

## LIGHT ON DARK CORNERS.

By Rev. T. H. Jones, D. D.

As we approach the shadows of the General Conference our anxieties as to the probable outcome of needed legislation. Our interest and desires for the best grows deeper and more expansive.

Much is being said about the qualification of men for the Bishopric, pensions for widows of General Officers, increase in Bishops' and General Officers' salaries, the Tercentenary and other matters of vital importance; all of which must be prayerfully considered, and we trust will be rightfully acted upon.

But there are three subjects of deepest interest to the permanent welfare of our Zion that should claim no second place in the legislation of the next General Conference, and the entire delegation should vie with each other to see that they are properly acted upon.

I refer to the Church Extension and Home Mission Department, widows and orphans of deceased ministers, and a department for superannuated ministers. The last mentioned claims the burden of this article. We have written on the Church Extension and Home Mission Department and shall write on the widows and orphans later.

Our Zion is more than a century old, and as a distinctive race organization has made marvelous progress along many lines. But one blot upon our past history is that we have given such little consideration to our veteran retired ministry, as is evidenced in the small amounts being paid to them annually. Some receive a little more than others if they happen to belong to a large and charitable Conference. But at best the amounts paid will scarcely average fifty dollars a year. And then the shade is darkened when we note how few of the men of our ranks pass from the battle front with life yet visible in their heroic forms. They usually tug on with the load, fight on at the front until they fall in the shafts of death. Hence the superannuated roll never runs very high.

The question comes forcibly to us here—Why is it that we have done so little for our retired ministers? We have provided for our retired Bishops a stipulated yearly salary? It is small, by no means enough, yet we are not ashamed to publish the amount to the world. Why have we done so little for our retired ministers. Is it that we have lost love for them in their old age and declining strength? Is it because we are insensible or disappreciative of their sacrifices? Not this at all. It is neither of the above mentioned, but the truth is that in our rush to put through other matters we have overlooked or undervalued the importance of special legislation for them.

But we should see to it at the forthcoming General Conference that special legislation be enacted in the interest of superannuated ministers aside from that of widows and orphans.

There should be legislation that will immediately increase the relief to them from fifty to one hundred per cent, and that within the next ten years a department sufficiently strong to pay them a salary of at least from two to three hundred dollars annually.

We should remember that we are traveling the way of our fathers and some of us will reach the station which they have, and we will have to step aside from ministerial activities, or be pushed aside to make room for progressive youth. If you have failed to do your duty in legislative sentiment and activity, a day of opportunity will have passed from you and your voice will scarcely be heard. No difference how proficient for the office of a Bishop in the Church of God, we can not by legislation attain to that lofty rank; then legislate for the minister in the lower rank as well as for those in the higher rank.

## Suggestive Legislation.

We do not see that the amount designated for the support of retired ministers from the General Claims budget can be increased; nor do we have any desire that an increase be made to meet the above suggested increase; but we can give the Church and the world a chance to help these fathers happily and comfortably pass their declining years by,

First: Legislating a day or season, Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year, when an offering shall be taken throughout the arena of our Church for this fund, and that a special secretary be chosen to operate the department for two quadrenniums without salary, until said department shall be deemed self supporting. His business would be to receive and disburse the fund, develop sentiment, and keep the department before the Church as other secretaries are doing.

A Department of the General Church, its Bishops, and Presiding Elders and pastors behind it and forcing it as they are other interests of the Church is bound to succeed.

No day will appeal to true laymen and lay women and thoughtful ministers than such a day, and would without any doubt be a success.

Secondly: The Tercentenary money designated for this department should after going to the General Treasurer, be sent to the Secretary of this Department for disbursement. A certain per cent of this amount should remain in the treasury to constitute a sinking fund so that the Department may get a substantial foundation for this movement.

I have not attempted to give this plan in detail as it is in my mind. Of course if the idea is appreciated by the General Conference constituency as it should be, a committee will work out the surface details. We simply here attempt to arouse a deeper interest in the superannuated ministers, and suggest a fundamental plan for its operation.

