

COMMUNICATED.

MAYSVILLE,
GREENE COUNTY, N. C.,
May 26th, 1873.

Dear Brother Gold:—

It has been on my mind for three years to write a part of what I hope the Lord has done for me. I will not say all that he has done, for I never shall be able to express it, much less to pen it down with ink. It is the Lord's will for me to be afflicted—and, oh! how just it is, and being almost lame in my left hand, today it came to me very forcibly that I could write with my right hand.—And so, while trying to look to the Lord to be my guide, I will endeavor to follow the impressions. I lived to be twenty years of age, which brought it to the date 1868—thinking all that time, and would often remark, that when I died I should be at rest—not caring anything at all for religion, for I was not partial to any but disdained the Old Baptist doctrine above any other, and said often that I would like their preaching better if they would leave out the experiences. I must write as my mind runs—right here comes in a text and I can't get around it. Paul says in his writings to the Corinthians, "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God—it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In the Fall of '69 along came two Old Baptists and preached at the Meadow—Elders Hall and Moore. My sister was on a visit to see me, and not as I cared anything about preaching I said to her, let's go to church that day, perhaps we would see Ma and other friends! Well, we went in the house and heard one sermon, and about half of Elder Hall's when we left the house, for I could not believe that it was the truth, for they went on to tell how a christian would feel, and I verily thought I was one, and I knew that I had never had any such feelings as they spoke of. But while we were sitting out at one corner of the house talking, out came a lady crying and looked to me like she was in more distress than she could bear. It was then that I thought that if I was only back in the house that I would be glad. But oh! it was too late, for the sermon was near to an end and so I went home having different thoughts from what I had ever had before, and thought I would go next day to White Oak—not to see and be seen as I had done; but to try and understand the preaching—and so it was, I went, and Elder Moore was nearly through preaching, but his text was this: "The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad"—and he preached the Christian Travel and I believe it was true. Elder Hall made the closing remarks and said he did not feel much like talking long, but there was a text on his mind and it was this: "Ye must be born again." But I was like Nicodemus, I thought, how could

these things be! and it put me to thinking of things that I had never thought of before. I believe they were men called and sent of God. I felt that a change must take place or I could not enter the kingdom of heaven. I did not know that either one of these texts was scripture, only by hearing them repeat it, for I had never read the Bible but very little, and it was a sealed and uninteresting book to me. Now, brother Hall told his hearers to read for themselves, and those that had eyes to see and hearts to understand would know whether he was telling the truth or not. It was then that I thought that if I could only be forgiven for what I had done I could live a perfect and a holy life, that I would read the Bible, sing hymns, quit joking, laughing, dancing, singing worldly songs, and then God would love me. But, oh! my troubles grew worse instead of better. It seemed to me that I was badly afflicted. It seemed to me for about two months that I should choke to death and sink under the heavy weight that I was laboring under. Oh, the trouble that I was in! I would try to pray but all seemed to do no good.—I thought that I was going deranged and would die. I knew I was in a strange condition. I tried to pass it off, but the more I tried the heavier it was. I finally came to the conclusion that I had the heart disease and told my companion that I was not long for this world, that death was staring me in the face. We wanted to go for the doctor, I told him that my desire was to sleep. I thought I was past all hope, but he without my knowledge went to one of the best physicians and stated my case, and he told him to carry me to see him. He came home and told me what he had done and I agreed to go, and the night before we were to start next morning—behold I had a dream and it was this: I thought I was in my old neighborhood in the woods where I have often roamed and plucked the flowers of the jessamines and lilies, and was in the thickest place I ever saw, and it was as dark as mid-night, and while there alone I heard a noise behind me, and I looked, and behold there was one of the most terrible-looking creatures I ever beheld, and of course I tried to get out, the briars and bushes would catch at my dress, and the terrible monster kept after me until I came to a very small stream and there I saw a light path which was about a half mile long, and at the end of it was a large house where one of my old friends lived, and when I stepped across the stream I was in that narrow path, though it looked dark all around, that path was light, and that frightful being followed me to the stream and no further, and I ran to the end of the path which lead to the house, and there sat the lord and lady looking as harmless as doves, and the lady looked upon me with an eye of pity, and exclaimed: Where

