

# THE STAR OF ZION

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VOLUME FORTY-EIGHT

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NUMBER FORTY-ONE

## SHAKING THE PLUM TREE.

### THE GREATEST CORNERSTONE LAYING EXERCISE EVER HELD.

By Bishop E. D. W. Jones, D. D.

The greatest of all displays ever held in Zion Church during its one hundred and twenty-eight years of existence was that organized, managed and directed by pastor Dr. J. W. Brown at the laying of the cornerstone of Mother Zion church, New York City, Sunday, October 5th, 1924. We go farther and say that nothing like it has been held in this country by Colored Protestant Methodism. It was the third cornerstone that Mother Zion has laid in her history. One was laid by Peter Williams himself with "his own hands" in 1801—this was the first. The second was laid under the pastorate of the late Rev. J. Sulla Cooper when Mother Zion moved from Tenth and Bleeker streets up to Fifty-seventh Street. While Zion erected a second church in 1821—there was no cornerstone laying exercises since we built around the old structure and used the same cornerstone laid in 1801.

Peter Williams, a layman, founder and trustee, Dr. J. Sulla Cooper and Dr. J. W. Brown are the only three to date who have laid in Mother Zion a tried stone for a foundation. Dr. J. W. Brown's pastorate makes the fourth structure we ever reared in New York. We did not build Tenth and Bleeker—we bought it.

In the morning of the cornerstone laying the whole vicinity of the present location of Mother Zion was early thronging with anxious hosts. Officers, children and more children, ministers, Bishops, choirs and ushers were moving here and there putting on the finishing touches of preparations made for a great day. The Children's Church with its infant robed choir, filled to its utmost with bright-eyed boys and girls began to sing their hymns of praise at the exact appointed hour for worship while one of the five adult choirs started the processional with "The Church's One Foundation." Led by Pastor Brown, flanked by Bishops Caldwell, Lee, Alleyne and Jones; the clergy moved in solemn state to the altar. The eleven o'clock services were conducted by the Bishops and the writer preached the sermon. It was a wonderful outpour of souls; every available seat taken and hundreds standing in the vestibules, blocking the doors and extending far out into the street.

At two P. M., the sound of the bugle noted the hour for the march to the site of the new church for the exercises. Headed by a platoon of twenty-four police, a band of seventy-two pieces, with flying banners the parade began with pastor and Bishops leading the triumphant hosts of Zion. "Here they come." "Who are they?" "My what a number," and with applause and happy greetings, a parade a mile and a half long, passed through the streets of New York City under the admiring gaze of seventy-five thousand cheering, shouting people. "Onward Christian Soldiers," the band played. Then another: "How Firm a Foundation," and another, "We are Marching to Zion," still another, "Glory, glory hallelujah," and still another, "On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand," until five bands playing religious march music filled the air with praise; high as the heavens their praises rang. On they came, one hundred ministers, five robed choirs, Boy Scouts, Elks, Pythians, Odd Fellows, Trustees, Stewards and Stewardesses, Deacons and Deaconesses, Sunday Schools and Christian Endeavors. Plumed Knight Templars, Masons, Free and Accepted; tramping New York streets while the disembodied spirits of the Fathers formed a gallery of witnesses in the clouds and shot out spiritual influences of inspiration and hope to the tramping multitudes moving in graceful precision down through thoroughfares banked on either side by crowding, pushing

humanity. It was Zion on a march. It was Zion in dress parade. It was the largest ever known and for many a day to come it will hold the front rank of religious displays.

Bishop Caldwell presided at the cornerstone exercises while Bishop Lee delivered the address. The masons put the stones in place, the bands played, the choirs sang and nearly four thousand dollars were contributed by a generous people and a loyal membership.

It has been asked what kind of church is Dr. Brown erecting in New York?

1st. It is a church all to itself. The old structure will only be an annex to and not a part of the new.

2nd. The foundation is laid, the steel frame is up, and the highest point rises two hundred feet from the ground floor.

3rd. The brick is now being laid on side walls and back while the solid granite for the front has been cut from the quarry and is awaiting our orders to be hauled to the building. Derricks are already in place to lift and set the massive polished stone to the plumb line.

4th. It will be when completed the



BISHOP J. S. CALDWELL, A. M., D. D.

Senior Bishop and presiding Bishop of the New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore and the North Carolina Conferences. He presides over the mother church of our general Methodism and over the mother church (St. Peter's, New Bern, N. C.) of Zion Methodism in the South. His is a large heritage.

largest and most costly structure ever erected by pure Negro Methodism in this country.

5th. It is to seat two thousand. Its choir loft will hold one hundred, and an entire annual conference of ministers can be seated in and around its altar. It will contain offices, rest rooms, day nursery, studies, telephone booths, historic gallery, Bishops' Cloister; three stories high and forty feet wide.

6th. Its basement from 136th to 137th Street will be large enough to seat a whole General Conference, five hundred visitors and equally as many alternates.

