

The Star of Zion

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

NUMBER SIXTEEN

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA. THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1924.

VOLUME FORTY-EIGHT

THINKING THINGS THROUGH.

GENERAL CONFERENCE MATTERS—SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

By Bishop L. W. Kyles, D. D.

The sounding of the gavel at Indianapolis at ten o'clock Wednesday morning, May 7, 1914, will bring together the most interesting, thoughtful and progressive group of men and women ever assembled in an African Methodist Episcopal Zion General Conference. The questions to be decided by this law-making body are perhaps the weightiest and most far-reaching in effect of any questions which have engaged the attention of previous General Conferences. The delegates have all been elected and have had ample time to "think things through." Will this General Conference take advantage of the opportunity to regulate its machinery for the new tasks of the new day, or will we trudge along in beaten paths, clinging to the antiquated methods of the past? Time will tell.

Present Restlessness And Its Cause.

In an article appearing in The Star of Zion recently we are told that the process of fermentation going on in the Church today is but the result of a recurring habit on the part of the men to demand changes every four years as they approach the General Conference. Is this statement correct? The fact that the restlessness of today is different in character, degree and effect from the restlessness which has preceded any General Conference in recent years leads us to doubt seriously the correctness of this statement. Why may we not as well conclude that the discontent with present conditions and the demand for changes in our regulations are signs of growth and development.

The correspondent informs us that the Church has made progress, that no changes in our system are necessary except "perhaps a little," that we should serve the traditions of the past and worship ancestral leadership, that the landmarks of the fathers are sufficient, and that we should close our eyes to the worthy examples set by other denominations. I am frank to acknowledge that the Church has made some progress. But the question is not whether the church has measured up to its opportunity and meet the increasing demands of the new day. I am as frank to confess that improvement of the method for the conduct of the Church has not been commensurate with its growth in intelligence and the awakening which has swept over it. We have failed to furnish opportunity for the exercise of the gifts and graces of the Church, and an outlet for its pent up energies. These things account for the agitation of the progressive element and the restlessness which is pervading the Church.

(Continued to page 5)

Just a Word—But as To Candidates.

By W. J. Trent.

As one follows the articles of The Star from week to week, he finds much space given to the candidates for the different positions in the Church. Each writer of course, has his preference, and is very anxious to see his friend go over the top. And while this is true, we ought to have in mind first of all, "Can he fill the bill?" Our first objective ought to be the good of the whole Church, and our second: "Who is the best man for the position that must be filled?" In other words the man and woman of ability, not only to do the job, but to be able to do team work as well. This is very important at

LOOKING FORWARD.

By Bishop G. C. Clement, D. D.

Some recent statements, propositions, predictions, etc., appearing in The Star of Zion call for a little investigation, perhaps. Several months ago we suggested certain lines of action looking forward to the continued growth of our Zion. We say continued, for there is a reason. The present quadrennium has seen the largest growth in the history of our Church since the era of Reconstruction. We must keep on. Somebody sent out a call for restoring confidence. When and where and by whom was it lost? It looks as if it will be foolish, a waste of time and money, to say the least, to call the whole Church in delegated assembly to Indianapolis for legislation, since already General Conferences have been held at Richmond Charlotte, Montgomery, and New York. So we have been duly and truly informed. No official roster or list of members has been furnished to date, but it seems we are only to have a ratification meeting at Indianapolis. It is to be regretted that the whole Church must bear the expense of holding a General Conference at this time, when already sectional General Conferences have decided what must be done. Maybe the real General Conference will be forgiven for presuming to assemble May 7,—anyhow, those of us who have not met elsewhere will be permitted to know what has been ordered at the several and sundry sessions above mentioned.

The number of bishops, and who they are to be, also, will no longer be an open question. There are five to be elected and the several General Conferences have named the men. Of course these brethren will bring their robes with them. Will they get a chance to wear them? Two hundred and sixty delegates must answer this affirmatively.

Does the Church need five bishops? A large majority of those we have consulted think that four will be enough and to spare. Some call attention to the fact that we had eleven at the close of the last General Conference. They forget, that only ten districts were provided, two afflicted chief pastors being given one between them. It was further agreed that the conferences assigned the two lamented bishops should automatically go to certain others in case of death. All know what happened. Not only two, but four of our board were called to their great reward.

For three years seven bishops have guided our Zion through the hazardous period of post-war restlessness and the great migration. Zion has not lost a member, but has gained thousands. We do not claim that seven bishops are sufficient, for they are not. We need more. The present board would break fearfully under such a load during another quadrennium. Three new men would be amply sufficient, if it were not for our increasing foreign interests. Per-

(Continued to page 5)

this stage of our growth. We have outgrown the individualistic stage of our development. Big business found this out in its way of doing things long ago, and the Church must practice it more and more as the program of the whole denomination is being made up. Not so much that some one man may stand out in a little space by himself, but that all work together for the glory of the kingdom. There is room enough for all and work enough for all.

Of course the question of character and fitness must be the sine qua non, as Zion Church has always stood four square for the highest type of character. And then we ought not to bar any candidate from the race simply because we think that he has

(Continued to page 8)

WALKING ABOUT ZION.

DEVOTIONS AND DEPENDENCE UPON THE DIVINE.

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

Mr. Editor:

I cannot free myself from the thought that a word about the religious side of our program at the forthcoming General Conference might not be out of place. I am mindful at the same time of the fact, that the General Conference is called to hear reports, enact new laws, amend old ones, and to elect officers. I believe none of this will be hindered, but rather all helped, if we keep in mind that all of this is done to the end of building the Kingdom and glorifying God.

