Barnes. A native of Ireland, Clarke preached and traveled with John Wesley in England and is regarded as the most notable Methodist minister to emerge following Wesley's death (Gallagher *i*). Clarke's magnum opus, *A Commentary on the Bible*, published in 1810, distinguished him as a serious and erudite biblical scholar whose diligence (he spent forty years composing eight volumes of commentary) reflected his earnest concern for the theological education of ministers and laity. Likewise, Albert Barnes published commentaries on the Bible that enjoyed widespread popularity in Europe and the U.S. A Presbyterian minister, staunch abolitionist, and advocate of total abstinence from alcohol, Barnes delivered a series of lectures on "Christian Evidence" at Union Theological Seminary in 1868 that were later published in book form. In addition to reading Barnes's

biblical commentaries, Hood likely read these lectures, as the titles of and argumentative points within his sermons indicate.¹⁸

Having read broadly, deeply, and critically the most popular theological texts of his day, Hood was a conscientious thinker and writer whose sermons reflect negotiations between his scriptural interpretation and homiletic style and appropriations of the conventional and popular. While Hood certainly distanced himself from the secular-oriented motives of some popular sermon publications of the eighteenth century, doubtlessly he emulated the compositional styles and topographical designs reminiscent of Puritan and Methodist sermons. The titles of his books and sermons, the design of his opening title page, and the outlined numbering format of individual sermons (three headings with three subheadings) strongly resemble those of earlier sermon publications. For example, the sermon excerpted below, written by Rev. John Gibbon, a Puritan minister of Cambridge, is entitled “HOW MAY WE BE SO SPIRITUAL, AS TO CHECK SIN IN THE FIRST RISINGS OF IT?” The sermon includes an epigraph from Galatians 5:16, which reads, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

My text presents us with it resolved in this excellent rule of sanctification:
“Walk in the Spirit,” &c. Wherein we have,

- I. The principle and root of sin and evil,--the flesh with its lusts.
- I. The opposite principle and root of life and righteousness,--the Divine Spirit.
- III. The terms and bounds of a Christian’s conquest, how far he may hope for victory: “Ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”
- IV. The method and way of conquering: “Walk in the Spirit.” Of each a word:--

¹⁸ While Hood shared much in common with the social, political, and theological ideologies of Clarke and Barnes, he states that he did not always concur with their readings of scripture, as he emphasizes the authority and merit of his particular position.

The outline above presents the structural “bones” of the sermon that Rev. Gibbon systematically fleshes out with enumerated points under the subheadings: “doctrine,” an exegesis of the thematic phrase, “Walk in the Spirit”; “rules,” scriptural passages that prescribe how one should govern themselves in accordance with the key commandment, “Walk in the Spirit”; “information,” a summation of the key claims presented in the sermon through scripture; and “exhortation,” a final persuasive appeal to the congregation on how to practically and actively “Walk in the Spirit.” Gibbon’s sermon structurally and linguistically strives for cogency as he evinces numerous well-supported claims with reasons backed by scripture and examples applicable to seventeenth-century English Puritans. The outline of his sermon explicitly portrays the logos-centric nature of his exhortation—weighted with divisions, or “heads,” and subdivisions as well as accompanying phrases to remind his congregants where he is and where he is going with his argument/sermon. He uses phrases such as: “We are to learn hence,” “Let me now persuade the practice of these holy rules,” and “Let me press this with a few considerations” (Roberts 109-111).

However, in some ways the structure and format of Hood’s sermons more closely resemble those of famed Methodist minister John Wesley, who published four volumes of sermons in 1771, entitled *Sermons on Several Occasions*. Even the page layout of Hood’s book of sermons appears to emulate Wesley’s. For instance, a page from Wesley’s *Sermons* appears as such:

SERMON X

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

DISCOURSE I.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Romans viii. 16 (111).

Likewise, a page from Hood’s *The Negro in the Christian Pulpit*, appears as such:

SERMON VII.

ON EASTER.

“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” Matt. Xxviii, 6 (90).

In nearly identical fashions, both Wesley and Hood construct multi-headed sermons with numerous subdivisions—often prefaced with rhetorical questions that are subsequently answered through examples from and explications of scripture—and prefer similar transitional phrases to introduce their points of emphasis. In Wesley we read, “I. 1. Let us First consider” (112) and “It remains only to draw some practical inferences from the preceding considerations” (94). In a similar vein, we read in Hood, “I. Let us consider THE IMAGINARY GAIN” (*Pulpit* 139) and “But I have hope that many are so far convinced that they will follow us prayerfully as we advance in the further consideration of this important truth” (154). Thus, Hood evidently appropriated not only the idiomatic repertoire of reputable eighteenth-century Methodist and Puritan ministers, but emulated the topography of their published sermons as well. These surface-level similarities simply suggest that Hood did not invent his own sermonic style; he appropriated the homiletic structures of other educated ministers who enjoyed success in publishing their

sermons, as he wanted his books to receive recognition for their originality in thought (not necessarily design) and warrant public scrutiny that would reveal his formidable intellectual and ministerial capacities. Moreover, as my rhetorical analysis of his sermons suggests, like most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglo-American preachers, authors, and intellectuals, Bishop Hood also utilized classic rhetorical principles in his writings.

Bishop Hood, however, was not the first African American minister to borrow from his white preaching contemporaries (whether topographically or structurally), nor was he the first black minister to employ classic rhetorical concepts in his sermons. Situating Hood in a black preaching tradition in America places him in a lineage of African American ministers dating back to the late eighteenth century, with varying levels of literacy and education, representing different denominations, living in varied social and historical contexts, and preaching to diverse audiences—all of which comprise a heritage full of originality, theological profundity, and persuasive power. The most critical characteristic, however, that distinguishes or divides this ancestry into two lines is education. Preaching style, content, and structure are quite distinct with regard to the black preacher's familiarity with the written word and his/her exposure to theological doctrines, hermeneutics, and literary and rhetorical concepts. Hood and some educated black preachers of his time comprise a homiletic tradition separate from folk preachers, one that relies more heavily on reason-based persuasion rather emotional. I do not wish, however, to schematize black preaching traditions by strictly correlating reason-based sermons with educated ministers and emotional sermons with non-educated folk ministers. Nineteenth-century black preachers with diverse educational backgrounds

utilized both logical and pathetic appeals in their sermons to suit specific occasions for particular audiences (see Introduction). Depending on the occasion an educated black preacher could preach a highly emotional sermon, just as an illiterate folk preacher might use logical appeals to illustrate a point. What conjoins black preachers in America, however, is a deep-felt identification with the plight of oppressed African Americans, a consubstantial connection with a downcast people who desperately needed to hold onto their faith in God in order to survive and eventually rise above their circumstances. Or, LaRue states, what distinguishes black preachers from European ministers and enmeshes them in a unique preaching heritage is an Afrocentric hermeneutic proclaiming that God “acts mightily on their behalf” (19).

There are few but significant pieces of evidence to help us situate Hood within AME Zion’s homiletic tradition. One of the most telling documents is Hood’s letter to Rev. Corbert, discussed earlier, where Hood attributes his “success” as a preacher to the influence of his mentor Rev. Samuel M. Giles. Rev. Hood’s success refers to his effectiveness as a preacher and his accomplishments an exemplary leader whose piety, progressive ideas, intelligence and usefulness enabled him to make an impact on the Church’s ministry and institutional development. Rev. Giles was his model. Furthermore, in Hood’s *One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*, he not only highlights Giles as one of the most noteworthy preachers of Zion’s “Developing Period: 1821-1863,” but he also gives a detailed description of Rev. Giles’s preaching style. He writes:

The ministers of the period were, as a rule, good preachers; few of them were what would be called brilliant men, but a large portion of them could preach a good sensible sermon. Some were powerful, awakening preachers; sinners could not listen without being affected to such a degree

that it was impossible for them to hide it. Rev. Samuel L. Giles was a reasoner of great force; his sermons were well arranged, logical and forcible. They were generally laid off in from three to five general divisions, with a large number of subdivisions, and his entire discourse would have looked well in print. (84)

Regarded as the “best preacher the Church has produced,” Giles commanded respect from Hood and his peers by virtue of his “well arranged, logical, and forcible” sermons. As a model “reasoner,” Giles composed “sensible sermons” that taught his listeners how to reason themselves—how to understand the *reasoning* inherent in Scripture as well as how to use God’s Word with *reason*. As my analysis of Hood’s sermons shows, he clearly emulated Giles’s logical structural design in his sermons, which, as I mentioned earlier, was not unique to Giles but typical of most white Methodist ministers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who were concerned with “methods” and principles to live, teach, and preach by. This quote sheds light on how Hood could have encountered published sermons—through his interactions with Giles, who was appointed supervision over Zion’s Book Concern and Publication House in 1856 (Walls 336). A voracious reader, Hood had a model in his mind of a good printed and he wished that his mentor had published his own.

In another section of Hood’s historiography of the AME Zion church he continues to praise Giles’s talents, as it “seems demanded:”

He was a fine scholar, and one of the most lucid preachers we ever listened to....He held the interest of his congregation by what he said. Every time he spoke he said something, and something which came so natural and so well in place that it seemed as if nothing else could have suited so well....He was among the best writers the connection has produced; he wrote rapidly, and the best language was so ready at command that he seldom had to rewrite. (*One Hundred Years* 103)

This quote corroborates my claim that listening to “lucid preachers” influenced Hood’s development as a homiletician and here he provides the prototype. No wonder that Zion leaders deemed Giles a “theological instructor” (Walls 132). Hood’s comments also voice his belief that a message should be memorable and meaningful, concise and clear. His focus on Giles’s writing abilities exposes how important the art of writing was to Hood, as his publications exhibit his resolute efforts to use the “best language” as well as his disciplinary regimen to rewrite if necessary.

A second source that showcases which AME Zion ministers Hood regarded for their exemplary preaching is his first volume of published sermons, which includes sermons from four other Zion bishops. Examining the profiles and sermons of these bishops reveals Hood’s criteria for featuring these preachers and their particular sermons in his book. All four ministers were educated men who played significant roles in the growth of the denomination, particularly in the South, and all were known for their distinguished preaching. Hood also carefully chose different genres of sermons among these men; each sermon exhibits how the preacher perceived the construction and purpose of a sermon. In effect, Hood wanted to portray the rich diversity in AME Zion’s preaching tradition.

A brief sketch of each featured minister is in order. Bishop J.J. Moore (1804-1893), known as the “silver tongued” orator and founder of the first black school on the West Coast, knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and could quote long biblical passages without notes or manuscript (Walls 164-166). Hood states that Bishop Moore was widely regarded as the most renowned preacher of the Pacific Coast and “some spoke of him as the greatest preacher, regardless of color.” Moore’s “eloquence was enrapturing, and his

imaginative and descriptive powers were marvelous” (*One Hundred Years* 177). While pastor of Big Wesley Church in Philadelphia, congregants described Bishop Moore as “one of the most eloquent divines of the present day...elevated in his views of enlightened Christianity and religious duties” and “gifted with a sound education” (Walls 164). In Moore’s “The Unpardonable Sin” we find a logically divided composition that fits Hood’s description of Rev. Giles’s sermons. Moore opens with an explication of the “three classes of sin in which men may put themselves beyond God’s pardoning mercy in this life...” (Hood, *Pulpit* 307) He then divides the third sin, blasphemy, into two heads that explain the “nature of the act of blasphemy,” each with numerous subdivisions. Topographically, the sermon resembles a descriptive outline, much like those published by white Methodists of his time. Consider the following excerpt as it appears in Hood’s book:

- First, we notice the feeling or disposition that incited them to that act of blasphemy.
- (1.) The feeling of *malevolence or extreme hatred*: as the Scripture states, “They hated me without a cause.”
 - (2.) They were prompted by a spirit of *arrogance or pride*. They were too proud to admit the divine work of the Saviour.
 - (3.) It was prompted by a *deliberate, determinate obstinacy*, to resist every evidence of Christ’s being the Son of God.

Rhetorically, it is carefully ordered and logical; it “sounds” like a lecture, as if delivered in a “matter of fact” tone. Moore’s experience as a masterful teacher and school-planter is evident in this sermon, for he teaches about moral virtue while he preaches on the dangerous consequences of spiritual “reprobacy.” Perhaps he believed his presentation of the facts concerning blasphemy to be fearful enough—thus, additional emotional appeals were superfluous.

While Moore's composition represents a tightly structured and instructive sermonic lecture, Bishop J.P. Thompson's homily is a complete contrast—a descriptive narrative full of emotion and imagination. A theologian, medical physician, and abolitionist (he served as superintendent of the Underground Railroad with Rev. Jermain Loguen), Bishop Thompson (1818-1894) delivered sermons with “animation and zeal,” often “attract[ing] much attention and drawing large crowds to hear him” (Hood, *One Hundred Years* 188-191). In “The First Pair Banished,” Thompson grips his audience with imagistic and pathos-laden scenes of Adam and Eve as they dealt with their expulsion from Paradise. He shouts, “How changed their condition!” and “How appalling the scene” (*Pulpit* 315-316)! He also bemoans, “How solemn their reflection as they cast a lingering look upon their forfeited inheritance” and “Their thoughts were turned upon themselves—reflections upon their own melancholy future...and a burden of grief, almost intolerable, overwhelmed them” (317-319). Relying on inductive reasoning, Thompson's sermon is not without logical appeals, for it utilizes identification to invite his parishioners into the sinful state of the “first pair,” which mirrors their own. The listeners' vicarious experience of “banishment” provokes them to logically conclude that living sinfully “robs [them] of the promised inheritance—the Eden on high” (321). In concluding, Thompson explains, “This awful banishment is recorded for our instruction and improvement” (320), thus revealing the purpose of his sermon and the rationale for his narrative strategy: Adam and Eve's story was recorded to instruct and warn future generations. The preacher's task is to re-tell and remind us of these stories. Hood chose Thompson's sermon to exemplify this particular style of effective and affective

preaching, even though it rhetorically, structurally, and topographically stands apart from his and those from other preachers in his book.

