

# The Star of Zion

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

VOLUME FORTY-EIGHT

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, JULY 24, 1924.

NUMBER TWENTY-NINE.

## Birth and History of Some Greatest Hymns.

Rev. W. J. MacQuarrie Poet  
Credit, Ontario, Canada.

One of our greatest hymn writers, Isaac Watts, has left behind him a verse that reads as follows:

In vain we tune our formal songs,

In vain we strive to rise;  
Hosannas languish on our tongues,  
And our devotion dies.

If this is true of any of us today it would be well if we could discover a remedy. The one unfailing remedy, of course, is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit of the churches. A spiritual dearth, however, is never without a cause, and if the cause be removed I am confident that the old power will again flood the channels. In so far as we suffer from such spiritual drought it is due largely to our lack of knowledge of the great fountains of inspiration and of hope. Familiarity breeds formality and formality is always sterile and barren. In no department of our religious life is there greater evidence of this than in the singing of our hymns.

Henry Ward Beecher said: "Hymns are the exponents of the innermost piety of the church. They are the jewels which the church has worn, the pearls, the diamonds, the precious stones, formed into amulets more potent against sorrow and sadness than the most famous charm of wizard or magician. And he who knows the way that hymns flowed knows where the blood of true piety ran and can trace the veins and arteries to the very heart."

Some of our most helpful hymns have been the outpourings of souls who were passing through the furnace of affliction. Such is the hymn: "Commit thou all thy griefs  
And ways into thy hands,  
To his sure trust and tender care,  
Who earth and heaven commands."

This song carries us back nearly four hundred years to the little German village of Mittenwalde. Here at the close of the Thirty Years' War, Paul Gerhardt began his ministry. He was shortly called to Berlin, but ere long trouble arose over his religious beliefs and teaching and he was tried, deposed, and driven into exile. Homeless, penniless and apparently friendless, he and his wife started on their journey out of Germany. They at last came to a little inn near the German frontier where Mrs. Gerhardt, weary, homesick and discouraged, broke down utterly. Unable to endure the sight of her sorrow and distress, Mr. Gerhardt left her weeping and went out into the garden. There in the quiet, with-out a gleam of hope in all his earthly sky he breathed into the world this great hymn of faith and trust.

It is interesting to record that God honored his faith, for that very night two horsemen came to the inn seeking for him. They had been sent by Duke Christian of Merseburg, offering him a home in that city and settling a pension upon him. Thus closed in sunshine and assurance the darkest day in all his life. Out of that dreary day came this triumphant song of faith to bring cheer and hope to all other anxious hearts.

(Let us all sing it.)  
"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!" is another famous old hymn. We know very little about the author except that his name was Edward Perronet. He was born in 1726 and became a minister of the Anglican Church, but later drifted about among the other denominations. He died in 1792.

There is an interesting story connected with this hymn that is worth recalling. One day Rev. E. P. Scott, met on a village street a strange looking individual who proved to be a member of a tribe of murderous mountaineers who lived far in the interior, where the Gospel had never been heard. Notwithstanding the warning of his friends that he would be exposing himself to almost certain death, Mr. Scott immediately set out

to carry the Gospel to these people. Among a few other things he took with him his violin.

After some days of travel he found himself suddenly confronted by a band of these wild tribesmen who immediately pointed their spears at his heart. Expecting to be killed he hurriedly took his violin and closing his eyes he began to play and sing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name!"

At the stanza beginning, "Let every kindred, every tribe," he ventured to open his eyes and found the situation completely changed. He had won them. It was the beginning of a stay of two and a half years with them, preaching the Gospel and bringing to them a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. As we sing this hymn let us remember that it has lost none of its beauty and power.

The next hymn we will sing is one that goes back some two hundred and fifty years. "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" was composed by Robert Robinson and there is a rather pathetic story told concerning the hymn and its author.

In his later life Mr. Robinson drifted into a somewhat careless manner of life and made light of poetry and devotion. One day while he was traveling in a stage-coach, a lady passenger showed him this hymn which she had been reading, and, never dreaming that he was the author, she asked him what he thought of it. He avoided an answer and changed the subject.

In a few minutes, however, she again referred to the hymn, and expressed how much benefit she had received from it and her great admiration for the thoughts to which it gave utterance.

While she talked the lady noticed that her fellow passenger was becoming somewhat agitated by her remarks and at length entirely overcome by his feelings, he said, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who composed that hymn many years ago; I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them to enjoy the feelings I then had."

