

Bahia, Brazil, Dec 11<sup>th</sup> 1887

Rev. W. H. Belden.

Dear Brother.

On my arrival home, Sept. 24, after an absence of nearly 6 weeks, I found your favor of July 29 awaiting me. I had seen a copy in S. Paulo, where I had gone to attend Presby, but I was either fully occupied or on the wing all the time. I write you by the first direct mail since my return. I fear my communication will be too late for your simultaneous meetings Nov. 13-17.

(1) I beg to assure you of my deep & earnest sympathy with this movement. The awakening amongst our home churches & and amongst the rising generation of ministers in regard to the duty of preaching the Gospel to every creature, is to my mind an evident token of God's will for good to his Church & the world, & that a rich outpouring of divine blessings is imminent. I am firmly persuaded the manifestation of God's power in the conversion of the whole world only awaits the true attitude of willingness on the part of his people. It is just as well also that <sup>he</sup> will make his people willing in (or for) the day of his power. My heart bounds with joy at these harbingers that his set time is at hand for favoring Zion - for demonstrating the invincible power of his Word & Spirit. O. May that power be mightily demonstrated through

out your synod during your simultaneous meetings.

(2) It is too late now to satisfy your desire in respect to this item of your letter. Cases of this kind for help have been very common in the history of our work in Brazil. Perhaps 17 years ago, more or less, away in the back woods of the Province of S. Paulo, a traveler heard for the first time the Bible read in the family where he lodged for the night. He secured a copy to take home with him to a neighborhood on the very borders of civilization. He & his neighbors met on the Sabbath to read & study it. Not long after they sent a messenger a distance of 120 miles to the nearest mission station to beg that some one go to preach to them. Fourteen years since a church was organized in that locality, which has now a membership of about 150. The same thing is substantially true of several of our churches at least.

In the beginning of 1881, I made my second visit to the province of Sergipe, west north of this, which now constitutes Rev. J. B. Kolb's bishopric. Whilst preaching in Aracaju, the capital, the local newspapers noticed & commented on the preaching. A paper of a neighboring town, some 40 or 50 miles distant, transcribed the news and announced that the same minister was coming to hold conferences, as they usually style it, there also; whilst in another town, called Maroim, the people

were greatly disappointed because I did <sup>not</sup> go to preach there also. In the latter place, last November, I preached every day for a week to large and interested audiences. To the former place, called Estancia, neither of us have yet been able to go.

I inclose you copy of a letter, written by Bro. Kolb for a different purpose, which will help to show you how the Lord has gone before & prepared the way for the messengers of the Gospel. It also contains an interesting statement which may be classed under your 3<sup>d</sup> head.

Under this head there are numerous facts of great interest. We have at times spoken & compiled a number of them, but 'tis yet undone, & I cannot command the time now before the arrival of the mail for stating any of them with the necessary care and accuracy, & with the work in hand I am afraid to promise to do it in any given time.

I refer you to an article of mine in the January No. of the Church at Home & Abroad, 1887, pages 87-91-<sup>or</sup> "Northern Brazil" for a succinct view of the field in which I feel the most absorbing interest. In nearly all parts of this field from Sergipe north, the power of God has been graciously manifested during the last year for the furtherance of his own work. The

three young men referred to at Pernambuco, were ordained there in May last. One of them soon after went, for motives of health, to spend some time at an interior town in the highlands of the Province of Parahyba. When it was known that a Protestant minister was in town, a mob of the vicar's friends, & at his instigation, collected to drive him out of the place or kill him. The firmness & courage of his host & of the police authorities thwarted the purpose, & he remained, & unmolested. As a result of the outrage there was an unexpected demand for Bibles, books & tracts, & many wished to hear the man preach, & numbers came even from neighboring towns out of curiosity to see the new priest, as they called him.

Along with the readiness to hear the word, the spirit of lawless persecution is rife in many places, & the safety of the preachers is <sup>manifestly</sup> due often to the power & providence of God.

If in the future I can in any way aid you in stimulating the interest of our brethren in this great cause, I shall be most happy to do what may be in my power.

Yours truly

A. L. Blackford

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