

File 696 =

ACCEPTING 12,000 ACRES IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Portion of a letter from S. N. Haskell to F. M. Wilcox, Secretary
of the Foreign Mission Board, written Oct. 9, 1894)

I may not be able to explain about the British South African Land Co. for I have never seen their Charter and in fact I know nothing about it in that respect. But probably Brother Bowmans ideas are essentially correct. It is a company organized under the British Crown investing them with authority to establish a colony under certain conditions and restrictions; so upon that point I should not question Brother Bowman's position. He thinks that possibly those who have had to do with the business of the denomination might be blinded as to the true relation of church and state, and so we become involved. Now let me put that question the other way. Is it not possible for those who have had their attention all absorbed in one direction to overlook some important principles upon some other points? And would it not be well for some who look at things from a different standpoint to come in and balance up on some of these things. You know that it takes not less than three ropes pulling in different directions to hold a tent-pole erect. Is not this one reason why we have been exhorted so much to counsel together? While I verily believe the Lord in a special manner has been leading in the organization and prosecution of plans by the N.R.L.A., yet they may not be perfect in all their positions. I do not mean in the principles they advocate, but in the application of those principles. There are special cases when it is right to take certain favors from governments, or I do not understand the Scriptures correctly. Are we not taught to pray to that end, that we might have favors at the hand of the governments of the earth? Jer. 29:7. I Tim. 2:1-4.

I have been led to query that if the N.R.L.A. had existed in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah whether they would have taken the favors granted by the king of Persia? See Neh. 2:1-9. Would they have taken "The Tribute beyond the river," and the "Expences" that the "work be not hindered"? Would they have taken "Young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for burnt offerings of the

God of Heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which were at Jerusalem"? Ezra 6:8,9. I understand that in this case it is entirely different from what it is to receive money by taxation for civil purposes and appropriate it for religious purposes. There was a consideration here in the mind of the king, namely, "That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons."

Now as to the experience of our brethren who went up to Mattabeliland. You can read an almost exact parallel in Neh. 2:1-9. Corresponding with the fourth verse, our brethren visited the Hon. Cecil Rhodes after specially seeking God's blessing upon the interview. Mr. Rhodes stands at the head of the B. S. A. Co. He asked them "For what they made request"? While the brethren were making their request the Mr. Rhodes continued writing at his table. When they would pause he would simply say "And?" Then corresponding with the seventh verse, the brethren asked that "Letters be given" to Doctor Jameson who has charge of the "King's forest" that he would show them such favors as their work might require. (Such letters were granted) which were presented to Doctor Jameson (See verse nine), who sent guide with our party to search out the land.

Now what are the considerations in the case of taking the grant of the B.S.A. Co. Our brethren went there to purchase the land. They present to the company what they want the land for. They tell them it is not to simply establish a school, and teach the natives on the plan of other denominations; but it is to send to the country men who will be self supporting; and at the same time teach the natives to work, bathe themselves, and dress like the white man. They also state to them our faith, that we are Seventh-day Adventists, that we are independent of other denominations, etc. There is nothing whatever covered up in the matter. They in return say, this, "We do not give away our land to any Missionary Society." "But we consider the class of people you propose to bring in here just what we want. It will do with the natives just what we want done with them. It is to make men and women of them. You are the men we want here to

aid us in bringing up the civilization of the people. Now in consideration of what you propose to do, we will give you the land and to every man who comes from your people, if recommended by your General Conference, we will give him a farm provided that he will work under the direction of your denomination."

Now while I do not suppose they care a fig about our religion as it regards to what we believe, they have in mind only the building up of the country, and so bring to them in the end wealth, yet it is in consideration of the principles we advocate, and the plan of our work among the natives they ask us to come; and the company holds out to us inducements as to no other people unless they should come to do as we propose to do, actuated by the missionary work among the natives in this practical manner. Is there any difference in the principle of this, and receiving from a town or city or state a grant of land for our colleges when they fully understand what we propose to do with them? They well know that we propose to educate men and women to advocate the principles we hold. They consider the building of the college will add to the wealth of the town, and in that way they are compensated for what they give. It will bring to them a revenue that will more than compensate for what they have given. I suppose that it is on the same principle they give us the land.

Now is there not two ways of looking at this? One way is to say as Mordecai said to Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" We have been talking about going to the heathen and we have believed that they are those among the Tribes that will hear the gospel as it is revealed in the Third Angel's Message. We have gone to a company which is entirely independent of the Home Government, as it relates to making grants, bargains, etc. And they say "We want that you should come here and do the work that you believe God has called you to do." It is the kind of work that is needed here among these natives. Of course they see by this work that it will feather their nest financially. Now shall we go? We went and offered to purchase, but they say, "No we will give if you will come and do as you propose,

for it is the work that will elevate and make useful men and women of these natives."

The other way to look at the matter is to say, "O, we do not think it is right to take any thing from any company or from any one who is not of our faith." Is not this inconsistent? Or do I not see it correctly? Does not God's word plainly teach us that God runs the kingdoms of the earth in the interests of His own cause? That He putteth down one and setteth up another, and when He has any use for a nation or kingdom He brings in men who will stay the tide of oppression on the people of God until the nation has done its work? Was not Daniel and the Three Worthies an illustration of this principle? Also Joseph who represents the deliverance of God's people in the last days, Esther also?