Romance is also wrapped up in the history of some of our old hymns and sometimes even our old tunes. There does not seem to be anything very romantic about "Old Hundred." There is a little story about it that is most interesting and instructive, however.

Many years ago a little Scotch boy learned to sing with his pious mother the old psalms that were then as household words both in the kirk and at the fireside. After he had grown up he wandered far away from home and loved ones, and was at last captured by the Turks and made a slave in one of the Barbary states. But he never forgot the old psalms and he often sang them in that strange land to heathen ears.

One night while he was thus comforting his lonely heart the attention of some sailors on a British man-of-war was attracted by the familiar tune of "Old Hundred" floating over the moonlit waves. Quickly surmising the truth that one of their countrymen was languishing in slavery, they armed themselves and launching a boat lost no time in bringing about his rescue. What a joy to him after eighteen years of slavery to be restored to his loved ones in this way! Is it any wonder that he afterward cherished "Old Hundred" as his favorite tune?

Another beautiful hymn full of romantic interest is Rev. George Matheson's "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go."

Matheson died just a few years ago, having lived a life of singular sweetness and great usefulness, although for many years he was stone blind.

When he was a young man Mr. Matheson devoted himself with great diligence to the work of the ministry. Such was his devotion that his eyes, which were never strong, began to give him serious trouble. Finally the doctors told him that nothing could save him from becoming blind.

## Let Us Be Fair With Bishop J. W. Wood.

"PEBBLES FROM THE SEA SHOE."

By Rev. N. D. Crawford.

An article appeared in both the Birmingham Reporter and The Star of Zion described as "An Open Letter" to Bishop J. W. Wood, D. D. I think we should be fair, and more than commonly so in dealing with our chief pastors who are doing all in their power with God to help, to steer this Old Ship safely into port. As for Bishop Wood and his activities in the State of Alabama, I can say he tried in every conceivable way to make an enviable record while serving us. It may be true he was a little rough to start with, but further down the line as he became better acquainted with the work, I have never served under a more loving bishop. To serve the Church under the conditions that prevailed then and are still prevailing, any Bishop will find it an uphill journey in this southland if he makes any report worthwhile here, where we are acquainted with empty churches. Congregations that used to be are no more. The majority of the real constituency of the Church four and five years ago are now in the north. Church starvation now exists where it used to be happiness and pleasure to meet a congregation. No one knows more about the hard suffering condition of the present day Church in this southland than the hard worked pastors and presiding elders.

Numbers of them are now threatening to give up. They cannot make a living. We can hardly make it much less a Bishop and especially one of ambition, energy and push as has Bishop Wood. Yes, he did his best and deserves praise instead of stoning. Being one of the secretaries of one of his conferences, and a presiding elder too, I am in the position to know of these conditions, his reports and the disbursements of the monies raised.

The pastors coming so short on their benevolences, the little that was raised on General Conference travel expense was placed in to fill out those vacancies. He tried to arrange what little monies was raised in such a way that it would give a creditable showing.

As to the Tercentenary money, it was near financial death to all other claims to mention that to our people. The amount raised was so small the Bishop would send it to the General Treasurer and at the same time ask the conference to just credit itself with an adequate sum so that we would show up to a creditable degree. No, the money was not raised.

Afing such conditions are, no help to us any way, and especially at an age when outdoor sports, movies, and the disbursements of the monies raised.

ularly so because he was engaged to be married. Under the circumstances Mr. Matheson felt that there was only one thing to do, so going to his fiancée he told her what his fate must be and offered to release her from her promise to marry him. She accepted her release and he was left to face the world blind and alone. George Matheson went home broken in heart, no doubt, as well as in sight, but not in faith, and casting himself on him whose love never fails he sent forth into the world this great hymn:

"O Love that wilt not let me go  
I rest, my weary soul, in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be."  
(This hymn was sung as a solo.)

Another hymn of great beauty is, "Jesus Lover of My Soul." It was composed by Charles Wesley who was the author of some six thousand hymns. These hymns were a mighty power in the great revival of religion in England that gave birth to the Methodist Church. Many stories of

societies, style plus fashions an every other worldly thing seems to be preeminent among our church folks. I am too fearful of God's anointed to do other than all in my power to encourage them, and if we are in doubt about these or other conditions, there are other ways the doubt can be removed than such public steps. Let us be brotherly and do all in a Christianly way to save the Church.

So dear Bishop, be encouraged. All of us in Alabama are not forgetful of your hard struggles in this near desolate section of our Church. Trust God, and continue your good work. The reward waiteth.  
Yours for God and Zion.

