

CORRESPONDENCE.

PAULPIETERSBURG, Natal,
April 13th, 1905.

Dear Friends,—“Dig deep ditches in your hearts that ye may be a blessing to others.” These words were ringing in my ears as I awoke last Monday night. I had dreamed that I opened my Bible to 1 John 4 and 1 and found these words written. In my dream they had seemed so wonderful and full of meaning. They were, I thought, a text from which I was to preach on the following Wednesday, or rather teach the few who now manage to get to our Wednesday class. I say the few, as now the gardens of Amabele are beginning to ripen, and from about three weeks ago until after harvest, in April and May, the natives are, the say “bound by birds” which “desire to finish the gardens.” And what they say is true, as with the sun rise, come large flocks of little birds for a breakfast of Amabele. But the tireless watchers are there before them. Rain or shine, they must be at their post, sling in hand, and there remain shouting, whistling and slinging stones until sunset, when the birds go to rest. The birds are really educated, as when a watcher sees a flock coming, he gives a whistle, loud and shrill and the birds turn in their course and pass by. The watching is done mostly by women and girls, but often boys and even men will take their turn, as this grain is to make their beer and must be guarded. And also the work being a lazy one is rather to their liking.

But to return to our text; how are ditches to be dug in our hearts, and in what way are they a means of blessing to others? Our text is, of course, not Scripture, but it is truly scriptural. Jesus said, “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (Jno. 7:38) and rivers do not flow just any where, they always have channels in which they course. In the following verse is the explanation, “This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him, should receive for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Not long after this the promise was really fulfilled: Jesus “being by the right hand of God exalted, and having of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost” poured out upon his waiting disciples that which was to be as rivers of living water, flowing out from them to bless others.

When we have our tropical down pours in this hilly country, the water rushes with such volume and force, as to make for itself great “dongas” as they are called. Our farm, Balmoral, is thus cut by about a mile of such ditches, some as deep as forty feet. In a way similar to this to continue our figure, the mighty coming of this Heavenly freshet of living water into our narrow souls must make room—must cut for itself new channels through which it may flow onward to bless and refresh others. Accordingly we find (1 Cor. 12:7) that “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; . . . to another the word of knowledge; . . . to another faith; . . . to another gifts of healing; . . . to another prophecy.” But the ditches that I am most deeply impressed with at this time are the ones that must be dug. We have noticed just now, the super natural ones, those not previously possessed by the individuals in question.

Then there is a second class of channels, our natural or acquired talents. God says to each of us, “What is that in thine hand? We reply, ‘Only the ability to sin, or to teach, or to play a musical instrument or some insignificant talent—Lord, I have but one talent, not two or five like many others.’ Yet remember that God chooses what is little esteemed among men to be channels of over flowing blessing. The crooked stick that Moses held in his hand—what could it do? Nothing. But used as God directed it was a means or channel of some of the mightiest miracles this world has ever witnessed. We, of ourselves, beloved, can do nothing, but we can be channels.

Let us now notice a third class of channels that must be dug if we are to be much of a blessing to others. And these are dug by trials.

Why should a loving, all powerful God permit trials and suffering to come upon His obedient children? Many of us can in part, answer this question. Yet I know

a man who has said that the reason he is not a christian is because he can not see that it was right for God to so afflict Job. One of the reasons, beloved, that Father sends or permits trials come to upon us, is that new channels of blessing may be formed within us, “that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort where with we our selves are comforted of God.” (2 Cor. 1:3, 4.) Mrs. L. D. Osborn, of the missionary Training Institute, once said to us students, “I never knew a worker greatly used of God, who had not sometime in his life passed through severe trials—trials that had cut deeply into the affections of the heart.”

Do we mean it, when we pray, “Lord make me a blessing?” Then why draw back, when, to answer this prayer, Father sends along His workmen to dig another new channel in our hearts through which luring waters may flow. The picks may be sharp and the stone sledges heavy, and when the fire blasting begins we do not always find it easy to “rejoice in tribulation.” But God’s word is plain on this subject. We can not doubt but what the God, who is love, sees that every stroke is needed to make us the blessing He desires.

Do you think that the book of Psalms would be the blessing it is, and ever has been to the church of Christ, if David had not toiled as a shepherd had; had not met the bear, the lion, the giant; had not fled for his life from the merciless hand of the backslidden Saul; had not known the wrath of enemies and the treachery of false friends? No, it was in these circumstances that the Psalmist came to know God, and when he wrote it was what he had learned from experience. It may be well if we remember as we find our hearts refreshed in reading some Psalm, that trials and afflictions cut the channels through which these rivers of living water flow.

Even the captain of our salvation was made “perfect through suffering.” Yes, it is boldly written of Him (Heb. 2:10, 14-18 and 4:15, 16.) that His life in the flesh, so filled with trial, temptations and suffering is what has fitted the God man for His priestly office where He now ever liveth to make intercession for us. “He knows, Oh, yes, my Jesus knows.” No night so dark but His voice is heard. “Lo I am with you.” No road so rough and thorny but “He hath tried this way before thee and the glory lingers near.”

