

The Star of Zion

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

NUMBER FOURTEEN

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 1924

VOLUME FORTY-EIGHT

GENERAL CONFERENCE HOROSCOPE.

By Bishop G. L. Blackwell.

Dear Editor:

This is my first article to your well edited paper since you donned the tropic nearly four years ago. First of all, therefore, permit me to pay my respects to you as editor. You have wielded a strong and trenchant pen, and your preachments have given high-toned character to our weekly connectional organ. Judging from my own observations and from the opinions of others, you have given general satisfaction as Editor of The Star of Zion almost from every view point. Both the Church and the race have been helped by the rich, sane, and, I may say, rare editorials you have written from time to time. So much am I impressed with the quality of service you have given, I could wish that it might be your wish to continue to be the chronicler, the expositor, and the interpreter of the current events and opinions of the Church and race through The Star of Zion for years to come. I do not mean by this that an embargo should be placed upon any other aspiration you may have to serve the Church, but rather to put a premium upon your eminent qualification as an editor.

The Church has produced a galaxy of excellent writers, narrators and correspondents, the character of whose contributions distinguishes them as such, but few men possess such a robust vocabulary, such fine discriminative powers, such elegance in phrasing sentences and paragraphs, such ability to differentiate the shades of difference between terms of similar meaning in such choice diction and chaste style, with the equipoise that you seem to possess. The periodic revolutions of The Star of Zion require that an editor should be a close observer, a quick and accurate thinker, a strong and logical reasoner, aside from being a scholar, well-read, broad in views, with a wide range of knowledge of men, places and things, and one who is industrious enough to make researches and observe the trend of current events in Church and in state. And so you have my highest compliment for the excellent service you have given and are giving the Church.

General Conference Matters.

During every quadrennium when we are approaching the General Conference The Star is filled with interesting articles from every part of the field giving suggestions for new legislation and providing for revision of the present law and regulations. For forty years I have observed this notwithstanding some men say each time we have need of great changes, etc.

It is true in a Church system like ours, both monarchical and democratic, that men who have the right to speak and to write, will see why changes should be made. Then, too, after the changes are made they do not satisfy them. It will be that way so long as men are imperfect in judgment. I have passed through eleven quadrenniums with this one, and each time on approaching the General Conference the solons have said certain changes are imperative. The changes are in many instances made, but when they are put into effect, to them they are unsatisfactory. Perhaps some changes in our present regulations are necessary, but not near so many as the new thinkers would have you believe. For instance, in nearly every General Conference someone offers a resolution to put into law things which are already there. The fact is many do not read the law often. We have enough law now to hang an elephant. None of us even make an attempt to carry out all of the law we have. We could easily dispense with a good deal of law that we now have. Yet it might be well to make some few changes.

There are those who advocate the election of two, of three, of four, of five or six bishops, and one brother wants eight. Well, each bishop, minister and layman, has a right to express his individual opinion when it comes to what he thinks the General Conference should do. No one's rights should be abridged when it comes to the expression of one's opinion; but when the solons meet in the highest law-making body of the Church, they usually do the wise and common sense thing, especially when they have reasoned together for about fifteen days. In my opinion, to elect only two or even three bishops, we would not have a sufficient number if we were to appoint one to the foreign field exclusively. To make eight, six or even five, we would be running a great risk. Six of the present board have decided that four new men on the bench, should the Lord bless the present number with good health, will be an adequate number to serve the Church. That number presupposes ten domestic and one foreign district. The present board is not so particular about how many bishops are created; they

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FOR THE GOOD OF ZION AND NOT SELF.

By (Mrs.) Daisy V. Johnson.

In a few days representatives from different sections of our Church will gather in the city of Indianapolis, Ind., to listen to reports of Zion's activities during the past four years, and to plan for her future progress. Dr. W. J. Walls Editor of the Star has been fair to all in getting articles in the Star as their turn come. In reading the Star we get an idea of the sentiment of those who go to make up this great law making body.

The world is calling for real leaders among the laymen as well as the ministerial rank. The world admires a man or woman always that can and will think, speak and act for themselves, a man or woman that cannot be bought, that is broad enough to forget self and think of the cause he represents.

It is a nice thing for those who dictates the policy of others and see them follow, but shows weakness in the follower, be he ever so learned if he has not the manhood when he is being commanded to do what he feels and know to be wrong and then wilfully do or say that thing that will help to hinder the progress or defeat the plans that are in operation for the success of any worthy cause.