on earth have you started? My reply was: Oh, Mrs. ———, I have started to see Dr. ——— to see if he can't relieve me of this heaviness and choking! Said she; You need not go for he can't do you any good—and her words waked me up. I called my husband and told him that I should not go to see the physician that day for he could not do me any good. I did not go and so I have never been troubled with that choking since—but the pressure at heart still remained. Well I began to think by this time that it must be the Lord's work with me, and I was more miserable than ever for everything seemed to condemn me. I tried to plead for mercy, till at length in February, 1870, I was brought to the stand-still place at the end of the law. While in my room alone it seemed to me that all the sins I ever committed came before me and it was there I felt that I had blasphemed against the Holy Ghost in sluring the Old Primitive Baptists. And, oh, dear reader, who ever you may be, stop and think for a moment who is your keeper—it is God. If I am not deceived it was here that I felt that he was Lord of lords and King of kings. Oh! what a trying time it was with me. It was here I viewed him as a Savior—but not for me.—My cry had been, Lord, what shall I do? It was here I was stripped of my own dependence and done all that I could do and no good thing had I ever done. Oh! dear brothers and sisters, is this not a trying time with a poor justly condemned sinner to feel that he has not a friend on earth nor in heaven, and that you are forsaken by all living creatures? It was here that I said: Oh, wretched sinner that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? I felt that he had all power and that none could hinder him, he was able to deliver me, but I thought that I had committed the unpardonable sin.—Oh! I had meddled with God's word when it did not concern me, and oh, dear reader! I will say to you to-day if you don't know anything about God's word, if he has never revealed himself to you, you had better not trifle. For the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—I John, 1: 14. I thought it was just in God to send my soul to destruction. The breathings of my soul were—Father, I have sinned, but oh! forgive Lord, have mercy on me, save or I perish. Yes, I prayed to God to give me a praying spirit. I saw without God I could do nothing. Right here a new love sprang up within me toward Primitive Baptists. Oh! how I wanted to see and hear them relate their experience—but it seemed that I was in a distant land—but I begged the Lord to enable me to trust in him. I was made to say, not my will be done—but thine, oh! God. Yes, I was made to say, Lord I am willing to suffer all the afflic-

tions you see fit to send upon me for the sake of being crowned with an everlasting crown. I remained in this condition from about the hour of 4 P. M., until the hour of 10 A. M., without God or hope—when lo! these words rushed through my mind: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. In a moment I thought if ever a poor sinner hungered and thirsted it was I. It seemed to relieve me for a short time and then here came my troubles again. I thought it was all imaginary feelings, but my desire was to go to preaching and hear them talk. Well, I followed every impression and I found I could witness with them and they with me, but my distress was still great which it seemed that I had thought that none of them had.—Oh, it appeared that my case was an outside one, and so I was brought along seemingly having more thoughts and crosses than any one else, until May following, when I believe, and hope that the Lord sent one of his chosen vessels around again which was A. N. Hall. I then thought it was one of the greatest sermons I ever heard delivered. The text was this: And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. It seemed that he told me of every thought I had ever had—nothing was left out. It was then I could lay hold of the promises and exclaim with one of old, that the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad. The Lord is my helper and I will not fear. I went home rejoicing within myself, saying: Bless the Lord, oh, my soul! Yes, he found me in a desert land, dead in sin in the wilderness and miry clay. And I hope he has carried me about in paths not known, and instructed and led me forth by the right way. Up to this time I tried to keep all my thoughts and distresses hid, even from my husband, for he has often asked me what was the matter when I would be groaning and sighing over sin. And my answer would be—nothing! It was then I did not care, for I wanted everybody to know my feelings. It was then I felt happy and wanted to depart from this world of sin and be with Jesus, who knew no sin. It was then I could sing the new song: "Jerusalem, my happy home,"—oh, how I long for thee. Very soon the doubts and fears began to arise, for I saw I could not live the life I wanted to, for when I would do good evil was present—though I was led along through the Summer very well satisfied, sometimes thinking I wanted to be baptized—and in October I was in a dark room one night and saw the moon shine and thought it was the brightest I ever saw, and in the twinkling of an eye something seemed to whisper in my ear with force, Let your light so shine! Here I was aroused again—in a few minutes I thought it was my duty to be baptized. Ah! here my troubles began.