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Shaking the Plum Tree.

SPRING CONFERENCES AND OTHER THINGS

Dr. E. D. W. Jones.

Spring conferences are over and editor and reporters have written up. It is therefore not my duty to repeat the facts and figures published by those who were to correspond with the papers, but to make a few hopeful observations. Long-looked-for reform is, that the tantalizing breeder of discontent, namely the Bishop's table has gone and gone forever. Not in a single spring conference we visited presided over by the late Bishop G. W. Clinton associated by Bishop G.

A Bigger and Better Zion.

By Henry J. Callis, D. D.

The strength of the nation is sometimes measured by its natural resources; but the great world war demonstrated that the dynamic of any nation is determined by its ability to develop and maintain man power. The nation that is making it possible for its boys and girls to live in a land where love of home and country is the first lesson taught; and purity of life and living with examples of justice and truth help us to them as the highest ideals of character will in the time of need and itself possessed with that man power which will be able to safeguard its best interest at all times. The highest and best service that one can render to his country, is that which comes from the best life that one can live. Poets and philosophers may have with indulgences reached admirable heights, but by a chase and virtuous career consecrating all their powers to the development of their God given talent, their flight would have been much higher and their service to mankind much greater. Our love of home and country demands of us the best that we have for its defense, even to the laying down of our lives if necessary and then we have only given our highest and best devotion.

If our home and nation demands the best we have, our God will accept nothing less. The Church of Jesus Christ of which we are a part is making the same demand of us; are we giving it?

We cannot have a Bigger and Better Zion if we do not place before our boys and girls the highest ideals and make it possible for them to attain those ideals; Zion's biggest and best men and women must come from those who love Zion more than any earthly joy. As I write, I am thinking of the early struggles through which God has brought our Zion; and the sacrifices made by the fathers and mothers and the full measure of devotion of those who have fallen asleep in recent years. It is true we have still strong and brave men in whom we have faith and for whom we are praying. But we would be very unwise not to realize the disadvantage to which our Zion is put in the loss of the services of those who have passed into the great beyond. In these times of stress and strain when every tribe and group that has any organized power is asking the question, who will go for us? we cannot help seeing and feeling the need of Bishop Alexander Walters standing in the very thickest of the fray pointing the way with faith in God and the race; a Bishop J. W. Hood, whose wise counsel could be sought at all times; a Bishop J. W. Alstork whose strength of will and purpose of heart made him the admiration of that section in our Zion where he so gallantly gave the last full measure of service and devotion to God and Church; and that prince of Bishops, G. W. Clinton, the star in Zion that went down just a few days ago, whose form still lingers in our sight, whose words we still hear and whose acts we still see. These like many others whose names could here be called were lives of service that have helped to build the kingdom of God on earth.

As the years come and go the work of the Church of Jesus Christ grows larger. The Church has always had a social problem, but today it is demanding more of the Church than ever; it is imperative that members of Christ's church today lift high the standard of social purity in order that as soldiers of Jesus Christ they may be fit to fight. The economic condition of mankind is asking the Church how

admired and respected the counsel and wisdom of old men. He was deeply interested in the conditions of his race. Had he chosen to have done so he could have made his race the stepping stone to fame and wealth, but it was his choice to advocate social justice and political rights. To this end he labored to the day of his death. He was an ardent advocate of a deeper, spiritual awakening in the church. His life's work was to keep the spiritual fires burning even in the humblest church in his Episcopal diocese. He was a great preacher—deep and learned. He swayed men and women at his will with his eloquence. He had his convictions but was broad enough not to fall out with and hate a man because he differed with him. He was approachable and sympathetic with the humblest. Sometimes men disliked him for what they believed in, but when they understood him better they loved him the more. Twenty-two years ago he insisted that the writer of these lines come back to the church of his mother, from which he had drifted in boyhood. He promised to ever be our adviser and friend, and though we often clashed and differed in matters of small moment, there was no bitterness or rankling of ill will. We are bowed in sorrow and feel the loss of a true friend. God grant that the church pray the prayer of guidance of a divine hand to those of his loved ones, and that his place be filled as acceptably as he filled it. Peace to his ashes.

The Mid-Year Meeting of the Blue Ridge Conference.

At a call from Bishop L. W. Kyles nearly all the pastors of the Blue Ridge Conference met in Southside Avenue A. M. E. Zion church, with Dr. W. M. Anderson, pastor, in the City of Asheville, N. C., May 3-4. The Bishop eloquently outlined the procedure of the meeting. He deplored the fact that he had not been able to make a single episcopal visit in the conference since his assignment over it, yet he hoped the seasoned and tried men of the conference had done their duty as they had understood it. Rev. E. M. Strong, of Waynesville. Rev. G. W. James, of Weaverville, and the Bishop all preached strong sermons to the delight of all. The meeting was saddened by the announcement of the death of Rev. J. B. Miller, one of its strong young men. He was a splendid preacher, of lovable disposition, loved and respected by all.

The reports from those of the pastors present was a pleasant surprise to the Bishop, and the splendid disbursements to the needy churches in the conference have done more to strengthen the Tercentenary cause than all the educational propaganda that could have been launched.