We may succeed in enslaving the minds of those who we have control over for awhile but after such a length of time that enslaved mind will resist the many false reasonings that are presented by his supposed to be master and think and act as his own conscious tells him to be right, then all respect for the master is lost be he ever so learned.

To those who perhaps are too weak to take a stand for right, let me say to you that the cause you represent is God's cause, the Lord is great in Zion and he is high above all the people Lean and depend on Him.

During the Quadrennium God has visited the official family of our Church as never before. He has taken from us some of our strongest leaders, as we look on in silence the thought with us is who will fill their places. There are many who are prepared but will we who compose this great law making body lay aside the little narrow views and in God's name elect them? Elect them not because they are our friends nor for any personal gain but because they are prepared and the Master has need of them.

Among those who are aspiring for Episcopal honors we have some of the brainiest men not only of our Church but of the world. They are men who have no fear when it comes

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ILLUMINATIONS.

By Rev. A. C. Cook.

The date for the meeting of the forthcoming General Conference has been fixed by law. The program as laid out by the Board of Bishops has been arranged. Dr. Davis and Bishop Wallace have projected local arrangements that will prove a benediction to the sessions of this deliberate body, and finally, to the church generally.

The program of which I speak, is for our daily guide in the General Conference, and recommendations of needed legislation and the number of bishops to be elected.

We hear it whispered around that possibly a majority of the bishops favor the election of four new bishops, and a minority favor the election of five new bishops, four for the home field and one for our Foreign work. If surface indications count for anything, and they do, should a minority report be rendered, it will be carried.

Zion Church stands with her face toward opportunities that she can no longer fail to grasp. Our home field has much territory that Zion has never reached. The people are here and we have a God given right to bring them into our fold. Can we accomplish this with seven chief pastors? I answer no. Not only I, but all progressive men and women in Zion will answer in the negative. But twelve strong men supervising twelve well arranged episcopal districts, will help the pastors and the presiding elders to put over a comprehensive program.

Some men seem to be spineless. have no opinions of their own, project no plan that will assist our Zion unless it has the approval of the powers that be. The powers that he want us to think, they want us to speak, and they want us to work. Why keep silent?

The lower house, as the ministerial and lay conference is styled, has for its leader or president, Dr. C. S. Whitted, who is large in body, great in soul, whose ambition is to be a bishop in the Church of his choice. He is a man of splendid parts.

It shall not be the purpose of this conference to knock the board of bishops, but it shall be the purpose of this body of honorable men and women to plan for the good of Zion. We will never get anywhere trying to stab our leaders in the back. I have no confidence in any one who makes capital out of the actions of our chief pastors, and then want a place with them.

Let us be fair, and treat those who are over us as we would have them treat us.

It is anticipated that the above mentioned body will put forward some proposals that will be hard to turn down at the General Conference. Just here we must ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and our efforts will not prove in vain.

Legislation! Legislation! will be the cry of many. Adequate Episcopal supervision will be the cry of others. All should agree on things essential, and nothing detrimental.

The chieftains of Zion Church are a set of very fine men. All for the most part, are progressive, brotherly, scholarly, and withal an anxiety to spread the borders of Zion.

We are coming forward with renewed vigor and proposals to place our Home and Foreign Mission departments under one and the same management. Develop these agencies of the Church and in the next quadrennium, we will see a new Zion.

We should not remain longer in the rear of other branches of our faith when it comes to the Church Extension department. We should make our Church extension department an agency that will work unceasingly to extend our Zion to every section of the country (America.) We must put a man at the head of

this department upon whom we can depend to carry the banner to the top of the mountain. If we want a veteran of many years, Dr. Bennett is the man. If we want a young man, Drs. H. H. Jackson, the man with a program, J. P. Foote and Lawyer Dudley are saying, take me, and I'll deliver the goods.

This writer has a yearning for a Church Extension Department that will have Dr. Stout of the C. M. E. Church know that we too, are on the main line.

Another proposal that is in the mind of this writer and many others is, the placing of our assessments under less heads. We have too many assessments mentioned on our certificate of appointments. Blind some of them and we will reap even greater benefits.

This General Conference should pass a law making more adequate provisions for our worn-out ministers, widows and orphans.

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Depreciating Achievements And Guessing at Leadership.

By J. H. McMullen.

