

it was my duty to join them; I know-  
ed that if I did I should have to lay  
my Masonry aside. But I could do  
better than that, says something;  
"you can visit the lodge and the  
Baptists will not know it." But that  
was worse; that carries fraud with  
it. I could not practice a fraud on  
such people—"Inasmuch as ye have  
done it unto one of the least of these  
my little ones, ye have done it unto  
me." Now look at God, who is in-  
finite in wisdom, knowing all things,  
even before they take place, and who  
is so good and so gracious to you.—  
Then I could look back to that Bethel  
spot, and feel his revealing power to  
save. But I was not a fit subject for  
the church. While in this frame of  
doubts and fears, one of the fairest  
and mildest men I ever saw appear-  
ed to approach me in a dream, but  
with a frown on his brow, and asked  
me, with a sharp tone of voice, "Why  
stand ye here all the day idle? go ye also  
into the vineyard." The tempter tries  
to take advantage of the quotation,  
and tries to annex pay to it, but avail-  
ed nothing with me, for I knew  
I should deserve nothing if I went  
into His vineyard, for He had already  
done more for me than I could pay  
for, even on the do and live plan.  
My doubts as to its being my duty to  
go into His vineyard did appear to  
a great extent, but a load of un-  
worthiness seems to take its place  
almost equal in weight to the one of  
guilt and condemnation in Georgia  
that I carried for several months;  
when another dream appeared, and  
in it a robe of righteousness let down  
near me, which was mine. I sprang  
to catch it and it was pulled up from  
me, and a voice saying, "not yet."  
I awoke in the effort of catching at  
the robe, and scarcely slept any more  
that night. The load of unworthi-  
ness left me to some extent, though  
I yet felt unworthy of the place I  
occupy and the mercies I am daily  
receiving at His hand, and also of  
the friendship and esteem of my  
brethren which they seem to force on  
me. But the effect of my last vision;  
as time rolled on duty was made  
plainer, my visits to the lodge more  
seldom, the whippings from Elder  
Brittain in his preaching; and he  
could bind up his bruises on me with  
the sweet promises in the gospel, and  
make me rejoice in such a God and  
such a plan of salvation, devised in  
infinite wisdom before time begun,  
and embraced subjects without worth  
or merit of their own. I lived five

or six years in this condition, going  
to the church all the time, but could  
not open my mouth in conference.  
During this time I often saw, as I  
thought, God's judgments following  
me for my disobedience—wife and  
children sick for my disobedience—  
and would promise to go to the  
church if God would restore health,  
but would fail to go. Finally one  
of the heaviest judgments that God  
ever sent on a poor wretch seized my  
mind. I cannot speak plainly on  
this judgment, but I come to my  
senses one day and prayed Him to  
remove it and I would go to the  
church. It was done, and I went to  
the church and was received 1st of  
June, 1861. But back, I had re-  
solved never to visit the lodge any  
more, whether received by the church  
or not, but have no persecution to  
wage against it, nor no fellowship for  
it in a church capacity. It has  
served as a link in God's providence  
to open my eyes to see what it is and  
what the church is. (Here is an un-  
limited field.) But baptism, what a  
load to see people coming to see un-  
worthy me baptized—so heavy that  
I asked God that if it was my duty  
to be baptized to remove the load,  
which he done to my gratification and  
satisfaction. I there, in the act of  
going into the water, lost my load  
again, which has not returned yet.  
Before it left I viewed the water more  
impure than other streams, because  
that was my own mill pond, and would  
rather have walked several miles to  
some other stream; but when the  
load left my mind I was willing that  
that should be the place. My brother,  
that act then and there was, and will  
be to the end of time, the grandest  
degree conferred by the grandest  
lodge ever assembled on earth.

These are the reasons, as I said at  
the start, I would give for having a  
name with the Primitive Baptists.—  
Are they the feelings of those in  
Carolina and Georgia? I am igno-  
rant and unworthy, but be it as it  
may, I have strong hope of realizing  
that blessed immortality beyond the  
grave.

