

The Star of Zion.

THE STAR OF ZION
REV. J. W. SMITH, Editor
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CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM THE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE A. M. E. ZION CONNECTION IN ALL PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL—ITS ADVANTAGES AND IMPORTANCE.

BY REV. G. W. CLINTON.

According to previous announcement, we begin our article on "The Sabbath school—its advantages and importance." It is the prevalent notion among christians everywhere that the Sunday school is the school for the moral and religious training of the youth on the Sabbath. While none will deny persons of advanced ages the right to attend or decri the benefits that may be received by such, yet all agree that the Sabbath school is, literally the children's school.

The history of the Sabbath school is closely connected with the onward progress of the christian church. It is by no means a modern institution, neither is it an offspring of the christian dispensation of the times of Christ and his subsequent followers. It is a plant of the old dispensation, and to this all must readily agree when they consider the main object of the Sabbath school, viz: to train up children by the scriptures and other books having the scriptures for their basis, in the way that they should go.

In all ages, whenever a revival of pure religion took place, one of the results has always been the giving of especial attention to the children and young by the church of God. In the inspired volume covering a period of four thousand years of this world's history, there is throughout, a careful regard for children. Concerning Abraham who was chosen for his special fitness to be the head of the ancient church. It was said, I know him that he will bring up his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord.

When Moses the great deliverer of Israel and law giver received the law from thundering Sinai amid smoke and lightning, he called all Israel together and taught by God he spake to them thus: "Hear, O Israel; these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." This admonition was not to individual parties but to Israel as God's church. Of course there is training for parents to do and woe be unto that child whose parents neglect so important a duty. But it is the duty of the church aside from and as a supplement to parental training, to teach the children. Especially is this so in this age and among our people where there are so many parents incapable of performing this all-important duty. The church should see to it in the winding up of its mission, that all her children, and as many as she can make her children, shall be taught of the Lord.

There is no agency which supplies or supplements the work of parents, as the Sabbath school. Thus we learn by the quotation already announced from Deut., nearly 4000 years ago, the Sabbath school idea was set forth; and where is a higher authority or more direct commission for any of the great christian sects that bless our land, than the above for the Sabbath school? It is an institution appointed and watched over by the All-seeing eye, and it is simply the church exerting herself in a godly way for the salvation and heavenly training of her

children. It is no auxiliary to the church, but a part and parcel of the grand church system, and should never be looked after with less care and zeal than the elect fold itself.

He who commissioned his disciples to go preach, also commanded them to teach. He who bade Peter in the most positive manner, "Feed my sheep," said with same deep meaning voice, "Feed my lambs." Then is there not as much authority for the Sabbath school as for the church? Do not all say yes? All must agree to this who have taken the care to read the accounts of our Lord as furnished by the evangelist in which he shows such profound love and uninterrupted attention to the children. Surely never can one forget the rebukes to those who would deny the little ones the privilege of the master's blessing.

During the latter part of the 2d. century Tertullian established those celebrated catechumenical schools, of which the great origin was one of the catechists, in order that he might check the defection of heathen converts. The influence of these schools was felt elsewhere, and others were established much to God's glory and the church's edification.

When Martin Luther the great reformer began the reformation he organized the celebrated Sabbath school at Wittenburg; John Knox did likewise in Scotland. The Pilgrim fathers in planting the cross upon this continent recognized the importance of this department of the christian church, and established the first S. S. November 1674. Thus the growth of the work drug along until the 18th century, when Robert Raikes, the founder of the modern system of Sunday schools through the suggestion of a lady from a pin factory, began the noble system which now does such wonderful good for the entire christian world.

Bishop Asbury of the M. E. Church was the first to introduce them into this country, hence they are coeval with Methodism, and has been one of its greatest means of bringing up its immense following, and from this department it has furnished the world some of the best talent that now grace the pages of history.

