

WOODSDALE, PERSON CO., N. C.,
June 30th, 1868.

Dear Brother Bodenhamer:—After passing through a great deal of trouble and affliction, I have concluded to write some of my experience, in order that when I am gone, my family, brethren, sisters, friends and foes, may know some of the dealings of my blessed Redeemer with me, while in a state of mortality. I have had two experiences in my past life; one in the flesh, the other in the Spirit, one of the Law, the other of the Gospel.

I was born of the flesh, May the 8th, 1816, was the fourth child my father raised; he (being a preacher) was absent from home the greater part of his time. I was raised to work in the week, but spent the Sabbaths in various ways of sporting; I rolled sin as a sweet morsel under my tongue, believing I could get religion when ever I would do my part, God would do his, and thereby, I could become a christian. About the time I was fifteen or sixteen years old, there came a preacher to my father's; he preached there and in the neighborhood several weeks; he told the people about the punishment of the damned in hell, and how to do to get religion. So I concluded I would get religion, and not go to that bad place he talked so much about; I commenced the work, as I thought; would fast, and try to pray; but I did not know what a great sinner I was, for I had never seen myself. I went on for one week, trying to get religion, and thought I was getting on very well. I went to preaching on Sunday, took my seat near the preacher and paid strict attention. After preaching I got in company with my playmates, and left off seeking religion; thought when I was grown and settled, I would then seek religion. Thus I went on in sin, worse than ever; I went on in that way until I was twenty-two years old. About that time, there came on a camp meeting in the neighborhood, which caused a great excitement among the people. I attended the meeting. There were a great many mourners; some singing, some praying and shouting, and some talking to the mourners. It caused me to feel very solemn, indeed I took my seat some piece from their straw pen altar. One of the preachers came to me, told me my father was going to heaven, but I would go to hell if I did not repent; told me to go in the altar and get religion. I

went in; he talked to me a great deal, said if I did not repent, I would certainly go down to hell; and that aroused my feelings so much that I cried freely. I remained there until intermission, then they went out to dinner, but I went to the woods, to pray. I remained there until the evening sermon came on. The preacher said to the sinners, to come in the altar and get religion; and I went in again; could cry freely; I remained there until sundown; then, there seemed to be good feelings going over me, and I could not cry any more; I did not know, whether that was religion or not. One of the preachers came to me, and asked me several questions, but I gave him no answer. At first he told me he was my friend, and I ought to answer his questions. He asked me if I felt as bad as I had felt? I told him I did not; he then told me to get up, I had religion: I got up, and it was soon reported in the congregation, that Andrew Hall had professed religion. They drew down my name, as one of their converts. I remained there all night; the next morning I went home, and stayed two days; but I could not feel as I thought a christian felt, so I went back to the meeting again. About the first man I met, after my arrival, was the preacher who told me I had religion; when I met him, I burst into tears and told him I had no religion; he said they all doubted their religion at first; my reply was, that I did not think I had any; he told me to go back in the altar as a mourner. It was soon reported over the camp ground, that I had come back doubting my religion. Several came around me, instructing me how to do; said when they commenced singing, I must join them, and if any one got happy, I must take hold of them, and that would cause me to get happy. I was willing to receive their instructions, as I believed that preachers knew all about the Scriptures, and what it took to constitute a christian. So I sung with them, became animated, and felt much better; I remained there until the meeting closed, and went home from there, believing I was a christian. Several months after, I offered to the Baptist church at Enoe, Orange county, N. C. When I related my experience, they did not ask me any questions, but received me into fellowship. I was baptized the next Sunday, which was the 3d Sunday in October, 1838. I remained

very well satisfied, the most of my time, until the next June. One day, while thinking of my condition, and how happy I would be when I died, something seemed to say within me, "No flesh can be justified that occupies the ground you do." There was a touch at my heart, which I had never felt before, for I felt condemned before the Lord, so much that I could not look up towards heaven.— I went on from Wednesday until Sunday, feeling more wretched and guilty before the Lord. I went to meeting on Sunday, but I felt like I was such a sinner before the Lord, that I wanted to go off to myself to try to pray. When the people went in the house, I went down the road, then turned through a field, in order to get out of sight, that I might pray to the Lord to have mercy on me a poor sinner. When I stopped, I cannot tell whether I knelt or fell down, for there was a power came over me, that I had no more power to resist than the shining of the sun; and there was a light, which seemed to shine from heaven, and in that light I saw the Lord; He seemed to be twenty-five or thirty feet from the earth; and in the same light I saw the judgment seat; I saw the dead stand before the Lord; His power seemed to draw a line of distinction between the righteous and the wicked; and I saw but few on his right hand, only a remnant according to the election of grace; but on His left hand I saw a large multitude, with myself; I saw a large book opened, and in that book I saw my sins recorded; and the Lord seemed to look down on me in wrath and indignation, for my sins; I tried to hide my face from His presence, but could not; I saw that I was destitute of the wedding garment, the robe of righteousness; I saw that I never had any religion, but had been a poor deceived soul, and all that I had ever done in a religious way was nothing but sin and abomination in His sight; I thought that I heard the King say: "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" I thought that I was bound hand and foot, and I saw it just in the Lord to send me to hell; and about the time I thought he was going to cast me down to Satan, to be tormented forever, I said, Lord it is just! After I saw and felt these things, the Lord seemed to withdraw himself from me, and I got up and stood on my feet;

I was astonished with great astonishment for the things which I had seen and felt. This took place on the second Sunday in June, 1839. I was about one mile from home, and when I got so that I could walk, I went home, for I did not want to see any one; I went up into the granary loft and remained there until nearly night, thinking about the things which I had seen and felt that day, and trying to read the Scriptures, to see if there was any way for me to escape the wrath to come; I begged the Lord to spare me until I could repent, for I saw I was such a sinner, I was afraid he would kill me and send me to hell. I went on in this way, trying to repent. One night I thought I should die before day; I felt that all my days had been spent in sinning against God; I had professed religion, and thought that I was a christian; I saw that I was only a poor deceived soul; that I had suffered myself to be deceived by false leaders, that I had not taken the warning which the Lord had given, when He said, "Take heed lest any man deceive you," and I was without excuse. O! dear reader, my tongue can never express, nor my pen describe, the awful feelings and views I had of myself; it seemed to me I was just on the brink of endless woe; it seemed to me I felt the pains of hell in my breast; I expected to soon be with the rich man in hell; I was so much distressed that I could not rest anywhere; I walked the yard, and wished that I was a dog, then I would have no soul; after some time in this way, I went in the house and felt some better; I lay down and went to sleep. I went on trying to keep the law; I would read the conditional promises in the old covenant, and try to keep them, for I could see no other way by which I could be saved; thus I went on, doing all I could to keep the law, but failed in every point; I saw the law was perfect, and required perfect obedience of me, while I saw myself defiled in every part; my whole head was sick, my whole heart faint, from the sole of my foot even unto my head there was no soundness, but full of wounds, bruises and putrifying sores; I saw that I was an unclean thing, that all my righteousness was as filthy rags; it seemed to me that I was under the very power and dominion of sin, and that it was a sin for me to eat and drink; all that I said, thought or done, in some way seemed to be sin. I was afraid that I had committed