

# Zion's Landmark.

DEVOTED TO THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CAUSE.

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY."

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## Zion's Landmark.

By the help of the Lord, this paper will contend for the ancient landmark, guided by its stakes of truth, and strengthened by its cords of love.

It hopes to reject all TRADITIONS AND INSTITUTIONS OF MEN, and regard only the BIBLE AS THE STANDARD OF TRUTH.

It urges people to search the scriptures and obey Jesus as the only King in the holy hill of Zion, keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

It aims to contend for the mystery of the faith in God and the Father, Jesus the Mediator, and the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Comforter.

All lovers of gospel truth are invited to write for it—if so impressed.

May grace, mercy and peace, be multiplied to all lovers of Jesus.

## Poetry.

San Marcus Valley, Texas, Sept. 15, 1876.

Elder P. D. Gold,—Dear Brother in Christ:

By request of some brethren and friends I send you for publication two poems, written by my sister (the late Mrs. R. Anna Spragins). "My Mother's Prayer" was written several years ago, but was never published. "Father, I Wait" was written during her last illness and expresses much of her conversation to us while on a bed of mental suffering. But we truly feel that for her to die was eternal gain, and that she now enjoys that blissful freedom on the farther shore.

Your very unworthy sister,  
I. F. CRUTCHER.

### MY MOTHER'S PRAYER.

Oh! make me humble, this the voice of pleading  
Spoke in its trembling at the mercy seat;  
All other blessings it passed by unheeding,  
And asked this only at the Father's feet.

I saw her bent form in the moonlight kneeling,  
Bearing so plainly all Time's ruthless scars;  
Her withered hands clasped in the sweet appealing,  
Her faded eyes uplifted to the stars.

The light of night lay on her like a blessing,  
Touching the silver of her shining hair,  
As though the angels some great light repressing  
Left half its glory on her bowed form there.

The stars looked down, not pitying—not in sorrow,  
But with deep eyes of anger in their glow,  
As if they knew the coming of a morrow  
Which would exalt her from a place so low.

Some cloud had come between her heart and heaven,  
Some olden cloud she thought forever fled;  
But with its coming was a sweet strength given  
To pierce it through and see his face instead.

She went child-like, not trusting her own fingers  
To lift the vail which had grown dark again;  
But with the faith which faltering, yet still lingers  
In loving hearts of three score years and ten.

My eyes saw not the beautiful hand outstretching  
With cup filled full of holy Spirit—wine,  
Nor saw the soul of my sweet mother reaching  
To clasp the chalice and the hand divine.

But well I knew the asking was receiving  
Of myriads of blessings when she asked but one;

And joy was hers above the heart's conceiving,  
When it knelt humbly at the Father's throne.

I oft have heard my mother's voice in praying  
In deeper anguish than she felt that night:  
I've heard her pray for thoughtless children straying  
Too near the pit where darkness has no light.

I oft have heard her tones in sorrow breaking  
On the wild night where death was hovering near,  
Her quivering heart-strings with one burden aching,  
That God would listen and requite her prayer.

Yea, often times this blessed, patient mother  
Hath uttered sweetly many a blessed prayer,  
But to my soul they were not like this other,  
Spoke with the moon-light on her silver hair.

'Twas sweet to see when she had come with smiling,  
The furrows changed to blessed lines of peace;  
No inward storm the outer calm despoiling,  
But holy signet resting on her face.

I knew her soul was satiate with a blessing,  
Her spirit feet with holy wings were shod;  
Her heart had found in humble, sweet confessing,  
The peace which comes when we have been with God.

I knew the joy which passeth understanding  
Was in her soul, and faith above much gold;  
One hope most precious spoke a sweet commanding  
That every fear move back within its fold.

The grave may win her tottering foot-steps early,  
The grave-dust gather on her shining hair;  
But in remembrance let me hold this dearly,  
More dear than all—this one sweet, humble prayer.

When she has passed beyond the thorns which pierce her,  
Unto the rest so perfect—waiting near,  
And life's hot trials for my soul grow fiercer,  
I beg the pleading which was given her.

Oh! make me humble—to the humble cometh  
The best that heaven to the earthly give—  
Removing fires which burning bright consume  
The better blessings which we might receive.

In after days, oh! let me still remember  
My mother's prayer, and feel it sweetly  
When the winds of time have brought me my December  
With silver snows of three score years and ten.

ANNA SPRAGINS.

### FATHER, I WAIT.

Father, I wait, oh! give me patient waiting  
To bear the cross which was so hard to take:  
Give me the faith which has no strange abating,  
And love to feel that I suffer for thy sake.

To live is Christ—aye words of wondrous meaning,  
To suffer all the shame, the guilt, the pain,  
Brow bared to thorns—for heart no gentle screening:  
This is to live—but ah! to die is gain.

