

Union College, Kenilworth, Near Cape Town, South Africa,
July 30th, 1896.

Mrs. Ellen G. White,
Cooranbong, N. S. W.

H. H. Prescott

Dear Sister White:-

When I wrote you from Grahamstown a short time since I did not expect to return to this place so soon, and it is now possible that the two letters may go on the same boat. There were some matters further concerning which I desired to write to you, but I could not take the time then to do it. A personal interview would be much more satisfactory but as that is impossible now we will do the next best thing.

I have been reading again and with much care the matter which you sent to me by the last boat and I wish to express again my deep appreciation of the value of the instruction given. I am seeking to apply all the principles to my own case and to gain all the benefit possible from the light which is thus given.

At times I feel very deeply over the situation in America as revealed by the letters which come to me from there and as shown by the instruction which the Spirit of the Lord sends as being needed at this time. I am distressed to see the mould which has been put upon the Lord's work by its being entrusted to unconsecrated hands, and to see how much confidence has been put in the arm of flesh and how little real trust has been placed in the Lord. I can only pray that in some way the Lord will bring to confusion every effort of the enemy to hinder his work and that God's plans will be developed out of what now seems to be much human management.

In addition to the special matter concerning which I asked counsel in my other letter I wish to confer with you about some other things: What would you think of my trying to arrange with Prof. Elffers to translate into the Dutch language the manuscript for your new book, so that when it is put into English it may also appear in Dutch. In this way the canvassers in this country could canvass for it in both languages at the same time, and this is a great advantage in a country like this where English and Dutch are both spoken. In some parts of South Africa it would hardly be possible for a canvasser to make a living with a book in English only, as so many of the farmers are Dutch. I believe this book would sell well to the Dutch and by having it translated its circulation could be largely increased. Prof. Elffers is a sworn Government translator and I think his translation would be more acceptable to the people of these colonies than to have the work done in America. What do you think of this proposition?

E. G. W. 2.

7-30-96

There have been some plans running in my mind of late in regard to the general work and I thought I would like to know if you have any light for me concerning them. It seems to me that our work is hindered by having so much responsibility placed in the hands of a few, and especially by placing so many burdens upon the President of the General Conference. When a few minds exert a controlling influence over all the interests of this work and they can be led to adopt any wrong policy the results are very disastrous and wide-spread. It has seemed to me that it would be better to have the responsibility more evenly divided among several men who should be located in the different parts of the whole field (the world) each one of whom should be given more room for his own individuality in planning and executing and that all plans for all these different fields need not be put through the minds of a few, some of whom have never been in these fields and can have but little understanding of the real situation and needs. Since I have been in these different countries it has seemed little short of an absurdity to me to ask these men just what should be done in every case in these far off fields where the circumstances are so different from what they are at home, and such a course seems almost sure to lead the workers in these fields to look for and expect some human minds to guide them instead of learning to wait upon the Lord himself for guidance and help in their perplexities. Of course I do not mean that we should dispense with a central organization but I think there is too much centralization of responsibility now. I know that it is impossible for any one human mind to grasp all the details of the work in so many different fields and an attempt to do so is almost sure to result in delays to the work and in counsels and plans which are not suited to the needs of the situation. Would not such a plan as this be in harmony with the light which you have been giving, especially of late?

Is there not some way in which the organized conferences in the States could be encouraged to do more for the extension of the work in these other fields? When I see the extent of the work to be done and the need of funds with which to carry it forward I am led to inquire whether there is not some way in which our home conferences can carry a greater burden in this direction. How would it do to ask each one of these conferences to support a laborer in some field where there is not a present organized conference? Perhaps let them select the field and if possible the laborer, in order to increase their interest and sense of responsibility, and then let them be responsible for his support. Would this bring in confusion? Our old plans seem to be so fixed and stereotyped that they give little opportunity for a

E. G. W. 3.

7-30-96

person to have a special interest in any one field, even though his mind might be especially burdened in this direction, but all this is lost in the one great machine. I am deeply impressed that we must do more for the world and less for our own people, and that there should be many more laborers scattering the truth all over the world. I know that we have been sending out more lately than at any time before, but it seems to me a mere beginning of what ought to be done. This country ought to have a hundred workers where there is one. Think of the thousands of natives in this continent, many of whom are in the darkness of heathenism and the remainder of them not much better off. I am deeply troubled over these questions. Have you any counsel to give? It seems to me that these things should be considered at the next General Conference. Is it not time that men, endued with the Holy Ghost and with power, should go in haste from city to city and from country to country to give the warning message and to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord? Would not the Lord honor such an effort by co-operating with it and giving the laborers the ears and hearts of the people that they might hear the truth? It seems as though something must be done in a different way from what we have seen the work go in the past. May we not expect the Lord to give special wisdom in laying plans to this end?

Is there anything which can be done to relieve our institutions, especially the publishing houses, of the heavy burden of having so many unconverted and unconsecrated workers gathered in one place? I know that when I left America the Review office was in a terrible condition, so far as the spiritual experience of a large share of its workers was concerned, and I fear that it has not especially improved. No one seemed to have the spiritual power necessary to move such a large body and their influence upon the work was bad. Would it be better to cut down some of these large institutions so that the working force would be more manageable? Should unbelievers and unconverted persons be retained year after year in these institutions? Is it not a part of the work of the message and should it not all be in the hands of consecrated persons?

Have you any suggestion as to what I should do with the large amount of manuscript which I am now getting from you upon the subject of education? If we are to publish an Educational Journal, then I can see a way in which it could be brought before our teachers and students. I think a very valuable new book on education could be issued by revising the one now in print by a more careful editing of the matter contained in it and then adding much new matter which you have written since that book was published. It seems to me

E. G. W. 4.

7-30-96

that there is much work to be done in order to put our educational work on the right basis and I am sure that it will be a large question at the next General Conference. I am now prepared to take strong ground on this matter and to insist that our school work shall be conducted strictly in harmony with the light which the Lord has given and I am fully ready to dispense with the services of any or all teachers who are not willing to follow this light. We have been held back all too long by those who preferred the plans of the world rather than the plans which the Lord himself has been pleased to give us and I want to see a change without further waste of time. Some of the managers need to get a different view of things as well as the teachers, as it seems to me from the plans which they are following. How I wish we could all be united in pushing the work just as the Lord would have it done!

I am glad that you have so good a corps of workers with you now and I trust you will be able to get out a large amount of matter in the near future. Do not our people need another printed volume of the Testimony?

I hope I have not wearied you with this letter. It is a relief to me to write these things to you and I shall look with interest for such reply as you may have time and strength to make.

There are plenty of perplexities in this field, as I have intimated in my letter to W. C. White which you will read. I am praying and hoping for light and wisdom that I may make no mistakes in what I attempt to do.

With kind regards to yourself and all the members of your household,
I remain, Yours in Christian love,

H. H. Prescott