

COMMUNICATED.

HAMILTON, October 8th 1873.
Elder P. D. Gold:—

DEAR BROTHER,—I have concluded under a feeling sense of my unworthiness to try and tell you and the readers of the LANDMARKS how I first came to fall in love with the Baptists. When I first grew up to manhood I read in the Bible that the wicked should be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God. This made me have serious thoughts, and I was also informed of the blessings of righteousness. Of course I did not wish to be lost when I died. I thought that it would not do for me to get religion, for I thought that I could do that when I got ready. I thought that when I became to be settled in life and had a family I would then get religion, which I thought consisted in praying, and doing good—and the Lord would save my soul for being good. Of course I was an Arminian, as all others in nature. At twenty-two years of age I was married and commenced keeping house but forgot my promise to my God. My business then was to take care of my family, which I tried to do and was very attentive to the things of this world. I wished to sell some land and concluded that I would go to Church on Sunday and see the man that was going to buy, and there make the bargain, as I did not wish to lose any time in the week. I went to Church and went in as usual—I did not think it right to be out at preaching time. The Preacher was Elder John H. Daniel, and though it has been thirty-five years since. The text was—"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God," &c., and there I became in deep distress. I did not think of selling the land any more then but came to the conclusion that some dreadful disease had seized me and that I was going to die. I then commenced thinking what would become of me in that condition. I very quickly concluded that I would pray and do the very best I could, and then the Lord would, for my good works and prayers, forgive my sins, and then I commenced in earnest, and then my disease seemed to get worse. I was fearful that I should not be prepared when death came. Of course you may know I worked in earnest, but every day of my life when night came I found there was something I had done wrong in thought, word or action, but have as often concluded that it should not be so the next day. This was the case for four long months—my condition growing worse and worse all the time. I tried to pray three times every day, and at the end of four months I thought my fate was sealed, for I fancied that I could not do what I first thought I could—then what to do I did not know. I had done what I could and my case was getting worse all the time. My burden was sin (for I have concluded since that was what was

the matter with me,) though I thought that it was a disease that would certainly kill me. One morning I arose from my bed and went to the woods, with as much as I could carry, as I thought. It seemed to me that I was bent down with a heavy load. When I got out of sight of every body I feel down upon my knees and asked the Lord, as best I could, to have mercy upon me, for I could do nothing for my poor distressed soul. I arose from my knees and started home with no relief.—While going home these words came to my mind—

Come humble sinners in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed
And make this last resolve.

The first thing I thought was that I was not touching the ground, and started to turn around to ascertain if I had made any tracks—and found that I had. I felt perfectly happy, and all things looked beautiful around me. I loved everybody, and the Baptists seemed nearer to me than all others—and they do to this very day. It was then four years before I joined the Church. I am comparing myself to one that Bunyan spoke of in his "Pilgrim's Progress." He said that he thought the man was afraid of his own shadow, and also said that he verily believed that he had the root of the matter at heart—it is sufficient for me. I would like to say something upon the duty of christians, as I have missed it so far. I have heard some say, the Lord's time is the right time. I'll tell you when I think the Lord's time is—after one has a hope in Christ—it is always from then as long as he lives. Christ says "If you love me keep my commandments, and you shall abide in my love," and again, "If you then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth—on the right hand of God." Hundreds of other scriptures prove the same things and my own experience also.

Brother Gold, I have been a very neglectful christian, if a christian at all, and if I could say anything to urge the young christians to do their duty it would well pay me for all the trouble and heart-burnings that I have had to encounter with since I have been hobbling along. I have been loving the Baptists, but whether I love them right or not God knows.

Your unworthy brother, in hope of eternal life,

ARCHIBALD STATON.

