

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

P. O. Hartland,
Via Paulpietersburg, Natal
So. Africa, Aug. 26, 1918.

Dear Highway:

Last Sunday was the second time I have crossed the Pongola in the vain effort to get a certain couple married. You will remember that in one of my former letters I spoke of their willingness to wait for the publication of bans, so they might save a license fee of \$2.50.

This time I was informed that all the necessary papers had been secured, and nothing stood in the way of the long-delayed union. The bride and her company were late in arriving, so I had to push matters in order to have time for a religious service.

At last the discussions were silenced, and the people were gathered in a suitable place for an open-air meeting. Let me act on the splendid suggestion of Brother H. Mullen and give an outline of my sermon. The subject of course was marriage as a scriptural type of the union between Christ and His Church. The lesson read was Eph. 5:22-33.

I. The bride to be yields to his wooing.

II. The fitting of herself to really become the Heavenly Bride.

III. Fellowship.

IV. Work.

V. Protection.

VI. Provision.

VII. A home.

To make one's point strong there must be scripture texts, while illustrations are the windows that let the light in. For thought I. such texts as Matt. 11:28-30, Rev. 3:20, Isa. 57:1 & 2, while a preacher may illustrate from his own experience in wooing. Second thought must include cleansing and filling, see lesson and I. Cor. 12:13. Holiness preachers will find difficulty in getting beyond this glorious and sacred heading before their half hour or whole hour has expired. The subject of fellowship is nicely illustrated in Gen. 3:8. The Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day to hold communion with the first Bride and Groom. And naught but sin can separate us from Him. Rom. 8:38 and 39 and break our fellowship.

IV. Work. To enforce this important Church in vital fellowship with Him is thought we may notice Rev. 22:17 and Matt. 25:40, "Inasmuch." The healthy always a working and growing institution.

Protection and Provision—Psa. 23. The Shepherd Psalm. It is a law of nature that the bridegroom provide for and protect the bride. It was here I explained how and why Mother Eve was taken, not from the man's head or foot but side probably near the heart.

I compared their treatment of the wife with ours, and told them what we would think if we saw our women doing all the manual labour while the men attended beer drinks or lay about the kraal by the month doing nothing. "This," I said, is due to the wrong customs among you which Christianity will, in time, change, until you provide for and protect your wives as we British do ours."

Lastly the home—I go to prepare a place for you and . . . I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:2 and 3.)

For illustration I took our Samueli who is soon to be married. This year he has only got time to build a native grass hut but expects to build a good stone house during the second year. Their unvarying custom is that the bride is taken to the home of the bridegroom in his father's kraal. This is just what Jesus will do.

When I had finished preaching the expected bridegroom had not arrived so I threw the meeting open for testimony encouraging Samueli to clinch any nail I might have left loose. He soon warmed to the subject in spite of interruptions. First a hawk swooped and struck a large chicken, but was frightened away by the screaming of a nearby girl. She returned in triumph holding the dying chick by one leg.

Then, on the outskirts of our company, just hidden from Samueli were several women engaged in hair-dressing. To this group the girl brought her prize. She came up so excitedly that one dog misunderstood and sprang upon another which caused a fight square in the midst of the hairdressers who scattered screaming or laughing in all directions.

Samueli, however, does not mind such trifles and only became more earnest in showing that God intended that the woman be equal with the man, and most important of all, the man should have only one wife.

And now it was too late to expect the groom that day and a discussion arose as to what should be done with the food that was cooked for the wedding feast. Even the big ox had been slaughtered and now it seemed to them that all this was to be wasted for if there were to be no marriage how could there be a marriage feast.

Finally it was decided that the food was to be saved by having the feast, which though out of season should be counted as in order.

The bride, all this time, had been, as you can imagine suffering a nervous strain which should soon cause a break. The suspense and disappointments were too much for her and she broke down and wept.

Now, just why did she feel so badly? You will say, "Because her bridegroom seemed not to care as he should about the wedding"—he did not even send a messenger to explain his absence. Or "Her pride was hurt," etc. I had a suspicion that it might be none of these things so I privately asked Samueli who sees all such matters from the native standpoint.

He replied, "She is crying about the food," and gave me a look which spoke volume. It said, "Is it possible that Infundisi (teacher) does not yet understand such simple affairs of us Zulus?" I gave him credit for more insight."

The marriage, a week later they thought would do all right, so they expect to come here next Sunday or some time later.

Dear Highway: September 2nd.
Another week has gone and I have not

sent your letter. Yesterday was "Big Sunday" at this station. In spite of rain we had a good gathering and excellent meetings. A watch-night service followed but was dismissed at 10.30 because we found the weather too cold.

Upon inquiry I learn that the bridegroom whom we had been inclined to blame, excuses himself by claiming that the messenger sent to inform him when to come and where was too late. But even then he had started and was met on his way by the bride's party returning to her home.

The feast followed Monday at the bride's home as planned. Another was held the next day, according to their custom at the home of the groom. And now the marriage is appointed for a week hence on "Big Sunday" across the Pongola.

Today a woman came to have her wounds dressed where her husband had beaten her in a drunken rage. Another wife of the same man had done her best to help the husband, and to her efforts is due some of the wounds, and a tearing out of the pierced ear-lobe. This piercing of the ears, by the way, is a national custom. The hole made is generally large enough to admit a finger and is used, not only to attach rings, but to carry cart-ridges, etc., as snuff-boxes.

Speaking of beer drinking reminds me of the burned baby I was called to see when last I crossed the Pongola. The poor little thing had its toes completely roasted as well as deep burns on foot, knee, arm and chest. It had crept into the fire place, which occupies the centre of the native hut, and there it lay struggling amid the hot embers unable to crawl out. Its cries, for it was in the night, failed to awaken its mother, or any other occupant of the hut. Fortunately others in huts near by were awakened. After shouting for some time and failing to awaken the mother they forced the hut door and lifted the babe from its bed of fire. When with great difficulty they at last roused the mother from her drunken stupor she sleepily asked "Ishapa?" (where is it burned?)

Beer drinks are held every day in the year when the grain is not too scarce, and drunkenness is a great curse to this people. Of course our church stands for totalism, and through its instrumentality rescues have been made by the score from the drink habit. They are saved from their old life to a new life in Christ Jesus. But oh, the watching, teaching and praying that is needed to keep them walking in the right way!

We greatly feel the need of your help in prayer.

Ever yours in Him,
H. C. SANDERS.

A preacher will always be positive and earnest while he has a deep assurance that he preaches what God commands him to preach; but if he loses the positive message and imperative tone when he wanders into regions of speculation that is to his credit. But he should know that his people no longer hear him as a preacher of the Gospel.—Selected.