Balancing logical and emotional appeals in a powerful message of inspiration and wise counsel, Bishop Thomas H. Lomax (1832-1908) composed a sermon that resembles Rev. Jones's "Thanksgiving Sermon," though more intellectually scrupulous. A founder of several schools in North Carolina and responsible for the massive expansion of Zion in the South, Lomax was a "plain, practical, orthodox, unpretending, and earnest" preacher with a "magnetic" appeal (Walls 580; Hood *One Hundred Years* 191-195). Bishop Hood, in fact, thought so highly of him that he not only licensed Lomax to preach but also put him in charge of organizing schools and conferences in North Carolina (where Hood served as Assistant Superintendent of State Board of Education). Lomax's sermon, "The Love of God—Its Objects, Gift, and Design" includes several rhetorical questions that he addresses within six subject heads, each with their own enumerated claims and support. While he methodically and thoroughly explains the mystery and *reasons*—or, in his words, "objects" and "design"—for God's love, he also complements these rational arguments with hymnal verses about the "gift" of God's "infinite grace." He proclaims, "What infinite grace in this amazing love of God! Let me sing, 'Thou shalt walk in robes of glory; Thou shalt wear a golden crown; Thou shalt sing redemption's song, With saints around the throne'" (*Pulpit* 327). Emotionally charged hymns appear at the end of each subject head, thereby creating a crescendo at several points during the sermon and closing with a climactic choral song. Hence, Lomax presents a hybrid sermon, if you will, that combines folk sermon elements that stir the spirit with reason-based appeals that exercise the mind.

The four ministers featured in Hood's book exhibit a range of preaching styles and homiletic genres, all presented as exemplars for Zion's seminarians; however, I believe Hood purposefully concludes with Bishop S.T. Jones's sermons. Although Jones (1825-1891) entered the ministry with "scarcely the rudiments of an English education," he worked diligently to become literate and, thus, qualify himself for the important duties of his calling (Walls 577). Jones learned English so well that he "could select the most choice and fitting words to express his ideas and could form the most beautiful and expressive sentences" (Hood, *One Hundred Years* 178). He was also multi-lingual, able to converse in French and German as well as read Latin. During his 23 years of service as a bishop, fellow Zionites considered him an "eloquent and finished" pulpit orator and "broad and lucid" writer (Walls 577). Hood's remarks about Bishop Jones indicate why two of his sermons appear in Hood's collection:

He was a fine and logical reasoner, and as a theologian he was entirely safe. He was original without being wild. He kept to the old beaten path of Methodism, but he was constantly bringing to view new beauties along that old path. We never knew him to make a theological utterance which seemed to us unsound. (*One Hundred Years* 178-179)

Evidently, Bishop Jones represented what Hood deemed a "first rank" traditional Methodist preacher endowed with "original" thought and the "new beauties" of a visionary who could prepare the Church for the next century. Moreover, Jones's sermons exemplify the curricular standards of theologically sound preaching.

Bishop Jones's two sermons are unique among the others in Hood's collection because they were the only ones written for commemorative occasions. Jones preached the first, "A Farewell Delivered Before the Kentucky Conference," on June 6, 1866 in Louisville, Kentucky at AME Zion's third southern conference where several "pioneer

preachers” and “distinguished visitors” attended, including Jermain W. Loguen (Walls 194). Reports recorded in Hood’s *One Hundred Years* indicate that this particular conference experienced “conflicts and trials” that caused a schism, eventually resulting in the formation of the Colored Episcopal Church (328). Jone’s sermon directly addresses issues at the root of these conflicts. Based on Ephesians 4:3, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” this sermon admonishes the conference attendees who allowed “the spirit of bitter contention, which distracts the church,” to lead to “division, envy, and unholy strife” (*Pulpit* 338). Relying primarily on ethical and logical appeals, Jones divides this sermon into three heads, all of which address the topic of “unity.” The third section “inquires *into the method of maintaining*” Christian unity, “its spiritual nature and its entire practicability” (*Pulpit* 348). Discussing “practicability” is Jones’s *modus operandi* for inculcating important principles about character development. He references numerous biblical characters who overcame differences in “color, in tastes, in conditions and circumstances in life” to prove the feasibility of achieving unity among AME Zion’s brethren. Hence, Jones uses logic to induce a moral feeling among his colleagues, hoping they would understand that achieving unity would “serve the cause of God and advance the interest of Zion” (351).

Jones’s delivered his second featured sermon, “The Good Samaritan,” in Knoxville, Tennessee before the Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria, a racially integrated secret society whose purpose was “to reclaim the inebriate from his lost condition and restore him to society” (Palmer 209).¹⁹ Although

¹⁹ Without an exact date for this sermon, the racial make-up of Jones’s audience cannot be determined, since white members of the Good Samaritans withdrew in 1877 when the increase in black membership precluded equal representation and a black National Grand Sire was elected (Palmer 209).

Hood does not provide a date for this text, Jones very likely preached to the Good Samaritans between 1872 and 1882 while he served as president of the Tennessee Conference, seated in Knoxville (*One Hundred Years* 336-337). This sermon resembles Hood's theologically and rhetorically. Based on Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, found in Luke 10:30-37, Jones employs numerous ethical appeals to inspire the cultivation of character and the maintenance of moral fortitude and personal integrity. He states, "Nothing seems more evident than that the Saviour designs to teach us in this narration that there is a wide contrast between the mere forms and ceremonies of Christianity and the reality of it" (*One Hundred Years* 355). He challenges his listeners to be what they claim to be, Christians and philanthropists, and practice what they preach. This society announced that it would "promulgate the causes of charity and temperance and spread the principles of true philanthropy" (Palmer 209). In order to achieve these goals, Jones proclaims that "burning eloquence" would not suffice; instead, "practical sympathy—action, and not words are required" (*One Hundred Years* 356).

Like Hood, Jones champions ethical appeals that provoke a moral feeling; he motivates his congregants to want to do what is right and good in God's eyes. In the final section of this sermon he writes,

Such, my hearers, is the practical philanthropy which the religion of Christ infuses into the hearts of all who possess that religion; such is the example of our divine Lord and Master, and such is the religion of the Bible. It matters little what is our creed, our office and standing, our gifts and qualifications, our nationality or complexion, our church relations and religious zeal or our claims to piety—it matters not by what name, order or association we are known—if we lack this practical humanity, this genuine philanthropy, this distinguishing mark of Christian character, we are wanting in the most essential element on which to base our claims to eternal life. (*Pulpit* 362)

For Jones “practical” means principled action. Similar to his chastising remarks towards Zion’s prideful leaders attending the Kentucky Conference, who rested on the laurels of high position and authority, here he goes further by suggesting that self-proclaimed humanitarians and philanthropists prove the genuineness of their hearts through work and not words; such is the “distinguishing mark of Christian character.” This quote also evidences Jones’s rhythmic use of parallelisms and anaphora. In fact, of the three clearly delineated sections of this sermon the third is the most eloquent—filled with long strings of anaphoric phrases that arouse a moral feeling to perform “acts of humanity” as Good Samaritans should. Rather than appealing to the emotions for the sake of catharsis or to induce shouting and dancing, his multiple series of cadenced declarations evoke a sense of moral obligation to strive for a Christ-like character and provoke his listeners to “imitate, in all your intercourses with mankind, the example of the great prototype of the Good Samaritan—Jesus Christ” (*Pulpit* 363).

Hence, the sermons of Hood’s handpicked group of preeminent Zion ministers show us what types of exhortations he heard during his ministerial career that likely influenced his own style as well as what he considered sermon models for Zion’s future generation of preachers. My brief characterizations of these sermons shed more light on Hood’s, allowing us to more critically consider what he contributed to AME Zion’s homiletic tradition. In addition, my consideration of Hood’s predecessors and contemporaries of other denominations even further sharpens our lens for analyzing his sermons, thereby facilitating a more informed placement of his preaching style within the broader contexts of African American rhetoric and black preaching.

Hood's Audience and Context

The congregations addressed in Bishop Hood's sermons consisted of black North Carolinians in Fayetteville, Charlotte, Raleigh, and New Berne as well as blacks in Virginia and South Carolina. As mentioned earlier, Hood traveled extensively throughout the South between 1864 and 1908, at times preaching at three churches in three cities in a single day. Because Hood's books do not indicate the places and dates of each sermon it is not feasible to determine which audience he preached to in each occasion. Very few sermons contain definitive clues that locate them at a specific place. To evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of Hood's preaching, one must have a sense of audience for which he crafted his sermons and catered his persuasive appeals. Here I will briefly characterize the social, political, and economic conditions of free blacks and former slaves in North Carolina during the antebellum and Reconstruction periods, shedding some light on the congregations Hood most likely faced.

Considered one of the most liberal states in the South on racial issues during the Reconstruction period, North Carolina ranked sixth among the slaveholding states (total population of slaves) and inhabited more free blacks than any state south of its border (Alexander xiv, Franklin 6).²⁰ In contrast to most southern states, the "laxity" of "free Negro" legislation in North Carolina allowed blacks more freedom, albeit a "quasi-freedom," that enabled them to own property, enjoy gainful employment, acquire apprenticeships for highly skilled jobs, operate their own public schools, exercise the right to a trial by jury, and even run for public office (Franklin 222-225). In fact, between

²⁰ In 1860, more than 70 per cent of the free black population in North Carolina consisted of mulattos; most were the offspring of white men and slave women, and a significant number were emancipated by their fathers (Franklin 35).

1874 and 1898 four blacks won office to the House and “hundreds of others held lesser positions” (Anderson x). North Carolina’s free black population ranked second (3.3 percent of the state’s total population and 8.4 percent of the total black population) among the Confederate states, which partly explains its “moderate temperament” as well as the upsurge of black leaders following the Civil War. Even while striving to achieve “true freedom” blacks “showed surprisingly little vindictiveness” towards whites” (Alexander 13). During the statewide Freedmen’s Convention in 1865 one delegate stated: “born upon the same soil, and brought up in intimacy of relationship unknown to any other society, we have formed attachments for the white race which must be as enduring as life, and we can conceive of no reason...[why anyone] should now sever the kindly ties which have so long united us” (13). Many black leaders chosen as delegates to this convention espoused similar sentiments, as they hoped whites would perceive them as peaceful people with “no intention of stirring up strife” (15).

In addition to conducting several demonstrations, celebratory parades, and meetings to show their unified demands and qualifications for equal rights and abilities to organize in an “orderly” democratic fashion, North Carolina blacks established independent churches that played major roles in statewide social and political affairs regarding their upward mobility. Bishop Hood, president of North Carolina’s Freedman’s Convention in 1865, pastored New Berne’s AME Zion Church, the largest black congregation in the state, and urged Zion members and freedman to “harmonize our feelings as much as possible, and treat all men respectfully” (Alexander 24-25); while, at the same time, he insisted that blacks get an education, secure jobs, and live morally upright lives so that whites would, in turn, treat them respectfully. Black churches in

North Carolina used Sunday School as a vehicle for not only teaching children and adults about the Bible but also to increase their overall literacy, inculcate principles on how to live prudently in preparation for life as a citizen, and provide a nurturing space where self-respect could be fostered. North Carolina blacks were eager to learn and, unlike most southern states, enjoyed adequate state-run educational facilities. In fact, between 1880 and 1900 black illiteracy decreased from 77.4 percent to 47.6 percent (Logan 214).

Upon reading the sermons Hood preached to black North Carolinians—presuming that the conscientious rhetorical design of his sermons *reflect* his audience—one can assume a relatively moderate level of education among them given the evident competency of Hood’s prose. In one sense, Hood’s sermons *required* literacy, as he often alluded to specific, at times obscure, historical and biblical figures and events, posed questions about current political matters, read excerpts from traditional Wesleyan Methodist hymnals (as opposed to traditional African American spirituals), and employed a somewhat sophisticated vocabulary. On the other hand, he likely wished to raise the level of cultural and verbal literacy among his congregants, for he often used sermons to teach lessons on history and language. In both cases, Hood’s sermons expose his earnest expectations regarding his listeners’ secular knowledge and sacred attunement. He sought to shape their minds as he nurtured their souls, composing carefully organized and logical sermons full of spiritual and practical wisdom that his listeners could use for the purpose of constructing dignified and morally upright identities, while living in circumstances that denied them of such noble qualities.²¹ In sum, while I cannot definitively characterize Bishop Hood’s various congregations beyond these

²¹ In my section on *pathos* in Hood’s sermons I characterize the psychological state and spiritual condition of his congregations.

generalizations, I would argue that the nature and *ethos* inherent in the language and structure of his sermons show us who he wished his audiences to become.

Rhetorical Analysis: *Ethos*

In *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, Andre' Resner outlines the historical tension between rhetoric and theology in regards to the preacher's person—rooted in Greek, Roman, and Augustinian rhetorical theories—and how the preacher's *ethos* functions in preaching. While most homileticsians follow in the theoretical footsteps of Aristotle by concluding that the “person of the preacher, as with any orator, is perhaps the most important factor in the persuasion of the hearers,” others, operating within a theological framework, contend that “since preaching is nothing less than God's word for which God alone is responsible and which God alone makes efficacious, then any talk of the human person making the word ‘more efficacious’ is idolatrous” (Resner 134). Rooted in a rhetorical framework, my analysis of Hood's sermons considers *ethos* in light of its classical conceptions, as eighteenth and nineteenth-century Protestant preachers, for the most part, embraced and employed more rhetorically grounded conceptions of *ethos*. According to Russell Hirst in “*Ethos* and the Conservative Tradition in Nineteenth-Century American Protestant Homiletics,” “Since the most fundamental purpose of pulpit oratory was to move auditors to emulate the Christian character displayed in the pulpit, the audience's perception of the nature of that character was the most important persuasive element in sacred oratory” (294). Hirst rightly observes that nineteenth-century preachers (and their audiences) did not restrict *ethos* to the minister's perceived persona during the preaching event, it also included “the reputation the preacher brought with him into the pulpit and the bonds of trust and love

generated by his personal ministrations to his flock” (299). In a similar vein, Lois Agnew’s examination of John Wesley’s sermons in “The Centrality of *Ethos* in Eighteenth-Century Methodist Preaching” reveals how preachers build ethos “through sharing his or her personality in a manner that connects with the audience, a strategy that actively engages audience members in appreciating the value of a message delivered by a speaker dedicated to addressing their concerns on multiple levels” (60). Agnew reminds us that the degree to which a preacher establishes identification (i.e., a “personal connection”) with his congregation correlates directly with how it responds emotionally to his message, thereby suggesting that Aristotle’s three proofs do not, after all, operate in isolation of one another. The antecedent ethos formed through a preacher’s “personal ministrations to his flock” prior to the sermon enhances the proclivity of an audience to be emotionally provoked during worship. When a preacher’s sermon addresses his congregation’s specific concerns and needs, when his sermon is exigent, the congregation senses his “good will” and puts more confidence in his character. Thus, if a minister’s congregation is moved by his character and believes him to embody the truths he inculcates, then they would be more inspired to live by The Word.

