

LOUISA, ALA., July 30, 1875.

Dear Brethren and Sisters.—

**H**AVE been thinking for a long time that I would write some of my travels, what I think the Lord has done for my poor soul, and since I have been taking the LANDMARKS I have thought I would write a few sketches and it might be that my mind would feel at ease.

I know I can not write as interesting as I have read in the LANDMARKS, but of a little lent little is expected. The first thing that made me think of death was when my mother died. I was eleven years old the day she lay a corpse. My father came to me and said, "Darcas, what will we do, we have got no mother now." I replied, I don't know unless we go too. And then these thoughts were pressed on my mind: you are not prepared to die. Overpowered by these thoughts I began to cry; thinking I had no mother and not prepared to die, and go with her. So I thought I would pray; thinking if I prayed I would get religion without any trouble.

At times I would go off to myself and, as I thought, I would pray a very good prayer: I would say to myself, I can pray nearly as good as Mr. Britton. Sometimes I would pray for all my brothers and sisters, for I wanted them to go too.

I went on this way about three years; but at last I got so I could not pray, I could only say Lord, have mercy on me a sinner; for indeed I felt like I was one of the worst, and that I was going to die, and if I died I could never go where my mother was. I would go off to myself, and think, I will get on my knees and pray right, and when I would try to get down on my knees I would lie down and hide my face; I could not get on my knees, I felt like it would be a sin for me to get on my knees and make a mock of good people; that was the way they prayed. So I could not pray anywhere. It seemed like my prayers would not rise above my head. Instead of rising it seemed like they went into the ground. I would get up and go away and think I would go away and think I would never try to pray again, but the more I tried to keep from it the harder I would find myself trying.

The first time I ever went up to be prayed for I was, as well as I remember, about fourteen years of age, I gave Elder Britton my hand. He went home with father that day: when I went in the house he called me his girl. I thought he said that because I went up to be prayed for. I thought I would never go up again. I thought he was a good man and I wanted him to pray for me: I knew he would do it if I would ask him to. It was some time before I went to be prayed for. I remained in this condition for a long time—sometimes wishing I had died when young; but then would think that I was not prepared to die. Often when I would go to preaching the preacher would get to telling his troubles, and he would tell mine so plain that I wondered how he knew my feelings so well—I thought he was preaching to me. I thought then I would never

go to preaching again for it seemed to do me no good; but when the time came for preaching I would want to go as bad as ever. I heard father say on one occasion: That he didn't think he would live to see any of his children join the Church. Then aunt Darcas Hearn said

"That while the lamp holds out to burn,  
The vilest sinner may return."

I thought I never could bear the thought of his dying—and not one of his children in the Church. If I was only a christian I would be willing to go with him—but instead of a christian I was a sinner. I was in great trouble, and how to extricate myself I knew not. The more I tried to pray the worse I got. I continued in this condition until I was eighteen years of age.

When alone one day (I don't know what I was thinking about,) I found myself singing these words:

"I can but perish if I go;  
I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away, I know,  
I must forever die."

I do not know how long I had been singing when I came to myself. I was at Darcas Hearn's, and I went in the house and asked her if she knew the first of that song. She got the hymn book and read it to me. I could not help crying. I felt like I wanted to continue singing, for my burden was gone. I wanted to tell her of it, but she did not ask me what was the matter; and, if she had asked me I could not have told her. I began to study where to go. To the Church? No, it did not mean that! I wondered what was the matter: the burden I had was gone and I felt that I wanted to praise the Lord. I thought if I was a christian I would never have any doubts. I wanted to know that I was a christian without doubt; but after a while I was willing to take it as I could get it. I would think I was deceived: and if it was of God what made me doubt? I loved the things I once hated and hated the things I once loved. I love christian people and wanted to be with them; but, oh! I am not fit—I know I am not as good as they are.

One month before I was baptized there was one that joined and I wanted to go then and tell the Church how I felt—but I had never told any one, and thought if I went without telling father he would be mad with me—so, I did not go. I was in great trouble: I wanted my father to know how I felt, and find out what he thought was best for me to do; for I put a great deal of trust in him.

When I lay down that night I asked the Lord to show me, in a dream, my duty. That night I dreamed I was baptized. Next morning when I awoke I thought if I lived until the next meeting I would go. Before meeting time one of my old comrades spent the night with me: At supper my brother and step-brother were telling how sinners felt. They went to meeting and left my comrade and self to finish the conversation: so we talked on until I told more than I can ever tell again. Father was gone that night, so I told my step-mother and she told father.