I hope that the Bishops will see their way clear to recommend the establishment of such a distinct and separate department as this General Superannuated Ministers' Department with a Secretary, Treasurer, and a Committee on Plans, etc.

A soldier in God's army is not to be considered of less importance than the soldiers in common military life of the country. The captains in the several armies and regiments of the Lord should be especially cared for; and legislation like this is one sign of our sincerity in the cause of Christianity. Men who have braved the firing line, tramped through cold as well as heat; through rain, snow and sleet; men who have swallowed the bitterest doses of imposition and hate of objectors to Christ and his teaching; men who have prepared the way for those who follow from the higher ranks; men who have moved forward until their hearts were sick, their feet were bruised and sore, until their strength gave way and they were forced out of the lines, and sent home to die, need special legislation in their behalf.

"Awake thou that sleepest and Christ shall give thee light."

Let us help them to feel comforted in their last years because of tangible legislation and tangible help, that the Church appreciates their sacrifice and service."

My next article will be in the interest of the widows and orphans of the ministry.

Clover, S. C.

## BISHOP BEE'S APPOINTMENTS.

March 7-8, Worcester, Massachusetts.

March 14-15, Waterbury, Conn.

March 21-22, New Bedford, Mass.

March 28, 11 A. M., Rush church, New York City.

April 2nd, Hilliard's Chapel, Montgomery, Alabama.

April 4, Dedication Old Ship.

April 6, Mid-Year Conference and Tercentenary Rally, Mt. Zion, Montgomery, Alabama.

April 8, Meridian, Miss.

April 9, Jackson, Miss.

April 11-12, New Orleans, La.

April 13, Mid Year Conference and Tercentenary Rally, Ponchatoula, La.

April 14-15, Mid year Conference and Tercentenary Rally, Canton Miss.

Dear pastors: Let us "go over the top" by a good margin. Now, going over the top means getting more than your proportion, and remember that you row as you work successfully. Finally, "Don't fail."

Where to address mail:

Alabama: April 1-5, 106 Cleveland Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama.

Louisiana: April 6-10, 2716, Belmont Place New Orleans, La.

Mississippi: April 11-14, Canton, Mississippi.

## THE EAGLE'S ALARM FROM ARKANSAS.—MY COUNCIL EXPERIENCES, MEASURES AND MEN.

By Rev. C. W. P. Mitchell.

Having been rushed so as not to have time to keep up any regular correspondence through The Star of Zion, and feeling that I had no monopoly of the columns of our well-edited church organ, I have not assailed it with an article for quite a while, but if leave will be granted me at this time, I shall sue for space to say affirmatively a few things about the Connectional Council and other things which I trust will be of interest to the many readers throughout the length and breadth of our Zion. Agreeing that the Council is simply a general meeting of the "celebrities" of our Church, I feel safe in saying that our last Council was the greatest of Zion's "celebrities" ever recorded in Council form because of the aggressiveness of the spirit of the men who met in Pater-son in Council session. They were there from everywhere—from the tar-pits of North Carolina, the fountains of Indiana, the summer resorts of Michigan, the ship-wharves of Louisiana, from Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Tennessee, Connecticut, Arkansas, well from every where. They had come with a vision that means a greater day for our Zion.

The Church had been asked to raise four hundred thousand dollars in its Tercentenary campaign drive; but these men and women had such "pep" in them to say, instead of four hundred thousand that we raise one million dollars. This drive is now on, and the amount asked and more should be raised as a fitting expression of our gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings we have received through our presence in this country. Let us put this drive "over the top" that the needy causes for which this money is being raised can be taken care of and the Church pushed forward toward greater achievements.

