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## OF OFFICIOUSLY MEDDLING WITH AND A TOTAL DISREGARD OF THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS—“AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?”

BY REV. J. W. SMITH.

Society has been infested in all ages of the world, with persons prone to intrude themselves into the concerns of their neighbors; with tattlers and busy-bodies. Indeed, some of this sort are quite ingenious in their way; their minds resembling a fertile soil, which for want of proper culture, bears nothing but weeds and poisonous plants.

Not but that, an officious intermeddler or even a tale-bearer, may mean no harm; the one, being actuated by an undue opinion of his own importance, and the other from the vanity of appearing to know the characters and the concerns of all about them. But intentional sowers of discord, who from envy, malice or the love of mischief, employ themselves in breeding dissensions in families and neighborhoods are as pestilence as thieves and robbers; and the less they are punished by civil law, the more should they be made to feel the species of punishment which public opinion inflicts.

They who, from habit or from temper, make it their business and delight to pry into and publish the failings of others, be it remembered that, "at that day when the failings of all shall be made manifest, the attention of each individual will be fixed only on his own." There is a fault, however, directly opposite to that of officiously meddling with the concerns of our neighbors: I mean the absence of all heartfelt concern for any but ourselves and our near relations. This fault, however artfully it may be covered, springs, for the most part, from mean selfishness, or from apathy of heart.

Selfishness, which is the love of self and everything else for the sake of self, has the power of keeping some persons at a vast distance from interfering with their neighbor's affairs, for which they care not a whit any farther than such extraneous affairs have a bearing upon their own personal interests. So also is the cold-hearted, in whose bosoms is the perpetual calm of apathy, trouble not their neighbors as busy-bodies in their matters; because they have not enough energy of soul either to love or hate in good earnest. Now it is often the case, that some belonging to each of these two classes value themselves highly upon their practical abstraction from all concerns but their own, and boast of it as a shining virtue. "We are not meddlers, not we. It is our manner to mind our own business, and to let all other folks alone." Nevertheless, if they would open the folds of their own hearts and observe fairly what is going on there, they will find that not being meddlers is owing to anything else, rather than a principle of virtue.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"—We know who said it. And so in numerous instances, when one is ruining himself and family by mismanagement of affairs, or when one betrays the symptoms of an inceptive vice, which, growing into a habit, would land him into perdition, his neighbors coolly look on, saying in their hearts, and to one another: "It is his own affairs." Not employing a single effort to save him, though often betwixt themselves, they shake the head and remark that he is in the road to ruin. Perhaps it is a youth, that is supposed to have stepped into this fatal road; a young woman of amiable dispositions, but wanting discretion. Perhaps that youth is an orphan, and errs for lack of the guiding hand of a parent. It is

all the same. Everybody is sorry, distressingly sorry indeed! but nobody moves the tongue or lifts a finger, for the purpose of rescue or prevention.

It is not so that we act in other respects. We struggle hard to save a fellow being that is drowning before our eyes. Should we see a man stand upon the brink of a frightful precipice and unconscious of his danger, doubtless we would instantly give him warning. Hardly would we neglect to snatch either the poisoned bowl from the lips of one that mistook the poison for a wholesome beverage, or the knife or razor from the throat of a man or woman in the act of committing suicide. Common humanity impels us to acts of this sort. And yet, when we see in scarcely less jeopardy of another kind, a neighbor, and acquaintance—one whom the offices of discreet and faithful friendship might perhaps rescue and restore—we are listless—we let him alone—we'll not meddle—"tis his own affairs!" Such is the way of the world.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"—How covetous and calumniating some are! In their ambition to be "dish-rag and bottle-washer" of everything of importance and outrun their contestant in the race of life, they will stoop to one of the most scandalous sins (in order to injure his neighbor's influence for good)—that of lying, which is the concealing of all other crimes, the sheep's clothing upon the wolf's back, the Pharisee's prayer, the harlot's blush the hypocrite's paint, the murderer's smile, thief's cloak, Judas' kiss, mankind's darling sin and the devil's distinguished characteristic. There is no mud-hole in creation like the mouth. Shakespeare says "Be ye as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." It is pleasurable to know that slanderers meet no regard from noble minds; only the base believe what the base may utter. It is only swine that will uproot a graveyard. If calumny will not stop while you are living, common decency demands that it shall stop when against its hard visage slams the iron gate of the tomb. It will be time enough for us to cast the first stone of slander when we are without sin. Both in the Church and State there is a class of self-constituted bosses who think they are the sun, moon and stars of the world, trying to shackle and handcuff other men in their work for God and the race. As long as they assume an air of superiority, and strut around and get the leaves and fishes, all is well; and if the sun shines brilliantly on their side of the street, it makes no difference how hard the rain may beat on the pathway of others.