An institution of undoubted divine origin, and with such a history should not be neglected or slighted. We as a body of christians having under the care of our ministry thousands whose minds are panting for the living streams which flow through the Sabbath school channel should awake. "Awake, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments." Clothe the children in properly organized and well furnished Sabbath schools. "Awake thou that slumberest," no longer lie in lethargy but come out and enjoy the fair light which Christ has promised and which the Sabbath school offers. If we would have a prosperous and growing Zion, let us keep this department of our church fully abreast with the age in which we live. Let us patronize our own Book Concern that it may soon be able to supply us with as much and as good a quality of S. S. literature as at cheap or cheaper rates than can be obtained elsewhere.

As we advised in our last, please do not fail to revive every Sabbath school and supply them with literature. Get efficient teachers noted for their love for Christ and the glorious work of bringing young souls to him. Our next will be on the "Advantages of the Sabbath school."

THE STAR OF ZION is the organ of the A. M. E. Zion connection and should be taken by every member of the church who reads. \$1.50 a year.

ONE OF ZION'S NOTABLE DIVINES IN BALTIMORE.

BY REV. J. W. SMITH.

Rev. Nathaniel J. Green, pastor of Galbraith Chapel, Washington, D. C., was with us last Sunday and preached two rousing sermons. He is large, heavily built, dark complexion and weighs 225 pounds. His preaching is precise, clear, strong and very impressive. He has a peculiar way of expressing truth that will make one remember it always.

Rev. Green is one of those God-called, heaven-sent ministers and has been successful in adding to Zion in the last two years, three brick churches valued at \$22,000—one in Baltimore, one in Washington and one in Laurel, Md. What is the secret of his success? Why, living close to the Lord and preaching the pure word of God. He does not preach to gain applause, but to save souls. He preaches hell and heaven. In his last Sunday's sermon on "the Punishment of the wicked," he made such a deep impression until I was forced to take notes, and following is only a synopsis of his sermon:

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."—St. Matt. xxv: 46.

"The text" says Rev. Green, concerns the interest of poor unworthy sinners of every age and clime in its far-sweeping declaration, and strikes with profound consternation the guilty assures them that their punishment is sure. The words of the text comes hot from the lips of Christ as burning lava from a volcano. In opening the discussion of this subject, let us consider:

- 1—Who may be considered wicked.
- 2—The punishment alluded to.
- 3—The truly righteous and their destiny.

But who may be considered wicked? They who are opposite to that which may be termed righteous; having ways repugnant to morality, evil in principle or practice; contrary to the divine law. Says Christ, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Read also Matt. xiii: 41, 42. Forever in the confines of hell, beyond the reach of God's mercy, blowing the flames of night shall the wicked dwell. The rich man in hell would give up the world had he it in his possession, to only receive a small portion of God's mercy, but there is no mercy in hell. To be cut off of the privilege of obtaining the heavenly canaan, is doom without help, hell without bounds, torment without measure—everlasting punishment.

It would seem an injustice for Christ to punish sinners had he not made provision for their escape. But He hath died and there is remission, peace and pardon for the wicked; a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. "God is angry with the wicked every day." His wrath is being stirred, and soon "He will pour out His fury upon the wicked." Hark! I hear his horses prancing in the valley, his chariot wheels are shaking the earth, producing earthquakes and cyclones. He is coming! He is coming! I hear him coming around the mountain. I see him as he approaches. I feel him drawing nigh. I have read of his approach in the Bible. He is coming! and "every eye shall see Him and they who pierced him shall behold him." He comes with terms to the guilty and peace and happiness to the righteous. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." Sinner, come

to Jesus without delay!

Let us notice the punishment alluded—"everlasting punishment." Punishment is the execution of the penalty awarded for crime. To be imprisoned is not desirable to any human being. The criminal wreathes beneath the verdict of a jury when they declare him guilty of the charge, preferred, and the sentence of the judge shocks his very nerve. But here is a world of sinners. The jury has been empanelled. God the Father is the judge. The angels are the jury. Jesus Christ is the attorney or advocate pleading at the bar. The criminal is guilty. Christ has been pleading for over 1800 years: Forgive him, O! forgive, he cries, nor let a wretched rebel die.