The delegates have all been elected who are to compose the General Conference. It may be said that the last General Conference did its work so easy because measures coming before that body had been threshed out through the columns of The Star, and the Quarterly Review before the assembling of the solons in Louisville. I am therefore confirmed in my opinion that if the important measures coming up before the ensuing General Conference could be discussed in the paper prior to our assembling in Knoxville in May it would greatly facilitate the business of that session. With this in mind I will offer the following suggestions as matters for consideration.

First: The Districting Committee should be separate from the Episcopal Committee. Because of the knowledge of the Bishops concerning the field they should serve on the Districting committee and serve as a guide in their work of redistricting the Church.

Second: The Episcopal Committee should be one on which the Bishops should not serve. The Committee should not be coerced by their presence. What does it matter where the Bishops serve? Their salary will be the same, and their office is for life. Let the Committee appoint them to districts where in their best judgment they can do the greatest amount of good for the race and Church. The Districts should be so arranged as to have the Conferences contiguous. This suggestion should be considered by the Districting Committee.

No Bishops' Receipts should be used after May 1920. In Louisville the Bishops recommended that there should be no Bishops' receipts. I fought through a resolution that the Bishops should give receipts for fifty per cent of the General Claims and the pastor should send the other fifty per cent in cash with the receipt forthwith to the Financial Secretary. The Conference adopted this resolution yet it has never been in operation. Now I am willing to agree with the Bishops that there should be no more Bishops' receipts.

The Western Star of Zion should be in circulation. The West should not be deprived of the only Department dedicated to its upbuild and development. There seems to be a marked disposition on the part of the Church to count the West an

servant and its development of such a doubtful prospect until the only Connectional investment toward its upbuild is the lives of a few of its ministers who with their families are out here trying to hold the lines safe for our Zion, and trying to push her borders to further distances. It was argued in 1912 that we needed The Western Star, and therefore it was created. It was argued again in 1916 that the necessity for it had grown to such proportions that it should be put on par with the Star of Zion, and it was done. Now because its editor elected to serve the United States as an army chaplain rather than serve his Church as editor of a much needed weekly periodical, and forsook his position in the Western Publication House for the honors of the Western Front Battlefields; it is now argued that the Western Star of Zion is not a necessity. It seems that the office was made for the convenience of one man rather than for the development of the Church. If the West ever needed a paper it needs it today; if it does not need it today it did not need it in 1912 or 1916. In 1916 the Church said that it needed a Legion of Finance. Now that the Secretary of that Department has been called to the great beyond, some are arguing that this Department is no longer a necessity in the Church. When will Zion cease her folly and fix a definite program and stick to it? When will she put her right foot upon favoritism, and her left foot in the clear where all of her sons can see her in the light of equal rights for all and special privileges to none? Is there a royal house in Zion from the solemn pales of which men for official preferment are to be selected? Does certain sections make one an alien in the commonwealth of Zion? Must one hail from certain quarters in the Church in order to be worthy of official consideration in the Church? Is Zion so badly put to it for man power until when an office is made vacant because of choice or death that a department must be abolished for the lack of some one to fill the place? Many sections of our great Church join me in asking these very pertinent questions; and if these Departments are abolished then Zion will be considered as answering these question in the affirmative. What will Zion say? What will Zion do? Let the General Conference answer.

It is a fact that Zion has held too closely to her "guardian rock" the Atlantic Coast line. Her failure to expand throws all of her work in developing the West up to future planning. Her Church population is now leaving the East and coming Westward to be housed by other denominations. Twelve years ago I came to Arkansas and seeing our needs in these neglected fields I began to sound the alarm, but Zion would not hear. But some one may say, she is waking up now. But she is almost too late.

Just as she has conducted herself toward her advantages in the West, she is conducting herself toward her advantages in Africa. To make ourselves a stronghold in our fatherland Zion needs a resident Bishop in Africa. Dr. Crooke should be elected Bishop and sent to Africa at once. The field needs close episcopal supervision. Why should Zion falter on this proposition and wait until the day of visitation has passed. "Awake O Zion, put on thy strength. Put on thy beautiful garment O Jerusalem."

