

## Communicated.

ROCKY MOUNT, N. C., March 1874.

To the Primitive Baptist Brethren and Sisters, and, to all who love to read the contents of Zion's Landmarks:—

Feelings much concerned and impressed under the great, glorious and precious cause for which we are professing—the great plan of the redemption and salvation of our poor souls, I desire to express through the LANDMARKS some of my experience and views in regard to this great and divinely-sustained matter in my own and feeble way. I will, in the beginning, try to communicate a portion of my experience on this matter: I suppose that at about the age of thirteen or fourteen years, I became very much concerned about my soul's interest.— I began to consider and wonder to myself—what will become of my soul when I die? I know I must die and what will become of me? I know I am a sinner and I must begin to do better, so that, when I die, I will go to heaven. I was led along this path for some considerable period of time, trying to improve and reform myself, imagining that I was going to work out my own salvation, and that I would practice none but good deeds, and that by so doing and persisting in the same course, I would work myself up in the favor of God, and would therefore be all right in the sight of God, but do you suppose I succeeded? Nay! but was wandering, I believe, still further off—at least it seemed so to me. It appears to me that the more I strive and exerted myself to get out of that dreadful pit of miry clay the deeper I sank. It appears to me that I was only being bewildered away down the road of perdition: I gradually grew worse and worse. I gradually became affrighted, so much so that it prevented my repose and sleeping of nights. I have been many a night aroused up badly excited, could not tell what was the difficulty with me and called to mother to awake and set up with me, for I was in a strange condition. Brethren, the carnal or fleshly answer would be that I was in an awful condition; but, I sincerely confided that it was the operation of the Spirit in my heart which was God's purpose, that it should result in my eternal, great and spiritual good, and not only so, but an everlasting inheritance in heaven for poor me. However, I passed along that gloomy road, until one night I was advancing in an Easterly direction and there proceeded out of the East a most brilliant flash of lightning succeeded by a mighty crashing peal of thunder: the lightning I believe represented the light and glory and beauty of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and the thunder, the mighty, omnipotent power of God Almighty, our heavenly Father. I could not account for it then, though I know it was the most mysterious dream

that I had ever witnessed or even thought of—though being spoken to me or presented to my mind at the very instant of the dream that the lightning was Christ and that the thundering was God the Father. For, (to make this still plainer) as the lightning proceeded out of the East, directly towards me, as I was going that way, a voice came to me saying: The lightning is Christ, and the thunder is God the Father. Such a monstrous view as this if it was in a dream gave me much concern. I thereafter felt a little relief but soon began to relapse, though I waded through tribulation, sorrow and grief, bowed down under a heavy weight of humiliation, depression and mourning on account of my sins and poor helpless condition in regard to my soul's salvation—as I had begun to discover them in this time with no impressions at all to unite with any church for three or four years. Finally I removed from Nash County wherein I was raised, to Stantonsburg, Wilson County, and while residing there, I from some source received impressions to join the church. Under these impressions, and without any deliberations of the matter, and imagining that I would be better contented in the church, joined the Free-Will Baptist church, still imagining amidst all my sorrow, grief and troubles, that I must assist in working out my own salvation. I will and I must do thus, and so to be saved, still adhering to the law of Moses for grace and the saving of my soul by my own righteousness—not depending upon the law of Christ or upon his fulfillment of the law for grace and salvation from whence it all flows. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."—That is therefore the fountain from which all our righteousness and goodness flows if there is any in us at all. It flows from God into our hearts and there prevails in us, therefore all goodness and righteousness is of the Lord, and not of man in any part of it. But, in regard to my uniting with the Free-Will institution, I very soon, I think, began to find myself greatly bewildered. I think that I soon found that there was no validity nor confirmation in freewillism, that it was in my view of the matter established and erected upon a sandy foundation, and therefore began to think that it was a tent of religion that could not stand the storm that genuine spiritually regenerated christians most need to "Stand up against and endure." Yea! I got in the wrong pew and I certainly was distressed and miserable by means of my connection with the society as long as I was with them. Wherefore, I tell you my brethren, I believe sincerely that I was brought to discover that if my dependence, and that the security of my poor soul rested upon me or upon my own freewill, that I was plunged into everlasting woe. But, oh! I thank God