CHATHAM COUNTY, N. C.,
September 21st, 1873. }

Dear Brother Gold:—

I once more take my pen in hand to drop a few thoughts to you and the dear family of God, and if I should say anything to hurt your feelings, it will be an error of the head and not of the heart. As I have a desire to say something to the family of God, and feeling my unworthiness and nothingness, I sometimes feel like omitting it. We sometimes hear a brother or sister say, I

want to write some of my feelings but I fear somebody will say something about it. And sometimes we hear a person say, I would join the Church but somebody will say that I am not a christian. Christians will find many oppositions, and if we listen to what somebody says all the time we shall not do many duties that the Lord requires. Me thinks it best to hearken to what the Lord says "But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Heb. 13: 16. To the lay-members I will say, I hope you all will consider what the word of the Lord says concerning the ministry. Brethren, can you sit down in ease at home amidst plenty and never think of the preachers who labor for you in the gospel, and some leave a poor afflicted wife and children at home with scanty means, while necessity is laid upon him and the love of God calls him from home, leaving his wife to battle with the cares of life, and sometimes look after him thinking it will be the last time she will see him. In time how heart-rending a scene, while we lay-members can enjoy our people at home and think it hard to be separated from them a few days. I hope the Baptists will consider these things and arouse from slumber—woe to them that are at ease in Zion.—Let each one do his duty and not have the Minister burdened with all this, and have to write so much on the subject. You all have the Bible and can read, the most of you, and those that can't can get somebody to read for them. We are afraid that by giving a little of this world's goods—what profit is it to gain the whole world and lose our own salvation? What would you have given in the time of your distress about your sins—to have peace with God? Would you not have given this whole world had it been yours? Yea! doubtless the dear Saviour paid the debt on the Tree of the Cross, forgiving our sins. He calls the preacher of the gospel to preach glad tidings of peace, and causes us to minister to them of our carnal things, and we are not doing our duty if we don't obey. We should give of a ready mind. I see some difference in the views of the Baptists. Christians are all taught of the Lord. Do you think he teaches us differently on the same things? I think not? We should be careful to ask the Lord to teach us and if we ask in a right and acceptable manner he will teach us. I hope I desire the peace of the Lord among the Baptists and wish we could all be of one mind. I have as little use for hireling preachers as any person on the globe—there is a difference in a preacher of the gospel of Christ, and that of Anti-Christ. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children. Some times I think I weary the Baptists when I am talking with them, but my treasures I hope are among the people of God, and where

our treasures are there will our hearts be also. We are sorry to see the controversy between brother Denton and Parker. Let us all humble self a little more and ask the Lord to teach us for we all shall stand before the judgment seat where there is no division and strife. There is somebody wrong—we often hear a man preach and before we get home hear people passing sentence on the preaching before they have time to go to the word of the Lord and see whether he is supported by it or not. We should be careful to search the scriptures and take them for our guide. We should accept the truth and reject that which is not. Sometime it's the case that we are not prepared to hear as well as at other times—the fault is in us and not the preacher. It is easy to find fault when we give way to fault-finding. It is easy to fall into sin, because the adversary which is the Devil, is going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Christians have many strange trials. After I received a hope, for some time when I heard preaching my feelings would be tender, I could shed tears freely, but after a while I would sometimes have such a hard heart it seemed that preaching took no effect. The Devil persuaded me I had no religion; says he, you know if you had religion you would be melted down in tears, and then I became most miserable. I would try to get my burden back, thinking I could repent better next time. I went on in this way for some time mourning over a hard heart, until I believed I was no christian. When I heard preaching I would listen attentively to see if I could gather any more hope. It seemed that I had a little hope, but very little. I went to Deep Creek to the Association, and brother McDowell of Virginia was preaching, and when he began to describe the feelings and travels of a christian he said that they would get so hard-hearted at times that if any of their people were dead they would not shed a tear. He described my feelings better than I could have done, and before he was done I could have said that if he was a christian I was. I shall never forget that sermon while memory serves me. I will say to you, brother Hassell, the sermon the Lord preached through you (that was the introductory sermon at that place) is fresh in my mind to-night. It seems to me that the Lord preaches the same to me sometimes when I am at my work alone. I would like to see you and hear you preach again.

I would say to you, brother Gold, that your views on dram-drinking and dressing are mine. I would be glad if our Missionary friends would oppose dram-drinking more.

If you think this will do no harm give it a place in your "little messenger." Don't let it crowd out better communications.

My love to you, brother and sister Dameron, brother and sister Oakley,