Business men, corporation leaders, and now our diplomatic ministers, all have reached their high posts through service in their especial fields of labor. Every where this has been the only rule by which to determine leadership. But for some reason which we cannot explain, certain minds in the A. M. E. Zion Church discard what has been governing principle in leadership from the very beginning of time to the present day, and cry what a man has accomplished through experience and great work is not worth a grain of salt when we want another whose achievements do not recommend them more favorable than the man of achievements and capability whom they do not like.

Hence the argument is produced "not what he has done but what he is capable of doing."

I have asked the question once before and I now repeat it, how are we able to know what a man is, capable of doing only by the rule of what he has done? Then we might also ask, why is it needful to keep arguing this question discounting achievements if there is not something at stake which we fear will come to the light? The impression is left that the man of achievements is bending under the weight of years and hence is incapable of bearing the burden demanded for a bishop. Well, if this includes the writer, we will be fifty-six years during the sitting of the General Conference.

That I suppose puts us under the bending years of old age, and yet one of the strongest and most active of our present Board of Bishops has reached the fifties. Of the older men of our present chief pastors, tell us if you will, who has become incompetent because of bending under the weight of years? And tell us also who of our present bishops went to the head of the church without having proven their ability to lead before being elevated through active pastoral service the essential element in their leadership plus whatever experience they may have had? The argument to which I have referred may be good politics, but the judgment is like that of Bob Ingersoll's Billy goat who undertook to butt the New York Central engine off the track while speeding rapidly towards New York City. If there are men of past achievements bending under the weight of years now unable to function as leaders, name them and come out in open opposition to them. And along with them name the capable unachieving men preferred in their stead who by process of reasoning resorted to will make capable leaders as bishops in the Church.

Sewickley, Pa.

WALKING ABOUT ZION.

By Bishop J. S. Caldwell, D. D.

Mr. Editor:

I wish to point out some activities and progress made by the Church during the Quadrennium now closing. I am led to make these observations from what I heard one of our brethren say who said he was quoting another respecting the lack of progress the Church has made in the last four years. Inefficient leadership, non-progressiveness and poor planning was given as the reason for this backwardness on the part of the Church. It is admitted that we have had an insufficient number of leaders for a large part of the four years. For this, no one among us is at fault. It is God's way to which we all humbly bow.

As to those who have been permitted to lead the forces up to this present day, and I trust into the General Conference, I wish to claim on their behalf that they address themselves like Christian heroes to the task assigned and as a result of what has been accomplished, let the records speak.

I have taken the time to look into our past history to refresh my memory on achievements that stand out in every Quadrennium for a little more than a quarter of a century. In comparing the highest water-mark reached in any previous Quadrennium, this present Quadrennium stands head and shoulders above any during that stretch of years. This progress is not due to any one agency, but every member ministerial or lay who has worked within the borders of our Zion, is due his or her mead of praise for what has been accomplished. If we had not worked unitedly together, we would to-day, have little or nothing of which we can be reasonably proud. I can in this brief note only hint at some of the things what has been accomplished.

The largest number of churches bought or built and dedicated in any previous four years, will be reported by three of our Bishops at the forthcoming General Conference, namely, Bishops Blackwell, Kyles and Clement. Bishop Kyles and his co-workers have organized a new conference on the Pacific Coast, and built and bought several new churches; to say nothing of the new organizations and new church buildings that have been acquired on this side of the Rockies. Bishop Clement has astonished us all in the number of new churches that he has built and bought in the State of Ohio, making the Conference one-third stronger than when he took charge. Bishop Blackwell had just taken over several new organizations in Chicago and the middle west, at the close of the last Quadrennium. He has given his time and talent to the work of securing for Zion these properties so that they might not be endangered from a financial standpoint. Detroit and Richmond belong in this category of churches. Bishops Wallace, Wood, Lee and the writer have all seen new churches built and dedicated in their respective Districts during the Quadrennium.

The historian will record the fact that the largest donations in the history of the Church has been made to three of our congregations: Cleveland, Ohio; Paterson, N. J., Newark, N. J., each received Five Thousand Dollars (5,000.00). Mother Zion, New York, Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000). Twenty-five other churches scattered throughout our denomination received a Thousand Dollars each. Those receiving Five Hundred Dollars and downward are too numerous to be mentioned. These simply represent the high spots touched in our onward march to quicken our church-life in all parts of the field.

In the field of educational endeavor, we have seen Atkinson College re-

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