that I believe my heavenly Father, that I have been brought to view a better and far more exceedingly glorious plan—a plan which ever has and ever will stand against all the ravages and storms to which it is subject by its foes—a plan against which all the satirical powers combined in all creation cannot prevail.—Amen! This is, I sincerely trust, the plan that has been shown to me by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, a plan which was prepared and predestinated in the full knowledge of an All-wise and All-powerful God before he commanded the world into existence, even in covenant with Jesus Christ the only begotten Son, that he should (that is the Son should) be made (or born) of a woman, made under the law; yea! take upon himself a body of flesh which should suffer, bleed and die (in the flesh) to redeem them that were under the law. Yea! the above mentioned plan prearranged by the great God-Head in the Trinity, before the foundation of the world, is the plan which I trust has been spiritually shown to me for the grace and salvation of poor mourning souls who are under a heavy burden mourning to know the way to heaven. Yea! this is the plan which I sincerely believe and trust and feel in my own experience is revealed to all true returning prodigals, who have been brought to discover their lost and ruined condition, their own vileness and depravity, their own fleshly and carnal lusts, strifes, envy and all manner of evil abiding in their own bosoms, all who have been made to feel and witness the effect of God's word wherein he declares emphatically that the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. I now feel that this is the plan which shows us all our weakness and imbecility and in every matter which causes us to feel as the poor Publican did on the occasion of the Pharisee and the Publican—when the self-righteous Pharisee advanced a great display of his own pretended religion, thanked God that he did many good deeds, and that he was better than other people; and, that he was not as that poor Publican was, &c. While the poor, poverty-stricken Publican (I believe) could only smite his own bosom—calling on the Lord, in the language—Lord, be merciful to me a sinner! He had been brought to see his sins, and vile, corrupt and penniless condition, and made to beg for mercy: while the Pharisee was ever vaunting over his own righteousness and great deeds. Oh! is not every poor soul when arrested by the Spirit's power, and commanded to turn right about from the downward road of abominations and the general persecutions of the Lord or his glorious name brought right down to the same condition that that poor Publican was in, and made to cry to the Lord for mercy? Yea! every one that is called by the Lord is made to cry to

the Lord to be merciful to him a sinner—I believe; and, I don't believe any one does until then, in spirit in truth and in deed! In regard to the language of the Pharisee, I will quote the language of our blessed Saviour himself. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, which are likened unto whited sepulchres which appear outwardly all beautiful and comely, but inwardly full of dead men's bones and uncleanness." And not only this, but we find that he pronounces many woes against them because of their pharisaical religion and self-righteousness and external religion where there is none internally. Oh! brethren, there is almost an incessant examination going on in my bosom, endeavoring to search out the secret recesses therein. There is a general research progressing within my bosom inquiring about myself, asking myself is there any such principles within me as the Pharisees contain, which Jesus Christ our Lord so demonstratively denounces, praying to my Lord that if there is such principles in me to cast them down to the very last particle as far from me as it is from the East to the West. But, oh! I hope that there is no such in me; but, trusting in and depending upon God our heavenly Father for all my supplies both temporal and spiritual, feeling my poor, helpless, wretched and undone condition, and that without him I can do nothing, not even naturally what I believe to be the condition of every one that is killed to the law of sin and self.—Yea! when sin revives in us, when our sins and transgressions are developed and hid before our eyes spiritually then we die, die to the love of sin, then it is that we can begin to discover our own imperfections, wretchedness, vileness, lasciviousness, depravity and all manner of evil, probably we can see within ourselves, full of wounds bruises and putrifying sores from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.—What is the matter now? I am in a horrible pit of miry clay and no chance to get out, though the poor soul will begin to make effort to climb out, but every step he attempts to make sinks him deeper in the mire. What shall I do? I will flee to the law for my next resort, which commands me to do thus and so, and not to do thus and so. May be I can find relief there. He flees to it which he begins to investigate, but does he find any protection or relief here? Nay! but every clause and every word condemns him. Oh! I have been violating all this all my life, I have been practicing all my life just what this declares I shall not do. Oh! what shall I do? it is impossible to fulfill this holy law. I transgressed it away back in old father Adam, now what am I to do? No means of escape, I now stand condemned under this law. I am subject to its vengeance because I have already transgressed it, and therefore must be tried and judged in the great