And when upon Calvary He hung bleeding for you and me, and that heart of love was pierced, “forthwith came there out blood and water”—a river in whose crimson tide alone is pardon and purity. We weep, and adore Him, but must recognize that the greatest blessing of man kind flows from the suffering and death of our now risen Lord.

Yes, He arose and “being by the right hand of God exalted,” continues to “pour out the gift of the Holy Ghost” . . . on the Gentiles.” (Acts 10:45) He is all and in all; the source of power; the fountain of blessing. But in this dispensation, He works through human instrumentality, pours the luring water through the channels of our souls. And the channels, beloved, must be kept open by our diligence. Should we neglect prayer and the reading of the word, will these channels remain open. No. The avenues of our spiritual nature become clogged and we gradually cease to be a blessing. At the Durban harbor the old dredger must keep digging or the channel through which the ships enter soon becomes shallow. We too, must keep digging and if we would go deep, much must be done upon our knees.

So long as we are in this world there is danger of worldly elements becoming a sediment in river beds of our hearts. Such materials as receiving honor one from another laying up treasure here below, doubts, fears, anxious thoughts, cares of this life, deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things are apt to get in and settle to the bottom.

We remember the failure of the disciples to cast out a certain devil (Matt. 17:14-21). Then came the disciples of Jesus, apart and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief. . . . Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. The lesson for us is this: would we know the fullness of power, we too

must pray and fast. The word, fast, though generally meaning to abstain from food, has a wider meaning even in Scripture. See (Is. 48:3-12) we are to abstain from all appearance of evil—all that may grieve the Holy Spirit. Our eyes may not look upon that which our hearts should not desire. John Bunyan writes of Christian and Faithful going through Vanity Fair thus; “But that which did not a little amuse merchandisers was, that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears and cry, ‘Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,’ and look upward signifying that their trade or traffic was in heaven.”

Our ears must abstain from listening to that which would be wrong for us to think upon.

Our talk—let us pray with David, “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips” (Ps 14:3)

Our natural appetites must not be given a free run, says Mr. R. A. Torrey. I do not believe that any man can lead a luxurious life, over indulge his natural appetites, indulge extensively in dainties, and enjoy the fullness of God’s power.”

I need not mention things so apparent as disobedience to the known will of God, as it is the little particles that generally get in unnoticed and cause the trouble.

If we would be a blessing, if we would know “the hope of His calling” we must pray and fast, and welcome trials that come to dig new channels.

Yours in His service,
H. C. SANDERS.

PAULPIETERSBURG, Natal,
South Africa, April 3rd, 1905.

Dear Friends,—“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” We find the above text so true in our work here. Tis often they whom we least expected who are the first to turn to Jesus.

small indeed as so few come to church and class but we know the reason and do the very best we can for those who come. Our strong hold is giving them God’s word and tis very encouraging and refreshing to listen while the many texts are being recited. Some seem quicker to learn them than others but every Christian knows some and quite a few have learned well all we have taught them. In this way even those who have not yet learned to read can give out God’s own word to those with whom they talk and give the reason for the hope within their breasts in Jesus’ words.

I have written of u Nomasouta, my kitchen girl, she seems especially gifted in applying scripture. Most of her prayers are full of the texts she has learned or the truths they express. I think she surpasses all the others in this gift and seems to be the promise of a worker for God by this means. Recently we learned she did not want to be sent home but to stay with us until after reaping anyway. If she was sent home they would send her to match in the gardens and not allow her to come to our meetings. She told Faith and Paul she knew she was a great trial to me and was afraid I would cease to have patience with her and send her home but if I did she would cry and be very sad for she wanted to stay so she could learn to read and attend meetings.

When Dr. Sanders first called her to work for us her father did not like it and came to see about it. He told him “I do not want her to believe.” Dr. replied “I have not the power to make people believe.” However he consented to her coming but cautioned her not to believe. She said “In my heart I danced for joy but when my father asked me if I was going to believe I deceived him and told him no.” As she left the kraal one of her

father’s wives called out a good-bye and asked her if she was going to believe she replied “Yes, but don’t you tell father.” This old woman never did tell the father. Some time after she began praying her father came to plow for us and calling her to one side asked “Have you believed yet?” She replied “No,” to which he added “That is right I don’t want you to believe. Several weeks passed away when he again plowed a piece for us and found her dressed. This greatly angered him and the following conversation took place. “Here you are dressed, have you believed?” “Yes.” Then I am going to kill you indeed, “I am not afraid, you can only kill the body you cannot kill my soul.” An older brother when he heard his father ask her “Have you believed?” and her answer said “why father what did you bring her to the teacher for?” As much as to say “you are more to blame than she.”

Poor old man! Only a few years more to live any way and still fighting God. I say fighting God because he began to follow Jesus when a young man but backslid. Now he says “Every believer in my kraal must get out as I will not have one in it. Accordingly a married son and his wife, three other young men and this girl have got to find homes of their own in the near future. Also one wife of this man says as soon as her son moves out and builds her a house she will also believe. So the work is spreading in spite of the opposition of this poor old sinner. O a little opposition does not hurt us it only causes others to see the truth.