Perhaps I am not sound in the faith upon these points. But if I am not then let us quit trying to see what state will give the best advantage to us as a people to have a school building erected in their midst. We have not gone so far as this in this case. We only went to purchase, and when they learned the object and the method we would adopt to accomplish our object, they said it is just what we want. It is all the compensation we ask. We consider this compensation sufficient so we are willing to do for you. In fact they went so far that Mr. Rhodes who is the head man in the Company, told Mr. Jameson in the presence of Peter Wessels, who is the head agent in the transaction, "Do anything for this people they ask." Mr. Rhodes is acquainted with us. He lives near the College and knows all about us as a people and about our work in the Colony. Elder Robinson has had two interviews with him. He is now expected to be in town in a few days and then we intend to see him and Doctor Jameson when they arrive on their way to England.

Perhaps I have said already too much. But from the understanding of the matter(I speak as an individual), I should consider it a mistake not to enter this opening at once. Who knows but in it is the hand of God to prepare the way for an asylum for many of God's people in a little from this, as well as to let their light shine amid the darkest places of the earth. I understand there are

other Tribes who are recognized by the English Government but who control their own land, who have learned what we propose to do and have invited us to come in their midst and do the same thing. There is a spirit in many places against the present missionary effort, because they do not educate the people to work. They teach them letters and make that the way to begin to the exclusion of teaching them how to work on the land. This is what they want to learn. But it is something they they do not know how. Is it not as much the Christian religion to teach them to be diligent in worldly things? Why if not, is it that the prophets and Christ Himself instructed the people by planting, ploughing the ground, and cultivating the soil in its different ways? In fact we might ask why did God even make it necessary for man to cultivate the land for bread? Is there not a lesson in all this that would elevate the mind? And did not God design that we through these things, should point the untutored mind up to Nature's God? See Isaiah 28:23-29. 55:8-13. Hosea 14:49. Mark 4:26-29/ Luke 12:22-30. And a host of other scriptures on the same point. Christ was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter. Shall we not do this as the work of God as much as to preach the gospel? If you should go into a town and preach the Third Angel's Message and there be a success in some embracing the truth, and the town should offer you a lot to build a meeting house upon, would you take it? They would do this not because they have so much a regard for your views but they think that it will build up their town, and in that way they are compensated.

Now brethren, as I suppose this will be read before the committee, I want to say one thing more. Now suffer me to be a little more pointed in what I say. Is there not danger of our losing some blessings because we are afraid we shall become contaminated with the world? A certain Doctor Burdet once used an illustration to show his brethren the difference between the Seventh-day Adventists and the Seventh-day Baptists. He said both denominations worked on the tunnel plan. The Seventh-day Baptists have the tunnel big end up. They would begin large and finally they would run out through the small end.

But he said the Seventh-day Adventist brethren have it the other end up. They begin small but they spread out. Now is there not danger when we get to looking at one particular thing, of our minds shaping everything like the point to which we look. The Third Angel's Message from its very nature calculated to enlarge our ideas until it brings within its scope every principle of righteousness and every agency to carry forward his work that was ever endorsed by the God of the Bible. And each and every such agency God will utilize in these last days.

Then, again, is there not a significance to certain promises which we have not fully comprehended, "I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring their sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Isa. 49:22,23. Then again, "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged; because the abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee: And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings; and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." Sixtieth Chapter.

Now in view of some such promises and the nature of our work, is it too much to expect there will be instances, if from no other reason than selfish reasons, men in high places will favor us because the Spirit of God has stirred them up to do so? I do not see that we compromise ourselves or the truth in the least in such a transaction as the taking of the land, providing we do with it as we propose and our principles teach us to do.

There is much questioning out here with many as to the righteousness of

the cause of this Company in making war on the Matabeli. Now as to that I do not know as we have anything to do. The war has existed and they were a terrible wicked people. They have brought upon the missionaries in the past much trouble. They have enslaved other tribes. They made war and plundered until they were a terror to all the Tribes around them. Now they are in subjection. The Charter Company have taken their cattle and their land. Only they propose now to let the white man have it. If any one is to be paid it should be the Matabeli's whose land it was. But if their sins have forfeited the land by taking one wicked company to do this and then they propose to give us an opportunity to do these natives good, and give us some of the land they have stolen to do it with, and we take this land and then let the poor native live on this land, only bring him light and truth, is not this a providence of God? Am I all off when all of these principles are involved in it? But I will say no more.

Perhaps I have not made this matter plain, any way I have written this in a great hurry. It is now in less than one hour that this must be in the Post-Office. But I can assure you I have no personal feelings in this matter. Now to pay them would only be to urge upon them money which they have not asked for and which they never rightfully owned. They themselves under the present circumstances would see no propriety in our paying them. To me there would be a greater propriety in going to the government in U.S.A. and obliging it to take a tax on our meeting-houses which all would say was folly, especially after we have expressed our sentiments in the matter. But in this last case it would be working as we believe. But in the other case I fail to see any sense in it."

