

agreeable morning, and I was afraid there would be but a very few, and I felt like I wanted the whole world, if it could have been possible, to be there. This was another change, for every time I would think about being baptized publicly, I would think: O, if something would only happen! I prayed that I might get very sick, so I could be baptized privately. But, thank the good Lord, all that pride was taken away; for several days I was perfectly happy. One night during the first week I awoke from sleep and began to think about all of father's friends, and thought if I had them all together that I would shake hands with each one of them, and tell them what I thought the Lord had done for my poor soul. I was enjoying the thought just as much so as I would have done if it had been real, until this thought crossed my mind, You have deceived enough, I think you ought to be satisfied. From that moment until day I never was in so much trouble; death was preferable, in fact, I thought I would get up and butt my brains out against the wall—but the good Lord kept me from doing it. The next morning, as soon as I got my breakfast, I went to Elder Hassell's and told sister Hassell I had deceived the Church and intended to have my name taken off the book. She persuaded me not to do any such thing. I staid all day with her and a miserable one it was; but towards night it passed off, tho' I was not satisfied.

Soon after this Elder Vanmeter was to preach to several of our Churches, and I looked forward with much pleasure. He did not visit Williamston, so I made my arrangements to get home in time to hear him, but failed to do it. The day he was to preach here at night I prayed to the Lord, if I had had a change to make it manifest to me in some way. I soon dropped off to sleep and dreamed that I was at cousin John Hynman's, up stairs in a room, looking over some old books; in one of them I found a photograph with paper fastened over it so no one could tell who it was. I soon removed the paper and found it to be a picture of a child. Pretty soon I discovered life in it. I laid it down and she (it was a girl,) reached her hand and took a potato that was near her, and began to eat it very greedily. I began to think how strange it was, that this child should be stewed away and no one knew she was alive. While thinking of it I awoke and began to think what a strange thing it was, but could not make out what it meant.

The next morning I said to myself: Well, Elder Vanmeter has filled his appointments, and I could not get to hear him; I wonder why it is that I want to hear preaching so much more than I ever did before? Then it seemed that some one spoke and said, You are like that child you dreamed of last night; you have been dead, but now you are alive; you were blind, but now you see; now you are hungering and thirsting after the bread of life, which is the gospel.

Brother Gold, this is but a dream, but it has afforded me a great deal of

comfort. I do not know that there is any evidence in this that I have had a change. One evidence I am satisfied I have is, the love for the brethren.

I attended the Baltimore and Delaware Associations last Spring. I never saw but one familiar face while I was gone—that was Judge Biggs, who accompanied me from Norfolk, Va.,—and can say, with a truth, I never met with kinder friends and more brotherly love in my life. I had thought I never could love any ministers like I did ours; but, I can say, and tell the truth, that those I met while gone I have the same love and feel just as anxious to see them as if had known them all my life; and am sure I enjoyed their preaching and received as much comfort as I ever did from any I ever heard.—The only thing I regret is, I could not attend them all.

Brother Gold, I could write more about my trip, but think I have already taxed your patience.

I hope you and all the dear brethren will pray for me, that I may be led and directed by the Holy Spirit.

Affectionately,
Your Sister in Christ,
S. H. R.

Speight's Bridge, Green County, N. C.,
June 23rd, 1876.

Brother Gold:—

I have been long confined at home, and seldom feel able to attend Church—I have to get most of my spiritual food from the many sweet communications published in your messenger (ZION'S LANDMARK,) and the Primitive Baptist, published at Raleigh, N. C. They are a great comfort to me in my afflicted state of health. If I cannot attend meetings, I can read with comfort those many sweet communications published in both of said papers.

Brother Gold, from reading a paper called *The Watch Tower*, published at Kinston, N. C., and from conversing with some of its advocates, I have concluded to write a short article for publication in your paper—if you think proper, after reading it and correcting all mistakes. If I know anything of my feelings, I wish to write from a spirit of love to all of God's people, whether in or out of the Church. I believe good people are all one in Christ, let them be where they will.

This paper I speak of, in writing to our friend Hern, says:

"Speak your mind, Hern, as it might serve to hasten the time when the Lord's people will be one."

Now, if the Lord's people are not one, united in love by grace freely given, I am at a loss what I believe. They may be in different denominations here; but the Lord knows them in the Church and out of it.—And the different Churches here never can unite while the world has its Church and the fashions to suit, and to please human nature. But, the Lord's people are a poor and afflicted people: they are not of the world, therefore they are spoken evil of; but thank God, none of these things move me from what I believe. If all the denominations of this world were to unite, in denying revealed

religion I would still stand firm in the faith that God is a Spirit and that he reveals his Spirit to whom he will.—It is from this belief that God has, in his mercy, revealed things to me, which gives me all the hope I have.