In his discussion of the ethical appeal in “old-time Negro preaching,” William Pipes notes that: “For the Negro preacher the concept of ‘character’ as a means of persuasion means the total man; the old-time Negro preacher is not merely a speaker with a speech: he is the ‘Man of God’ with God’s message to men — the instrument through which the Father talks to His children” (90). Hence, by virtue of his pastoral role alone the black preacher embodies ethos. Despite his obvious human fallibilities, the congregation’s belief that he is “called” to preach by God necessarily warrants his upright

moral standing. As a spiritual authority and vessel through which God speaks, black ministers oftentimes suggestively authenticate their credibility by openly declaring that their words are, in fact, God's words. Bruce Rosenberg, in *The Art of the American Folk Preacher*, describes how preachers commonly insist that they are divinely inspired:

Every oral preacher insists that his sermon material comes from God. There is no question in his mind about that . . . he knows that God has driven him to deliver that particular sermon on that particular day, even to choosing the passages from Scripture that he will use or quote; and most important, at the moment of performance God, and God alone, will inspire him to say the words that he will actually use. (27)

The divine genesis of a sermon in the African American preaching tradition not only affirms the preacher's calling to the ministry, but it also validates his access into the mind of God and his intuitive sense of God's time and timeliness, or *kairos*. In black preaching, nothing is incidental. That is, a providentially moved minister attuned to *kairos* will preach what God ordains as the appropriate and perfect message for a specific congregation, during a chosen occasion, and for a particular purpose. Or, as theologian Richard Eslinger puts it in the negative, "If the Spirit of God has not led a man or woman to preach on a particular text at a particular occasion, then that person should really refrain from the pulpit until a more providential season" (119). Not often does a minister "refrain from the pulpit" and call into question his qualification as God's messenger. Nor does every pastor, who delivers a sermon every week before his own congregation, always declare his credibility to deliver the word of God; it might seem self-aggrandizing and even superfluous. One might think that if he brings attention to himself by stating his special and privileged position as a 'messenger of God' then he could possibly lose the respect of his parish — thus damaging his ethos through self-glorification. However,

African-American ministers historically have, and still do, at times make such intimations during their sermons, but in a strategic manner.

An eminent political leader, educator, and preacher, Bishop Hood's reputation preceded him no matter what congregation he faced. His ethos was impeccable. In Rev. William J. Simmons's seminal text *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising*, he writes of Hood: "He has a large amount of what is called character" (133). Likewise, A.M.E. Zion minister and church historian Rev. J.J. Moore affirms that Bishop Hood's "Christian integrity stood unimpeached" (375). Carter G. Woodson, regarded as the "Father of Black History," describes Bishop Hood as "one of the most influential men of color in the United States" in *History of the Negro Church* (214). However, Hood did not see his national reputation in socio-political affairs as a qualification for his call to preach the Gospel, for in some sermons he would allude to his role as a divinely inspired minister. In "Loss of First Love," Hood explains how the message for that day came to him:

A little over a month ago, while steaming down the Tar river, on board the steamer Greenville, I was studying this passage, not with a view of preaching from it at any time, but simply for my own edification. I was suddenly impressed, however, with the idea that I was called upon to bear the message contained in the text to this church. This church, or its condition, had not been in my thoughts during that day, or for days, until that moment, but the impression was so vivid, that I felt it my duty . . . to discourse from this subject. I confess that a very different subject would have been my choice, had I been left to select without any special inspiration. Nevertheless, I think it best to follow the dictates of the Holy Spirit. The more I thought about this subject, the more I felt the burden of the message resting upon me. Nor did I feel relief until I began to write down the cogitations of my heart. (*Pulpit* 250)

Hood's declaration that his message for that day is the product of "special inspiration" from the Holy Spirit demonstrates the most explicit ethical appeal in this narrative

vignette. Arguably, his humble account of how he received a message from God does not wax dramatic, as does Moses' supernatural encounter with the "burning bush" and other accounts of divine interposition characteristic of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century spiritual narratives, which use affected phrases such as bolts of light, darting of the soul, or striking of the spirit. Rather, Hood simply states, "I was suddenly impressed"; and in a sincere and forthright manner he confesses: "this church, or its condition, had not been in my thoughts during that day, or for days." This suggests that God interrupted his private thoughts to remind him of his "calling" as a minister, that is, of his instrumentality as a conduit between Creator and created, as it also establishes identification between him and his congregation. While discerning the needs of and edifying his own spirit God "suddenly impressed" him with the notion that what he needs and feeds his soul is and should be shared with his congregation. After all, they are one in the body of Christ, feeding from the same fountain of fellowship. Several other points effectively boost his ethos as well. First, Hood states that he did not originally intend to preach the given passage, but was studying it simply for his own "edification." This remark suggests to the congregation that he is a pious Christian honestly seeking to improve himself and live righteously. He is truly immersed in the Word of God, thus reminding others of his qualification to be called a "man of God." This establishes identification with his congregants who would infer that they, too, should strive to become spiritually "girded" with the Word, using Hood as a model. Hence, God makes Hood "consubstantial"²² with his flock by feeding them the same spiritual food. Furthermore, Hood expresses that he

²² Here I use Kenneth Burke's notion of consubstantiality: "To identify A with B is to make A 'consubstantial' with B...A doctrine of *consubstantiality* may be necessary to any way of life...and a way of life is an *acting-together*; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*."

felt it his “duty” to “follow the dictates of the Holy Spirit”— which meant preaching the sermon that was “given” to him by God. This statement affirms his station as an obedient servant of God, one who allows himself to be used as an instrument of God, as it also reinforces the impression of his humility; he humbles himself before God by foregoing his own will (to preach a different sermon) in order to follow the “dictates of the Holy Spirit.” As a man who normally follows the dictates of *kronos*, “man’s time,” he says that he would have chosen a “very different subject.” However, as a man of God, operating through *kairos*, he chose the subject commanded by God.

While establishing his authority as an ordained and obedient servant of God might appear to distance him from his congregation, by virtue of his elevated spiritual role, Hood’s introductory remarks exemplify his strong identification with his people. As Mitchell states, “In the black preaching enterprise, the preacher’s preparation starts with close identity with his congregation...being black he could not escape having a part in their condition even if he wanted to” (103). Hood’s pastoral relationship with his community, much like that between a Good Shepherd and his flock, displays his good will, or *eunoia*, and his concern for their pains, struggles, triumphs, and joys—not only as oppressed people of color, but as persecuted people of God. Their social, political and psychological condition was his also. However, while he identifies with the plight of his people, he also assures them that as a “watchman” chosen by God he will exercise wisdom and foresight to protect them from evils threatening their welfare. In “The Earliest Gospel Symbol” he exhorts at length on the subject of intemperance, a vice that gripped and devastated newly freed black communities of the post-Emancipation era. He preaches:

A few weeks ago in the town of Charlotte, N.C., they held an election to Decide whether or not license should be granted to men, to deal out to that community “liquid damnation.” At this election, there were a number of persons, who professed to be Christians, that voted what they called “the wet ticket”—that is, they voted to license the sale of intoxicating drinks. I heard of one class-leader who voted the wet ticket. What shall we say of such a leader? Where is he leading the people to? Certainly, not into the true Gospel light, but into the darkness of intemperance. We would not sit in judgment upon the Christian character of our neighbors; but how a man, who supports the whiskey traffic, can imagine himself a Christian, is a mystery beyond my comprehension; and as a watchman upon the walls of Zion, I feel in duty bound to warn the people of the evils of the present day. I know of no evil so destructive to every interest of both soul and body, so wide in the extent of its ravages, so exacting in its demands, or so fearful in its consequences, as the evil of intemperance. We, as a race, have lately escaped from a bondage most oppressive, degrading, and evil in its consequences—a system denounced by a great and good man as the “sum of all villainies.” Whatever the evils of that system...and whatever were the horrors of the enslaved class, or the curses upon the slaveholder, yet the victims of that system were in no such evil case as are the victims of intemperance! (*Pulpit* 118-119)

Bishop Hood exudes an ethos laden with good will for his congregants, declaring his univocal moral purpose by rebuking the socio-political views of “professed” Christians who support “liquid damnation.” By questioning the values and judging the character of Christian leaders who lead people “into the darkness of intemperance” Hood implies that he is a trustworthy “watchman upon the walls of Zion.” Here, Bishop employs the Old Testament term “watchman” to describe his duty as a servant of God chosen to protect His people, a direct reference to the prophet Ezekiel whom God chose as “watchman for the house of Israel” (Ezekiel 33:7). In the Old Testament there are two principal kinds of watchmen—ones chosen by kings or army commanders, often called sentinels, and ones chosen by God as ministerial watchmen. Military watchmen were stationed along city walls in towers or guardhouses, with orders to warn city dwellers of potential danger or

maneuvers of approaching enemies.²³ On the other hand, a ministerial watchman's duty was quite serious and demanding, particularly for the nation of Israel, as God ordained prophets to protect His "chosen people" from physical and spiritual warfare. The prophet Ezekiel was one such watchman, chosen by God to warn the nation of Israel against falling into the pitfalls of wickedness.

I will include here the biblical passage from the Book of Ezekiel that Bishop Hood invokes in order to substantiate his role as "watchman upon the walls of Zion." Ezekiel 33:7-11 reads:

(7) Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. (8) When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. (9) But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself.

Son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?" ...Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

God bestows upon the prophet Ezekiel the responsibility of warning the house of Israel to turn from its wicked ways, and he holds Ezekiel accountable for their blood/death, as it affects his also. Of note is the distinction that God makes between exhorting and persuading. Ezekiel's duty is to warn and "dissuade him from his ways"; he is not liable for the house of Israel's sins if they choose not to heed God's command, and God does not judge him based on the results of his cautionary rhetoric. However, when Ezekiel pleads, "Our offenses and sins weigh us down and we are wasting away because of them," he expresses his consubstantial ties with the Israelites, maintaining his personal

²³ Examples of military watchmen are found in Song of Solomon 3:3, 5:7; Jeremiah 51:12, 2 Samuel 13:34, 18:24; and 2 Kings 9:17.

connection with his people and concern for their conjoined spiritual welfare. Even though God promises that he would be saved by fulfilling his duty as a ministerial watchman, Ezekiel would surely suffer to watch his people die for their evil ways.

Bishop Hood's words reflect the same gravity and earnestness evident in this passage from Ezekiel, thereby strengthening his ethos through identification with a biblical prophet. Like Ezekiel, Hood took his duty as watchman seriously, holding himself accountable for the "fearful" consequences that could destroy his people. Hood writes, "as a watchman upon the walls of Zion, I feel in duty bound to warn the people of the evils of the present day." Here, the figurative implications of "walls" resonate on multiple levels relevant to Hood's audience and he exploits these semantic nuances in order to demonstrate the concomitant roles he occupies as a "watchman." As a pastor Hood protects his church's (and his denomination's) walls by ensuring its autonomy and maintaining its status as a pillar of solidarity and beacon of authority within the community, while he also stands as a vigilant guard upon the community's walls, walls that were indeed vulnerable in the wake of the Civil War. Hood's censure of the "class-leader who voted the wet ticket" exhibits his critical view on a socio-political problem with ramifications affecting the welfare of the community and its members. In effect, Hood sounds his trumpet from atop the walls of Zion to warn his brethren of false prophets, i.e., "professed" Christian leaders, who would not lead his people "into the true Gospel light, but into the darkness of intemperance." Hood also avows that as a farsighted watchman he forewarns against an "evil [so] destructive to every interest of both soul and body," here referring to the "walls" of individual members, whose bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. By invoking I Corinthians 6:19, "Do you not know that

your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” Hood reminds his congregants that the Holy Spirit inhabits their bodies, which are temples/walls; therefore, they should honor God with their bodies by resisting the soul-ravaging effects of intemperance.

By addressing exigent matters relevant to the social conditions of his people, particularly intemperance, Bishop Hood employs “self-help rhetoric,” what Jacqueline Bacon describes as “moral advancement through education, economic self-sufficiency, and religious commitment” (23). Hood’s denunciation of Christian advocates of the “whiskey traffic” and his forewarnings of the dangers of intemperance show his efforts to elevate the ethos of his community, through the rhetoric of moral reform. Appealing to their religious values, Hood encourages his congregation to make stronger commitments to avoid the wickedness of “liquid damnation,” which would not only draw them closer to God but would also enable them to evade a *second* type of bondage, one even more oppressive than the institution of slavery. He forewarns:

Like the great red dragon that stood before the woman, this monster seems to have been waiting the results of the emancipation proclamation, that it might seize upon the freed people and enslave them again, before they were strong enough to resist its power. Our penitentiaries are filled with its victims. (*Pulpit* 120)

Like other African American reformers of the nineteenth century, such as William Whipper and William Watkins, Hood saw thousands of newly freed African Americans weak in moral fortitude, not “strong enough to resist” the tempting power of intemperance. Raising the community’s consciousness regarding an evil threatening its welfare, Bishop Hood calls for group solidarity, hoping that individual members would hold one another accountable for their behaviors and together stand against the “monster”

waiting to exploit their weakness. While invoking their consubstantiality as African Americans who “lately escaped from a bondage most oppressive” Hood assures them that he will steer them clear of the present “evil of intemperance,” which could “seize upon the freed people and enslave them again.” Thus, he addresses the concerns of his congregants on multiple levels—of soul, body, and social-political status.

Acknowledging their vulnerable state, he wants them to remain free, to resist the power of temptation, and to enjoy the blessed “results of the Emancipation Proclamation.” His congregants, thus, can appreciate the value of his message and regard him as a venerable leader worthy of their trust—for he is capable of ushering them beyond lurking temptations and pitfalls of the spirit and body and into the “true Gospel light.” He also proves his alignment with his flock. That is, as a black man he rode in the same boat with his people, suffering through the same storms of prejudice and social injustice; only he was the captain.

