

R. W. Summers

ZION'S LANDMARKS.

DEVOTED TO THE DEFENSE OF THE PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS.

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY."

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Poetry.

The following lines were composed by Elder LEWIS WHITFIELD, at Lafayette, Lenoir County, N. C., in December, 1848, when about to remove with a portion of his family from this place, (where he settled and long resided,) to Beaufort in Carteret County, where he died in October 1849, aged 84 years. Zion's Landmarks please publish and oblige,

R. D. HART.

Now Lord, though we must part awhile,
Upon the sacred road,
Still let thy face upon us smile,
And keep us near to God.

And if on earth again we meet,
Lord let us meet with thee,
And let thy gracious presence sweet,
From bondage set us free.

This, dearest Lord, we humbly crave,
While Earth is our abode,
That we with Christ and saints may have
Communion on the road.

And since our fellowship below,
Affords such joy and love,
We long its full extent to know,
When we shall meet above.

Dear Lord, let this excite us on,
To keep the narrow way,
Till we shall meet around Thy throne,
To spend an endless day.

Correspondence.

OPELIKA, ALA., }
February 16th, 1869. }

"Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11: 9.

The above language is the instruction and encouragement given by Christ to his disciples, in which every needy child of grace is assured that his wants shall be supplied. But it is not merely a lip-service, or to say Lord, Lord, that is intended by asking. To ask God acceptably, for anything, there must be a sense of need, otherwise our petition will be but a formal thing at last. He who has no feeling sense of sin, will not ask forgiveness, but will be rather inclined to boast of his own works, &c.; thank God he is not as "other men." The wicked are "not in trouble as other men." (Ps. 73: 5.) For this reason they make confession of their true character like the proud Pharisee, and say, "I am not as other men."

To ask acceptably, not only implies a sense of want and a sense of sin, but it also implies *faith*. Inasmuch therefore as faith is the fruit of the Spirit, no person who is destitute of a spiritual birth can be exercised by it. Gal. 5: 22. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14: 23. Where there is no faith there is nothing but the exercise of the natural and carnal mind, and as the mind and conscience of unbelievers are defiled and polluted with sin, all their exercises are sinful, and consequently not acceptable to God. Faith is not the mere volition of the will or exercise of the natural mind. It is a living principle, "the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11: 1. The things which the natural powers of the mind look at are things which the natural mind are capable of understanding; they are temporal things. But this is not faith; faith looks at eternal things.

Another reason why this living faith is necessary in every acceptable petition to God, is found in the fact that "without faith it is impossible to please him." Every man who is not exercised by faith is exercised by some fleshly motive and cannot please God, for it is expressly written that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8: 8. Faith lays hold of Jesus Christ as its only plea. The Lord is well pleased in Him. He is the Righteousness that will give the trembling sinner acceptance with God. Hence when we come acceptably before God, we not only come in faith, but we come in the name of Jesus. Our own name will give us no admittance there, no matter what our wants may be.—Vengeance waits us when we ask in our own character. "The wrath of God abideth upon us." John 3. We are under the law and under its curse. Our mouth is stopped when we come to God in our own character and in our own name, pleading our moral performances or our reformations.—Nothing but the name and character of Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth, will give us an acceptable

hearing before God. "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 14: 14. Faith never lays hold of anything but realities. It deals not in fiction. It presents Christ and his righteousness as the only hope of pardon and justification.

WM. M. MITCHELL.

REEDSVILLE,
ROCKINGHAM CO., N. C.,
March 29, 1869.

Dear Brother Bodenhamer:—

Having been for some time impressed to write out my experience, I will now make the attempt, greatly feeling my dependence on God to direct my pen. I was very young when first arrested; I suppose about nine years old. Hearing my parents talk about the world being destroyed, it struck me to the heart; I thought there was no resting place for me; but as I grew older these feelings would wear off for a length of time; but when doing wrong I would have checks of conscience, and tried to pray to the Lord to keep me from doing wrong, but being possessed with a wicked heart I could not refrain from evil. One Sunday morning I took my axe and went in the woods to cut up some tree lops to make fires during the week, but was suddenly struck with a sense of my wicked heart; I felt condemned before God and went to the house without striking a lick, and tried to beg the Lord to forgive me, and I would try to do better in the future; but ere I was aware I would break my promise and do as wicked as ever. Sometimes when clouds would rise during the storm, I felt so guilty I was afraid God would suffer the lightning to strike me; I would sometimes take a little child in my lap, thinking or hoping at least, the Lord would spare me for the child's sake; and when the storm would abate, I would feel thankful that I was yet out of torment. My troubles increased and became so great that I could not remain at my work; when in the field I would go in secret to try to beg the Lord to have mercy on me a lost and helpless sinner, for it ap-

peared to me that I was lost, forever lost. One day when going to my work, trying to pray as I went, I thought when I got to the fence I would get on my knees and try once more to beg the Lord to have mercy on me, for I expected every minute to sink into torment; and I saw justice in the Lord in sending me to torment, but I did not want to go, though I wanted the will of the Lord to be done; and just as I got to the fence, I looked up toward heaven, and these words came in my mind: "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and the first thing I knew, I was smacking my hands and singing:

"Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of thee,"

and I felt rejoiced, and was filled with love beyond expression, and everything appeared beautiful, even the trees looked new; and I felt that I wanted to see christians and tell them what the Lord had done for me; and when I went back to the field I felt so light I could work without any trouble, and I saw no trouble all that day; and the next morning I went in to hear prayer where I was living, and I could hardly hold my peace, and the man being a Presbyterian, I got in doubts, for I thought if I had been a christian, I would not have been lifted up under his prayer; and I was sometimes lifted up and sometimes cast down with doubts and fears, and when I would go to meeting and see christians assembled together, it would tender me, and I thought I would have given the world, if I had it, to have been fit to be with them; and I had impressions to go to the church, and in August, 1858, after preaching, I went forward and told what I hoped the Lord had done for me, was received and baptized by my father-in-law, Elder Robert Shreves.

"But now I have a warfare,
Which often bends me low,
The world, the flesh and Satan,
They do beset me so.
Can one who is a christian,
Have such a heart as mine?
I fear I never witnessed
The effects of love divine.

Yours in hope of eternal love,
WILLIAM SUMMERS.