Dr. C. L. Alexander is one of the most progressive pastors in our Zion and it was my pleasure to visit him on my return from the Council and spend a week with him and his good people. Dr. Alexander was making some extensive repairs on his church which when completed will add both beauty and convenience. He is a tireless worker and a successful manager. His people love him, and the city of Petersburg counts him among its most constructive citizens. His good wife and refined family add much to his success. Dr. Alexander is at present the Secretary of Zion's Financial Legion, and if retained and a greater degree of definiteness be given his department in May, he will do a great service for the Church through this department. This is one of the departments for which the Church feels it has no need. One is forced to wonder why was it created in 1916? What successful turn has Zion made during these four years

in the course of her finances that makes this department an aimless venture in the affairs of the church? Certainly Zion's reserve funds have not increased until we have money enough to meet her ever increasing demands. Then why abolish a department that is calculated to increase Zion's financial capacity? Bosh! It's all stuff. The fact is that the department was created to meet the demands and fill the desire of one man for official preferment; now that he is gone there is found no further need for the office. Retain the office and give Dr. Alexander a chance to develop it and prove its necessity.

The campaign of Dr. J. B. Colbert for the Bishopric seems to be taking on the form of definiteness to the delight of his many admirers throughout the West. His friends scattered throughout the East have seemingly discovered the elements of merit in him, and with a pronounced program which closely studied forecasts success. Dr. Colbert has made great sacrifice for the Church, and might have been Bishop long ago had there been enough Western voting strength to have given prestige to his campaign. It is to the delight of his many friends in the West that he is receiving some support from the other sections of the Church and without a sudden change he will be a candidate to be reckoned with in Knoxville.

The happy advantage of being able to swing around gives men who are aspiring a chance to be observed by those who as delegates will make up the General Conference. Through this medium Dr. E. D. W. Jones has impressed his fitness for Episcopal honors upon many, and from what is said in the many write-ups his election is almost assured. Dr. Wallace also made favorable impressions, while Dr. Wood is the choice of the whole Church. So the bulletin board reads: "Wood first. Who next?" The observer answers who?

There is something strange about the Editorship of The Star of Zion. Two years ago everybody was ready to throw Dr. Anderson out of the office window, but there has been a decided change in the sentiment of the Church. Everywhere they are saying: "Let Dr. Anderson remain." You can hear men everywhere praising him for his wise Editorials.

Well, Doc, hold tight, and don't go to sleep on your job, for our Lord said: Woe unto you when all men speak well concerning you."

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## DR. E. W. SHAW PRAISED.

Our noted and widely known and read Hon. John E. Bruce, "Bruce Grit," has the following to say in one of our prominent exchanges:

"I do not personally know Dr. Shaw who is a candidate for the Secretaryship of foreign missions of the A. M. E. Zion Church, but I have heard Bishop Alexander Walters, who in his life time, was my warm personal friend, speak of Dr. Shaw in fulsome phrase, as a clean, capable, courageous Christian gentleman, who was worthily and acceptably representing the Zion Connection in Africa. I think that this is a pretty strong endorsement of Dr. Shaw. Bishop Walters never slobbered over men, never wasted words on incompetents. He knew a real man when he saw one. And he was glad and happy to give such men the benefit of whatever influence he possessed to aid them in getting up in the world. From a picture I have seen somewhere of Dr. Shaw, I understand why the Bishop thought and spoke so highly of him. He is a man of fine personality, a man of purpose and possesses excellent mental ability. If I were going to pick out a candidate for Missionary Secretary I would unhesitatingly pick out Dr. Shaw because of a firm conviction I have that he is exactly the man for that office. The fine, strongly marked face bespeaks the self-controlled Christian gentleman and well informed scholar—the very type of man needed by the American Church in Africa, because the African on his native hearth is much more advanced in matters spiritual and temporal than he is generally given credit for. I trust Dr. Shaw will be elected to this office."