Returning to the above-cited passage from Hood’s homily, “Loss of First Love,” we find one of his most subtle and interesting ethical appeals. He describes the burdensome weight of God’s message upon receiving it and how he only felt relief after he had *written down* the “cogitations” of his heart. This more personal remark conveys Hood’s steadfast dedication and commitment to his ministry, while it also further warrants the validity of his experience with God — that is, his moment of divine inspiration seems less fleeting than it does persistent and laborious. Bishop Hood meditated deeply upon the message and even wrestled with it; and what ultimately

brought him peace was committing his heart's reflections to paper.²⁴ In this sense, Hood compares himself with divinely inspired writers of the Bible who describe a similar experience. For instance, David writes in Psalms 45:1: "My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer." Like David, Hood's act of writing down his meditations, in essence, makes permanent, tangible, and valid his experience of being "touched" by God. Again, this palpable encounter with God illustrates the temporal tension between Hood as kronos-driven man and Hood as kairos-governed servant of God. Kairos is "felt time," "measured in feelings, e.g. love, anxiety, or anticipation" (Baumer 133). It is God's appointed time when His purpose for mankind (or a specific person or group) is fulfilled through a particular event. Thus, the "burden of the message" that Hood describes represents the excitement and anticipation associated with the striking immediacy of God's word, which filled his heart. Recalling from the Ezekiel passage that the watchman is held accountable for the souls of the people if he fails to issue God's warning, the word "burden" also illustrates the psycho-spiritual weight of the prophet's/watchman's duty to deliver God's time-specific message to a targeted group of people. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah describes this type of burden (in the form of God's Word or message) from God: "His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot" (Jeremiah 20:9). Bishop Hood, like his biblical forefathers David and Jeremiah, received through his heart God's Word, the fiery burden of Truth that could not be contained, but demanded expression. This fire moved David to

²⁴ In the next section on *logos* I will discuss how Hood's homiletic composition from God's "special inspiration" exemplifies "invention."

compose eloquent psalms, provoked Jeremiah to fervently exhort, and “impressed” Hood to both write and preach the “cogitations of [his] heart.” In all three instances relief is felt upon release of God’s word. Consequently, Hood’s congregation would feel, receive, and be touched by the fire of the Holy Spirit through his sermon, thereby strengthening Hood’s ministerial ethos and the consubstantial ties between him and his audience as they are all consumed by God’s grace and love in the form of His Word, viz. Hood’s words.

Hood’s act of composition also demonstrates his commitment to insuring his experience with God: written documentation preserves what memory can lose.²⁵ Unlike many African American preachers of the antebellum period who preached extemporaneously, even if they were literate, Hood distinguished himself as a conscientious thinker and writer. He meditated deeply on how to put into human terms God’s ethereal message, that is, how to make it applicable to his congregation’s daily spiritual walk, one that involved constant struggle and hardship. Not a stranger to strife himself, Hood aligns himself through identification with his church members by addressing the most pressing matters relevant to their conjoined condition as neophytes of freedom. Invoking his God-given authority as pastor and watchman, Hood affirms his ethos by “following the dictates of the Holy Spirit” and allowing God to use him as an instrument to protect, prophesy, and preach--thus voicing God’s will and dramatically effecting the cosmos in which he and his people lived.

The authoritative and reflective “cogitations of [Hood’s] heart” convey that his experience of receiving God’s message not only stirred his emotions but involved his

²⁵ For Hood, transcribing and publishing his sermons ensures that Zion’s homiletic tradition is preserved and passed on to generations to come.

intellect as well. Besides being called by God to the ministry, Bishop Hood argued that one of the most critical qualifications for a Christian minister is his or her education, particularly his theological training. Biographical synopses of Hood's ministerial life point out his careful discernment when he first felt called to preach. Both Martin and Atticus G. Haygood, who wrote the Introduction to Hood's book of sermons, note that although Hood was called to the ministry at age twenty-one, he hesitated for three years due to his "unfitness for the work upon which he was about to enter" (*Pulpit* 4). Martin further states: "it is not clear whether Hood's understanding of being qualified referred to educational attainment or spiritual experience or both" (27). Nevertheless, Hood spent three years reading and studying voraciously to prepare for the possibility of entering what many considered a demanding profession, especially in the black community. The proof of Hood's ministerial and theological training is found in the detailed exegesis of scripture in his sermons and his numerous references to biblical commentaries. Hood was a biblical authority. The introductions to almost all of his printed sermons involve an explicative re-telling and historical contextualization of the biblical passage presented, including lessons on Hebrew and Greek language and customs, comparisons between historical and biblical accounts of particular events, and socio-rhetorical renderings of how certain epistles were probably received among targeted audiences.

Bishop Hood acquired his vast knowledge from diligent and expansive study: reading biblical commentaries and historical texts, studying Greek and Latin, and even comparing different translations of the Bible. For instance, in "Personal Consecration" Hood shows his understanding of Latin by illuminating the etymology of the word consecrate: "Consecrate is from the Latin *con* and *sacro*, to make or declare sacred, to

separate from a common to a sacred purpose, to set apart, to dedicate, to devote to the service and worship of God” (*Pulpit* 22). In “Loss of First Love,” he quotes renowned historian and luminary of early Christian writings, Edward Gibbon, to substantiate his characterization of the Church at Ephesus.²⁶ However, most often he drew from primary and secondary sources related to scripture, citing material written by some of the most prominent biblical scholars of his time:

In the revised version of the New Testament it is rendered, “Lest haply we drift away from them.” The sense is about the same. The idea is, that if the things are retained, it is our own fault. Mr. Benson thinks “run out” would be a better rendering, that it alludes to a leaky vessel, which lets out the water many ways... (*Pulpit* 18)

Here, Hood mentions Joseph Benson, an eminent Methodist minister from England appointed by Rev. John Wesley as classical master at Kingswood School, who for many years edited the *Methodist Magazine* and published several notable theological texts, including: *A Defence of the Methodists*, *A Farther Defence of the Methodists*, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, and *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*. Given the fact that Benson’s *Commentary* enjoyed international acclaim as an authoritative interpretation of the Bible and the context in which Hood mentions his rendering of “run out” in his sermon, it is quite probable that Hood here refers to Benson’s book. Likewise, in “Why Was the Rich Man in Torment?” Hood notes Adam Clarke’s reading of the story of Lazarus and how some Bibles subhead this passage: “I think it is Dr. Clarke, who remarks, ‘That men do this, it seems, to justify the Almighty in sending him to

²⁶ Hood quotes Gibbon directly: “In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick; the desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana, or the church of mercy, will equally elude the search of the curious traveler.” This comes from Gibbon’s most famous multi-volume work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published between 1776 and 1788.

torment.’...In some Bibles, the words ‘the rich glutton’ are written over this chapter. Who dare write such a heading there?” Adam Clarke (1762-1832) was regarded as the most famous Bible commentator of the Wesleyan-Methodist tradition. An abolitionist and preacher, Clarke worked for forty years on an eight-volume text, *A Commentary on the Bible*, his most influential work, published in 1810. Finally, in “Man Disinclined to Turn to His Maker,” Hood writes, “I have long held to the opinion that Elihu was the writer of this truly interesting history; and notwithstanding the many arguments that I have read to the contrary, and especially the plausible and forcible arguments of Mr. Barnes in his introduction to the book of Job, yet I have not given up my opinion. Like others, mine is only an opinion...yet I think it a well founded opinion” (*Pulpit* 166-167). Like Clarke, Albert Barnes was a prominent theologian whose commentaries on the Bible were immensely popular in Europe and the U.S. during the nineteenth century. By referencing Benson, Clarke, and Barnes, Hood establishes credibility as an opinionated and ‘learned’ minister by positing his interpretations of scripture in accordance with or against the hermeneutic renderings of these well-known theologians, while he also shows the breadth of his historical and biblical knowledge through references to different versions of and concordances to the Bible. That Hood cites two Wesleyan ministers also shows his theological allegiance to Methodist doctrine and specifically to figures regarded by his denomination’s founder, John Wesley, whose religious authority would be unquestioned by most Methodists. Hood, in fact, pays homage to Wesley in “The Earliest Gospel Symbol” (discussed above) by praising his character and citing his most famous epithet regarding American slavery: “a system denounced by a great and good

man as the ‘sum of all villainies.’”²⁷ Thus, through references to and ideological alignment with prominent theologians, particularly abolitionists of the Wesleyan-Methodist faith such as Wesley, Benson, and Clarke, Hood shows that he also is a “great and good man.”

Pathos

The supreme element in the old system was emotionalism, and, while we hate to confess it, truth demands that we affirm it as the predominating element to-day. The church which does not have its shouting, the church which does not measure the abilities of a preacher by the "rousement" of his sermons, and indeed which does not tacitly demand of its minister the shout-producing discourse, is an exception to the rule. This is true of the towns as well as the country. Of course we all understand that it has always occupied first place in the worship of the Negro church; it is a heritage of the past.

W.E.B. DuBois
The Negro Church

There is no better evidence of a change of heart than a change in our conduct—our manner of life.

Bishop J.W. Hood²⁸

Through myriad rhetorical strategies Bishop Hood exhibited qualities worthy of his congregation’s trust and respect, as his sermons show his *eunoia* towards them and the great pains he took to educate and prepare himself for his role as Zion’s “watchman” and bishop. In tandem with his substantive ethical arguments, which put his character in a favorable light, are numerous pathos-based appeals that provoked his hearers to feel in certain ways, putting them in a receptive frame of mind. According to Aristotle, persuasion occurs “through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion by the speech, for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly

²⁷ This quote originally appeared in John Wesley’s *Journal: 1703-1791*.

²⁸ From “Attachment to Christ and the Reward,” Hood, *Pulpit* 43.

and hostile” (Kennedy 38). During the nineteenth century, black ministers invariably encountered grieving and downtrodden hearers, people whose daily tribulations in a tyrannical world tested their faith in God, who at times sat in church pews with “hostile” hearts, doubtful of God’s providential power. Facing such somber worshippers, how did black ministers like Bishop Hood turn tears of pain into tears of joy, transform sanctuaries of sorrow into refuges of rejoicing, and convince the browbeaten and demoralized that God’s justice would prevail and their “troubles won’t last always”?

As discussed earlier, scholars who study Black sermons generally agree that the primary persuasive technique used by Black preachers is the emotional appeal.²⁹ Raboteau notes that, “for more than a century and a half black ministers have moved their congregations to religious ecstasy by a distinctive style of preaching” (141). Raboteau discusses how Black ministers are expected to preach in a way that incites an “emotional experience that moves them [congregation] to sing, shout, and dance” (146). Similarly, in his analysis of “old-time Negro preaching,” Pipes states that “the immediate purpose in the Macon County sermons is to impress and to arouse the audience — to cause shouting, excitement, and emotional abandon” (74). LaRue acknowledges that most scholars identify the emotional appeal as the “distinctive feature in African American preaching.” He observes: “This unabashed, emotional fervor...continues to impact both the preaching of the sermon and the response of the worshipping community” (11). While

²⁹ While these studies are primarily based on audio recordings of sermons—thereby enabling the analysis of performance style as an effect on pathos—my analysis of Bishop Hood’s sermons is solely based upon compositional elements. This poses a problem when comparatively analyzing pathos in Hood’s sermons with that of contemporary African American sermons, since what stylistically distinguishes Black folk ministers is not as much what they say but *how* they say it.

most homileticians and scholars of African American religion agree that emphasis on the pathetic appeal in black sermons reflects the preacher's response to the "needs" and expectations of his/her congregation, positing the church as a "safety valve" where the tormenting psychic burdens amounted outside church walls are supernaturally dissolved, such an over-simplification of black preaching reduces it to verbal pyrotechnics geared to provoke psychological escapism, without acknowledging its more fundamental and salutary purposes of mending broken selves, corralling lost souls, and indoctrinating disciples of Christ and agents of social change. As Raboteau notes above, though most black congregants expect (historically and presently) a cathartic worship experience where their pains will be relieved and their "burdens laid down," not all black ministers cater their sermons with this telos in mind. Indeed, what current scholarship calls for is a more critical examination of the strategies and purpose(s) of emotional appeals in black preaching.

As David S. Cunningham reminds us in *Faithful Persuasion: In Aid of a Rhetoric of Christian Theology*, "Persuasion with reference to the *pathos* of the audience concerns not only the emotions, but also the wide variety of ways in which the state or condition of the audience affects the persuasive appeal of the speech" (43). Drawing from Aristotle's senses of *pathos* in *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Cunningham points out that since the relationship between the audience and speaker/preacher is crucial to persuasion the preacher should begin the process of persuasion by establishing common ground through "identification," that is, by speaking their language and exhibiting that he/she identifies with their "state or condition." With an established bond of trust and empathy, a preacher puts his congregation in a "frame of mind" that enables him to *move* them to action,

whereby they do not simply “catch the Spirit” *in vivo* and dance in the aisles, but rather their convicted hearts provoke them to change their daily habits, i.e. how they live (*hexeis*). However, if a sermon merely panders to a congregation’s present state/condition (and their assumptions) without challenging them to effect change in their spiritual walk then true persuasion does not occur and emotional appeals prove ineffectual verbal performances or “empty rhetoric.” Such was not the case with Bishop Hood’s sermons.

In discerning the state and condition of his congregation, Bishop Hood saw what most nineteenth-century black ministers did: dejected and demoralized souls. After years of suffering discrimination and prejudice, newly freed African Americans still had not reached the Promised Land, as they remained marginalized and debased sub-citizens with only a glint of hope that some day they would achieve *total* freedom. Black worshippers needed assurance that God’s providential plan for them was not finished, that his fountain of love and grace was not depleted, and that, most importantly, belief in His sovereign power could restore their lives and ensure a brighter future. Bishop Hood, realizing that God would not miraculously transform the condition of his people instantaneously, designed his sermons with the intention of influencing how his listeners understood God’s character, perceived their present condition, and anticipated a hopeful future. According to LaRue, this rhetorical strategy exemplifies a common trope among black preachers. He explains that, “the hermeneutic of a sovereign God acting mightily on behalf of the oppressed is indeed the common master lens in black preaching” (20). In addition, LaRue’s examination of black sermons from ministers of different political allegiances, denominations, and educational backgrounds, illumines how “the socio-

cultural experience of being brought up black in American in an era of upheaval and sociopolitical ferment” shaped them and, consequently, their conception of God. He concludes that nineteenth-century African American preachers:

had an unshakable faith in the power of God to bring about in their lives what no other power could do. This belief in the mighty sovereign conjoined with their everyday struggle for mere survival is the seedbed of black creativity and insightfulness in black preaching. (67)

This “unshakable faith” Hood sought to instill in his congregants, imbuing his sermons with evidence of God’s proclivity to act “mightily on behalf of the marginalized and powerless” and utilizing what LaRue calls the “power motif” in his hermeneutical expositions. In so doing, Bishop Hood employed a rhetoric of faith in his sermons.

