

## Foreign Missions.

### W. B. M. U.

"We are laborers together with God."

Contributors to this column will please address Mrs. J. W. MANNING, 178 Wentworth Street, St. John, N. B.

#### PRAYER TOPIC FOR MARCH.

For the missionaries at Bobbili, the school and its teachers. For the native Christians, that they may grow in grace and strive to win others to Christ.

#### The Baptist Denomination in South Africa

As Baptists we are often reminded that we form part of a great family, whose branches extend to all parts of the globe, and it would be strange indeed if representatives of our faith and order were not found in the land now troubled by the opposing forces of armed men.

A dark cloud hangs over the southern part of the great African continent, and very bitter may yet be the experience of some of our brethren there. In view of trials and difficulties already existing, and of others still impending, some brief narrative of the history and position of the Baptist community may call out that sympathy which is greatly needed, and may perhaps also afford some measure of assistance.

Seeking someone from whom I could obtain, with the assurance of accurate knowledge, an account of the rise and progress of Baptist churches in the various colonies and states of South Africa, I applied to Rev. Charles Pummell, who very obligingly placed his experience at my disposal. Mr. Pummell, on leaving the Pastors' College, sailed for the Cape in January, 1893, and for eighteen months was minister of the Baptist church at Pretoria.

#### RELIGIOUS LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

I started off with this inquiry, "What is the position of our Denomination in South Africa, Mr. Pummell?"

"We are by no means strong. There are twenty-four English churches, five German churches, and one Dutch church, the total membership being 2,931."

"That is certainly small," I remarked. "How can it be accounted for?"

"The Baptists seem to have come rather late into the field, the earliest church being that of Grahamstown, formed in 1820. This was the only Baptist community in South Africa till 1860, when the cause at Port Elizabeth originated. To properly understand the position it is necessary to remember the following facts. The white population of South Africa is about one-third of that of London, and is probably the most heterogeneous in the world. The Dutch are in the majority, and are represented by three main religious denominations—the Dutch Reformed Church, the New Reformed Church, and the Dopper Church. The term Dopper means 'Dipper,' and its members used to practise baptism by immersion; but have now deserted this, as we believe, Scriptural method. President Kruger is a 'Dopper.' The English are next in point of numbers, and the denomination may be reckoned in order of size and strength as follows: The Wesleyan, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist. South Africa seems to be a stronghold of Wesleyanism, as America is of the Baptists."

"To what do you attribute this?"

"It is probably," replied Mr. Pummell, "owing to the large proportion of miners who come from Cornwall and other centres of Methodism in England."

"Being so few in number, and the territory so vast, many of our Baptist churches must be in very isolated positions?"

#### FEW AND FAR BETWEEN.

"Their position may be described," answered Mr. Pummell, "in the words of Nehemiah, 'The work is great and large, and we are separated one far from another.' Take Bloemfontein, for instance. This church is 400 miles from the nearest Baptist cause—Pretoria—while on the north, west, and east, Pretoria itself is over 100 miles from a sister body. One is not surprised, therefore, that the annual gathering of the Baptist Union is a long-looked for treat for the lonely brethren."

"Among a scattered population, there is a great deal of pioneering work to be done, of course?"

"One of the most interesting causes is that at Alice, a little town of 250 people, forty-two miles from the nearest town, which is King William's Town, and united with it only by telegraph and post-cart. In this lonely outpost, however, there are no less than six places of worship. The Baptist chapel seats 500 people, and there are ninety-five members and 100 Sunday school scholars. The pastor travels on horseback over many miles of country, keeping in touch with Baptist families living far apart."

"From whence do the churches obtain their pastors?"

"Practically all of them come from the Homeland, sent out at the request of the churches on the recommendation of our leaders in this country. Mr. Spurgeon

was often applied to, and the Pastors' College is well represented.

#### BAPTISTS IN THE TRANSVAAL.

Having then referred to the subject generally, I inquired of Mr. Pummell more particularly concerning that part of South Africa where his own work had lain, the little Republic of the Transvaal, on which all eyes are today fixed.

