

Crest Hotel  
July 18, 1950

TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:

Dear Brethren:

With reference to our former letter of last week, we have had no reply as yet. It is now over eight days. We have been informed, perhaps "unofficially", that the sentiment of the Committee is that we not be allowed to return to Africa as missionaries until the matter presented in our last letter is "cleared up." Presumably that would mean that we retract the positions we have expressed, either with or without being shown rationally and logically wherein they are erroneous. We regret that the implied threat of dismissal from the mission field is used as a sort of lever to pry us into "step" with the opinions of men, which opinions are so clearly opposed to both reason and revelation.

We have not challenged a single tenet of Seventh-day Adventist faith. Rather, we are appealing for a return to the faith of the pioneers of this movement, to the faith of Ellen G. White, and the light which came to us in 1888, which latter is now quite completely obscured by a confusion of "the third angel's message in verity" with Babylon's false and synthetic, so-called "righteousness by faith".

We would ask respectfully, brethren, why is the first reaction to our appeal that of dangling a sword over our heads?

As for us, behold, we are in your hands: do unto us as seemeth good and meet unto you. (Jer. 26:14). We frankly confess that it may not be impossible that we are indeed the most stupid fools ever to attend a General Conference session. But, if we are, it should be most easily possible for you to show us wherein, logically and rationally and truthfully, our conclusions are utterly erroneous. This matter is very serious; either we are terribly right, or we are terribly wrong. If the latter is the case, then the fundamental errors of our convictions should be outstandingly apparent to your minds. If the former is the

case, we would respectfully remind you, dear elders, that to seek to stifle this matter will be a serious tragedy, not for our ~~weaf~~ selves, but for yourselves and the church, to whom, under God, you are responsible.

We believe in unity, and keeping step with the brethren. But the time has come to point out the ultimate results of confusing our people with Babylon's irrational and spurious "righteousness by faith", which is in affinity with modern Spiritualism. "We are to unify, but not on a platform of error," wrote Ellen G. White nearly fifty years ago, at the time of Dr. Kellogg's spiritualistic apostasy. "In the providence of God, the errors that have been coming in must be met," she added (Special Testimonies, Series B).

Herewith are a few selections from her pen, addressed "To the Brethren Assembled at the General Conference", Minneapolis, Minn., November 1888. May we refresh your minds with a few of the solemn counsels which she gave at that time concerning the danger of "squashing" men who speak their deepest convictions:

Doctor Waggoner has spoken to us in a straight forward manner. There is precious light in what he has said. . . Truth will lose nothing in investigation, therefore I plead for Christ's sake that you come to the living oracles, and with prayer and humiliation seek God. . . I want to receive every ray of light that God shall send me, though it should come through the humblest of His servants. Of one thing I am certain, as Christians, you have no right to entertain feelings of enmity, unkindness, and prejudice toward Dr. Waggoner who has presented his view in a plain, straightforward, manner, as a Christian should. If he is in error, you should, in a calm, rational, Christian manner, seek to show him from the word of God where he is out of harmony with its teachings. If you cannot do this, you have no right as Christians, to pick flaws, to criticize, to work in the dark to prejudice minds with your objections. This is Satan's way of working.

Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct. But I believe him to be perfectly honest in his views, and I would respect his feelings and trust him as a Christian gentleman. I have no reason to think that he is not as much esteemed of God as any of my brethren and I shall regard him as a Christian brother, so long as there is no evidence that he is unworthy. The fact that he honestly holds some views of Scripture differing from yours and mine is no reason we should treat him as an offender, as a dangerous man, and make him the subject of unjust criticism. We should not raise a voice of censure against him or his teachings unless we can present reasons for so doing, and show him that he is in error. . . There are some who have a desire to have a decision made at once as to what is the correct view in the point under discussion. As this would please Elder Butler, it is advised that this question should be settled at once; but are minds prepared for such a decision? While under so much excitement as now exists, they are not prepared to make safe decisions. . .

It is perilous to make decisions upon any controverted point without dispassionately considering all sides of the question. . .

The truth must be presented as it is in Jesus, and it will satisfy the soul. Let not any among us become stirred up because ideas are presented in this meeting contrary to what they have believed. Stop your unsanctified criticism and come and investigate the subject. . .

There are but few, even of those who claim to believe it, that comprehend the third angel's message (how could they, if they confuse its verity with modern Spiritualism?). . . Said my Guide, "There is much light yet to shine forth from the law of God and the gospel of righteousness. This message understood in its true character, and proclaimed in the spirit, will lighten the earth with its glory. . .