It is a “strange juxtaposition” to conjoin rhetoric and faith, even though the Greek word for persuasion and the Christian word for faith are the same, *pistis* (Kinneavy 3). Drawing from the work of eminent theologian Karl Barth, who outlines key elements in the trilogy of “Old Protestant” faith—trust, assent, and knowledge—James Kinneavy concludes that the rhetorical concept of persuasion and the Christian notion of faith share parallel structures beyond their etymology. In both notions we find “trust in the speaker,” “promise of good to be achieved by the listener who freely assents to the message,” and the “acquisition of some knowledge,” which parallel the ethical, pathetic, and logical arguments in rhetoric (50-52). Hence, to employ a rhetoric of faith in sermonizing is to incorporate appeals to character, emotions, and logic by way of assuring believers and non-believers of God’s *eunoia*, or “good will,” instilling hope that God’s promises will be fulfilled, and exhorting the gospel as Truth, i.e. the earthly materiality of God’s Word (Jesus as incarnate Logos). For post-antebellum black ministers like Hood, such a task proved daunting, as the polarity between the present condition of newly emancipated

blacks and the proclaimed promises of God seemed irreconcilable. Hood, in turn, constructed faith-based sermons that assured his congregants of the bountiful blessings that could be enjoyed in *this* life if they continued to grow spiritually through study of God's Word, live righteously, and believe in the justice of His will.³⁰

Bishop Hood's sermons drew primarily from the New Testament, where the most frequent rhetorical appeal is "based on the promise of something to be gained by the believer" (Kinneavy 139). Sixteen of the twenty-one sermons in Bishop Hood's first volume of sermons exegete New Testament scripture, while two of the five Old Testament based sermons frequently cross-reference New Testament passages. Historically, this favoring of New Testament passages makes Hood an anomaly among his contemporaries since most nineteenth-century African American sermons highlighted Old Testament narratives that demonstrate God's "mighty actions on behalf of marginalized and powerless people," particularly the Israelites, whose history of bondage and emancipation dramatically parallels that of blacks in the U.S. (LaRue 15; Mitchell; Raboteau). A fairly common hermeneutic argument advanced in antebellum sermons suggested that black slaves were God's *new* "chosen people," the new Israelites (Raboteau 17-36). This [Burkean] identification with the children of Israel not only helped black ministers establish logical claims about God's ability and promises to save the wrongfully oppressed but it also enabled preachers to incorporate powerfully relevant

³⁰ I emphasize "*this* life" because antebellum sermons typically assured black slaves that God would reward their pain and sufferings in the *next* life, constituting "other-worldly" sermons or what Benjamin Mays calls the "compensatory idea," in light of what seemed an unchangeable and endless life of suffering in this world. Preaching during the Reconstruction period, Hood sought to instill hope in his congregants that there were blessings and rewards to be enjoyed *here* and *now*.

pathetic appeals, as they inspired hope in better days to come and promoted “keeping the faith” during harsh and insurmountable circumstances. On the other hand, as Hood shows, the New Testament does not lack in parables and stories applicable to spiritually disenchanted black Christians. Kinneavy observes that of the three traditional rhetorical appeals employed in the New Testament the pathetic appeal is the most dominant, constituting sixty-one percent and falling into three categories: “faith based on the desire for miracles and signs,” faith “grounded on the hope for justification,” and “faith grounded on the hope for eternal life” (140). While in some sermons Hood’s use of pathetic appeals fits these classifications, particularly the latter two, his strategies to affect the hearts of his listeners often invoke their character, conscience, and will.

In “The Helplessness of Human Nature” Hood discusses the “strong cords which operate upon the will and draw men to Christ,” essentially advancing Kinneavy’s Greco-Christian notion of *pistis*—that is, how preachers persuade listeners to have faith in God and live according to that faith. Hood writes:

He [mankind] has a conscience capable of emotions, and affections which can feel the touch of love, and are moved in response to its influence. There came once a man to church, filled with notions of his own importance: it was during a revival season. I said to him, “would you like to go forward to the altar for prayer?” He gave me a look, which seemed to say, “I don’t want your prayers!” Now, I might have talked with that man for a month, while he was in that state of mind, without moving him. To have gotten that man to the altar, I would have had to apply physical force, and then only his body would have been there. But the services continued, the Spirit of God touched that man’s conscience, tears stole down his cheeks, his head was bowed, and finally he arose and went to the altar, and found peace. That man’s conscience was touched, and through his conscience his will was reached, and caused to yield to the divine influence. (*Pulpit* 272-273)

Displaying Aristotelian principles of rhetoric, Bishop Hood constructs this anecdote using the three categories Aristotle outlines as important concerns for speakers seeking to

persuade an audience through emotions. For the sake of my discussion, I find Alan Brinton's translation of these category heads quite helpful: "(1) the *state of mind* of the person to be affected, (2) the *persons or objects* toward whom the emotion is to be felt, and (3) the sorts of *circumstances* which give rise to it" (208). Hood mentions that the subject of his illustration is "filled with notions of his own importance," that is, proud; he also strikes Hood as obstinate, for he rejects Hood's invitation to the altar and gives the impression that even Hood's personal counsel would fall flat against his pigheaded state, thereby characterizing his emotional "frame of mind" with regard to Hood and God quite clearly. The occasion, or "circumstances," also lends a significant light on Hood's perception of the man's heart: "it was during a revival season." Hood includes this detail in order to call forth the shared assumptions among Christians about people who attend revival services—i.e. that on some level they wish their hearts to be spiritually reinvigorated or renewed—as well as to provide a fuller description of the ecstatic emotional atmosphere in which an ostensibly stubborn man could find himself supernaturally transformed. In other words, a revival service primes its participants for a dramatic spiritual experience by orchestrating circumstances that provoke particular emotions and affect one's "state of mind." In explaining this man's conversion experience, Hood briefly theorizes on the interconnections between conscience, will, and emotions, implying that persuasion occurs through the man's conscience, which is "capable of emotions," "can feel the touch of love," and can be "moved in response to its influence." By way of an emotional appeal, his faith "yield[s] to the divine influence" of God's "touch," evoking tears and contrition. Moreover, it is God's touch, not Hood's, that changes this man's pathos from prideful and obstinate to humble and assentient; and

“his will [is] reached,” leading him to the altar. Through the suasive ambiance of the services and the work of the Holy Spirit, governed by God and directed by Hood, the man achieves the targeted “frame of mind,” peace.

Bishop Hood’s understanding of the relationship between emotions, conscience, and human will seems manifestly Aristotelian. Just as Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* advances his beliefs on what citizen leaders should know in order to help society achieve the “highest good attainable by action,” that is, “happiness,” Hood’s sermons demonstrate his aim to edify his congregants, to make them faith-filled and righteous servants of Christ who, through virtuous action, would transcend their deplorable circumstances to attain God’s rewards. In “Attachment to Christ and the Reward” he declares, “There is no better evidence of a change of heart than a change in our conduct—our manner of life.” Hood believed that by cultivating the heart into a center of virtue, one would harbor a moral feeling for righteousness and a disdain for sinfulness, which would dictate one’s conduct. This philosophy directly reflects Aristotle’s teachings in *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he says, as Ellen Quandahl paraphrases it, “virtues are dispositions—that is, characteristics or habits (*hexeis*) of feeling and action that develop through activities. Thus the name for moral virtue (*ethike* or habit) is related to *ethos*” (15). Quandahl further notes that Aristotle “is unwilling to call an action virtuous unless the doer knows and cares about what she is doing” (16). As discussed earlier in my analysis of Hood’s ethical appeals, Hood earnestly urged his congregants to regard themselves with dignity by living like “saved” Christians rather than enslaved heathens. Not only did he teach them to know what is good and righteous but he also insisted that they care for their own

souls by living righteously before God and man³¹. Ethos manifested in action reflects the virtues of the heart, causing one to feel good about doing what is good. This nexus of ethos and pathos, then, forms the basis of Hood's rhetoric/theology of faith.

In *Rhetorica* 2.1-2.3 Aristotle states:

For it makes a great difference with regard to conviction...that the speaker should show himself to be possessed of certain qualities and that his hearers should think that he is disposed in a certain way towards them; and further, that they themselves should be disposed in a certain way towards him...And if a man desires anything and has good hopes of getting it, if what is to come is pleasant, he thinks that is sure to come to pass and will be good; but if a man is unemotional or not hopeful it is quite the reverse. (Aristotle 169-171)

Aristotle's insights regarding the ethos of orators, the pathos of audiences, and what is necessary for an orator to "produce conviction" present a practical model for examining and explaining Hood's rhetoric of faith. As Hood implies in "The Helplessness of Human Nature," there are two rhetoricians at work in worship services—God and the preacher. Thus, at the same time that worshippers evaluate the ethos of the minister, whom they trust as the representative of God who re-presents God's Word, they also assess the ethos of God as presented by the minister in his sermons. To this end does Hood remind his listeners in this sermon that God says, "I draw them with cords of love" and "With everlasting kindness have I drawn thee" (*Pulpit* 274). Suffering unimaginable circumstances with only gleams of evidence that their lives might improve, Hood's listeners needed assurance that God is, in fact, loving, kind and willing to uplift their spirits. While in every sermon Hood constructs ethical appeals that demonstrate both his

³¹ In this section I will expound upon the notion that Hood encouraged his congregants to live virtuously before other people, as this largely concerns how Hood and other northern black ministers believed the social and political elevation of the race to be bound in white society's perceptions of them, particularly their moral dispositions.

and God's dispositions of "good will" towards his/His congregants, in "Helplessness" Hood emphasizes the fact that ultimately God is at once the supreme persuader whose "strong cords...operate upon the will" and the sovereign Lord who is able to bless those who "desire anything and [have] good hopes of getting it." The "conviction" that Aristotle describes, then, is comparable to the faith, or *pistis*, that Hood inculcates in his sermons, for both involve a strong belief embedded in the heart that influences the will. In short, Hood exhorts that if his congregants trust in the *eunoia* of God and have faith in His ability make "what is to come...pleasant," then God will reward them with blessings on earth and eternal life in Heaven. However, if they are "unemotional or not hopeful" and lack faith then God will persist in finding other "strong cords" to draw them to Christ.

Arguably, many of Hood's sermons incorporate ethical and pathetic appeals that might superficially seem "unemotional," unlikely to provoke emotion or alter a sorrowful listener's disposition, because they lack the emotive language we often expect from black ministers. Because of Hood's emphasis on the intellectual aspects of emotional investment in Christian faith we might be led to wonder if the manner of Hood's delivery in some way *compensated* for the lack of affective words that would have held a tired and woeful audience's attention. Did he plead or moan in cadenced, melodic prose? Did he sway or stomp his feet to dramatize the urgency of his message? Despite the absence of any audio or video recordings of his preaching performances, Hood's published sermons provide ample evidence for examining his use of pathetic appeals that would arouse a sullen crowd. His words surely stirred the emotions of his listeners. As Dolan Hubbard notes, "At the heart of black preaching lies authoritative proclamation and joyful

celebration, not rational persuasion” (17). In “The Soul’s Anchor” Bishop Hood proves an exception to the rule, as he simultaneously expresses his passion for logos/Logos and the logic of having a passion for Christ. Arguably Hood’s most eloquently written sermon in the two volumes he published, “The Soul’s Anchor” not only contains the best examples of his mastery of poetic language, as I will highlight in this section, but it also demonstrates his ingenious employment of logical appeals through use of analogies and enthymemes.³² In this sermon we see Hood’s synergistic weaving of Aristotle’s three proofs, blurring the conceptual parameters of ethos, pathos, and logos, and proving that appeals to reason and emotion can effectively work in concert.

Hood orchestrates powerful emotional and logical arguments through the extended metaphor of a mariner on a ship caught in the midst of a storm, saved only by his/its “steady” anchor of hope. He writes:

The anchor is that which, when cast, holds the ship steady amid the storms and keeps it from being blown upon rocks and dashed to pieces, or drifting off with the tide. There are times when sailing becomes dangerous; when the black tempest sweeps the wailing billows, the boiling surges mix with the clouds, death rides upon the storm, and the mariner fears the destruction upon the rocks; the anchor is his only hope; if it fails him, the ship is lost. (*Pulpit* 124)

The rhetorical effect of this passage is accomplished through *enargeia*, “the power of language to create a vivid presence” amounting to “visual clarity, immediacy and strong emotional appeal” (Lunde 50). Hood elaborates the definition of the soul’s “anchor” with vivid appeals to the senses, particularly to sight, as he verbally creates in the minds of his listeners a visual object with “its own reality” (50). A prime example of what Quintillian calls *ekphrasis*, “a descriptive account bringing the subject matter vividly before the

³² Discussed in Logos section.

eyes,” (53) Hood loads this graphic narration about the mariner’s cataclysmic crisis with sensory details to help the audience imagine such a reality, thereby constructing a mental bridge between the fictional (mariner’s reality) and the hypothetical (audience’s possible reality) that leads the listener/seer to be present within the narrative. This engagement of the congregation’s imagination represents an appeal to pathos, as they identify with and vicariously experience the mariner’s “fear of destruction upon the rocks” and cling to the only cord that can save him/them from death. Subsequently, Hood applies this metaphorical image to hypothetical life situations that his listeners would more likely encounter. His elaboration of the metaphor is written as follows:

Amid the storms of life, hope is the Christian’s anchor. When friends all fail and foes all unite; when subjected to cross providences, or strange afflictions; when the enemy comes upon us as a flood, all things seem to be against us; and, like old Job, we are constrained to cry out of the bitterness of our soul: “Oh! That my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together; for now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea . . . (*Pulpit* 125)

“Amid the storms of life” bridges Hood’s contextual explication of the biblical metaphor and the real-life application of the theme. At this moment in the sermon the listener’s emotional engagement is intensified as Bishop Hood reveals the fuller human meaning of Christian hope: “It is a hope that sustains him in every discouragement in life, and forsakes him not in death—a hope full of immortality and eternal life” (*Pulpit* 126). Hood ingeniously parallels the series of storm disasters with adverse life situations or “discouragement[s] in life”: “when friends all fail and foes all unite;” “strange afflictions;” “when the enemy comes upon us as a flood.” These specific cases come alive as the listeners imagine themselves “amid the storms of life,” thus deepening the effect of the pathetic appeal through “visual testimony.” However, Hood’s congregation

did not have to stretch their imaginations too far to engage in these scenarios, for they had been through the storm, “subjected to cross providences,” and still suffered the aftermath of daily wars against prejudice and discrimination. The immediacy of Hood’s images struck home, at the heart, drawing out the “bitterness of [their] souls” and perhaps tears as well. Because Hood illustrates real-life, concrete examples with such visual clarity the “images of absent things” appear to be present and the congregation feels the sensation of living in the moment. The rhetorical effect of such immediacy enhances the emotional and logical appeal of the verbalized illustration, thus augmenting their perception of various situations in which they will make better judgments about how to react and respond (Lunde 55). Hood urges that hope is the Christian response.