Up to this great day of men's wisdom, they can even alter the Bible to suit them, by changing the word from *baptized* to "dipping." I suppose both of the terms mean to be buried. So, I prefer the word as it reads, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized, and Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." So, I can see no use in saying he was dipped. Both words mean about the same thing. But let us hold to it as it has been for generations: he (Christ) was baptised by John in the River Jordan—not in a cistern, nor in any other way than the way the word teaches.

Another article in the *Watch Tower* I wish to notice, and that is, where it speaks of gospel success, where it says:

"There is a decided improvement over former Baptist usage."

I suppose it is a decided improvement to suit the world. The candidates for Baptism were not called on to relate any experience, but simply made a profession of their faith in Christ; not a word said about the pardon of sin—but a simple trust in Jesus. The world, and all that ever heard of Jesus, in my opinion, would believe in that simple trust in Jesus. It is natural for the world to have

I will now stop mixing the world by nature and the true Church of Christ, in this short letter, and write of what I have been taught by grace, revealed to me of the plan of salvation, if I have not been deceived; not revealed by man's wisdom, but by the revealed word of God—to my poor, helpless soul. And when, I believe, from all my soul, it was by revelation and all the hope I have; and, take that hope from me, if it was possible, and I would feel that all my prospects for heaven would be to an end. But thank God, while I write (tho' very feeble to-day,) something seems to whisper internally: Write on! But what shall I write?

I will now, if the Lord will, give some of my travails from an earthly state of my life to the time I felt the Lord precious to my soul: When I was quite small I felt that I wanted to be happy when I died, and often tried to recommend myself in God's favor, by trying to pray, until I was quite noted to some of the arminian churches. It went on in this until I was married, when I said to my wife, Now let us get religion and join the Church. We both attended a revival at a Methodist meeting for several days, when I found out that I could do nothing, and my wife was the same way—so we finally stopped going.

Some months after this I became very much troubled about something but could not tell what it was. I said nothing to my wife about my condition. She would often ask, What is the matter? I would say, Not much of anything. But, at the same time would be asking God to have mercy on me. I felt a load of trouble—all a secret from my wife and everybody else. I grew worse for several months, when, one night I felt that I would die with trouble.—I left the house and concealed myself in a secret place and tried to pray; I fell down on my knees but could not even ask the Lord to have mercy on

me. I got up and went back to the house and found my wife sitting up waiting for me. I undressed and went to bed and placed my hands across my breast and gave myself up to the will of God, with this resolve: Lord, I can do nothing—Thy will be done, O, God! I cannot say that I was awake or asleep, but it appeared to me as plain as if I had seen it with my natural eyes—the three-one God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all in one; all moved together in the salvation of my soul and spake, Thy sins are forgiven thee! I thought I could see the justice in God to forgive sin for Christ's sake. I wanted to go to a Primitive Baptist preacher that night and tell how happy I felt. I told my wife about it, but told her not to say anything about it to any person. I fear I was deceived and wanted a brighter evidence, but have never received other evidence for the hope I have.

Now, brethren and sisters, if I am worthy to call you by that name, I must say in conclusion, I went forward April 2nd, 1844, and related what I hope the Lord had done for me, and was received a member of the Church at New Chapel, Wayne County, N. C. I have had many troubles and trials to encounter in my pilgrimage; but brethren, while I write I feel that the time is near at hand, when I will have to bid all adieu in this world of trouble.

May God be with us all and direct us in the right way, is my prayer.
S. P. Cox.

ELDER RESPESS--ASSOCIATIONS

The Staunton River Association met in August, Pittsylvania Co., Va. This county is blessed with a number of Baptists, incorruptable in morals, simple in manners, sound in faith, and modest in deportment. Such are the salt of the earth. A wise resolution was adopted—to have Union meetings. There are some churches in that Association very destitute of preachers, and the Union meetings, when held in these destitute sections, will open a door or give an opportunity for preaching in such places.—A disposition on the part of our preaching brethren to go in regions beyond and preach is manifested in many instances. They are not sent by boards or Associations, but, having a readiness of mind to preach, they go from an inward impression. This is a good work and I hope it may still go on and increase.

Elder J. R. Respass, of Ga., a gifted, humble and precious brother, visited this Association and preached, much to the joy and comfort of the people.

The Country Line Association followed and was attended by an immense assemblage of orderly people. I do not think I have ever seen so many people at one time disposed to hear preaching. Many precious brethren are in this Association.

The Abbots Creek Association met near Salisbury. It was composed of a well-behaved assemblage of men and brethren.

Elder Respass also visited these two Associations, and was a great comfort to the brethren. A goodly number of preachers besides him attended all these Associations also, but none others so far from home. The meetings were delightful at all places, and many were the kindnesses our brethren and friends showed us.—With pleasure brother Respass remembers these meetings and the kindness shown him. As for myself I had the double pleasure of his company and the delight of attending the Associations. Thanks to the Lord for precious brethren, and thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift of Jesus.—[Ed.]