

# The Star of Zion.

ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH IN AMERICA.

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## WITNESSES CALLING

For Vengeance Against a Cruel and Lawless King.

BY BISHOP J. W. HOOD, D. D., LL. D.

"For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."—Habakkuk 2:11.

While passing through the Virginia Conference my attention was several times called to this text. There seems to be some doubt as to its meaning.

To understand a passage of Scripture, it is generally necessary to consult the context. This is especially necessary, respecting the passage we are considering, which, taken out of its connection, means nothing. The preposition "For" with which the text begins, indicates that we must look back to something which precedes it, in order to understand it. The subject begins at the fourth verse. The prelude at the first verse.

The Prophet, standing upon his watch-tower awaiting divine direction, is commanded to write the vision and make it so plain that he who readeth it may run. He is assured that the prophecy shall be fulfilled. Though the vision may seem to tarry, the judgment is sure.

Then at the fourth verse, he begins to declare the pride, vanity, iniquity, intemperance, unholy ambition, transgression and unrighteousness of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. He declares of Nebuchadnezzar that his desire (for gain) is enlarged, as hell, as death, which cannot be satisfied. "He gathereth all nations to himself." That is, he attempted to extend his conquests to the ends of the earth. Not by any right, but simply to extend his dominion, and to satisfy his thirst for power.

In the 7th and 8th verses, the Prophet declares, that as he had spoiled others, so his dominion and posterity should be spoiled. There should be a sudden rising up against him, to bite and vex him; and the blood and violence which he had caused others to suffer, should come to his own house.

At the 9th verse, the prophet begins the denunciation of woe upon Nebuchadnezzar's house and kingdom. "Woe unto him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!" God had employed Nebuchadnezzar as an agent to punish other nations. He imagined that his own arm had gotten him the victory, and therefore grew proud, cruel and oppressive. He built up, enlarged, embellished and fortified Babylon, by spoiling and ruining many other cities, and by destroying or enslaving their inhabitants. In doing this, he thought to bring stability to his own house. As birds, by their instinct, build their nests in the top of walls and other high places, that their young ones may

be in safety, so he thought his high towers and strong fortifications would secure him from evil.

But since his conquests were the result of covetousness, and his towers built by the blood and unrequited toil of his captives, the Prophet declares, (verse 10,) "Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul." Then follows the text: "For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

Thy wickedness, and the distress, which thou hast brought upon many shall neither go unnoticed nor unpunished. It shall be proclaimed upon the house top. The very stones and timbers which thou hast built, shall cry out against thee. It requires two witnesses to condemn, and here they are. The stone of the wall shall make the complaint, and the beam of the timber shall sustain the charge.

The idea of stone testifying for Jehovah, is not peculiar to this text. When the proud Pharisees and Sadducees came to John's baptism, filled with thoughts of their excellences, as the descendants of Abraham, he said unto them: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Also, when Jesus made His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, amid the loud hosannas, the chief priests asked if He heard what the people were saying. That is, they wanted to know, if He really understood that they were giving Him honors due to Zion's King and Lord. He said yes, He understood them, and if these held their peace, the stones would cry out.

God can cause inanimate nature to testify for Him. It may also bear testimony against the wicked. Or testimony may come from a source as unexpected as if the stone should cry out of the wall, and the beam of the timber echo the cry. Let not thy heart with pride be lifted up, nor build thy house by pulling others down, for stones of walls built up by shedding blood, with groaning timbers, lifting their voices to God, shall meet thee at the bar, when thou art called to stand before the Judge of all the earth, and cry for vengeance there.

Fayetteville, N. C.

Sister Mary Jane Stevenson, the oldest and most faithful worker of our church, died November 16th, in her 70th year. Though suffering with an afflicted limb she dragged the old body out to our second quarterly meeting and there told us in the love-feast that that may be her last time to meet with us; if so, somewhere around God's eternal throne we can meet her. She is now in glory. She was well thought of by the members and the community at large.—Rev. D. P. Witten, Lock Haven.

## THAT "AD" CONTRACT.

I Heartily Agree With Elder Chambers' Criticisms.

BY BISHOP GEO. W. CLINTON, D. D.

Mr. Editor: For reasons which need no explanation, I have adopted a rule to avoid newspaper controversies and discussions unless some occasion should arise which I thought demanded attention such as I could safely give.

I have been waiting for a little spare time to write an article on "Zion and Lay Recognition." I shall discuss this subject in the near future, Providence permitting. Just now I want to do what I have not been able to do hitherto—commend one of Rev. S. A. Chambers' "Cannon Balls," and at the same time correct an impression which your editorial comment seems to make concerning the STAR OF ZION advertisements.

I heartily agree with the criticisms which Elder Chambers makes concerning a certain class of ads which the STAR is now carrying. I also agree with what he suggests relative to certain ads which should be carried.

But I beg to most respectfully demur when the Editor indicates that an agreement has obtained since the STAR was first moved to Charlotte which has compelled the present management to carry objectionable ads against its will. During the management which had charge of the STAR prior to June 1896, the Southern Newspaper Union controlled about three columns as part payment for printing the STAR on its press. There was no time when this contract could not have been annulled by giving a week's notice; and at no time were more than two of the objectionable ads condemned by Elder Chambers carried in the STAR OF ZION by the Southern Newspaper Union prior to June 1896.

