

BUTLER, TAYLOR COUNTY, GA., }
July 26th, 1870. }

MISS ELIZABETH E. WILLIAMS—
Dear Madam:—I am in receipt of your letter of 10th instant, which I have perused the second time with much interest. In answer to your letter, I will say, that while I sympathise with you and hope that I can also pray for you, yet I do feel that you are one of the highly favored of the Lord. You write to me of your youthful feelings and views, when you felt that you could enjoy much more pleasure in sin than religion could afford you. On the second page of your letter you state the circumstances of your first serious concern about your future state, in 1854. Since that time you have been greatly troubled on account of your sins, and say you have tried to live a holy life, but what you desire you cannot attain. You say that you have often prayed, or tried to pray, for mercy, but your prayers seemed unavailing, and you have sometimes thought to throw away all such exercises and think no more of these things, as you could not accomplish anything thereby. But again your troubles would come upon you, and your gloom would seem greater than ever; so that the necessity was upon you to call upon the Lord for mercy, and have desired that if your prayers could not be answered, that the Lord would hear and answer the prayers of christians in your behalf. Your tears, which I observed when I was in your country, while trying to shew the helpless state of sinners, and the abounding grace of God by which the poor and needy are comforted and everlastingly saved, together with the brief conversation I had with you at your father's house concerning your spiritual exercises, gives me the fullest assurance that what you have written to me is unfeigned. I have carefully observed every expression in your letter. After giving an account of your troubles, glooms, depression and praying for a space of sixteen years, (acknowledging some intervals of lightmindedness,) you in an affecting manner speak of God's goodness and forbearance towards you; though you say you are yet without a hope, and greatly fear sometimes that you will remain without a hope and die in your sins, but then again you say you have a little hope that peradventure the Lord will save you; and especially when you hear christians talk about their trou-

bles, you say they tell your feelings better than you could yourself. From the scope of your letter I feel to hope that you have received the gift of faith and hope, though your faith may be weak. I am aware, that there are some who have received a hope of pardon, and because they could not feel all the time as they did when first relieved, they were not disposed to acknowledge any hope. They find that they are yet sinners and cannot live as holy a life as they desire; they conclude that christians do not experience such temptations to sin as they often feel, and to which they may at times yield through weakness of the flesh. You need not look for a change of your fleshly nature, while you remain in this world. God in his word has said of you and me, and all the rest of Adam's sons and daughters, "the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up," &c. Isaiah 1, 5:6. Again, "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Jer. 17:9. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 8:7. Now madam, these sayings are true, not only of some, but of all the apostate race of Adam, and you need not expect that the Lord will manifest to you by his Spirit that you are any other or better creature than he has described you in his word. Now if you were ignorant of your wretched state by nature, so that you could boast yourself as the Pharisees do, then I should think that you were darkness still, but the self-loathing which you feel and express, the darkness, gloom and depression of spirit which you experience, are not evidences of a benighted state, but of a spiritual enlightenment, without which you never would have known how vile a sinner you are, nor would you ever been prepared to call upon the name of the Lord. Every time that you view yourself aright you will both see and feel that you are vile, that you are unworthy, guilty, lost, ruined and undone forever, without the pardoning mercy and grace of God. But now because there is nothing good in you, do you think there is not any thing good in Christ, or will you not trust in Christ except you can feel worthy of his mercy?

Do you not know that if you felt worthy, then you could not feel your need of Christ, and could not therefore call upon his name sincerely? Are you afraid to trust in Christ, and cast all your care upon him, because you are a sinner? If you were not a sinner, then you would have no need of Christ; and if Christ had not come into the world to save sinners, then he need not or would not come at all. But you feel like you are a very great sinner. So much the better for you, as you will feel the greater need of Christ, and be the less apt to trust any other. The thief who was crucified with Christ was a great sinner, and Saul likewise, with Mary, and the Gadarene. These were all great sinners; and even publicans and harlots shall enter the kingdom of heaven sooner than the Pharisee. Now would you feel worthy of Christ? If you did, you would be a Pharisee, and then you would reject Christ. Christ says, "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now I think from the scope of your letter, that you feel to be very poor in spirit, and as such the promise is applicable to you. Would you then feel rich? If you did, the kingdom of heaven is not promised to such. I am glad that I have often felt poor, wretched, vile and miserable beyond expression. True such feelings are not pleasant to us, but such experience shows as our need of Christ; prepares us to call upon him; shows us that none but Christ can pity or help our case. Moreover, by darkness, gloom and depression we are prepared to appreciate the love and mercy of God, when he is pleased to manifest to us his saving grace, which abounds more than our sins. Whatever may be your affliction of mind or body, as you read this imperfect letter, you may be sure that it would not be best for you to have more joy at present, for God has declared that all things work together for good to them that love him, who are the called according to his purpose. Perhaps you may have great fears that you are not one that loves God, or that has been called by his Spirit, but I hopefully believe that you do love the Lord, and that you have been called from death unto life, and from darkness to light, and if the Lord has not yet manifested his love to you, by giving you faith and hope in Christ, I trust, yea, I feel assured that you will ultimately realise a ful-

filment of that gracious promise, blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted, and that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. If the Lord has at any time given you peace, with a comfortable hope of pardon, remember we must live here by hope, and that which is seen is not hope. You need not expect to know that you are a saint, nor should you let fleshly weakness and imperfection hinder your trust in the Lord. Some christians cultivate a spirit of unbelief and distrust. This we should not do, but should be humble and thankful for just a little hope; and if we have a little, the readiest way to obtain more is to use what we have. This I would recommend you to do. If you have a little hope follow Christ in his ordinances as you are commanded, and your faith will be strengthened and your hope increased. I must now soon close this letter. I fear that what I have written will not be interesting to you. I have often thought of you since I saw you last, and especially since I received your letter, and I hope I have prayed for you. I know that I desire that the Lord should direct and comfort you and me and all of the poor and afflicted, and if I meet you no more in this world, may we be prepared in life for death, and for a happy reception at the right hand of God in that kingdom of glory where sin nor affliction cannot enter.

Very respectfully,

JOHN ROWE.

[From the Signs of the Times.]

PROVIDENCE, Fla., Aug. 21, 1870.

To EL.D. P. D. GOLD—*My Dear Brother:*—Having seen a communication from you to the "Biblical Recorder," and re-published in the "Signs of the Times," and your address not being given, I thought it meet to address you through the "Signs of the Times," as you have spoken things which I have seen and heard. Hence I think I can say that I have fellowship with you. I have several times been requested to give my reasons more fully than I did in a letter to brother Beebe, dated June 5, 1869; but I can say that for the same reasons as given by yourself, I have been deterred.—And I have found so much comfort to my soul in your communication, that I have been impressed to cast in my mite, by way of telling you that it was to me as cold water to the fevered brow. If I have r