Bishop Kyles has walked right into the hearts of the men of the Blue Ridge Conference, and his splendid personality is being indelibly stamped upon both ministry and laity. It is now being evinced that his will is the men's pleasure, and the Blue Ridge conference is advancing by leaps and bounds. There are many strong men in this conference; in fact the percentage of strong men in accord with the views of the Bishop

answer at roll call with round reports. But best of all they will report many souls converted and added to the church and the church has been strengthened wherever they labored. A Centennial. It was the pleasure of the writer



DR. GEORGE L. WHITE

Who fell asleep, May 16th, 1921, at Newbern, N. C. in the midst of successful work of building the church. Rev. J. S. Shaw is now finishing the task. Dr. White pastored a number of our leading churches. He was a man of electric and laconic eloquence and held unprecedented attention and following in his charges.

to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to one Sister Eliza Scruggs, who boasted of being 106 years old. She was in possession of her mental faculties, could walk spryly and remembered many things that happened a third of a century before the civil war. She was a marvel indeed. She walked without assistance to the Communion altar and bowed with tears in her eyes, and took the Lord's Supper with the congregation. Her younger son, Brother Chas. Scruggs, was touchingly tender and attentive to her. She lives at Sugar Fork, N. C. The quarterly meetings at this point on the Franklin circuit were indeed a great success due largely to the untiring efforts of the pastor, Rev. W. C. Van Hook, who made it so pleasant for the Presiding Elder. He is highly respected and greatly beloved by the people. All the men of the Asheville district seem to vie with each other in showering courtesies on their Presiding Elder, making him love them more than ever. Rev. Mrs. V. R. Robinson.

This good woman is not only the conference evangelist, but is at the head of the W. H. and F. M. Societies. She is moving heaven and earth to eclipse all past efforts to arouse a deep interest in the missionary endeavors, backed up by such strong young women as Mrs. Mea Gray, of Dillsboro, N. C., of the young women, and Mrs. Hattie R. Henderson of Morristown, Tennessee of the Buds of Promise. These good women are endeavoring with

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L. Blackwell in New Jersey; the Philadelphia and Baltimore and the New York conferences presided over by Bishop J. S. Caldwell, the New England by Bishop W. L. Lee; did that old table show its hideous face. It has been consigned to the rubbish heap there to remain until it finally goes back to things forgotten. The General officers and members of the conference collected all the money and the bishops presided and really and actually superintended the work. It looked like great business houses to see the men who had wrought, wit pad and pencil giving credit to their fellows and attending to the affair of their own conferences. Not a dollar was misplaced. Zion was no ruined. The dignity of the Bishop was enhanced and men and people were happy to see the day dawn when all orders and classes did their work according to law, and not according to whims. Very few had time or disposition to idle their days away on the outside and at places of amusement for these Bishops had arranged to keep every man busy in the conference room. Our Senior Bishop J. S. Caldwell went a step forward and had the auditing committee, made up entirely of conference members, gather in all the finance from the different collectors, verify their reports and then turn money and receipts over to the conference finance committee for proper distribution.

It is generally known that this method is just what the men have been clamoring for years and for the first time in twenty years we

never heard a complaint or murmur against this rule of law.

May that old table that has been the cause of more grumbling and suspicion both on the part of the clergy and laymen than anything else in our Zion never come back in a single Zion conference but that the men who raise the money and care for the connection's interest during the year be thought and found able to care for its proper handling at the Annual conference. This course adopted by our Bishops of the Spring conferences at least gave us the assurance that we were a part of the great church and that we could have the honor and duty of attending to the business of our own Annual conferences. At these conferences the movements were so quiet, quick and orderly that much time was given to preaching and the discussion of important religious affairs.

Every day at 12 o'clock, big heretofore Sunday preachers like Drs. Goler, Alleyne, Walls and Hannum poured forth the message of the Gospel of the Son of God in spirit, fervor and power.

I have never seen so many happy preachers in all my days in Zion. Happy that at last their ability and love for the proper care of the church was recognized. Happy because they were treated like seasoned men and not like children and novices. Happy that all had found each man his place and each was filling it to the glory of God and the extension of our beloved Zion.

Compliments were numerous and profuse on Dr. Goler's illuminating and encouraging financial report published in the Star and the good days that we have longed hoped for and prayed are upon us in every department of our church work. Nothing is so helpful and inspiring as to let us all know about our financial collections and distributions. Dr. Goler himself is so happy over the favor with which his services met, and over the fine showing that the church is making financially that he is proud to publish broadcast its wonderful achievements. Surely God is with Zion.

The Star of Zion is increasing its circulation among the laity. Dr. Wall keeps ever after the thousands he has in mind who must read our great connectional organ. When he enters the conference rooms he begins to build up the subscription among our members and more Zion people are reading the Star today than ever in its history. In passing we note that he well fills the place of his predecessors as ever ready in brilliant responses and sweeping oratory. He has a splendid personality, winning style, profoundly thoughtful, well read and magnetic presentation.

We looked for Dr. J. W. Martin in our round of visitation but he was in other parts bending himself to the load and finally put in appearance at the little Michigan with flying colors, giving a fine account of the workings of his department. Dr. Whitted, whom to know well is to love and respect, was earnestly presenting the claims of the Brotherhood. One remarkable advancement the Brotherhood has made under the efficient control of this business head is, that he has taken it out of the realm of perpetual controversy and continual complaint. Men pay the assessment now without grumbling because they have confidence in the man at its head and the institution itself. Dr. Whitted too, is a connectional man and has his eye on every nook and corner of this broad Zion, spies out its weak spots as well as strongholds and seeks then, by supplying material and men, to save the day, check harmful influences and build up the grand old church.

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