I do not like mud-finging, for I believe it to be an invention of a weak mind, which, although designed to dislodge an enemy, in fact tends to fortify him the more in his position. Only the burning and penetrating sun-light of just criticism is productive of good, and not the freakish passion and repetition of a wrongly governed spirit bent on the intent of injuring. Only persons of the low and tough element will seek notoriety at the expense of common decency, regardless of a proper regard for the rights and reputations of others. The dignified and refined of both races are satisfied to keep the even tenor of their way and let the garbage remain for the buzzards, vultures, swine and kites. I will say to these so-called demagoguing bosses who had exalted their own selves in Church and State, is it not time to call a halt to this peevishness, picking at your neighbors, thinking yourself their superior, comparing them

and villifying them in public print without a just cause? Bossism must be put down at once. An indignant and injured people are fixing to sit down on you. In regards to the church, the time has fully come for the annual and the general conferences to put an end to this damaging procedure of ministers villifying one another, by passing stringent laws to that effect, for unless it is soon checked, there will be knocking down and dragging out, even if it has to be done physically. True and tried sons of the connection will not be slandered by those who have once been expelled from it. The day is past and gone by for Negro domineering; gone, when the thumb-screw and the gibbet shall be fastened around men's honest convictions. The Negro has heard the crack of the slave-driver's whip for the last time, and the sooner the men in Church and State learn this lesson the better.

It seems to me that only a creeping thing suffering from hydropneumonia virus of a malignant type, and of a cowardly and vindictive disposition, would publish a libelous article to damage his neighbor. They, only, can open the sewers of their pent-up indignation, and spit forth vituperation gathered from the vaults of inferno's stygian darkness, where the slimy ooze of infamy, drips from grinning skeletons of lost and perjured souls. There is no elevation to which I could attain, that would make me forgetful that every one, whether poor or rich, has rights that I am bound to respect. I consider no one my superior or my inferior, only officially. I envy no one who knows more than I and I pity the one who knows less. I would rather be a beggar, blind like Bartimeus, begging alms at the door of public charity, if such condition was necessary to the freedom and happiness of my fellows, than to be a tyrant trying to oppress and crush suffering humanity. Says one, "why don't you sue them for damages when they print libelous articles?" What is the use? Why, some of them haven't anything but some old clothes that nobody wants. Hem!

I wish it thoroughly understood that I am not speaking particularly of any one person in this article, but generally of a growing evil that must be checked at once; hence, I hope no one will get on the fence and retaliate unless I could be allowed to wipe at them with my pen as I would like. In conclusion, I am called to preach the gospel, not to be editor of a paper. Since that assertion has been made, I decided to write no more for the "Star" and it is only through the request of two of our Bishops, the President of our college, together with brethren north, east, south and west, that I have commenced again. The editor of the "New York Enterprise" has written to me to write for his paper. I don't think he will slur me. Want anything else explained?

Baltimore, Md.

FROM MONTGOMERY, ALA.

Mr. Editor: I beg space in the "Star" to let the many readers know that the new church Ebenezer is completed, and I will have it dedicated on the first Sunday in November. Bishop J. W. Hood will preach for us at Ebenezer on the 28th of October, the Lord being willing. Sister Harriet Sanders, a Baptist lady, has been a great help to us in building our new church.

Yours in Christ,  
Sept 18th. H. TALLEY.

