

Zion's Landmarks.

DEVOTED TO THE DEFENSE OF THE PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS.

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY."

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NO. V.

POETRY.

THE SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE.

Affectionately to Mrs. Dr. Williams of Caldwell County, Texas.

Oh! sea of Glass, in wondrous beauty heaving,
Strange glowing billows rolling to the strand,
And in the soul a solemn music leaving
From harps of those who on the billows stand;

In robes of white the faithful sons and daughters
Victorious stand and sing the praise of God;
They look for Him, across the changeful waters—
Look for the Christ, with His dividing Rod.

Their voices speak of one renunciation
Of earth and life, till on the mingled Sea,
Cast from the world—the strange and faithful nation

Sings Moses' song of one great victory;
But faithful souls, though waves of Glass be glowing,
To light for them the restful shore beyond,
Yet through those waves the vaulting fire is flowing,
And surges up with wild and hissing sound.

The strangling Fire runs wild through every billow—
Will it engulf the singers on the Sea—
Will fiery depths become their scorching pillow.

The furious deep a Furnace and a grave?
Oh! shall their feet go down into the cauldron—
Their forms consume within the fervent heat—
Or shall they stand, as did the holy children,

No touch of Fire upon their unshod feet?
When John was called for God's deep revelation,
In holy silence on the lonely Island,
This came to him in grand and glorious vision

And held him tranced through all the wondrous while
In Spirit this—a wrestling Sea commingled
As if it were of Glass and radiant Fire!
To tread its waves from every clime saw singled.

A living host to touch a living lyre.
He saw that which should come with coming ages,
He saw that which should come to you and me;
He read for us life's dim and tear-stained pages,
And painted true for us this liquid sea.

He knew this Ocean which in billows breaking,
Throws up a spray of such transcendent light
That they who stand are ever watching waking,
Alike in sunlight on the darkest night.

Hast thou not seen the bright light flowing beaming,
Hast thine own feet ne'er pressed the billow road,
Aye hast thou seen the thrilling fire-wings gleaming
Through waves of glass which only lead to God?

Hast thou not worn a robe of radiant whiteness
And stood to rise with every changeful roll,
And though all trembling from the fiery brightness,
Felt Moses' song glad waking in thy soul?

Oh! fearful sea, oh! radiant wrestling Ocean,
The Christian's life of struggling hope and fear;

The harps they hold the true evangel's portion

Which they must touch though fire is burning near.

Were seas all glass the way were smooth for treading,

A radiant plain and not a troubled sea;

Were life all hope the heart were full of speeding

To grasp at once the crown of victory.

But fire within the Sea of Glass is given,
To scourge the deep with scorching lava-tide;

And fear the fire from the refiner's Heaven,
To bring to Him, the host of purified.

Sometime the Christ, for whom the host is waiting,

Will come and touch the Ocean with His Rod,

And the wild waves at the swift touch abating,

Will all lie still before the mighty God.

The fires will fall from out the waters passing

They will no longer burn in every wave,
The tongues of flame swift on each other chasing,

Will find their chains within the deepest grave.

A newer light all bright and radiant tender
Will wrap with sweetness the pacific Sea;

And God will give each brow a crown of glory;

Each lip the song—Eternal victory.
Sept 5th, 1873. ANNA SPRAGINS

COMMUNICATED.

[Experience of Sister R. Anna Phillips Continued.]

The Sunday School—that pet of the Church and system of bringing up children in the fear and admonition of the Lord: I was very favorable to a Sunday school, teaching the children the scriptures &c. I thought surely none but the ultra illiberal could object. Still I have been deceived in other matters—I had verily believed other matters scriptural until a clear analysis; and "if ye love me" &c., led me on to make the best—"observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" &c. In noticing their catechism for Sunday schools—I found—first—"who made you? "God;" who redeemed you? "Christ." Now this second answer struck me as, at least, presumptuous. The answer was for all—were all redeemed? Was it right to teach all they were certainly, so sure as they studied the catechism, redeemed? Who knew but they taught their little children a falsehood. I had no use for a catechism that did not accord with the scriptures. None I ever saw do.

But my main objection was to the principle of basis. I found the system as an auxiliary principle, assisting the Church. Was the Church indeed the *body* of Christ?—And this huge mass appended or attached to

his body: Was it a solid part or a fungus growth? If a solid part, why so entirely hid from ages past? If fungus, by what law attached to the body of Christ? But I am told it is the nursery to the Church,—a nursery wherein to plant the seed and grow the tender plant to a certain age, and have it prepared to transplant in the Church. Here then sinners are converted and saved; the weak and inefficient arm of the church can't reach them. So this also is a soul-saving-machine. It is argued in public speeches that the Sunday schools convert many more souls than the church—that the churches would die out but for the recruits from Sunday schools. When did Jesus Christ, with whom in God is hid the life of his church, when did he transfer that life to a Sunday school? Did the articles of faith read correctly—scriptures, "only rule of faith and practice." Where is the faith, or practice, or rule for appending anything to the church? And that appendage to fit, to prepare, to make christians of children, and at the proper time, have nothing to do, or for them to do, but to transplant to the church,—baptize them. Just like a tree from a literal nursery.

This principle I found altogether contrary to the scriptures and I saw no use in claiming the word of God as a standard—as an only rule of faith and practice, unless we respected it as such. The law of Christ teaches that his body is complete and perfect of itself—that it was fitly framed together, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Any addition was a fearful sin. He is the life of that body and all the members are complete in him; and because ye are sons, because ye are covenant children of God, God sends forth his Spirit into your heart crying Abba, Father; and not because a Sunday school, or a Mission or a Missionary Baptist so called church has a being

Then to patronize a Sunday school is to recognize its basis and object as religiously lawful. This is not so; so to patronize is to act a falsehood.

I think surely no one ever experienced more sorrow of mind than I did, at these convictions of truth, as one thing after another was condemned and my mind was confirmed by the unerring word of God. I did desire to be a Missionary Baptist and of all her members I was the most restless and dissatisfied. Besides my natural

pride was so great. How could I say to my fashionable neighbors—to my beloved friends—"our church and all her fixtures are false? Sunday school—the beautiful petted darling, is unscriptural, and hence it is a sin to recognize it by patronage. When I would look at the popular sentiment and feel assured of the fall I should take in public estimation, and every way in a worldly sense, I faltered and tried, as I could not go for, to do, and say nothing against them. Silence is considered consent to anything proposed. Jesus said "he that is not for me, is against me." If ye love me keep my commandments. "And this is love that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning ye should walk in it from the beginning," notice and not from Missionary Baptist time. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (of Christ) receive him not into your house, neither (by silent submission or otherwise) bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds, 2 John, 6:10. And this came up against my pride and popular opinion. I would look away to Jesus while on earth as denied and put to death by popular opinion, and my soul was pierced within me with sorrow, and I would mentally pray him to give me faith to overcome the world.

Now I could see why the Primitive Baptists did not patronize or approve of their systems of Sunday schools. I was told, however, they did not believe in any kind of good works not even to teach the children the bible. This I knew was false, for I had been sent to Sunday school all my childhood and girlhood days. The school I attended was not denominational, but all denominations joined and taught the Bible and nothing else. My teacher was generally a Methodist class leader. But why don't they all do so? Perhaps because they generally live in the country, so few and far between, that they find it better to teach them altogether at home. For to bring their children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, the Primitive Baptists consider an important christian duty. The command was given to parents, and hence they consider it their own *daily work* and *conversation* showing themselves as under the fear and admonition of the Lord. Is a school fulfill-