There will be great humbling of heart before God upon the part of everyone who remains faithful and true to the end. Satan will so work upon the unconsecrated elements of the human mind that many will not accept the light in God's appointed way. . .

There is positive danger that some who profess to believe the truth will be found in a position similar to that of the Jews. They take the ideas of the men they are associated with, but not because of searching the Scriptures. They conscientiously accept their teachings as doctrines of truth. I entreat of you to make God your trust; idolize no man, depend upon no man. Let not your love of men hold them in places of trust that they are unqualified to fill. For man is finite and erring, liable to be controlled by his own feelings and opinions. . .

I entreat you, close not the door of the heart for fear some ray of light shall come to you. . . If you do not see the light yourselves, you will prevent the rays of light from coming to the people. . .

With humbled softened hearts, with respect and love for one another, search your Bibles. The light may not come in accordance with the plans that man may devise. . . And let no one pursue an unfair course, not willing to open their ears to hear and yet free to comment and quibble and sow doubt of that which they will not take time to understand. . .

Our greatest fears should be that we may be rebelling against God's word which we have as a guide amid all the perils of the last days. We must be sure that we are on the Lord's side, that we have the truth as it is in Jesus. . .

Men will go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for the second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is their work to make crooked things straight. Some things must be torn down; some things must be built up. The old treasures must be reset in the framework of truth. . . Their testimony must not be molded by the opinions and ideas that have been regarded sound, but by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. They are to lift up Christ (the true One, of course), and call sinners to repentance. . .

(Some like the Jews of old) do not take the time to investigate candidly with earnest prayer, the evidences of the truth, and they oppose that which they do not understand. Like the Jews, they take it for granted that they



have all the truth, and feel a sort of contempt for anyone who should suppose that he had more correct ideas than themselves of what is truth. They tell others that the doctrine is not true, and afterward when they see light and evidence they still cherish doubt and take steps which lead to results of which they never dreamed. Those who have doctrines because their associates in the work believe them resist the truth without going to the Scriptures to learn what is truth. Because those in whom they have confidence oppose the light, they oppose it, not knowing that they are rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. . .

It is not wise for one of these young men (Jones and Waggoner) to commit himself to a decision at this meeting where opposition rather than investigation is the order of the day. . . You should not believe any doctrine because another says it is truth. You should not believe it because Elder Smith, or Elder Kilgore, or Elder Van Horn, or Elder Haskell says it is truth, but because God's voice has declared it is His living oracles. . . Those who neglect to search for evidence for themselves, and rely upon what some one else says, will not have root in themselves, and will not be able to give reason for the hope that is within them. . .

We should not reject or oppose the views of our fellow labourers because they do not agree with our ideas until we have used every means in our power to find out whether or not they are truth, comparing Scripture with Scripture.  
--MS 15, 1888, E. G. White

Thus did the Spirit of God solemnly counsel our fathers sixty-two years ago at the fateful meeting at Minneapolis. We do not profess to be messengers of God as were Elders Jones and Waggoner at that time. We are just humble missionaries from the heart of Africa. But we are constrained to speak our sincere and conscientious convictions of truth. Will you not make it possible for us to present to you, without an atmosphere of prejudice, bias, or threats, the reasons for the conclusions to which we have come?

This is God's true church, and it will triumph. There are seven thousand left in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal, in spite of the insidious work of Baal's four hundred and fifty prophets. Truth will triumph, and God may use agencies we do not now discern to turn the heart of His people back to Him in genuine, heart-broken love. The Christ of the Cross will yet be uplifted. On Monday, February 27, 1893, the following words were read to the General Conference session of that year, in a letter sent from Australia by Sister White (she speaks of the sad consequences of spurning the light at Minneapolis, and the tragic deceptions that would ensue):

There will be lords many and gods many. The cry will be heard, "Lo, here is Christ, and lo, he is there". The deep plottings of Satan will reveal its working everywhere, for the purpose of distracting attention from present duty. The appearance of a false Christ will awaken delusive hopes in the



minds of those who will allow themselves to be deceived. The church members that are awake will arise to the emergency, and manifestations of satanic power are to be presented in their true light before the people.

Let the Cross be restored to the everlasting gospel. Let Israel behold the Lamb of God, rather than this false Christ, this Babylonian Baal, held up before them at the present time.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed)

R. J. Wieland

(Signed)

D. K. Short

Retyped verbatim March 1993, from the original indistinct carbon copy.