Yours, &c.,

J. E. HARDIE.

TERRELL COUNTY, GA., }  
July 22, 1869. }

Brother Bodenhamer:—From cir-  
cumstances and opinions recently of-  
fered upon *fasting* as a christian duty,  
and as my opinion has been asked, I  
have concluded to give my views  
through the Landmarks, however

scattering they may be, if you will  
permit. The first record we find in  
the Bible of fasting is in Judges, 20th  
chapter 26th verse. Israel went to  
war with Benjamin, their brother;  
they asked of God who should go up  
first against Benjamin: God told  
Judea. They went up and were  
smitten with a loss of twenty-two  
thousand men. Israel was filled with  
sorrow and wept, and asked of God  
whether they should go again to bat-  
tle against Benjamin, their brother.  
God told them to go again and they  
went, and were beaten again with a  
loss of eighteen thousand men. Israel  
was now overwhelmed with sorrow  
and perplexity. They went again  
into the house of God and wept, and  
sat before the Lord and *fasted* till  
evening, and offered burnt offerings  
and peace offerings. God told them  
to go again and Benjamin should be  
delivered into their hands. Thus it  
seems to me this devotion was ac-  
cepted of the Lord. Their condition  
was peculiarly distressing. The next  
record we find is in I. Samuel, 7th  
chapter 6th verse. Israel in this  
case was also in great distress. They  
drew water and poured it out before  
the Lord and fasted and acknowl-  
edged their sins. This seems like-  
wise to have been accepted of the Lord.  
The third record is in same book, 31st  
chapter 13th verse, and was attended  
to under great sorrow. The fourth  
is in II. Samuel, 1st chapter 12th  
verse. It does not appear that these  
last fasts were offensive to the Lord,  
though not avowedly accepted of Him.  
The fifth is David fasting for his  
child, which was evidently not ac-  
cepted of the Lord. (II. Sam. 12:  
16.) It is clear that in all these  
cases fasting was a voluntary act, and  
not performed or attended to under  
a command from God. The next fast  
was under command of Jezebel in  
Ahab's name, and was proclaimed and  
ordered to commit murder and take  
innocent blood. (See I. Kings, 21:  
9.) Fasting, then, seems to be a  
voluntary act, brought into exercise  
under peculiar distress, into which  
Israel perhaps was more liable to fall  
than other nations. It being accepted  
of the Lord, is doubtless a favor and  
a privilege granted in deep distress  
under peculiar trouble. The ques-  
tion arises, is it a duty binding on  
the believer? It seems to me it is,  
because a favor from God obliges the  
christian or recipient to accept and  
observe it, especially as the believer  
is exhorted or encouraged so to do.

This exhortation we find in Joel, 1,  
14:2-12, and our Saviour encourages  
us in Matthew, 6:16-18, and the duty  
is implied in answer to the Pharisees  
when he says, how can the children  
of the bride chamber fast while the  
bridegroom is with them, but the days  
will come when the bridegroom shall  
be taken from them, in those days  
shall they fast. The apostles and  
early believers in the church fasted.  
(See Acts, 13:1-3, and 14:23-2, Cor.  
6:5 and 11:27.) The christian is yet  
liable to those peculiar distresses,  
therefore the obligation is yet bind-  
ing. We now come to the point be-  
fore us, is the duty of fasting so con-  
nected with the ordination of a min-  
ister that the ordination would be in-  
valid without fasting of the church  
and presbytery? My opinion is, it  
is not so connected, and first because  
fasting to be acceptable must be vol-  
untary, arising under peculiar dis-  
tress, and second the Scripture ex-  
amples bearing upon the subject does  
not seem so to imply it according to  
my understanding. The first clause  
touching the case is in Acts, 13:3.  
The church at Corinth was attending  
to fasting, and it is said "as they  
ministered to the Lord and fasted  
the Holy Ghost said separate me,  
Barnabas and Saul, for the work  
whereunto I have called them, and  
*when* they had fasted and prayed and  
laid their hands on them they sent  
them away." Here it seems to me  
the fast was being attended to prior  
to the work of ordination, and not  
in connection with it as part of it.  
The second case is in Acts, 14:23.  
It is said "and *when* they had or-  
dained them elders in every church  
and prayed with fasting, they com-  
mended them to the Lord on whom they  
believed." In this case the ordain-  
ing of Elders and praying and fast-  
ing seems to be duties performed and  
mentioned as going before their being  
commended to the Lord, and the or-  
dination seems to stand before pray-  
ing and fasting. And further, if  
fasting is part of the work of ordi-  
nation there must be a command for  
it, and that I have never been able  
to see. Thus, while I believe fasting  
to be a christian duty, it becomes a  
duty from the privilege granted by a  
gracious benefactor, and does not  
arise under a command, and when  
performed aright it must be volun-  
tary, and arises under deep distress.  
I do not conceive that it destroys any  
other any more than prayer, hence  
ordination of a minister may be per-