## A LECTURE ON THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF JERUSALEM.

BY BISHOP J. J. MOORE.

The holy appendages of the temple have all their mystical bearing. The ark of covenant—the incarnation of Christ, its 12 loaves of shew bread, the heavenly food for the soul given to the world by the 12 apostles; the golden candlesticks, the light of revelation reflected by the church of God; the Sacerdotal attire worn by its priests, the holy miteron, his head a pure mind, in its ministers of truth. The breast-plate on their hearts bearing the 12 tribes of Israel, bearing their religious well-being on their heads, and the Divine articles in the urim and thummim—the mystery of Godliness. The brazen sea on the 12 oxen backs; the 12 apostles representing the work of regeneration effected through the patience and perseverance of the gospel ministry. The cherubim over the ark representing the two angelic agents, Michael and Gabriel that attended Christ during his incarnation on earth.

The third great peculiarity in the history of Jerusalem, was its preservation for so many hundred years against the ravages of bitter heathen foes. During 1000 years all the surrounding Pagan nations beset it with obstinate invasions, as the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Syrians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. Yet God preserved it as the Jew's national capital until the Saviour came; and they rejected the Messiah; then, then its fate was sealed.

The fourth marvelous peculiarity in the history of Jerusalem, was the supernatural omens of its pending destruction. These well attested historical establishments. These omens are the wonderful attestations of God's desire to save the Jews and their sacred city. Among these supernatural signs of Jerusalem's impending destruction when her fate was about to be sealed, was the appearance of a star in the heavens every evening hanging over the city, in the shape of a sword. This occurred for the space of a whole year.

The second warning sign given them was the appearance of chariots and armies fighting in the heavens, every evening, for a long period, seen over the whole country, at the setting of the sun. The third warning signal given by the Almighty, was while the people were assembled to celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread. At the 8th hour in the night, suddenly there blazed up a light about the altar as bright as noon day, and lasted for some hours and the priest had to cease to officiate.

The fourth token of warning calling them in awful tones to repent and sue for mercy at God's hands, was at the same feast, a cow being led to the altar to sacrifice, brought forth a lamb. The fifth omen with which God sought to bring them within the reach of his proffered mercy, was the great brazen gate that required 20 men to open and shut, when bolted and fastened, was seen night after night to open an shut of its own accord, for many months before the Roman siege.

The sixth signal warning of God's approaching judgment, was at the celebration of the Pentecost, the sounds of great multitudes were heard in the air saying: "Let us depart hence! let us depart hence! Woel woel to Jerusalem and its temple." All these awful tokens failed to bring the devoted city to repentance and sue for Di-

vine mercy. Finally, its cup filled, and God prepared the Roman army with its fearful legions and battering rams, and in the 6th month siege, the most fearful extremities ever known in human sufferings, sealed the fate of Jerusalem. During the six months siege, nearly two millions of its inhabitants perished by famine, pestilence and the sword.

The fifth peculiar feature in the history of ancient Jerusalem, is the Divine interdiction to its being rebuilt again until the fulness of the Gentile shall come in, in receiving the gospel. How remarkable, that during the period of 300 years, two millions of fanatical Christians, infidel Jews and superstitious Pagans have in vain tried to control the destiny of that ill-fated city, and have perished in their folly, as in the case of the holy wars or crusades.

During the third century, Julian, the Emperor of Rome, named the apostate, tried to repossess the Jews of Jerusalem. He said he would defeat prophecy, and to that end he employed 200,000 men to rebuild it. But the interposition of the Almighty soon convinced him of his folly. As his men were engaged in attempting to clear away the rubbish for to build, balls of fire would burst up through the ground, so that they had to abandon it, leaving Jerusalem to this day, trodden under the foot of the Gentile, as God had declared it should be.

At present where once rested the sacred base of its holy temple, upon Mount Moriah, beautiful for situation, joy of the whole earth, reposing as it did upon bosom divinity, throwing the shadows of its holy spires on the valleys that lay couched a thousand feet beneath, while from its watch-towers that mingled with the clouds, divinities, angels with eternal vigilance, looked out upon Arabia's plains and ancient Gallilee for approaching foes. Now stands on this once hallowed spot, the Pagan's desecrating Mosque, guarded by the haughty Turk.

