

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

Note.—The following was written to the editor (who is also the Missionary Treasurer) but we are going to give all of our supporters of the missionary work the privilege of reading it, as we find that all the family want to hear all that is being said about our missionary work.—Editor.

Hartland P. O.,
Paulpietersburg,
Natal, Sou. Africa,
Sept. 19th, 1919.

Dear Brother Baker:

Now for answering your letter. Herbert and Faith have written to the Highway much that will throw light on what you want to know concerning the evangelists so I will try not to repeat and will try to fill in such details as I can, to give you further light and help if I can re-organ. I am so glad for the good word concerning it. We live so far away it would not pay at all to bring an organ, or anything similar, that would need constant repairs, etc., for we have to do all such things ourselves. We are pioneers indeed on all lines like that. We either must do things ourselves or go without—usually we go without if we cannot do them. I shall greatly enjoy the organ and am so glad it may get off so soon. I do hope you will not send it to Quebec, etc., as St. John will be the best as I know it. However, please accept my warmest thanks for all the trouble you have had over it. You will think we are not very good civilizers in that we do not encourage the natives to get organs, etc. Hand sewing machines and plows, clocks and better houses are as high as we have been able to climb so far. It will be a long day before any native here will be able to have such a thing as an organ. Pianos and organs are very expensive and many Europeans do not have them. Dr. Sanders has given Mrs. Frizzle a native worker, I think Samueli. He is one of the first and the best as far as winning souls for he is simple and earnest and keeps at his work. Also because he is weakly, laid up some of the time each year. He is home all the time. We can give regular statements, and we do. Not every month nor write to each one separately, but everybody takes the Highway and we write oftener than any other minister in the whole denomination. Surely they can know if they want to. Missionaries are very busy people, at least we have always been, and with our limited European help, since our return to Africa, have always worked too hard, taken too little time away from this mission station, too few holidays, etc., etc., for our own good, and we do, at times, get very worn till a rest looms large on our horizon, then fades away.

A station like ours should always have had two married couples right here, then another married couple should have been across the Pongola three years ago anyway. We have pressed into service everyone we could use, supervised them carefully, kept the workers up to time, watched over them to keep them from heresy, kept the faith, have not departed from the doctrines of our church, dug out the heathen from their degradation, have

trained our children up in the ways of the Lord and have done a lot toward helping out our living expenses.

Living is always higher than at home and since the war increased almost beyond reason on some lines.

So, my dear brother, you can see we have had no leisure. I know you have all worked hard, all had to economize, etc., so I have said very little about us. I have felt thankful we have been allowed to go on with our work here undisturbed by the horrors of war. But we have not forgotten you in all the extra that must have fallen upon your shoulders, but then even you have had the changes people get at home. Beulah may be busy, crowded, but then one is willing to do extras when one has enjoyable company to meet, to exchange ideas, experiences and fellowship,—remember all this has ever been denied us—and to be helped by the same.

Faith and Paul are able helpers and if it had not been for them I do not know what we should have done, but Paul is not quite through with his education—a few months more if possible—and they have more than they can do right here.

Evangelists—they have filled the breach indeed and God is raising up new ones all the time. These have to be carefully trained and always watched. Interviewed, warned, reprov'd, etc., continually and it must be Europeans to do this. Here is where Faith and Paul are so valuable, as they can not only speak Zulu but can think in it too.

We are indeed grateful for the deeper interest you have taken in Paul. It has come just in a good time I assure you, as wages are so high and work so plentiful out here there are exceptional opportunities for making money. We want Paul to devote his life for this work and this makes him feel you want him too. He is at present getting a good practical training in business methods which every missionary needs to know.

Just remember things move very slowly here in South Africa. For several years we have tried to get a spot of land on which to build a mission station across the Pongola and not yet have we secured it. But we are still trying. It is good when you once see you need to do something never to get discouraged but just keep on trying. That is our method.

However, from this side of the river that part can be worked, and this is what we shall have to keep doing till we can get better arrangements, possibly by next dry season.

The road is only a rocky mountain path over the river, up high hills, etc., and much of Climbing must be done on foot as the horse has all it wants to get over itself.

Rest assured we are doing our best. I am reminded of the British Navy. It is never off the watch, never idle, always on the job. People may talk but it does not stop for that. It knows its work better than the people who support it, so it just goes right on about its business. I think we have been something like that. We have kept right on, never slack up for anything, always keeping the interests of the Reformed Baptists at heart. Once in a while the people at home find out we really are doing something. We really

have been a good investment and done the foreign work for them. We are holding some of the outposts of civilization and trying to keep the enemy back.

Why do the native workers need to leave their work or to buy cows?

South Africa is cursed by polygamy and every native must "lobola," give ten or more cows for his wife. Often she costs him twenty. In the old days this land swarmed with cattle and they were so cheap that it was a small matter to get a wife. Now they are dear and it is a very grave problem with many how they are to get enough to pay for one wife.

Some fathers have enough cattle to give their son either all or part. Whatever he may lack must be earned by going away to the towns. Since each beast, when full grown, is worth from \$30.00 to \$50.00, according to the animal, it often takes years before this amount is raised. Generally every young man as he comes home from work has enough money to buy one or two beasts and they are keen enough to know if only a little one it will grow, so they buy as young as they can get because they are cheaper.

So often, time the beast or two is bought there is little or no money left to buy blankets or clothing for the family or even for food. You must live here to really understand how very important this "lobola" business is. We hope in time the government of this land will do away with polygamy, then "lobola" will follow and many difficulties among our young converts done away with.

Besides "lobola" cattle to buy, there are other needs for money. The boys always bring what they earn to the father, if living, or if not, to the oldest brother. He may buy cattle, buy food, pay taxes or debts with this money. Then when the young men who earned it need to give cattle for "lobola," the father or brother supplies them. These are some of the Zulu laws and customs and rigidly kept. Now these young men feed the family, if they must buy food and according as they are helped or hindered so they are a short or long time before they are ready to be married. Sometimes after six or more are paid the wedding may take place and the remaining cattle paid after, but often the old father refuses till the last cow is brought home. Because of these conditions often long years of engagement ensue, much to the dissatisfaction of all concerned, especially if they are Christians.

We do not have one evangelist who has more than one wife. He could not be one if he had. We are especially careful in selecting our workers and endeavour to keep only those who are walking up to their light.

As wages are high, what we pay our evangelists is much smaller than they can get in towns, but they like to find work near home and expenses are less there so they do nicely but must have time for gardening, etc., to help out.

You will see by what I have written above we do not change Zulu customs or laws where there is no reason to do so. If they are sinful we draw the line but it would only make confusion to go further.

Now about our reports. I think Herbert

(Continued on Page Three)