When the Savior stops pleading, then the period of grace will be wound up, and the wicked shall be banished from God's merciful presence into that gulf which is without bounds; the place "prepared for the devil and his angels." "The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God." Hell is a pit without bottom, darkness unceasing, fire unquenched, misery without abatement, night without day, weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Read II. Peter, ii: 4 and Rev. xxi: 8. Sinner God's presence is in hell only to shower down thunderbolts of his wrath upon the soul forever. O sinner, turn tump, why will you die?

Let us consider the truly righteous and their destiny—"but the righteous into life eternal." The truly righteous are those who are right; having right views, right lives and walks and are not conformed to the world, but are transformed into the image of Christ. Those having the new birth or regeneration of the soul, new creatures in Christ Jesus the Lord, the image of God being stamped upon the forehead. Their destiny is "life eternal." While lifted high in our weak imagination and dwelling beyond the sunbeam, wafted by the peaceful winds of God's ethereal glory, basking in royal sunlight and sheltered beneath the canopy of God's stormy heaven, we can but faintly conceive the bliss and happiness understood in the words—"eternal life." I ask what is your conception of the word "life"? What answer have you to my interrogation? I assert that life is the opposite of death; the growth power in nature's garden; the vital spark which produces action in the human being.

"Eternal life" is a living duration without bounds; living forever without an anticipation of death; the anchor cast within the vale, sure and steadfast; the righteous being "forever with the Lord," "in whose presence those in fulness of joy and at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore." "There the wicked shall cease troubling and the weary are at rest." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat," etc., Rev. vii: 16, 17—xxi: 23; Matt. ii-xiii; Isaiah v. Christian, be faithful.

Sinner, I cannot close without giving you another warning. Leave the barren mountains of sin and come home to your God to-day. If you are lost, then you will find that hell is a world of ugly ruins, shrouded in night's blackest pall, where no one of the damned has a friend, filled with cursings and strifes and where all ranks and sexes are herded in one promiscuous mob with foulest demons, and where every stinking cave is inhabited with fiends and gnashing ghosts, and on whose black crags the ravens of despair sit and caw, and where God's eternal justice plies his burning whip and Remorse lays on with his fiery

thongs—the flashes of whip and thongs will be your only light, world without end. Let us not go there. Oh, let us not go there!

Baltimore, Md.

ELIJAH IN THE DAYS OF AHAH

BY JAMES ED. MASON.

Elijah impresses the Bible student in many respects, as next to Moses, the most remarkable man of the Old Testament times. There is a reason why he alone went up to heaven in a chariot of fire without passing through the sepulchre's gate, and why he with Moses should appear on the mount of Transfiguration. He was of all the Hebrew prophets, first and foremost in honor and eminence.

Sternly self-denying, rigidly upright he was faithful to God as needle to pole, and burned with jealous, zealous ardour for Jehovah. About his whole life, character and career there is a sort of rugged sublimity, a moral grandeur that reminds us of the sharp crags of his own Carmel that soar into the blue of the sky. Are they ragged or rugged? they are mantled in the imperial purple of a higher atmosphere that knows no defilement. The fleecy clouds are their ermine, while the sunlight paints their edges with gold and crowns them with its sparkling diadem.

Oh for more like Elijah in this idolatrous and apostate age! He bursts upon our view without notice, he disappears as suddenly by miracle. All along his short career he moves as the swift-footed messenger of God. Intensely wrapped up in his sublime errand to pull down idolatrous altars and repair the altar of the Lord which had fallen down. He was a man whose goodness was so commanding as to compel even the most abandoned and unscrupulous monster of wickedness to respect and fear him. He triumphed over foes, as Joseph did in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. By the mere power of stainless piety he gathered lustre from reproach and borrowed strength from enemies routed. By the inherent majesty and authority of goodness he controlled a nation of idolaters.

