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Adams College  
Adams M.S.

April 20, 1936.

Dear Allison,

I have been much touched at your keeping of my letter written to you over twenty years ago and further by your expressed wish to hear from me again. Life during the past twenty-three years has given you some hard knocks, hasn't it. I was interested to see your name in the paper a few days ago in connection with the disturbance over the new police. The attitude of the reporter was favourable to your comments on the condition obtaining in Durban before and during the riots in Victoria St. and probably has been one cog in the wheel of inquiry to see where the trouble really lies.

Last evening at the prayermeeting Dr. Brueckner gave a long and informing talk on economic conditions as they exist in the United States and in South Africa. Among other things he said that conditions make people drunkards and shiftless and criminals, sometimes. He gave as one instance of that a man who was a drunkard. A friendly man talked with him and learned that his work day by day was deadly dull and that his wife had tastes so utterly different from his that it was no joy to go home at the end of the day, so to get rid of life's conditions on Saturday and Sunday he would drown his feelings in drink. He did not love it, only wanted to forget life. This gentleman asked if it would help any to spend some time with him during the week end. He thought it would and by visiting the kindly gentleman he left off drink.

I believe you are trying to better the conditions of your people, and I honour you for it. Of course there are ways and ways of doing it, just as there are kinds and kinds of people and different ways of spending time, so one statement does not answer for everyone. However in the course of history there has been no solution to the problem of poverty and misery superior to the one Jesus gave. He lived but three years in his preaching life, wrote no books, and his sayings all collected fill only a small pamphlet, yet see how lives have been changed by faith in him and how the whole outlook on life has been cleared up when persons have submitted to his will. No, when all is said and done, Jesus did come to teach people how to live. He showed how the rich might help the poor, how the poor might help themselves, how the weak ought to shoulder their own trouble, but how the strong should help on the weak brother. It is true he depended a lot on prayer and talked to his disciples about prayer and searching the Scriptures, but it was in order to let them see how to live rightly.

I hope you will use every opportunity to listen to Dr. Brookes who has the welfare of the Bantu deeply at heart. He believes like Mr. Phillips of the Social Center in making real friends of the Bantu and receiving them on an equality, loving them and giving them a chance in life. Because he is an able man as well as spiritually minded his words carry weight. He lives what he preaches. I consider him the man for Prin. of this college. As you know, he frequently speaks in Durban. Today he is expected home after a trip to Bloemfontein where he has been attending a meeting of the senate of the University of South Africa.

Both he and his wife have been greatly helped by contact with the Oxford Group, and because of that they invite all who care for it to meet at their home every Monday afternoon for a season of prayer and helpful interchange of thoughts and experiences. It is surprising how many people meet together there, with a sincere purpose of gaining strength to meet the daily tests. Now I do not think life in this school is so hard as most find it in their home communities and in positions of work, for beneficial rules are so many that life is hedged about, but to maintain a Christian character where it is ignored, or ridiculed or persecuted, that is hard. The people come together to learn more about how to maintain what they have learned to respect here at school. Much is made of how Jesus can change lives. One must pray and then listen to what God will say. It is possible to get leading in that way, only there must be a definite putting away of selfish desires and purposes. Joy and peace do come.

There is an idea that Christianity has failed to benefit the oppressed and that a solution must be found in socialism or some other man-made scheme, but when these have been looked into it has always been found that it is not Christianity that has failed, but that people have failed because of their failing to carry out principles of Christ. Sad to say, Churches are not always what Jesus would have them, but there are individual lives which are truly Christlike. So my advice to you is to study the Bible, especially the teachings of our Master, and try to apply them to conditions as you find them. Pray for guidance and listen to God's words to you. You cannot fail to hear if you sincerely desire to listen.

Perhaps I would be better able to help you if I knew more of what you have to contend with, but I know very little about your activities. Certainly your opportunities are great as your name is so well known. It is all very well to stand up for your principles even if you come in conflict with civil authorities, but St. Paul tells us to speak the truth in love. It is love that helps, not sentimental or selfish so-called love, but the love that is willing to suffer if only to serve. Perfect honesty in every detail of life is absolutely necessary. The creed of the Oxford Groupers is: 'Perfect (or absolute) love; perfect unselfishness; perfect honesty; perfect purity.' And a very good creed it is too. How few of us can say that we are possessed of these characteristics; yet we ought to strive with God's help to attain to this state, and there is no excuse for us not striving for it.

In this rambling letter I hope you will find something that will help you. Do write and tell me what I can do more to help you to help your people which is your aim. It is so easy to believe that one desires to be a benefactor, but the rapt attention of a crowd of listeners can easily go to one's head like red wine, there is a danger of pride. Love is after all conqueror of the world.

With keenest interest in your welfare, I remain

Sincerely your friend,

*Caroline E. Froot*

**Collection Number: A922**

**Allison Wessels George CHAMPION Papers, 1925-1959**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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