The Editor very well knows that there has been no compulsion upon the present management of the STAR to carry any ads for the Southern Newspaper Union since the STAR has used its own press. He also knows that I made a motion at the Asbury Park meeting of the Board of Publication requiring the present STAR Managers to keep a standing directory of our General Officers, heads of our educational institutions, Conference stewards, annual Conferences and a display ad of Livingstone College. I have more than once called the Editor's attention to some of these omissions, especially the entire omission of the list of Conference stewards, the occasional omission of Livingstone College ad and the small type used when it is published. I have wondered why other institutions can get their ads carried in display type, and the Livingstone College ad is carried in small type, and very often in some obscure place; while other institutions are not advertised at all. The Editor

should tell when the present ad contract was made and by whom. The blame should be placed where it belongs. Thou shalt not say I did it. Shake not thy inky pen at me, even though I was pressed as thou hast not been and I hope never shall be, for means to keep the STAR shining for all.

Memphis, Tenn.

## GOOD NEWS.

BY MRS. M. A. CREWS.

Our most beloved pastor is Rev. M. S. Cost. Last January Bishop J. B. Small sent him to Mt. Tabor circuit. He is a model Christian gentleman, a good gospel preacher, and acknowledged by hundreds of our ministers and people to be the sweet singer of Zion in Alabama. Our presiding elder says he is the Sankey of Alabama.

Rev. Edward Hunter is our presiding elder. He is a God-fearing man and is always at his place and knows what to do when he is there. He is a forceful gospel preacher. The stewardesses and many friends tendered a grand reception to our presiding elder and pastor. The Sabbath-school donated to the presiding elder 80 cents; friends donated 60 cents, stewardess board number one donated \$1.00.

Our church is a little mission with 34 members. We paid our pastor this year, \$22.05; general fund raised this year, \$9.26.

We pray that God will move upon the heart of the Bishop to send our beloved pastor back to us.

Ironville, Ala.

## AFRICA.

BY REV. J. F. MILLER, S. T. D.

God will ultimately give to the Negro the work of evangelizing Africa. We lack in way of proper preparation and experience, nor are we ready to begin. I hold we are not prepared for the work of evangelizing Africa, and that God has reserved the work for us. He has a long time in which to do it. He has no need to make haste.

Peter, the apostle, in his day, met the question when in reply to the scoffers who said: "Where is the sign of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, behold all things remain as they were unto this day?" His answer was: "Ye do not remember that a thousand years are as one day with the Lord, and one day as a thousand years." All eternity is in His hands, and therefore He need not haste with His purposes concerning Africa. We are beginning to divine what is to be the rehabilitation, what is to be the moral, social, industrial rehabilitation of Africa, when she shall have been clothed in the glory of new life and her sons and daughters shall be exalted in that land, just as He held this country in reserve, concealed from the eyes of the world for centuries, until the time had come for its discovery and development.

Louisville, Tenn.

## RACIAL PREJUDICE.

Its Cause and Remedy—A Very Excellent Sermon.

BY REV. J. R. DANGERFIELD.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?—Psalms 2:1-3.

The human heart is never so clearly set before the world as it is now in the text. Its very principles are defined. It bows to the will of the most devilish and inhuman schemes. There cannot be any more commendable part of the devil's action than when our minds are led to the 4th chapter of Acts and the 27th and 28th verses. This is not to be wondered at when you find the human heart void, stultified and corrupted with a disease of vile and painful passion. You notice the weak child of God, yet a babe, but God's eternal Son, was turned against with the strong arm of Herod, Pontius Pilate and with other rebellious spirits, who gathered together with a murderous mob to do violence and to overthrow the great plan of salvation. We see the heathens raging and wavy like the sea, tossed to and fro like the restless waves in a storm, lashing the innocent ship to pieces. These kings of the earth array themselves against the God of creation by destroying human lives.

Mob violence is now apparent, and the grand principles of the moral law of God is but the footstool, subject to their evil authority. Race prejudice excites the ignorant and the vile; color is its cause. Who is responsible for his being? God, our common father, is the Lord over us all. Our fair land and its history are now stained with human blood. It shall break forth with utterance with its blood, crying from the ground against their brothers in white.

Since the sainted soul of Abraham Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation, over 5,000 human souls of black men and women have suffered death by the lynch law on our American soil. I claim that the white man must be educated along special lines, and the white pulpits and the press with these powerful agents will effect good results along that line. Let our leading people consider the fair words of Dr. Abbott and Dr. Parkhurst: "Give the colored man of this country his rights and let the government of this republic be respected."

Religion is one of the greatest elements left out of the question. Men and pulpits are discussing higher criticism, higher science, and religion seems apparently left aside. When religion is in the heart and education in the head, prejudice and color line will entirely be ostracised and eliminated from the face of this nation. And the only thing that will bring about this civilization is true religion and pure education. God help the race.—Utica (N. Y.) Daily Press.