Furthermore, the reference to Job in this passage holds a particular religious resonance of emotional import for the Christian audience member, particularly African Americans. Trusting that his audience is well aware of the story of Job and his horrifying history of calamities, Bishop Hood draws upon this biblical figure to invite his congregation to put themselves in Job’s shoes. He positions this reference at the climactic moment of his rift of emotional catastrophes: “and, like old Job, we are constrained to cry out of the bitterness of our soul.” And, subsequently, as the listeners try to empathize with Job’s abysmal and soul-shaking anguish, Hood turns their attention to the divine escape:

In such an hour, hope holds the soul steady, and sweetly whispers:
“Peace, troubled soul, thou needest not fear,
Thy great deliverer still is near,
His tender love protects thee still,
Be calm, and sink into his will.” (*Pulpit* 125)³³

³³ This hymn, “Peace, Troubled Soul,” was written by Samuel Ecking in the 18th century and first appeared in *Gospel Magazine*. Lowell Mason, known as “the father of American

This vignette from Hood’s sermon demonstrates his compositional prowess by showing how well he uses hymns to influence his congregation’s “horizon of expectations,” that is, to put them in a particular frame of mind by alluding to a familiar reference that invokes shared sentiments. This not enlivens his sermon but it also reinforces the consubstantial sensations—of grief and desire for relief—felt among the congregants and preacher, as they all silently (or aloud) sing the words to this consoling hymn. Black preachers with a stock of biblical stories, hymns, and poems typically employ this technique to elicit emotional responses and encourage audience participation, creating a catalytic atmosphere of communal catharsis. Furthermore, this moment in the sermon where Hood includes the hymn excerpt represents the *volta*, or “turn,” as he turns his congregation’s attention away from pain and towards pleasure; or, as Chaim Perelman suggests, he makes “present” what was absent from the forefront of their minds. Heretofore, Hood fills their minds and hearts to the brim with tragic and disheartening images and sensations that evoke their past or present realities, whereas he utilizes the hymn to steer their thoughts toward the future and the promise of God’s protection and peace. This moment also offers a foreshadowing of what points Hood will present in the final section of the sermon.

The closing section, entitled “The Consolations of the Christian’s Hope,” exhibits not only Hood’s most forthright appeal to pathos, but also his most creative compositional efforts. The sentences in this section flow with the sort of cadence typical of “chanted sermons” — where speech is stylized to a distinct rhythm and meter. In light of this, the arrangement of this section invites readers (i.e. AME Zion seminarians) to read aloud in

church music,” composed the music for this hymn and published it in the *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music* in 1825.

order to appreciate its rhythmic flow. The use of anaphora with the repeated phrase, “we are consoled by the assurance,” simultaneously balances the sentences together and drives the rhythm forward, even as it steadily tugs at the emotions of the listener. Three consecutive paragraphs in this section begin with this phrase, followed by another set of repeated phrases, which further enhance the sense of cadence. Note these openings taken from two consecutive paragraphs:

We are consoled by the assurance, that whatever our trials and difficulties, whatever dark nights of sorrow and affliction, whatever dark paths duty compels us to pass through . . .

We are consoled by the assurance, that however we are buffeted by the enemy, whatever sore conflicts we may have, whatever wounds we may receive, however hard pushed we may be, however numerous . . . (*Pulpit* 134)

This is indubitably the cathartic moment in Hood’s exposition. In a sense, he holds nothing back, but pours forth a stream of emotionally charged images to excite his congregation. Unlike the ekphrastic anecdote of the mariner caught in the storm, this litany of hardships was not merely imaginable but more than likely immediate. Hood captures the exigent conditions of his people in poetic form, simultaneously opening psychological wounds while salving them with soothing words. Stylistically, his rhythmically metered sentences and syntactic parallelisms are filled with illustrations anchored in the sermon’s metaphoric theme of inevitable tribulation and faithful hope. While, thematically, the phrase “we are consoled by the assurance” is empowered with such emphatic force that it overshadows the adverse and antithetical string of phrases that follow it — thus compelling the listener to focus on the “saving grace” of Christian hope rather than the tragic pitfalls of everyday life. Noting this common theme and practice in black preaching, Molefi Asante claims that, “The business of the black preacher during

slavery was the business of consolation. He consoled in life as well as in death, for life was often a living death” (45).

This benediction, of consolation and celebration, epitomizes traditional black sermons. As Mitchell notes:

Knowing that emotion is inescapable, the preacher must weigh each homiletic move for impact or effect, making sure that, so far as is in his power, the emotional involvement and suspense ascend progressively, to the final celebration. (Eslinger 114)

Although it is impossible to determine the degree of emotional frenzy Hood’s words provoked within his congregation, his use of *affective* language clearly leads us to imagine a sanctuary full of fervor and shouting. From beginning to end Hood’s sermon builds up to this climactic moment of emotional release. His diction, choice of metaphors, scriptural references, and allusions to archetypal biblical characters synergistically operate to argue crucial theological claims while, at the same time, punctuate God’s promise to rescue His oppressed and heavy-burdened believers. To this end, Hood’s sermon catered to the needs and expectations of his congregation, who, like Job, experienced unfathomable persecution and surely questioned God’s sovereignty and exercise of justice.

Logos

Whether one is just now making ready to speak before the people or before any other group or is composing something to be spoken later before the people or to be read by those who wish to do so or are able to do so, he should pray that God may place a good speech in his mouth. For if Queen Esther prayed, when she was about to address the king concerning temporal welfare of her people, that God would place a “well ordered speech” in her mouth, how much more ought we to pray for such a reward who labors in word and teaching for eternal salvation of men?...and for the profitable result of their speech they should give thanks to Him from whom they should not doubt they have received it, so that he who glorifies in Him may glory in Him in whose “hands are both we and our words.”

St. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*

Appearing in the final lines of Book Four in *De Christiana Doctrina* Augustine’s prescription regarding the genesis of a “good speech” addresses preachers who take seriously their labor “for eternal salvation of men.” Augustine urges each to pray that God would “place a good speech in his mouth” and acknowledge that God should be glorified for the “profitable result of their speech” because ultimately The Creator accomplishes the work of saving souls through His *logos*/Word and man’s *logoi*/words. Well versed in rhetorical theory and theological doctrine, Augustine links the secular conception of logos with the sacred to advise homilists on how to prepare a sermon, whether written beforehand or delivered extemporaneously, while he also reminds them that they are mere conduits through which God’s persuasive power acts upon the will of man; or, as David Cunningham puts it: “God’s rhetorical activity is revelation; human rhetorical activity is proclamation” (203). Revelation is persuasive and not manipulative because it comes from the ultimate authority, God; human proclamation, on the other hand, is powerless unless it is guided by God’s revelation (201). Thus, a preacher stands in the position of authority by virtue of being the chosen “instrument” through which The

Word finds breath and sound, revealing truths that God deems kairotic for particular congregations in specific conditions.

What, then, constitutes a “well ordered speech” or sermon? In remaining faithful to traditional understandings of logos in religious worship a biblical preacher “allows a text from the Bible to serve as the leading force in shaping the content and purpose of the sermon” (LaRue 10). For many Protestant ministers, particularly black preachers, the Bible functions as the primary source of language, imagery, and narrative; hence, a “well ordered” sermon comprises negotiations between God’s written Word, His revelation via the Holy Spirit, and the preacher’s individual personality, oratorical style, and discernment of his congregation’s needs and expectations. Besides being organized and “ordered” in an effective manner that fits the overarching theme and needs of the audience, a logos-centered sermon consists of thoughtfully chosen examples and illustrations, well-crafted enthymemes, appropriate modes of reasoning—deductive and/or inductive—relevant analogies, insertions of familiar hymns, and allusions to revered biblical characters. Logos-oriented sermons are context bound, as they address the exigence of the community’s current circumstances and demonstrate the Bible’s, God’s, ability to supply answers to whatever questions or problems one encounters in this life. In short, Logos is kairotic and exegetical content catered to a particular congregation and delivered by a preacher attuned to the voice of God.

* * *

Although Bishop Hood surely moved his congregation to spiritual ecstasy with emotionally charged appeals, his intelligently and conscientiously crafted homilies demonstrate his even greater concern for constructing logical arguments. Contrary to

what William Pipes asserts about old-time Negro preaching — that its primary purpose is to “excite the emotions” — Bishop Hood’s sermons are more logos oriented, thus exhibiting Henry Mitchell’s belief that the “intelligent preacher knows that true comprehension is an emotional as well as an intellectual process” (175). Pipes further claims that the “discussion” section of an old-time sermon “merely has the appearance of organization, for it is often a series of digressions aimed to arouse the emotions of the audience” (157). Proving his knowledge of homiletics and his literary exposure to the sermonic tradition of Puritans, Wesleyan Methodists, and English pulpit orators, Hood primarily designed his sermons to fit the classic form of “three points and a poem” (still considered a maxim by many homileticians). Typically including three sections composing the “discussion” or “body” of each sermon, Hood marks each section with a Roman numeral and subheading. Each section usually presents three or more points that follow, back up, or warrant the claim stated in the subheading. In “The Soul’s Anchor,” for example, he labels the three sections as follows:

- I. Let us notice THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE.
 - II. Let us consider THE GROUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE.
 - III. But notice THE CONSOLATION OF THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE.³⁴
- (Hood 126)

Even a glimpse of the bare-boned outline of this sermon yields an understanding of the rhetorical plan behind it. Given that the purpose of this sermon is to convince the congregation that they should believe and embrace the notion of Christian hope, the method employed by Hood to reach this end seems quite logical and thorough. First, in describing the characteristics of Christian hope he essentially presents what is ethically

³⁴ Capitalized words as printed in the text

appealing about it by highlighting God's "good will" and grace for humanity. The second section, in turn, appeals primarily to *logos* — for it presents the "grounds" or reasons why a Christian should put faith in the concept of Christian hope as opposed to secular hope. Finally, the third section, culminating in a climactic manner, embodies the pathetic appeal where Hood explains what "consolations" and "assurances" one is granted if he/she believes and embraces this Christian hope, particularly during crises.

In this way, Hood distinguishes himself from the ministers included in Pipe's book, who seem more concerned with the emotional development of their sermons than the logical. However, as my analysis shows, Hood's sermons are not absent of pathetic appeals; they, rather, appear couched in logical propositions, exemplifying what Jeffrey Walker describes as "modern enthymeming." Walker characterizes the contemporary enthymeme as a:

stylistically intensified argumentative turn that serves not only to draw conclusions but also, and decisively, to foreground stance and motivate identification with that stance. And, further, its motivating force will derive not simply from a propositional logic...but from what Perelman has called a "web" or network of emotively significant ideas and *liaisons* that may or may not appear as a structure of value-laden oppositions. (55)

Hood's meticulous arrangement of "emotively significant ideas" in "The Soul's Anchor" display several instances of minor enthymemes that continually build upon one another to "foreground stance and motivate identification with that stance." In the case of this sermon the desired stance is indefatigable hope in God's protection and comfort. Hope and fear, hence, represent one set of "value-laden oppositions" that aid in the audience's identification with the existential position of dependence on God. Hood's first move in section I of this sermon, "Let us notice THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE," involves elaborating the metaphor drawn from the Biblical

passage read at the beginning, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul.” Of note, Hood begins with the Bible, Logos, from which he appropriates the foundational claim of his sermon. This verse is actually one of the major conclusions Hood wishes his listeners to accept, enveloping several suasive elements in a well-crafted deductive argument. He states:

The anchor is that which, when cast, holds the ship steady amid the storms and keeps it from being blown upon rocks and dashed to pieces, or drifting off with the tide. There are times when sailing becomes dangerous; when the black tempest sweeps the wailing billows, the boiling surges mix with the clouds, death rides upon the storm, and the mariner fears the destruction upon the rocks; the anchor is his only hope; if it fails him, the ship is lost. (*Pulpit* 124)

This detailed and graphic description of a ship in the midst of a storm constitutes the “mini-narrative,” a memorable image from which Hood will continually draw and around which the sermon is designed. It implicitly urges identification with the mariner, whom the audience would deduce represents “we” (Christians) in the biblical passage. The next logical question that begs consideration is “what is the *soul’s* anchor?” Hood writes, “Amid the storms of life, hope is the Christian’s anchor” and later, “The Apostle calls this a ‘sure’ hope...It is a hope that sustains him in every discouragement in life, and forsakes him not in death...it is ‘steadfast’—unyielding, unmoved. The violence of the storm can neither break it nor drag it from its moorage.” Here, the metaphorical ground upon which Hood’s argumentative points stand is established, as Hood continues to weave a “web” of premises regarding hope in God. The listeners understand that the theme, “the soul’s anchor,” actually refers to “Christian hope.” Both definitions of an anchor, literal and figurative, serve to explicate the text — what the Apostle meant by “an anchor of the soul” — while they also prepare the listeners for Hood’s contextual

explications to come. In addition, Hood peppers this section with minor enthymemes rooted in the Gospel/Logos, noting that the Apostle describes Christian hope as “sure” and “steadfast;” while, simultaneously, he continues to yolk these biblical claims with the primary metaphor of the storm in order to further resolve the disconnect between the literal (Logos/logos) and the figurative—as the storms of life ‘actualize’ in the audience’s imagination, so does the notion of Christian hope concretize within their hearts. Contrary to Pipe’s paradigm of the “old-time Negro sermon,” Hood’s discussion section is hardly a “digression;” rather, it is a progression of claims constituting an “inferential and attitudinal complex” that “motivates a passionate identification with his stance” (Walker 59).