"There are three Baptist churches," said Mr. Pummell, "in the South African Republic, one in Pretoria, and two in Johannesburg. Nevertheless, the Baptists wield great influence. I have visited a great many Boer farmsteads, and the very mention of the fact that I was a minister from Spurgeon's church always insured me a hearty welcome, and invariably I was shown either a portrait of our beloved President hanging on the wall, or else a copy of his 'Interpreter' and morning and evening readings on the table."

"Now as to the history of your own church at Pretoria?" said I.

"The Baptists and Congregationalists united to form a church in Pretoria in 1890, under the leading of Rev. H. T. Cousins, now of Colwyn Bay. Disaster, however, overtook the enterprise, after the chapel had been erected—the foundation-stone of which was laid by President Kruger—and it had to be closed, with a debt of £2,200, at the heavy interest of ten per cent. It was put upon the market for sale, and only rescued by the praiseworthy efforts of Rev. H. J. Batts, who collected £350, and endeavored to form a church once more. He undertook the pastorate at the request of the Baptist Union, though with somewhat of trepidation, I fear. After eighteen months' fairly successful work, during which time the debt was reduced to £1,650, and a bond secured at six per cent., another disaster overtook the work. The political air was surcharged with discontent, and brought to a sharp head by the 'commandeering' of British subjects. Thereupon the inhabitants left the town in large numbers, while others went to quell the native rising. Trade was at a standstill, and reluctantly the cause had to close its doors again, and I left. It remained closed for six months, by which time the town had revived again. Rev. H. J. Batts then settled in the pastorate, and with a brave heart set himself to face overwhelming odds. Possessing a genial disposition, he succeeded in drawing together a band of helpers. Then came the lamentable Jameson Raid, when he was found ministering the word of life to the prisoners on the Sunday following the capture. Alas! I fear the church and its sister churches in Johannesburg will not be able to weather the storm now passing over them."

In Mr. Pummell's study there hangs an illuminated address presented to him by the church at Pretoria when they were regretfully compelled to disband.

"I observe that you styled the church as a Baptist Congregational one," I said. "What was its constitution?"

"The pastor and deacons were obliged to be Baptists, but Congregationalists were admitted to membership. There was no sprinkling of infants, however."

"So, practically the church answered to what we in England call an 'Open Membership' church?"

"Yes. I may say that through the whole of the Baptist churches in South Africa a form of dedication of infants is in use."

"Is anything done by the Baptists for the native population?" I inquired.

"Yes," answered Mr. Pummell, "there are four native churches, with seven missionaries, and 12 members under the Baptist Missionary Society of South Africa. In addition to that there is in connection with the church at Cape Town a very interesting mission to the Dutch Malays, in charge of a coloured American minister. Rev. R. A. Jackson."

"Did you yourself take part in any service for the native races?" was my text inquiry.

"I frequently held services for them, speaking through an interpreter, and on Sunday afternoons I made it a practice to visit the Leper Asylum which stands on the outskirts of Pretoria. Most interesting those services proved to be. The patients, mostly natives, but with a sprinkling of Dutch, would arrange themselves in order outside the walls of the asylum. One or two friends would sing to them from Senkey's hymn-book, and I had the privilege of telling them on those occasions of the Christ of God who cleansed the lepers in days gone by, and who could brighten their wretched lives."

"Were there many lepers?"

"At the time of my residence in Pretoria there were thirty-nine. A whole Dutch family, father, mother, a babe at the breast and several others, were found to be infected with the disease. They came to the hospital in their bullock wagon, well knowing that they would never leave it alive, bringing all their worldly possessions and erecting a tent that they might live apart from the natives. After three days the man was seized with despair, ran away to Johannesburg, and had to be brought back by

special detectives. He made no further attempt to escape."

"How long do lepers usually live?"

"About two years, or two years and a half. They bury their own dead."

The life of a South African pastor is evidently one full of special difficulties, and certainly calls for very strong and robust qualities of both mind and heart.—Cor. Baptist Times and Freeman.