Yours in His service,
E. SANDERS.

BEALS, Maine, May 10th 1905.

Dear Highway,—I am reminded by my calendar to write you again. As the time draws near for our Alliance and Camp meetings at Beulah and Riverside our into plan and action. We know we are among a great host who are already looking forward to Beulah, N. B. or Riverside Me., with increasing interest. After the hard fought battles against sin and the devil during the past year it is an inspiration to us to ascend, at least once or twice a year, up the mount of transfiguration and get a view of our blessed glorified Lord, and Saviour. Precious, indeed, have been the many seasons of comfort and heavenly consolation which we have enjoyed with our glorious risen Lord, in the grand company of God’s saved and sanctified children. With them we have wept, with them we have rejoiced; and often upon our knees in bowed submission of spirit and the breathings of humble prayer upon our waiting and longing hearts, we have been softened and subdued and melted by the Holy Spirit into a complete oneness of thought and feeling and purpose. Aye, Beulah and Riverside means more to a great many of us than merely the social greetings of kind friends. It means being brought into a holy and spiritual contact with the presence of God, with the presence and power and fullness of the Blessed Holy Spirit,—a contact and a touch and fellowship that humbles our human ambitions, and exalts our glorious risen Christ in our hearts and makes Him the center and object of all our affections and all our energies. And we need just such spiritual help and just such divine upliftings and anointing to fit us up to march victoriously along the common highway of christian duty.

Shall we have them? Shall we put ourselves down before the Lord when these refreshings from heaven will fall upon us? To will is to have,—to deny ourselves and to consecrate is to possess the fullness of His Spirit. No lack in God’s power or willingness. The responsibility for leanness of soul rests with us alone. Shall we remain lean and weak, when God’s power is near by to make us strong. Aye, let us with one hearty full consent say, “We will let the great boundless tide of His love fill our souls.” Amen.

Well, Praise the Lord forever. Our

testimony is, we are enjoying salvation. It is a good thing to possess. Having nothing so far as the world goes yet, we can say with Paul, “possessing all things.” My, what a wealth of salvation one can have. Yes, we may be “rich in faith.” Glory. We are more than satisfied in Jesus.

We wish to say that in regard to our work here, we have had a strong invitation to remain with this church another year. We have accepted the invitation on conditions, which the church is now considering. We hope and pray for a united rally in all the work before us as a church. May God in all things be glorified.

A. L. BUBAR.

PENTECOSTAL, Collegiate Institute

No Scituate R. I. April 29th 1905.

Dear Editor,—I feel led to write you a few lines in regard to my where abouts and doings, feeling it may be of interest to some of our friends. As you will notice my companion and I are still at the Institute, and the past months although freighted with clouds and disappointments together with many trials have all proven blessings to us, and to day we stand rejoicing, “On the victory side. I have done all my studying for Jesus, he has blessed me and hath given me the desire of my heart. But I feel thankful to say that not alone in my studies have I been successful but also in preaching the glorious Gospel of salvation from all sin. Bless His name forever.

After I had been here for a few months that great desire to do some active work for the Master seized me. I began to inquire of the Lord where it was I should work. A number of the students had preaching places and occasionally I had the opportunity of supplying for them. At last the spirit of the Lord led me to the village of South Scituate, a distance of four miles from the school, I went, told them the Lord had sent me to them, and they received me. I preached to them the message God gave me, then returned home. I was invited back so I kept going until I saw there was a division, some wanted me and some did not. Not caring to cause a division I

mile from this church is another, which had been closed for over two years. After much prayer and consideration I found the owner, asked permission to preach in that church; but was met with a strong refusal. I urged with him and I found all his excuses were easily overthrown but still he refused to let me in. I then said, well, I must hold the meetings. I will hold them in the private houses. This seemed to please him and he said “If you do and are successful I will help you all I can. I then tried to get the people to let me have the meetings in their houses, but they all had excuses, and it looked pretty dark. When I thought of a plan. I went to the manager once again and said, I have a proposition to make. The people all claim their houses are too small and want the meetings in the church. Now what I want to suggest is, let me have a week of special meetings, and if there is good done why let them continue. If not I will withdraw and say no more. It was satisfactory and I at once began to advertise and make ready for the special meetings, which took place from March 29th to April 6th. Much to their surprise there was a good sized congregation out the first night and they kept increasing all through to the end. Three souls found pardon and a number strengthened or reclaimed. At the close of the meeting I had the privilege of organizing a Sunday school, and now we have four classes and an average attendance of about thirty five, a Thursday night prayer meeting, and a Sunday night service. Truly the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad. It was all in answer to prayer. “Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts.” I am rejoicing in a mighty saviour, a mighty redeemer and a mighty deliverer. Oh glory to His precious name. I can never praise Him enough for the marvelous way he has led me the past year. Old things have past away and all things have become new. Summer, hath taken the place of winter, life the place of death, and I mean to tell the world far and near what a wonderful saviour I have found. He saved me just now from all sin, the past is under the blood and I am trusting in Him.

I remain your brother in Christ,
P. LAWSON COSMAN.