7th. It will have a spire rising up into the day and into the night that can be seen for many miles away.

Now what are its needs and what can we do to encourage the builders and continue the constructive work?

1st. We can each Zionite send one dollar and get a souvenir of the cornerstone.

2nd. Each fall conference can give a window and the spring conference can follow suit.

3rd. We can in our local churches inaugurate a Mother Zion offering and each society in city, town, hamlet, country lift an offering for this magnificent Zion Temple. I would like to see this a pastor's voluntary movement with no bishop in it only as he is in it as a member of some local church, and I would like to name Dr. James H. McMullen, of Brooklyn, N. Y., under whose administrations the only Zion church in New York in which we are worshipping was erected,—to head this pastors' and members' movement for the erection of Mother Zion. Why not have, Dr. McMullen,

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## MOTHER ZION LAYS CORNERSTONE.

By Mr. A. A. Rives.

Under smiling skies, fanned by gentle breezes of a perfect autumn day, amid the plaudits of admiring friends and members, surrounded by high church dignitaries and state officials, prominent ministers and leading laymen, encompassed by scores of fraternal and civic organizations while thousands of Harlem's cosmopolitan population of all classes, regardless of creed or condition, Mother Zion laid another cornerstone on Sunday, October 5th, it being the fifth in 128 years of eventful history. It was an inspiring sight to witness thousands of people struggling to get near the new church. It was more than a Mother Zion cornerstone laying. It was a great Protestant demonstration which broke all previous records. Words can only in a small way convey a slight conception of the magnificent spectacle. Seeing only would produce believing.

In the early morning lowering clouds and unsettled weather indications met the anxious gaze of those most concerned in having a fair day, but at ten o'clock the sun beamed down and the clouds scurried up as the people hurriedly filled up the pews. At 10:45 every available space was occupied and more were still coming. Preceding the sermon, the secretary of the Building Committee, R. B. Henderson, read the following letter from Bishop George Lincoln Blackwell which amply speaks for itself:

624 S. 16th Street,  
Philadelphia, Pa.  
Oct. 1st, 1924.

Rev. James W. Brown,  
M. D. D.,  
Pastor Mother Zion Church,  
151-3 West 136th Street,  
New York City.

My dear Dr. Brown:  
Just one hundred and twenty-four years ago the corner stone of the first Mother Zion church edifice was laid, Rev. John Wilson, (white) pastor. Peter Williams, our first great layman, put the stone in place, assisted by his comrades, the other trustees, viz: James Varick, local preacher, Francis Jacobs, chairman of the Board, George Collins, our second great layman, Secretary; Thomas Miller, Treasurer.

In 1821 the old edifice was replaced by a new stone church on the same spot, corner Church and Leonard St., and the corner stone laid by James Varick, elder-elect, Abram Thompson, elder-elect, and George Collins, Secretary of the Board.

The stone church was destroyed by fire in 1839 and rebuilt and cornerstone laid and dedicated in 1840, Bishop Christopher Rush officiating.

Mother Zion changed its location in 1864 to West 10th and Bleeker Streets and the new place of worship dedicated and a cornerstone laid, Rev. Sampson Talbot, pator, and Bishop J. J. Clinton, officiating.

Mother Zion again changed its location in 1904 to 89th Street. The cornerstone laid and edifice dedicated. Rev. J. Sulla Cooper and Bishop J. W. Hood and Bishop J. W. Hood and Bishop Alexander Walters officiating.

And now the present pastor who has served Mother Zion church twelve consecutive years is undertaking to build a new cathedral costing \$300,000, immediately adjoining the present Mother Zion without destroying or selling the present Mother Zion edifice, and on this the 5th day of October, 1924, lays the cornerstone, Bishop Josiah Samuel Caldwell, presiding, while the stone is laid by Masons of the city and other fraternal societies.

The attempt to erect a \$300,000 cathedral at 140-6 West 137th Street is the most prodigious undertaking in the history of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church during its 128 years of existence.

The A. M. E. Zion Connection has donated \$50,000 to help on this Herculean task, and yet the Connection at least through her representatives must do more to encourage the heart

of this gifted and great man, than whom we have no greater pastor, and perhaps he has no equal in the whole Church when it comes to organizing the forces of the church for work.

The Allegheny conference over which I have the honor to preside this the fifth year with Rev. G. W. Kincaid, presiding elder, and Rev. B. F. Combash, secretary, sends greetings with a purse of fifty (\$50) dollars to help the pastor and trustees.

I count Dr. J. W. Brown among my truest friends and the A. M. E. Zion Connection regarding him among the ablest of its ministers. May his good work stand forever, and should this stone ever be opened by future generations, let the great grandchildren of the present generation give to Dr. Brown the credit and call him blessed.

Indited by my heart and inscribed by my pen this the first day of October, A. D., 1924.