I have during all of my public life in the Church, been intensely interested in the devotional side of our public meetings, no matter by what name such meetings are called. At two of the preceding General Conferences we succeeded in getting the Committee on Program to add ten additional minutes each day for devotional services. This time was largely given to song and praise services. The Committee on Program is allowing thirty minutes at the Indianapolis Meeting, and giving this time at the close of the morning session instead of at the opening as heretofore. This is done to give every delegate in attendance an opportunity to be at the devotional services. The morning hours in advance of the regular session are usually devoted

to the meeting of special delegations, caucus and committee meetings, thus you see the almost impossibility of getting the members out of these meetings in time or even in a frame of mind to participate with any profit to devotional exercises. Every member will, or should be in his place and in readiness for the devotional exercises at the noon hour.

There has always been, and I suppose always will be those among us who attach little importance to the idea of divine aid in helping to shape and carry out the policy of our endeavor in public assemblies

(Continued to page 5)

Bishop Blackwell's Remarkable Statement.

A CHALLENGE.

By Rev. T. J. Moppins.

In Bishop Blackwell's letter, which appeared in The Star of Zion, issued April 3rd, the good Bishop writes a deserving compliment of the editorial quality and success of the Editor of the Star. To this we beg to add our humble "Amen" and "right you are." The good Bishop must be given credit for frankness. In this he sustains his reputation among his brethren as saying what he thinks if he says at all, saying it in a manner not capable of difficult interpretation. The Bishop is not in favor of more laws. He might accept certain regulations. He then makes the impression that to make more laws for the guidance and directing of the affairs of the Church will amount to nothing should

(Continued to page 8)

GENERAL CONFERENCE HOROSCOPE.

By Bishop G. L. Blackwell.

General Officers' Work.

If all the general fund and all the benevolences are sent to the financial secretary to be divided, and sent to the general officers once in three months, what would the general officer of a given department at a \$2000 salary (as proposed) have to do during the quarter? Say for instance, take the half quarter immediately following the General Conference and the quarter beginning with July, what would he receive from the clearing house even for his salary much less money for his department? It must be remembered that salaries are paid first, and if the bishops are precluded from collecting and receipting for general fund (as is proposed), then they must be paid first according to the present law. So with twelve bishops, as is proposed, at \$3500 or \$3600 each, it would take all the money, general fund and benevolences, to pay the bishops, certainly from June to October of every year. Then what would the general officers, the schools, the superannuated ministers and others do? They would either have to go without any pay or borrow money to live on at six per cent and perhaps a bonus. This would work a hardship on them, and the beneficiaries of their departments would suffer. Then, too, the proposed clearing house plan would leave the general officers, all except the financial secretary, without an appeal. It might be said that he should go out and hustle, but should he go out among the brethren he would be handicapped in his appeals since no part of the money raised by his influence can be paid over to him by the pastor he visits. But you say let him hustle otherwise and replenish his treasury; but this has never been done to any large extent by any general officer since we have been paying them living salaries, and you need not expect others to do so, for human nature is about the same in new officers as that in old ones. We can make the system bring the money if we will, as at present, apportion so much to be raised for a certain benevolence and let it be sent directly to the office.

In that case the officer will have an appeal and a chance to hustle. He can help the pastor raise the quota for his department, and perhaps induce him to do a work of supererogation. This is about all of the hustling any general officer has done or will do. Just imagine a general officer receiving only about \$25 for himself and about one hundred dollars for his department from June 1 to September 30! This is about all he could expect, for the salaries of seven bishops would have to be paid from January 1, 1924, and the salaries of the new bishops from June 1. And if the bishops are prohibited from receiving and receipting for general fund, then they will contend that their salaries be paid in full at \$300 per month each. In that case the financial secretary would have to go in the market and borrow sufficient money to pay them, saying nothing about the salaries of the general officers. He may not want to do this, but you will find that he will have to do it or the bishops and general officers will have to meet and change the system when it collapses.

Why Rob the General Officer?

There are suggestions offered to increase the salaries of the general officers. I am not opposed to that provided the proposition carries to increase the salaries of bishops. But upon what ground is the general officer's salary to be increased when you take away from him a part of the

(Continued to page 5)



RESURRECTION

JEAN WILLA HOLMES

Old Ship A. M. E. Zion Parsonage
Montgomery, Ala.

RESURRECTION.

An amarillo richly bloomed
Above the spot where, long entombed.
Its bulbs had silent slept
Until sweet April made soft call
And hung the sunlight in her hall—
Then forth they crept.

A butter-fly sped past on wing—
A gaily painted, velvet thing
With winsome turn.
It graceful rose to take its throne
Beneath a honey-blossom dome—
To queen from worm!

A blooming tree, the loveliest sight!
So full of green, and flaked with
white,
Cast cooling shade.

A miracle had spring performed
On victim, long by winter stormed,
And art portrayed.

A laughing song the waters sang,
That in the ears of Nature rang,
Who listened, glad;
For it was she who silenced them
When they were chanting winter's
hymn
Too deep, too sad!

An ice-bound, stubborn heart unsealed,
And smiling love was there revealed
To longing eyes.

Oh, other hearts entombed in fear,
In sorrow, hatred, malice—hear:
'Tis time to rise!
—J. W. H.

SUBSCRIBE NOW FOR THE DAILY GENERAL CONFERENCE STAR (See Rate on Page 4)