As we study Elijah in the very court of Ahab, we are quite dumb with amazement. We know not at which we most wonder, the man at the court who feared God so that he feared no one else, or the king who, having no pious fear of God, had a servile fear of everybody else, especially those who were thrice armed because their quarrel was just. That intrepid prophet at court, and that infamous king who tolerated him there, are almost equally historic marvels. Perhaps Milton, after all, was more philosopher than poet when he wrote the words:

"Abashed the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is."

Wicked men, even the worst, can not help a certain respect and fear toward the good. Ahab could not have been ignorant of Obadiah's fealty to Jehovah. Some of his loyalty however, must have been under cover of concealment for the very safety of those whom he sought to protect. Yet Ahab respected and advanced Obadiah. Put into his hands the keys of the kingdom, for he knew such a man could be trusted. So, only much more so, did the king of Israel, respect, reverence and fear the grand old seer. In his presence an awe took possession of him. At his bidding he found himself strangely swayed as by a superior will and a stronger hand. So will it ever be. The soldiers who came to seize Jesus, and had him unarmed

and helpless before them, "went backward," and in involuntary homage "fell to the ground." Have we not here a representative and typical incident, illustrating the power of simply purity of character to compel respect and repel malicious assault?

Elijah was one of the brightest of those lights that burn amid the deep darkness of the death-shade of human history. His day was distinguished for general apostasy. Idolatry had multiplied its shrines and forces. Sensuality gave loose and reckless rein to human lusts, so that they trampled with iron hoof over all that most beautiful in character. Persecution laid bare her red arm and would have smitten even the prophets of carnal into the silence of death. Yet, he was faithful, bold, stainless and incorruptible. He could neither be bought by bribes nor swayed by threats, and who, like John the Baptist, was a "lamp lighted and burning," the court of Ahab being the candlestick whereon he stood to burn and shine.

Far down the ages pierce the rays from that beaming candle. The golden gleam, penetrating the gloom of more than twenty-seven centuries, reaches even to us. From time to time others have caught and transmitted the prophetic fire. A spark from it alights in Babylon, and Daniel burns in the court of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. Another spark alights in Judas, and John the Baptist shines in Herod's court. And so, still later in history, John of the "golden month" beams forth in the court of Eudoxia. John Huss in Bohemia, John de Wycliffe, in England, John Knox in the palace of Mary of Scots, Luther in Saxony, John Calvin in Geneva, Savonarola in Italy, and who shall say how many heroes and martyrs have caught inspiration and enthusiasm from the faith and the courage of the old Israelite of Carmel? Here is the time "apostolic succession," when light after light keep up through the ages the undying radiance of unholv testimony to the truth and to God.

Let the candle of Carmel kindle us to a holy flame. It bids us let our light shine, clear, bright and afar. Whatever be our social position, whatever eminence or prominence God may give, let it be only the golden candlestick from which our light radiates the father. Hell's best may conspire to put it out, but God will keep it shining. Even martyr-flames shall turn to a testimony, with tongues of flame proclaiming the unutterable allegiance of the disciple to his Lord.

Ithaca, N. Y.

FROM GREENSBORO, N. C.

Mr. Editor:

We are pleased to witness the peace and harmony that infuse the entire Statesville District. The interests of the church are being rapidly developed by each pastor of the District. The standard of the connection is being rapidly raised, and the interest due to each department—the Bishops, Zion Wesley College, the Star and others properly developed. As the ministers regard and esteem the Bishops, so will the people regard and esteem us. As we regard and care for the interests of the Bishops, so will each department of the church be regarded and cared for. These interests are inseparable.

We are a staunch republican, and say to every republican to be careful how you enter into any other party. We should reorganize and not leave the party because of our defeat. Principles are eternal, while parties change. Let us stick to our principles.

H. WILLIAMS.