Similar in rhetorical functionality to the modern enthymeme is Gary Hatch’s concept of “poetic logic.” In “Logic in the Black Folk Sermon,” Hatch claims that

the appeals to reason in Black folk sermons are embedded in the narratives, examples, comparisons, and biblical references chosen by the preacher. These narratives establish a series of relationships that appeal to the intellect and imagination as well as to the emotions. These relationships constitute a type of ‘poetic logic’ in which reasoning is neither inductive nor deductive, rather analogical, proceeding from one particular instance to another particular instance of the same relationship. (228)

Both strategies advance logical claims through networks of emotively charged examples or comparisons that, while embedded in premises, facilitate acceptance of the overarching argument or conclusion. In light of this, Bishop Hood employs both “poetic logic” and enthymemes – inductive/analogical and deductive reasoning — in his sermons. The mini-narrative about the ship in the midst of a storm employs both concepts, aided by the rhetorical force of *enargeia*, as discussed earlier. Hood effectively uses this metaphor as a type of concrete reasoning to strengthen the persuasive effect of

his claims, in the same manner as the Apostle who wrote the Biblical passage. For instance, when he describes the “celestial anchorage” referred to in the scripture passage, “It entereth into that within the veil,” he says: “Within this veil our anchor of hope is cast; the divine Triad is our anchorage, and faith is the strong cable that holds us fast” (*Pulpit* 126). Here Hood’s final points concerning the characteristics of Christian hope further stress the Christian’s special connection to the Holy Trinity, the “celestial anchorage,” which is the most “steadfast” and trustworthy of all sources of spiritual power and security. Thus, the metaphor of the anchor is continually employed in order to describe the fundamental beliefs of Christian faith.

The second section of this sermon, which Hood labels “Let us consider the GROUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE,” extends the same metaphor to support another point using a strand of enthymemes. Hood reminds his audience that in order to “hold a vessel steady in the storm, the anchor must be cast, and must take hold upon good, solid ground” (*Pulpit* 127). As with “anchor,” Hood unpacks the semantic duality of the word “ground” to make his points more poignant and clear. Again invoking the image of the physical anchor, he notes that in order for a vessel to withstand the tumultuous battering of a storm, its anchor must be planted on “good, solid ground.” This figurative point leads directly into the literal-spiritual: that Christian hope rests on the solid ground of “intelligent, heartfelt, practical, pure, and undefiled religion” (127). As noted earlier, this section of the sermon presents the heart of the logical appeal by establishing the rhetorical “grounds” that validate and confirm the notion of Christian hope. Hood provides five Biblical references to prove the immortal foundation of Christian hope, thus grounding his argument in God’s word:

1. Christian hope is grounded upon:
2. “divine benevolence”
3. “the finished work of Christ”
4. His mediatorial intercession
5. The believer’s own personal experience
6. The believer’s longings for heavenly home

Exercising his rhetorical training, Hood warrants these enumerated “grounds” by providing ample biblical passages that speak to the assurances of each and in a few instances he also includes excerpts from famous hymns and poems that testify to the virtues of Christian hope. In fact, there are eleven excerpted passages from hymns in this sermon, each demonstrating Hood’s use of poetic logic and enthymematic argumentation. Though perhaps gratuitous in number, considering most black sermons include primarily biblical cross references and a few lines from hymns, Hood uses a cacophony of hymns and poems to exploit the *kairos* of the preaching moment, as he influences his listeners’ emotional and rational sensibilities. For instance, in substantiating his claims regarding God’s “mediatorial intercession” he invokes the “immortal Charles Wesley” by reading one of his poems: “He ever lives above, for me to intercede, His all redeeming love, his precious blood to plead, Which blood atoned for all our race, And sprinkles now the throne of grace.” Trusting that his congregation harbors a deep identification with Wesley and his spiritually anointed poetry, Hood incorporates these lines into his “complex chord of rational and passiona reasons” to facilitate adherence to his stance on hope. Likewise, Hood closes “The Helplessness of Human Nature” with a hymn replete with pathetic-logical reasons:

“Almost persuaded” now to believe;
 “Almost persuaded” Christ to receive;
 Seems now some soul to say,
 “Go, Spirit, go Thy way,
 Some more convenient day on Thee I’ll call.”

“Almost persuaded,” come, come today;
 “Almost persuaded,” turn not away;
 Jesus invites you here,
 Angels are ling’ring near,
 Prayers rise from hearts so dear; O wand’rer, come!
 “Almost persuaded,” harvest is past!
 “Almost persuaded,” doom comes at last!
 “Almost” cannot avail;
 “Almost” is but to fail!
 Sad, sad, that bitter wail— “Almost,” but lost! (*Pulpit* 135)³⁵

Exemplifying both poetic logic and enthymeming this popular Methodist hymn embodies rational and emotional premises that foreground the urgency of receiving Christ *today*. It captures the sense of exigence, or “nowness,” that Hood impresses upon his listeners in the sermon through a string of temporal words and phrases: “now to believe,” “come today,” “harvest is past,” and “doom comes at last.” Having already expended an entire sermon on the subject of one’s helplessness without God, Hood closes in climactic fashion, as he segues to one of the most crucial events of worship service, the invitation to receive Christ. The non-believers in the congregation are compelled to seriously reflect on the state of their spiritual welfare as they imagine legions of angels “lingering near” while Jesus extends His hand to invite them into the fold. It seems reasonable to avoid “doom” and quite woeful to hear the cries of those praying in vain on your behalf, pleading that another “almost” Christian is not lost forever.

In a similar manner, Hood uses deductive logic to prove his point in the sermon “The Claims of the Gospel Message.” Following the introduction, Hood provides the following transitional statement leading to the discussion section:

³⁵ This hymn was written and composed by Philip Bliss (1838 – 1876) and published in *Gospel Hymns* in 1875.

Our theme is, The Claims of the Gospel Message. And our thoughts first revert to the grounds upon which these claims rest. Why ought we to give heed to the things which we have heard respecting the Gospel message? There are several points from which we may urge attention to this subject. (*Pulpit* 11)

Here, Hood's language – "claims" and "grounds" -- suggests a deductive explication, and thereafter he expounds three major points that support and warrant "The Claims." Hence, this rhetorical move evidences Hood's employment of traditional logic, as opposed to "poetic logic," and demonstrates his repertoire of rhetorical techniques. In addition, it shows how Hood's sermons in some ways stand outside of the tradition of the "Black folk sermon."

* * * *

The pulpit is demanding prepared men for its occupancy. The pew demands talent that can lead and instruct in the truths of the Gospel. Thought, well presented, must take the place of sound and noise, and senseless harangue and twaddle. These will not do in this enlightened time. We must study; we must arouse...but we must do so by reason, and not merely by exciting fear and dismay.

AME Zion Quarterly, II (July, 1892)

These passages sampled from Hood's rhetorical repertoire present ample evidence to warrant Frederick Douglass's accolades of compositional ingenuity. This analysis not only illustrates Hood's appropriation and innovation of classical rhetorical tropes, but it also broadens our conception of the African American preaching tradition. Black preaching is not simply pathos and flourish. It is also logical and thought provoking. Hood's sermons show us that black sermons educate, as he renders lessons on history and language; Hood's sermons illuminate, for they make his congregants aware of social and political matters that directly affect (and endanger) their everyday lives; his sermons inculcate, for he instills in his dehumanized brethren values that would uplift their self-esteem and engender in them a desire to live dignified and morally upright lives. In

addition, while some of his sermons surely aroused his congregants to spiritual ecstasy, Hood primarily used his homiletic talents to “lead and instruct in the truths of the Gospel” in “well presented” expositions. He embodied virtues of eloquence and wisdom. Augustine professes that wisdom “manifests itself as the sincerity, perspicacity, and doctrinal orthodoxy of the speaker whose words come directly from the heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells” (Schaeffer 1137). As an enlightened minister who took seriously his call to preach, Hood studied and read broadly and conscientiously, composing sermons filled with carefully chosen scriptural references, kairoic hymns and poems, and citations from well-respected theologians, which, conjointly, aroused his congregants by reason and emotion. Furthermore, Hood catered his sermons according to the exigencies of post-antebellum blacks—addressing moral aptitude, personal character, biblical literacy, intemperance, and spiritual sanctity—while inculcating Christian principles that would prepare his congregations for the spiritual battles they faced as sub-citizens marked by the stigma and psychological refuse of enslavement. To this end, Hood’s sermons largely involved persuasive efforts to build the character of his congregants rather than focusing on his own credibility as a minister.

Hood once wrote: “Preaching is represented as watering men with the word, and receiving the word by faith is represented as drawing forth water from the wells of salvation. If we do not retain what is poured into us by preaching, and received through faith, we may be charged with letting it run out, or slip from us” (*Pulpit* 18). It is plausible to claim that Hood — by virtue of publishing his books of sermons — indoctrinated a particular sermonic style that influenced thousands of other ministers, especially Zionists, who read or heard his sermons. Not only did he “water men” through spoken word, but he

also created a preaching legacy by *retaining* “what is poured” in written form, never “letting it run out.” In fact, the Bicentennial Commission of the A.M.E. Zion church felt that Hood’s sermons were so important to the history of the church that in 1995 it reprinted them with a new introduction (Jenkins 36-51). Thus, given the certainty of the A.M.E. Zion church’s role in the education and “congregation” of key African American leaders and figures, a further investigation into Hood’s impact on African American rhetoric is warranted.

Conclusion: Content of Character

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In his seminal work *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B DuBois aptly states, “The Preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil” (155). At once a spiritual leader, social-political activist, educator, “idealist,” and businessman, the antebellum black preacher was the idiosyncratic product of a “soil” contaminated with racism and sullied with hate. Despite this antagonistic environment, what enabled his ascension to the head of black culture was “a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness” and “tact with consummate ability” (155). As shepherd and statesman, the black preacher embodied virtues and talents representative of the potential of his people and set the standards for community investment and civic action. He was the model of character for the race.

My study of nineteenth-century AME Zion preacher-politicians exposes overlooked features of black rhetoric, challenges predominant perceptions of the black preaching tradition, and provides an alternative perspective on how to examine the persuasive appeals of black rhetoricians. Through rhetorical analyses of letters, speeches, and sermons I show that in addition to employing emotional appeals to draw the sympathies of whites and allay the lamentations of blacks, black ministers also effectively wielded logical arguments to demonstrate their capabilities as reasoners in philosophical debates and intellectuals with original thoughts. However, most importantly, the black preacher’s ethical appeals served multiple practical and salutary ends for the uplift of African Americans. Rev. Loguen’s ethical appeals, for example,

focused on how the individual's self-improvement contributes to the community's welfare and growth. Loguen championed issues such as slavery, temperance, and women's rights while he also extolled the value of education, economic self-sufficiency, moral development, and religious piety. Moreover, by virtue of his charismatic personality and radical rhetorical actions, Loguen inspired his brethren to assume agency in their battle against oppression. Bishop Hood, though more conservative in his social and political strategies than Loguen, was no less effective and influential. During the Reconstruction, Hood preached to newly freed slaves unprepared for the responsibilities that freedom afforded. He inculcated principles of self-esteem, moral integrity, and spiritual piety, while he also emphasized the necessity of education and maintaining a disciplined work ethic. Bishop Hood, like Loguen, also exemplified how faith empowers the individual will, enabling him or her to accomplish mighty acts in the name of God.

As AME Bishop Richard Allen once stated, "The vile habits often acquired in a state of servitude are not easily thrown off" (69). Like their denominational rivals, AME Zion ministers observed the "vile habits" of their enslaved and recently freed brethren and responded by providing a sacred space where psychological vices could be absolved, morale fortified, spirits liberated, and minds enlightened. While northern black ministers, in general, used the safe space of churches to emphasize the need for moral improvement and "strict adherence to the 'principles of Christian virtue'" (Fordham 34) Zion ministers like Rev. Loguen preached these lessons within church walls and without. My rhetorical analysis of Loguen's letters reveals a relatively unexamined medium for spreading the "gospel of moral improvement," which expands our awareness of the multiple means black preacher-politicians employed to reach black audiences beyond local community

borders and state lines. In addition to preaching at churches across New York state and exhorting at political forums, Loguen used abolitionist and black newspapers to disseminate his poignant reflections on the condition of colored communities, promote values and virtuous habits crucial to the community's survival and success, and motivate his readers to resist tyranny through rhetorical action. Personal, passionate, and kairotic, Loguen's sermonic letters authenticate a constructed public ethos intended to inspire his degraded brethren to strive for cultural refinement, moral perfection, and personal integrity, thus demonstrating an alternative form of effecting the "ethos formation" of antebellum black readers.

Loguen's letters specifically prescribe a social ethic for literate, employed, and free African Americans who enjoyed the benefits of an education, urging them to enlighten those who harbored "a reprehensible apathy in regard to education." In essence, Loguen targets middle class blacks and urges them to live by the maxim, "with privilege comes responsibility." For instance, in praising the achievements of St. Catharine's black middle class, he writes, "This class [is] being incessantly drawn upon for the comfort and well-being of strangers, and others less favored than they" (*FDP*, Feb 5, 1852). The general welfare of the community largely rested on the shoulders of learned and employed African Americans who had already achieved a high level of self-respect and regard from the white community, "as any other class of men of any complexion." In their fight for racial inequality northern black abolitionists like Loguen saw the black middle class as the exemplar of the race, with the characteristics that proved their intellectual and spiritual equivalence to whites. In response to the race- and class-based assumptions of inferiority propagated by white society, Loguen sought to

elevate the black working class in order to create a unified black community with the same moral, political, social and intellectual standards and aspirations (Harris 173). In addition, the generosity exhibited by the more privileged black middle class towards their disadvantaged brethren enabled the community as a whole to “attain a higher elevation,” foster group cohesion, boost individuals’ morale, and show the wider *white* world that African Americans are altruistic people. Loguen observes that St. Catherine’s black middle class made their families “happy and comfortable” by “good conduct and persevering industry,” while also earning the respect of “good men in this country” (*FDP*, Feb 5, 1852). This community also “set a worthy example for good industry, good economy, and generous hospitality” and, thus, personified Loguen’s model of a colored community that exploited its resources to maintain economic self-sufficiency through “good industry,” typified traits of upright citizens, and showed that African Americans can independently achieve a share of the American Dream.