Father, I wait, and take my cup of sorrow,  
Each day more bitter than the yesterday;  
But billowy time is bringing the to-morrow,  
And peaceful resting which will last for aye.

I have bent low—my steps almost to failing;  
The cross so heavy, and the hill so steep,  
My star of hope like a dim vision failing,  
Till thou hast blest me in the dreams of sleep.

Father, I wait—oh! make me patient, stronger  
And ready—willing to be crucified:  
And if the days, oh! Father, be much longer,  
Give sweet assurance that my strength abide.

Thy love be o'er me as in one sweet vision  
When I laid helpless all my cares on Thee;  
Let me but once more feel the sweet transition,  
From waves of crimson to thy crystal sea.

Father, I wait—in tears forever sowing;  
Waiting when thou shalt give me golden sheaves:  
Waiting and wandering, hoping, never knowing  
How deep my halting thy sweet Spirit grieves.

Waiting the day mysteries great revealing,  
When I thy secrets shall all understand;  
And worship thee with all the blissful feeling  
Which thou wilt grant us in the promised land.

Father, I wait—oh! tell me 'tis not faithless,  
The faint, tried heart which ever pleads with thee;  
'Tis very dark—but say it is not pathless,  
The gloomy desert thou hast spread out for me.

With garments dyed as his from sodden Edom,  
Going from Bozra as he went before;  
Oh! shall I, waiting, reach the blissful freedom,  
When thou shalt take me to the farther shore.

Father, I wait—thine in deep tribulation,  
Bought with the price which flowed on calvary;  
Baptized in soul, in the deep, red libation  
For helpless sinners, that they might go free.

In the deep valley of the myrtles sighing,  
Or up steep mountains to the rugged brow;  
I toil and wait the blessed, sweet replying  
To all the prayers I whisper thee below.

Father, I wait—I would not ask to hasten,  
I know 'tis good to wait before thee here;  
I know the waiting will but still and chasten  
My soul to meet thee, when thou shalt appear.

Give me but patience, Father, and fresh hoping,  
Strength for the day, love for the cleaving pain;  
Make me remember even in my groping  
To live is Christ—to die, eternal gain.

ANNA SPRAGINS.

Guadalupe county, Texas.

## Communicated.

Flat Shoals, Ga., Oct. 24th, 1876

Brother Gold:—

I noticed a communication from brother Respass, in the LANDMARK, in reference to the Towlaga Association; also some remarks from yourself. It caused my mind to refer back to the history that Ezra gives of laying the foundation of the second temple, and also the union and fellowship that existed between the Towlaga Association and her sister Associations heretofore. He says:

"Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy."

I feel to thank God and take courage that the set time, as I hope, is near at hand when I will be permitted to meet and receive the Towlaga brethren as in days that are past. I feel to hope the Lord has enabled brother Respass to lay the foundation upon which the building will go up to the praise and glory of our blessed Jesus, who will have his people to be one. I would advise the brethren to read the history as given by Ezra in building the temple. Those things are for our learning and are profitable, and often afford comfort and consolation to the saints of God in their afflictions and trials they have

to meet in trying to serve and follow their Jesus. I have been intimate with the brethren of the Towlaga Association, and perhaps more so than many out of her bounds. I joined the Baptist church in her bounds five or six years before they withdrew from the Missionaries, which they did in the Fall of 1837. The next year they were constituted into an Association, having twenty churches or there about, (I speak from memory) and were called the Primitive Towlaga Association. I remained in her bounds until about the first of January 1860. I attended the most of her associations during that time and have attended the most of them since. In my removal I settled near them in the bounds of the Primitive Western Association and joined one of her churches.

If I remember correctly, in the year 1842, one of the churches of the Towlaga Association sent up a query to know how they should receive members coming from the Missionaries. The answer was, All that had joined them since the division should be received by experience and baptism: those before, by confession of faith. The advice was received, adopted and practiced by the churches until about 1860; then, I understand, some of the churches began to receive Missionaries without baptism. This was agitated among them several years before, and continued in strife and controversy until, I have learned, the most if not all receive Missionaries without baptism.

At their association in 1848, there was a query sent up from one of the churches asking advice with regard to receiving, holding and excluding Masons, &c. The answer given was not satisfactory to some of the Associations, and they tried to get her to reconsider her answer; failing to do so they dropped correspondence.

There were efforts made for several associations afterwards to have the question reconsidered, and on failing to do so all the Associations with whom she corresponded, stopped their correspondence. The churches previous to this denied the right to their members of joining and visiting the masonic lodges. Controversy and confusion got up among them until they suffered their membership to unite with Masons. And as Ezra says; "Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass."

A few years back they received into their body and united with a body of brethren claiming themselves to be the Ocmulgee Association, and claiming themselves to be Primitive Baptists in faith and practice, and who were a minority of the Ocmulgee Association, led off by Eld. T. Oxford in his opposition to the thirteenth