

WILLIAMSTON, N. C. }  
May 22nd, 1869. }

ELDER L. I. BODENHAMER—*Dear Brother*:—In compliance with the forcible impressions of my mind, I now venture in the depths of humility to address you.

Since you have erected a standard in defence of the truth, and often requested your brethren and sisters to contribute to its columns, I feel constrained to cast in my little mite. I am sensibly aware of my inability to pen anything to the edification of your worthy readers, but would that I could wield the pen of a ready writer, and clearly show forth the praises of Him, who *I do trust*, has called me out of darkness into his marvellous light. The God of our adoration is perfect love and wisdom, who says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." I feel, dear brother, that it is this spiritual and holy love of Christ in my soul, now prompts me to the pleasing duty of uniting with the beloved brethren and sisters in magnifying the righteousness of Christ, testifying that salvation is of the Lord, and

"To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him Lord of all."

Surely we are of few days and full of trouble. In the midst of life we are in death; disease ever preying on our tenements of clay, subjecting them to the fell destroyer.—Sensibly aware that this is our state; oh! that we might ever live with a direct reference to eternity, as those who have no abiding city here, but seek one which hath foundation, whose builder is God; that whenever the messenger cometh, we may with rapture receive the welcome message: "Child, your Father calls, come home," and be found clothed in the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, having our lamps trimmed and burning, prepared to enter the marriage supper of the Lamb, and go no more out forever. May we spend and be spent to the praise of him who has done such great things for us, whereof we ought to be glad. Oh! that we may ever adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, with meekness and humility, remembering the injunction: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." May we ever be diligent in business, fervent in

spirit, serving the Lord, and count all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Vanity of vanities; all is vanity, and most truly,

"Solid joys, and lasting treasure,  
None but Zion's children know."

Precious thought!

"Be the living God my friend,  
Then my bliss shall never end."

Tongue nor pen cannot portray the riches and glories of the grace of our God, whom we desire to love, serve, honor and adore.

"Oh! what can be compared to Him,  
Who died upon the tree?  
This is my dear, delightful theme,  
That Jesus died for me."

Verily, this is matchless love and wondrous condescension, that He who was rich, became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. He, who has all power in heaven and on earth, endured the ignominious death of the cross, that his vile and bitter enemies might live forever. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Truly he is a friend above all others.—None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. He killeth to the love of sin, and maketh alive to the love of holiness. He exalts the humble beggar at His footstool, to a king and priest to God. He extricates the lost and undone from the horrible pit, and miry clay, and sets their feet upon the Rock of eternal ages, establishing their goings forth in the Lord. He so loveth his enemies, as to make them heirs of God, and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and eternal in the heavens. He causeth the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and henceforth to believe and rejoice in the glories of salvation by grace, through our crucified and arisen Saviour. He cleanseth the polluted in his own precious blood, and clotheth them with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. He turneth their mourning into singing, putting a new song in their mouths, even praises unto our God. He feedeth the hungry with the bread of eternal life, and causeth the thirsty to drink from the waters of salvation. He enableth the lost and ready to perish to stand accepted before God, calling him "Abba Father," through the righteousness of his Son, and will finally bring them off more than

conquerors, over death, hell and the grave, to praise His name forever. While in nature's darkness, clothed in human righteousness, trusting in man whose breath is in his nostrils; alive in nature, but dead to all spiritual things, in trespasses and sins; delighting in the way of the transgressor, Jesus indeed appears as a root out of dry ground, entirely void of form and comeliness. But when the Holy Spirit pierces the soul with the keen arrows of convicting grace, calling it from death to life; as the natural sun emerges from the thick darkness of night, dawning and ascending from behind the eastern horizon, until it cheers all nature with its rays; thus the glorious light of the Son of righteousness gradually penetrates the dark recesses of the soul, increasing in brilliancy, revealing unknown truths to his astonished vision, that his heart is clothed with the blackest dye of sin within and without; low sunk in a horrible pit, which continually casts up mire and dirt, justly deserving and expecting nought but utter banishment from that God, in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forever more. He is now enabled to see the worthlessness of human righteousness, and feel, "That the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" And "cursed is man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm;" and with that contrite spirit which alone is acceptable in the sight of God, exclaims in the anguish of his soul, "Lord have mercy on my poor soul! Lord save or I perish!" Just here, when all the boasted worth of human righteousness, merit and faith, which he feigned to perform correctly and zealously, and exercise abundantly, are beheld as nought but filthy rags and tinkling cymbals, without form and void; realizing that there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can redeem the poor soul or give to God a ransom, save his well beloved Son, who died once for all, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life; he is enabled to realize that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; that Jesus is no longer uncomely and undesirable, but contrariwise, verily the chiefest

amongst ten thousand and altogether lovely. The poor soul now feels that I have none in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee. He loves God because he first loved him, and trusts he has brought him nigh by the blood of the everlasting covenant. He loves those who are begotten of God, and desires with all his soul to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, that the remnant of his days may be spent to the praise of his grace, who was exalted a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins: who has made him a free man in Christ Jesus, and living man in Jerusalem, with joy to range the fields of gospel grace, and partake of the rich fruits which it continually yields, and drink from that fountain which eternal ages never quench.

The soul redeemed not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, without spot and without wrinkle, indeed feels to exclaim with Ruth: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Verily, we must declare great and marvellous are thy works Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways thou King of saints. He is a God of power, justice, purpose, truth and love, and will do all his pleasure. He is the perfection of Beauty, the Prince of peace to his redeemed children, but a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity. He alone can sustain us while passing through the furnace of affliction, enabling us to rejoice in tribulation, with the spirit and the understanding. In him alone, is refuge to be found from the peltings of the pitiless storms of life, which oft threaten to submerge our frail barks, while crossing the ocean of life. He can inspire the soul with that ecstatic joy, serene peace, and true comfort, which is a foretaste of the christian's home in heaven; with which, although a faint conception, there is nought on earth to compare.

To the preceding unconnected remarks, dear Brother, I trust, if not deceived, I am a living witness; realizing that Christ is my all in all.