Jerusalem, physically, was the embodiment of wealth, architectural skill and beauty. The cost of its magnificent temples erected was \$3,827,420,364, moulded into silver coin, would be 105,000 tons; sufficient to load 50,000 wagons with two tons or 4,000 pounds each, forming a line of wagons 671 miles long, 60 feet apart, with four horses. In its splendid and sublime attitude it sat, unconscious of its magnitude, reposing upon the bosom of gorgeous terraces. A splendid architectural pile, clustered upon the sacred mountain slopes in an area encircled by a line of nine miles, where alone the visions of holiness brooded for centuries. This city of God, encompassed by a trinity of walls 500 feet high with a host of towers of polished stone lifting their crest where the heavenly vapors with airy footsteps tread.

As its princely temple, the tabernacle of God, clad in habiliments of inspiration and Gloria excoelces, wrapped in its mantle of solid adamant, reflecting in every ray of its divine intellations from its towering terraces of guild splendor only consciousness of its divine authority. No earthly object was ever more imposing to human sight and attractive to human observation than this divinely stamped temple now recorded in ruins, and God forsaken. Let us once more hear the voice of mercy pleading in the mild accents of a weeping God: "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou that killeth the prophets, etc." Thus mercy closes her lips with fearful valedictions.

See that your neighbor reads THE STAR OF ZION.

## FROM SOUTH EATONTOWN N J

BY INGOMAR.

Elder Abraham Anderson is to be here next week.

The bazaar held here sometime ago by a committee of ladies realized \$63.

The second quarterly conference of our church will convene on Thursday October 7th.

The Richardson Bros., pork butchers, are making rapid preparations for their fall business.

Our church, through the exertions of the pastor, Rev E Hammett, has liquidated its debt to the small amount of \$25.

The "Modern Fool" is the title of a lecture to be delivered at the old church, Pine Brook, by Prof Green on the 8th, for the benefit of the church.

The Pine Brook A M E Z church will pay this week \$100 more on its church indebtedness, which will make \$825 paid since its erection. Still due \$1075.

The model church in this county is the A M E Zion church at Revetown. It is free from debt, has a large Sunday school attached with a new assorted library, all accomplished in two years.

## PHILADELPHIA AND BALTIMORE S. S. CONVENTION.

The fourth annual session of the Sunday school convention of the Phila. and Balt. conference district, will convene in Zion Wesley A M E church, Lombard street, between 5th and 6th streets, Philadelphia, Pa., on Wednesday Oct. 21st, at 10 a. m.

The convention will hold three days. There will be two sessions each day—morning and afternoon. Each school will be represented by one delegate. All schools are requested to send a full report to the convention and also a donation in aid of the convention. We need help to print the minutes, etc., and "many hands make light work." At the close of the convention, the Sunday school will give an entertainment for the benefit of the convention.

PROGRAMME—First Evening.—Reading essays and delivering addresses by eminent divines and singing.

Second evening—Reading the prize essays, addresses and singing. All members and delegates to the convention will be provided for.

Rev. J. P. THOMPSON,  
Rev. G. W. OFFLEY, President.  
Secretary.

## THE CHARLOTTE N C DISTRICT

Mr. Editor:

Please allow me space in Zion's bright "Star" to inform its many readers that the Charlotte District is all awake. The most of the pastors are building, rebuilding or beautifying the churches in their charge. Even in the mountains where the bogus bishop and his blind cabinet have done all in their power to blot out the name of old Zion, but every stroke they have made has only made her shine brighter, for there we have one new church nearly finished. Therefore you can see we are not sleeping, although we have not said much. I wanted to get around the district before writing. As I have made two rounds on the work, I am fully persuaded that in the next two months we will regain all important points. Yours for God and Zion.  
E. L. CAMPBELL, P. E.

When ill news comes too late to be serviceable to your neighbors, keep it to yourself.