George Lincoln Blackwell, one of the Bishops of the A. M. E. Zion Church.

The names of the donors of the Allegheny Conference who this the first day of October, 1924, contributed the amounts opposite their names to Mother Zion church on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone, October 5th, 1924, Rev. J. W. Brown, D. D., pastor.

Bishop G. L. Blackwell.....	\$10.00
Rev. E. L. Madison, D. D.....	10.00
Rev. B. F. Combash, B. D.....	2.00
Rev. J. T. Moore.....	2.00
Rev. D. H. Thomas.....	2.00
Rev. A. L. Lightford.....	2.00
Rev. E. P. Smith.....	5.50
Rev. F. W. Benjamin.....	1.50
Rev. G. W. Kincaid, D. D.....	1.00
Rev. F. S. Anderson, A. B.....	1.00



REV. J. W. BROWN, A. M., D. D.

The indomitable pastor and builder of the new mother Zion church, New York City.

Mrs. Ellen Poole.....	1.00
Rev. W. Roy Smith.....	1.00
Rev. Wm. Smith.....	1.00
Rev. R. R. Bell.....	1.00
Rev. J. C. Taylor.....	1.00
Rev. J. H. Chase.....	1.00
Rev. W. C. Porter.....	1.00
Mrs. John C. Taylor.....	.50
Rev. P. F. Anderson.....	.50
Rev. Lulu J. Morgan.....	.50
Rev. Neal Saunders.....	.50
Rev. W. C. Anderson.....	1.00
Rev. J. C. Taylor, D. D.....	1.00
Cash.....	1.50
Total.....	\$50.00

G. L. Blackwell,  
Bishop of the Allegheny conference.

Bishop Edward D. W. Jones, Bishop of the Ninth Episcopal District, making his first appearance in the Mother church since his elevation to the Episcopacy, delivered an impressive sermon in a manner that brought reminiscences of his very illustrious sire, the late Bishop Singleton T. Jones, who once pastored the church from which his son preached so acceptably. By his sweeping flights of eloquence he moved his rapt audience at will as they hung upon the burning words as they fell from his impassioned lips. Bishop Jones also preached at the evening service.

Bishop J. S. Caldwell, senior bishop, was master of ceremonies and

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## OUR NEW FINANCIAL PLAN.

### ANSWERS TO SOME INQUIRIES CONCERNING IT.

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

I have received a number of letters recently from pastors in various sections of the Church touching upon the new Financial plan. In addition to these Dr. W. H. Goler, the Financial Secretary, has handed me several letters which he received and requested me to answer them. In these communications three things were emphasized, (a) faith in the possibilities of the new Financial System, (b) desire for information concerning its interpretation and operation, and (c) complaints of violations of its provisions.

Commenting upon the contents of these letters, the most hopeful note sounded is the faith exhibited in the new system and the desire to see it properly executed. There seems to be a general impression that the new plan meets the needs of the Church and removes the cause of much criticism so freely made heretofore. It is safe to predict that the maintaining of an open book in the annual conferences and a faithful and clear exhibit of the funds will so encourage the pastors and stimulate the members as to guarantee a large increase in the General Fund and the Benevolences during the next twelve months. The fall conferences are upon us. Within the next eight weeks three fourths of the conferences of the Connection will hold their sessions. The new law should be given an opportunity to demonstrate the wisdom of its enactment.

Referring to complaints of violations of the new law, one of its plainly stated and distinctly understood provisions is that no general official, whether bishop or departmental head is permitted to collect any of the claims. Any pastor paying the General Claims to a general official becomes equally guilty of violating the law. The law provides that the General Claims be sent directly to the Financial Secretary at Philadelphia. Another provision is that no general official shall pay himself from the funds of his department. The Financial department is the clearing house for the General Fund and Benevolences, and the secretary is required to pay the salaries and make the appropriations to the departments on the basis of the apportionment of the General Conference.

Complaint is made against the pastors for lack of system in collecting the General Claims and for tardiness in remitting them after they are collected. To make the plan effective and guarantee the sustenance of the departments and the support of the employees on the field the pastors must be systematic in collecting the claims and faithful in remitting them to the Financial department. The average pastor is honest and interested in the thing which makes for the advancement of the Church. If we can impress them with the importance of collecting the claims and remitting them monthly, it is safe to say they will do it. This will enable the Financial Secretary to pay the salaries and make the appropriations to the departments monthly as required by law.

Several questions are asked regarding the interpretation of the new Plan. As the authority for the interpretation of the law during the interval of the General Conference is vested in the Board of Bishops, I speak not as a bishop in this article, but as the Chairman of the Board of Finance and an humble member of the A. M. E. Zion Church. As to how the system is to affect the handling of the General Claims in the Annual Conferences, the law is explicit. It provides that each Annual Conference shall elect its General Claims Committee; that this Committee shall collect all the General Claims; that after their report has been examined by the Committee on Audit and approved by the conference they shall send the report to

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