Everything was fresh to me that night.

Shortly after this there was a three days meeting: on Friday I went with father: I wanted him to question me but he never mentioned the subject. Saturday morning he asked me if I was going to join the Church that day, and said if I was, he would send for sister "Mat." I told him I was not fit to join the Church. His reply was: If you wait till you are fit you will never join. That day there were a great many at meeting: I thought they went there to hear me talk to the Church; so I would not go, but when the time came, and the door of the Church was open several went forward. I thought I would not go, but after a while I found myself there; but, I thought, everybody there would think I learned what I had to tell from the rest. But when I got through telling they gave the right-hand of fellowship. I can never describe my feelings. I was baptized the next day by Elder E. Britton. Since then I have had doubts, trials and temptations, and often think I am a miserable wretch, and wonder if anybody has confidence in me, when I have so little in myself. Like one alone I seem to be. Oh! is there any one like me?

This is a brief sketch of the trials of your poor unworthy sister, if one at all. I would to God that I was gifted with language and scribe enough to tell you half my feelings since I was first brought to know God in the pardon of my sins.

I want all the brethren and sisters to remember me in their prayers.

I feel unworthy to subscribe myself your sister,

DARCAS P. CARTER.

TOISNOT, N. C.,

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

**H**AVE often thought that I would write some of my feelings for the columns of your highly esteemed paper, ZION'S LANDMARKS, though often shrink at the task, feeling my unworthiness and imperfections; though as I read your paper I am much comforted.

I will endeavor to write a portion of what I hope to be the dealings of the Lord with my poor soul.

When about fifteen years of age I was taken very ill, and all thought I was going to die, and thought so myself; for part of the family had died from the same disease.

One night while I was so sick I had a dream, I never have forgot it. I dreamed that an angel came and carried me to heaven, and I saw God and Christ, and I thought that I ask God to make me well again, and thought that God gave me to the same angel and he brought me back and put me down at Union, Uppertown Creek Church. I thought that all the Old Baptists were there, and all the Methodists were there too; and I thought that a Baptist Minister took all the Methodists and tied them up in bundles and smote them on the head and sent them away, and then all the Old Baptists were permitted to go in the Church, and I was permitted to go in with them, and I awoke, and when I did I told my mother I

had been to heaven, and told her my dream. From that time I began to get better until I got well.

Well, as time glided on, my dream got dull, but never forgotten. I had another dream: I dreamed that the world was coming to an end, and to be burnt up, and I thought that father and myself were standing at the foot of a ladder, and where the top reached I could not see; but old Jacob saw the top, he said it reached to heaven, and he saw the angels ascending and descending on it. I could not see the top; but I thought father and I looked to the East and saw the whole world on fire. I thought I was frightened very badly and I thought I looked at father and told him to pray for us, and I thought he said to me, "don't be frightened for Christ is before the fire;" and I looked towards the fire again, and I saw a man coming before it up in the element, and he had on a long robe and a staff in his hand, and as the fire came Christ came until it got nearly to us, and then Christ took the staff that he held in his hand and struck the fire and it divided and past on both sides. I thought I felt the heat some but not very much. I then awoke and was troubled for a long time, but did not let any one know it. Weeks, months and years passed and I ceased to be troubled, and grew up to manhood, and the late war came on and I had to go. While in the war I had many serious hours over my future destiny, and had many serious meditations. What would become me? I read the Bible every chance I got, and tried to do all the good I could, and thought after a while that I was good, notwithstanding I dreaded to die; but thought I had done so good God would save me anyhow. When we were going in a battle I would pray and be as good as I could. The war ceased and I was spared to get home, though I was badly wounded in my right shoulder breaking it to pieces very badly so that I am not able to do all kinds of work. When I got home I thought I was out of danger; I threw away all my religion and went in sin worse than ever, though often I had serious thoughts on my future destiny, and thought I would get religion again when I got old, though it was not the wish of my parents, for I was raised by strict Baptist parents; but going to the war and being with so many sorts of people I thought I could get religion at my own option; for I thought I had got it once, and could get it again; for I often prayed to the Lord to spare me until I got home, and that he did; so I thought I could get religion when I got ready.

I went on in this way until eighteen seventy three. There were three deaths in our family, two of my sisters, and a little girl, one of my sister's children that my parents took to raise. Though all died it did not seem to hurt me much until the last died, that was my oldest sister, that seemed to hurt me very badly. I thought more of her than of the rest of my sisters. She did not die at home, and I went after her to bring her home to have her buried; but when I got where she died she was already buried; so I had to come