Loguen avers, “We never can be respected by others till we demonstrate our self-respect to the world....I have the pleasure to know that all our most intelligent men and women are with me” (*FDP*, March 14, 1853). In Loguen’s sociological schema “self-respect” not only refers to the individual but also the black community as a whole. Aware of the northern black community’s “double consciousness,” consisting of two “warring selves” or classes—the black middle class which championed white republican ideas of moral perfectionism and skilled labor and the black working class which advocated practical or domestic labor and was less invested in education—Loguen envisioned a more unified “self” of blacks who were all educated, employed, industrious, and pious. In effect, he tried to conflate class and racial identities by promoting

ideological attitudes he felt best for the race. Loguen's vision was not entirely paternalistic, putting the weight of ethical and social responsibility solely on the shoulders of middle class blacks. He wanted the illiterate and unemployed black population to understand and appreciate the rewards of education, industry, and moral purity and, consequently, strive to achieve such virtues for their own good. Through individual and communal self-improvement blacks could earn the respect of the world. Hence, through directive epistles to socially fractured black communities Loguen constructed a communal ethos based on altruism, self-respect, and "persevering industry," which, once realized, proved instrumental to the elevation of the race.

Furthermore, my analysis of Loguen's speech on the Fugitive Slave Law reveals how some African American men constructed radical public personas in order to assert their manhood in the midst of emasculating and dehumanizing legislative practices. Whereas many fugitive slaves attempted to escape via the Underground Railroad to free states or Canada, Loguen exploited the nation's contentious milieu by publicly announcing his defiance of the new law and remaining a "hunted man" in his hometown. This rhetorical performance of resistance demonstrated not only his individual boldness and integrity but also the manhood of the race. My examination of Loguen's speech supports Ella Forbes's assertion that for nineteenth-century African Americans manhood meant "courage, self-determination, civil and human rights, and communal self-esteem, not necessarily gender" (156). As in his letters, Loguen presents himself as an embodiment of these manly traits, a model of manhood fit for imitation by both men and women. Rebelling against the law in a public forum and advertising his home as an

Underground Railroad depot, Loguen shows us an alternative method employed by African Americans to critique the system of slavery in their fight for freedom.

Despite being heralded the Underground Railroad King by his contemporaries, Loguen remains in the shadows of scholarship on antebellum history, eclipsed by famed “escape artists” such as Harriet Tubman and Henry “Box” Brown. Wanted dead or alive for \$40,000, Tubman, deemed the “Moses” of her people, ushered hundreds of slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad, at times disguising herself as a man in order to elude bounty hunters. Brown, another fugitive “on the run,” exemplifies one of the more complex forms of “performative resistance” applied in response to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 (Brooks, D. 66). Encased in a “3 feet long, by 2 feet wide, and two feet deep” wooden crate, Brown escaped to freedom by being shipped from Virginia to Pennsylvania during a twenty-six-hour-long journey via wagon, steamboat, ferry, and railroad. Disguised as a box of “dry goods,” he accomplished one of the most spectacular feats recorded in slavery’s history. Tubman’s and Brown’s escape narratives of “motion, migration, and flight” demonstrate “aggressive and performative responses to the juridical surveillance and circumscription of captive bodies” (Brooks, D. 68). Both moved in secret: Tubman, cloaked in dark shadows, occasionally cross-dressed as she migrated via a figurative railroad; Brown, “entombed” in a wooden case, sojourned by way of every form of public transportation possible. These somewhat theatrical performances of flight mocked the system of slavery’s dogged attempts to entrap black bodies and proved the determination and ingenuity of African American slaves who refused to remain bound like chattel.

Loguen's exhibition of defiance shows us an alternative form of resistance. Rather than using creative and clandestine means to elude slavery's imprisoning forces, he metaphorically transforms the space around him to maintain an openly confrontational stance against the government's subjugal control. In effect, Loguen turns the "hunting ground" constructed by the Fugitive Slave Law into a social-political stage for his militant rhetorical performance. Brandishing a charismatic personality reminiscent of the nation's revolutionary forefathers and deftly wielding appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos Loguen declares, "I feel no chains and am in no prison." In an address to his Syracuse neighbors, Loguen illumines the inhumane and ungodly fallacies of the Fugitive Slave Law and denies the metaphysical reality of slavery's "chains" and "prison." Like Rev. Henry Highland Garnet who once stated, "To such degradation it is sinful in the extreme to make voluntary submission," Loguen uses "radical rationalist reformed Protestantism" (Jasinski 38) to subvert the logic of submitting to despotic fabrications of custody and control. Refusing to sin through "voluntary submission," Loguen reclaims his God-given freedom, repossesses his manhood, and repositions himself as an agent of resistance. Neither hidden nor disguised, he displayed his bare soul in order to convince white society of his character and the humanity of his people. Thus, Loguen's response to the dangerous social and political climate created by the Fugitive Slave Law constituted an uncompromising and indefatigable ethos.

Like Loguen's letters, Bishop James W. Hood's sermons also reveal a telos of cultivating the character of African Americans. Influenced in part by his denominational peers and mentors, Hood addressed the needs of recently freed blacks by composing a "curriculum" of sermons designed to inculcate practical principles and lessons that would

prepare them to enjoy their freedom responsibly and honorably. Although blacks were no longer physically shackled about the wrists and ankles, they were still hampered by a slave mentality—one that dimmed their hopes, stifled their desire to learn, and defiled their sense of self-worth. During slavery many southern black preachers consoled their congregants with cathartic sermons centered on the afterlife and drew the attention of their hearts away from their present miseries and towards the promise of heavenly rewards. In some ways, these sermons conditioned blacks to endure tribulation through psychological escapism and to abide until God delivered them. However, once free, African Americans met new challenges—how to get an education, earn a living, buy a home, and manage money. They arrived at the Promised Land unequipped to thrive in it.

In light of this, Hood shepherded his flock through the gates of slavery towards a spiritual and mental liberation. Whereas the powerful exhortations of many antebellum black ministers instilled hope of better days to come and enabled blacks to endure their trying times, Hood perceived the exigencies of post-emancipation in a more fundamentally constructive and practical light. For Hood, that blacks “got religion” was not enough to sustain them spiritually and elevate them socially and politically; they needed a more concrete understanding of basic theological doctrine and a faith based on that knowledge and their personal experiences with God—that is, a faith substantiated by hearing, seeing, *reading* and *doing*. In effect, during the antebellum they had learned how to survive as slaves but not how to succeed as freemen. As a teacher and preacher, Hood saw moral and literary education as a critical stepping-stone to black self-improvement and a means for gaining citizenship and equal footing in public affairs with whites. Even more important was biblical literacy. “Book learning” might secure them a job, but

biblical knowledge would help build strong moral character and qualify them for God's work on earth, which involved advancing the race as a whole. Thus, Hood envisioned the black church as an institution ordained to indoctrinate Christian agents of change.

Like most nineteenth-century black ministers, Hood believed the black church to be the cultural center of the community, a "safety valve" for blacks to commune, and the conduit through which God directly addressed his children. Hood also perceived the black church's role in advancing the race as providential. Just as God delivered the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage, through the labors of the church He would emancipate African Americans from European tyranny and raise them among the ranks of society. However, what distinguished Hood from some ministers was his critique of the church's role as a psychological crutch for black congregants—or, what Carter G. Woodson calls a "mystic shrine...engaged in immediate preparation for the 'beautiful land of by and by'" (Sernett 418). While Hood certainly did not object to the church's provision of refuge to the depressed and dejected, he wanted the church to fulfill its purpose as the spiritual crucible providentially designed to transform subjugated slaves into influential citizens. In Hood's eyes, God allowed African Americans to suffer through the fire to strengthen and prepare them for the work of building His kingdom on earth and making the world a better place. Knowing that the black church, particularly AME Zion, would perpetually be involved in contentious affairs that threatened the black community, Hood used his ministerial powers to make Zion an institution dedicated to cultivating the character of his congregants.

My analysis of Hood's sermons reveals this rhetorical effort to convert sinners to saints as well as his mission to train citizens for the ongoing spiritual and socio-political

war that continued into the twentieth century. Standing at the head of the church-as-crucible, Hood preached that through the church blacks could experience God's refining fire and be cleansed of the "vile habits" acquired during slavery. This process of purification required deep faith and discipline, which explains why Hood's sermons relied heavily on logical and ethical appeals and centered on the temporal more often than the eternal. Gayraud Wilmore calls this "pragmatic spirituality," a "plain and profoundly sensible spirituality" concerned with the "nitty-gritty problems and purposes of daily life" (5). The *character* of this spirituality, while it engages in "speculative theologizing," "flights of fantastic imagination," and "mystical experiences," emphasizes "doing more to improve and enhance the possibilities of a this-worldly existence" (4-5). As my study of his sermons shows, Hood's *modus operandi* was "pragmatic spirituality," as he produced highly organized sermons lined with sensible points about bettering one's self and environment. Engaging his congregants intellectually and spiritually, Hood inculcated a mixture of Christian and democratic values that socially and politically would help them become active and responsible citizens able to vote, have influence in civic life, and enhance the moral climate of the country. The subtitle of his first book of sermons, *The Two Characters and Two Destinies, as Delineated in Twenty-one Practical Sermons*, indicates what he ultimately wished to teach Zion's seminarians and laymen in general—that they should strive to practice charity, "improve their talents," "represent the practical Christian," and "work out [their] salvation by repentance, faith, and practical godliness" (*Pulpit* 151). By preaching that Christians who embody this kind of character would be assured the destiny of "life eternal" Hood persuaded his congregants to become

doers of The Word, that is, godly citizens/agents who would invoke God's supernatural power to transform the world around them.

My findings also broaden the scope of current research on black preachers, which focuses primarily on oratorical and stylistic devices, often highlighting the black minister's creative use of language and his ability to provoke emotional response through imaginative appeals to the heart. My analysis of Loguen's letters and Hood's sermons sheds light on a second lineage of black ministers, particularly manuscript ministers, who privileged the practical over the pyrotechnic, the ethical over the emotional, and contributed to the church's function as an "uplift agency" as opposed to a "mystic shrine" (Sernett 418). As visionary leaders concerned with the present and future of their people, Loguen and Hood created a cultural legacy comprised of printed materials rich in intellectual and political thought and black theology, rhetoric, and history. Both published with intentionality—Loguen documented his life for inspiration and emulation, while Hood printed his sermons to indoctrinate Zion's future ministers in a homiletic tradition. Both also published in order to contradict white claims of supremacy and prove the intellectual merit of African Americans. Furthermore, Loguen and Hood were pragmatic strategists who believed that "there were good reasons for African Americans to take away the ammunition from potential detractors by living morally upright lives" (Bacon, *Freedom's Journal* 105). By preserving the histories of African American struggle and progress, these ministers provided texts that facilitated the consolidation of a black *ethos* in the public sphere.

In light of this, Jacqueline Bacon's recently published *Freedom's Journal: The First African American Newspaper* reveals how editors Samuel Cornish and John

Russworm intended *Freedom's Journal* to be a “public channel” for “the dissemination of knowledge...in the community” for “moral, religious, civil, and literary improvement of [their] injured race” (*FJ* March 16, 1827). Cornish and Russworm claimed that African Americans must “convince the world by uniform propriety of conduct, industry and economy, that [they] are worthy of esteem” in order to “disarm prejudice of the weapons it has too successfully used against [them]” (*FJ* July 1827). Black-owned newspapers like *Freedom's Journal* and *The Colored American* not only served as vehicles for self-definition but they also functioned as potent forums for educating, empowering, uplifting, and motivating blacks to improve their degraded status. These channels of the black press also provided a space for African Americans to voice their sentiments and opinions about issues affecting their communities, engage in intellectual debate, hone their rhetorical skills and, “as iron sharpens iron,” sharpen the persuasive abilities of one other. Loguen’s letters, published in the latter journal and several others, represent his efforts to exploit the benefits of the black press by preaching the gospel of moral improvement, which honored the black press’s forefathers and echoed their aims of using *black* letters to allay racial prejudice and elevate the race. Loguen, consequently, contributed to the black community’s burgeoning endeavor to speak for itself, assume control of its own destiny, and foster a more unified black identity and public ethos.

In sum, my study of AME Zion ministers Hood and Loguen exposes a root within the black rhetorical tradition that “makes evident the urgency of connecting ethos and action” (Royster 26) and begs us to reevaluate how we schematize the rhetorical practices of nineteenth-century black preacher-politicians. We are reminded that rhetoric does not

only entail the effective use of words but also the influence of the rhetor's character and his or her ability to wield words with charisma, magnetism, and god-like authority. As leaders of one of the most socio-politically successful black denominations, Hood and Loguen demonstrate how black preachers utilized the black press and church to acculturate, educate, and elevate disenfranchised blacks in order to make them productive agents of civic change during the antebellum and post-Civil War periods. Infusing theological, philosophical, and socio-political ideologies espoused by the North's black middle class, these figures provided a rubric for African Americans who lacked the discipline, moral and spiritual fortitude, and prudence necessary to acquire and exploit the resources available to them. Through the labors of these visionary men, the AME Zion Church became a crucible for improving the content of character in African Americans suppressed because of their color. Thus, my study illustrates how the potent words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. continually reverberate back as they resonate even now, and illumine a dream born a century before yet still deferred.

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Vita

Paul Andre' Miniffee was born in Hempstead, TX on January 12, 1973, the son of Dr. Paul K. and Pamela K. Miniffee. After graduating from Galveston Island's Ball High School in 1991, Paul entered the University of Texas at Austin where he studied English and Psychology. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1994 and subsequently moved to Seoul, Korea, where he taught English conversation and composition to children and adults. During his two years in Seoul, Paul learned to read, write, and speak in Korean while researching the heritage of his paternal grandmother, Ae Ran Cho. Paul returned to the United States in 1997 in order to begin his graduate studies in Rhetoric and Writing at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to teaching composition and literature courses as an Assistant Instructor, he also served as Austin Korean Presbyterian Church's College Ministry Bible Study leader and taught English conversation to Korean immigrants. In 2003 he received the Erskine Peters Doctoral Fellowship and John S. Marten Program in Homiletics Fellowship from the University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame also granted him the University Writing Program Pre-Doctoral Fellowship in 2005, which involved teaching core composition courses to incoming freshman. In his spare time, Paul enjoys playing basketball and tennis, cooking, and dancing.

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