Seima, Ala.

## Father and Son Week.

Some one has said that these Father and Son Banquets and other affairs in which fathers and their sons get together for fellowship and good times are a great deal better than the conferences that the two used to have in the wood shed.

Since 1920 Father and Son Week has been observed jointly by the International Council of Religious Education and the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A. during the week that includes Armistice Day. This year the dates are November 9 to 15. This includes two Sundays. Each day in the week is set apart for the observance of a special idea.

The first Sunday is Armistice Sunday with emphasis upon the idea of true patriotism. The Second Sunday is given to emphasizing in church and Sunday School the Father and Son relationship itself. Wednesday is church day, Friday is banquet day, when tens of thousands of boys and their fathers will come together for good times and inspiring addresses. Saturday will be given over to recreation on the part of men and their sons together. And so throughout the week dads and lads will come to know each other better through sharing life in happy experiences.

The number of churches, Sunday schools, and Associations that give an adequate observance to this week is increasing every year. Statistics cannot be gathered as the idea is taken up and used in all sorts of ways all over the country. Every indication for this year points to a wider observance of the week than ever.

Full information and literature as to observing day can be secured from the State Sunday School Association (or Council), a local Y. M. C. A., or the International Council of Religious Education, 5 South Wabash Ave., Chicago.

## France Dedicates Monument to Negro Troops.

Rheims, July, (A. N. P.) In a speech dedicating a monument which France has erected in honor of the Colored colonial troops who fought for her during the world war, Gen. Archinard took occasion to reply to German criticisms of the troops and to voice the admiration which white Frenchmen feel for the brothers of color, declaring that the Germans because they regarded the everything from love of evil" and they fought well for France "because she treats them with humanity and justice, on the same footing as her

## World's Ninth Sunday School Convention Strong For Golden Rule Sunday.

When the World's Ninth Sunday School Convention adjourned in St. Andrew's Halls, Glasgow, Scotland, June 29, it had put into its thinking and plans the great work being done by the Near East Relief. For the Convention not only laid strong emphasis on the observance on an International scale of Golden Rule Sunday, December 7, 1924, it also registered a growing conviction that the relief program, conducted so helpfully on such a large scale for the past few years, must climax in a cooperative scheme of religious education.

One hundred delegates from Korea, Japan, China, the Philippines, South America, Syria, Scotland, England, Canada, Norway, Germany, Holland, Czechoslovakia, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Hungary, Austria, Sweden, Latvia and the United States, sat down to the Near East luncheon at the Grosvenor restaurant the Thursday of the convention week, presided over by Mr. Arthur Black of London.

The larger significance of the work of the Near East Relief was pointed out by Mr. John R. Votie, Associate General Secretary, of New York, who, representing the United States, said that the constructive training of children saved by Christian philanthropy through the Near East Relief from an untimely death, becomes both a solemn responsibility and a challenging opportunity. Sixty thousand orphans from 2 to sixteen years of age, still depend upon outside help for physical support. Forty thousand other orphans have been placed in industries or homes. Tens of thousands of others have been partially supported.

These children can be trained at little cost, through leadership of their own people, provided a program, equipment, training and supervision is given to their young native teachers. With the support and leadership of the World's Sunday School Association forces and the International Council of Religious Education the promise of success is great. Add to this the help of many leaders now in the Near East, who feel that religious education must be given along with the industrial and agricultural training and the elementary education now being given, and the day seems near when there must come the sympathy and cooperation of the foreign and native missionaries, the native Orthodox Church Leaders, the Near East personnel and the church leaders of the nations carrying on this philanthropy and a generation of refugee orphans will be growing into Christian men and women, equipped physically, mentally and spiritually for genuine service in the world to which they were saved by Christian love.

The following resolutions were enthusiastically adopted by the convention:

"The World's Ninth Sunday School Convention would express its deep and abiding interest in the needy children and the refugees of the Near East made sacred by the earthly life of our Lord and gives its hearty approval to the proposal to observe December 7, 1924, as International Golden Rule Sunday. It would also express the hope that out of the united efforts of all concerned there may emerge a definite ministry to the spiritual hunger of these orphaned wards of the world."

An old farmer chuckled to himself after reading over the subjects of a convention program.

"You've had papers and discussions all day on how to get people to attend," he said. "I've never heard a single address at a farmer's convention on how to get people to the

IMPERFECT IN ORIGINAL