

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, N. C., }
March 29th, 1869. }

Come all ye that fear God, and bear with me, and I will try to tell you what I hope the Lord has done for my soul. I was young when first arrested; having a slight spell of sickness, I was lying in a room to myself, Father and the family being in a different room, singing for prayer, as was his usual custom night and morning. In giving out the hymn he repeated these words:

"The rising morning can't assure
That we shall end the day;
For death stands ready at the door,
To snatch our lives away."

These words seemed to take hold of my feelings and left serious thoughts about death on my mind; but when I got well, these feelings wore off and I was as wicked as ever; and sometime after that I was at work in the field with Father and some of the children, and the most distressing feeling came on me I ever had in my life; it appeared to me that it was the darkest time I ever saw; I thought that I was going to die soon, or the world was coming to an end, or something great would happen. It was there I hope the Lord was pleased to ~~change my~~ ~~condition~~ and I began from that time to try to beg the Lord to prepare me for death, and to read the Bible for instruction; but the more I read and tried to pray, the plainer I saw how wicked and sinful I was and had been; but these feelings would wear off, and I would become unconcerned about death for weeks and months at a time, and then I would get in trouble again, and would try to beg the Lord to forgive me, and I would promise to do better in the future. During the time of my conviction I was married to William Summers, a member of the Baptist Church, and I felt like I was outside, for I had a christian husband and christian parents, and I was a poor lost sinner and saw no chance for me to be saved. I would lie and wet the pillow with tears on account of my lost condition, and trying to beg the Lord to prepare me for death. It seemed that my sins would rise like mountains before me, which would cause me almost to sink in despair, but my cry was, Lord have mercy on me and save me from destruction, if it is Thy will; for I believed the Lord had all power, and I believed he was a just God, and I did not see how He could be just and the justifier of such a sinner as was. It seemed to me that I did

not have a friend on earth or in heaven; I laid down one night and fell asleep, and dreamed of seeing my mother, that had been dead some fifteen years; I thought she came to me and said there was something in the church for her children; I waked in a state of rejoicing; I saw no trouble for half the next day, though I did not take it for religion, but took it for an evidence that I would have religion in time to come; and I was a mystery to myself from that time until I went to the Association at Deep Creek, for when reading the Bible or hearing preaching or experiences, I would sometimes become so full it seemed like I could hardly hold my peace, and I was made to wonder why it was the case that such a sinner as I was should have such feelings under preaching; but while at the Association, I heard brother McDowell preach; his text was, "then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward;" I was filled with love beyond expression; I never can describe my feelings, and I never was satisfied from that time until I joined the church; and in October following, the door being opened before preaching on Sunday morning, I went forward and told a portion of what I have here written, was received, and baptized by my father, Elder Robert Shireves. Remember me and mine when it goes well with you, for

"I am the chief of sinners,
I freely own with Paul;
Or if I am a christian,
I am the least of all."

Yours in hope of eternal glory,
NANCY L. SUMMERS.

BUTLER, TAYLOR COUNTY, GA. }
February 20th, 1869. }

ELD. L. I. BODENHAMER—*Dear Brother*:—I had thought not to trouble you any more soon with my scribbling, but I see in Zion's Landmarks, Vol. 2, No. 4, a request from our esteemed brother, Joel Hardy, for my views on the 11th chap. 39th and 40th verses of Hebrews. I do not feel to have any special light upon the passage; however, such thoughts as have occurred to my mind since my attention has been specially called to the subject, I will try to pen down, and submit to your disposal. The text reads as follows: "And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the pro-

mise, God having provided better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The chapter in which the subject is recorded, begins with an expression of what faith is, and the apostle goes on through the chapter, showing or refreshing the minds of the saints, with the miraculous works or effects of faith. "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous," 4th verse. Now what did the excellence of Abel's offering consist in—not in the thing which he offered, as some suppose, for the fruit of the ground, which Cain offered, if it had been offered in faith, would have been as soon received as the firstling of Abel's flock, and the firstling of Abel's flock would have been as soon rejected as Cain's fruit of the ground, if offered without faith. Any thing whatsoever, without faith is displeasing to the Lord, "for without faith it is impossible to please him." Heb. 11:6. But the least thing with faith, is pleasing to him; the widow's two mites was accepted and well pleasing to the Lord; while if Paul had given all his goods to feed the poor and his body to be burned, and had not faith and charity, it had profited him nothing. 1 Cor. 13:3. But how did Abel obtain his faith which capacitated him to offer unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain? Not by reading the Bible, we know, for then there was no Bible, and yet Abel made an offering which typified Christ, which clearly shows that his faith embraced Christ. But the Jews who had the Old Testament to read at pleasure, in which Christ was plainly set forth by the prophets, we find to be without faith respecting Christ, who is the sum and substance of the Bible; all which shows that genuine faith, through which the catalogue of saints named in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, obtained a good report, is an impression or gift of the Spirit. But what was this good report, which the elders obtain through faith? Be sure it was nothing that will be pleasing to the flesh; they were stoned, they were slain with the sword, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were about in sheepskins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented. 37th verse. Truly this is a good report, that the ancient saints suffered such things for Christ's sake; they truly manifested the purity of

their faith and the sincerity of their profession, by the things which they suffered. Now men after the flesh might desire such a good report, but we know that men after the flesh would not be willing to suffer such things for the sake of a good report, and if they should, they would not obtain a good report thereby; for whatsoever a man does for the sake of applause, whether it be little or much, the Lord reports evil of him, but whatsoever a man suffers for the sake of Christ, whether the sacrifice be great or small, it is accepted of the Lord, and he who so sacrifices, obtains from the Lord, (who trieth the hearts) a good report. But these who obtained a good report, received not the promise. It does not mean that they received not Christ and eternal life in him, for the whole scope of revelation shows that their faith embraced Christ and salvation through his merits. But they saw not the actual fulfillment of that which the types under the law foreshadowed; they did not literally embrace Christ in their arms, as did Simeon and others, nor did they witness the actual crucifixion and resurrection of Christ from the dead, upon which the yoke of bondage was removed and the gospel kingdom actually set up; these things the apostles beheld with the natural eye, and by the Spirit witness that these things were in fulfillment of the prophets; and now henceforth, we no more look through types and shadows, but with open face we behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, &c. 2 Cor. 3:18. In other words, the better things prepared for us, is the betterness of the new covenant. The old was conditional, and Israel was stiff-necked and rebellious, and therefore sin, captivity and death abounded under it; but as for us or spiritual Israel, the Lord says "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people," and this is an expression of the new covenant; hence the Lord is merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and our iniquities he remembers no more, see Heb. 8:10, 12. And this is that "better thing the Lord has prepared for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." It doth not mean that there was any lack or defect in the faith of the real saints under the old dispensation, for such miracles as was wrought by them, by an I through faith, witness to us that such faith was the