### Foreign Mission Board.

#### NOTES BY THE SECRETARY.

In a letter received recently from Bro. Churchill he writes: "The new link in the East Coast Railway made our journey from Madras to Vizianagram quite easy to what it used to be. In some places along the road there were signs of drought, but for the most part there seemed to have been a fair crop. But from Vizianagram here (Bobbili) most of the way there has been almost utter failure, especially around Bobbili. I have not been about much yet to see with my own eyes, but as far as I have seen and heard, things are bad enough. What the people are to do and how they are to live I cannot see. Not only is there lack of food supply, but the water question is also a very serious one. Nearly all the tanks are quite dry and only a few wells have water in them, and this just at the beginning of the dry season which will last for six months. One of the mission wells has four or five feet of water in it, and the other much less. They are nearly as low as I have ever seen them at the end of the dry season. One I shall have to deepen by and by. . . . Of course they were glad to see us back in the hope that our coming means better times for them. And they need to have better times, at least some of them, a good deal better than they have had for four years past. The crops about here last year were almost a failure. How some of our Christians have pulled through is a mystery to me, and this coming year will be worse than ever I fear. There has been a very poor crop up in the Jaypore country, so there is no help from that direction. But bad as things are about us, they are nothing like as bad as in Central and Western India. The Government has already set large numbers at work, but many millions will have to be cared for or die."

"I baptized two women a week ago yesterday. They are from Mairdipilly. Others are said to be ready to come. A young man, a goldsmith from Peida Penkie, came last week and was ready to be baptized at once. But I did not see my way clear to accept him just then. I want to see his people in their village, so as to give them no chance to say we have baptized him secretly. Chinna David was in from there last week and thinks there is a good degree of interest among the people and hopes some are believing. From what I gather from Miss Harrison and the workers I judge that a good many people are getting to know our teaching and are becoming interested, if not believing."

"The morning light is breaking." Let us have faith and hope and courage. The darkness will surely disappear. There can be no doubt on this point. We had better doubt the reality of our own conversion. God's word cannot return unto him void.

If there is one thing more than another that the blessed Lord longs to do for us, it is that he should be at home with us every one, our Friend and Brother as well as our Redeemer and Saviour, coming right into the life and filling it with his presence. If there is one thing more than another that grieves his great love, it is that we make him but one of whom we sing in our hymns and preach in our sermons, of whom we think in his high glory as the Lord of heaven, whilst the daily life is left just as lonely and the week just as empty as if he had never come at all. His great love longs to come right with us, to come right home to us—to fit into our wants and to fill the round of life with the light and peace and strength and music of his love.—Mark Guy Pearse.

## "Deeds Are Fruits, Words Are But Leaves."

The many wonderful cures effected by Hood's Sarsaparilla are the fruits by which it should be judged. These prove it to be the great remedy for dyspepsia, rheumatism, catarrh.

Rheumatism—"Pains in my limbs finally settled in my back. My blood was poor and I did not have any appetite. I could not sleep nights. I tried Hood's Sarsaparilla and Hood's Pills and these medicines made me a well man." G. R. Rafus, South Waterville, N. S.

**Hood's Sarsaparilla**  
Never Disappoints

HOOD'S PILLS cure liver ills; the non-irritating cathartic.

are  
T  
ing,  
han  
som  
put  
hair  
Y  
ne  
a h  
fo  
s u  
a s

In  
the  
ing  
col  
You  
thir  
fifty  
hair  
all t  
of y

\$1.00  
I had  
Hair  
will do  
for it,  
complete  
ness.  
Maid

If you  
ex  
Vigor.

The Centen

The First  
organized in  
and the time  
its one hun  
present mem  
gregation in  
worship to b  
Memorial,"  
celebrate the  
years ago a  
with old Pat  
man, as their  
church. The  
little log hou  
were born int  
some years t  
for the growi  
house was b  
the Petticoat  
credit to the  
have cost the  
men who kn  
grace they w  
to build a f  
Almighty Go  
saints, with  
midst, are p  
church yard  
Resurrection  
these pioneer  
crumbled int  
another, abo  
old one. In  
This, like its  
day and ge  
descendants c  
to be worthy  
same faith an  
a new house  
of our fathers  
be a splendi  
leaders in our  
days.

Denominatio

Rawdon ch  
Country Harb  
special, \$10; B  
Noel Section,