

1011 Maryland Avenue  
St. Cloud, Florida  
August 3, 1950

Elder J. I. Robison  
Takoma Park  
Washington 12, D. C.

Dear Elder Robison:

In my brief visit with you the last Sabbath afternoon of the Session, you requested me to reply to the letter of July 20 which you delivered to me then. This has been my first opportunity.

I appreciate your frank, though kind, acknowledgement of our letters to the General Conference Committee. I have thought a great deal about the whole matter during our trip back, and re-read with some surprise the boldness expressed in those two documents, and in the preceding correspondence which passed between some of the brethren and myself. As timid, retiring, and fearful as I ordinarily and naturally am by disposition, I am a bit surprised at what I have done.

But—the outcome of the recent General Conference session has only deepened my convictions that the matter which I have presented is very serious, and worthy of careful investigation. Upon re-reading the correspondence in my files, re-reading to-day extensive portions of Testimonies to Ministers, Life Sketches (the chapter to which Elder McElhany referred in his opening address at San Francisco), and Prophets and Kings, and praying sincerely for guidance, I feel that until the positions we have expressed are proven untenable, I cannot be ashamed or regretful that my name is subscribed to those documents. It is not only unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience; it becomes unsafe for one to repress his conscientious convictions too long in times of crisis and peril.

May I point out, Elder Robison, a few points in your letter which I do not fully understand: While I appreciate your concern as to our "future", it seems, upon re-reading and analyzing your letter, that you have definitely pre-judged our case, and confidently assumed that we "are on the path that Satan trod". I have searched the letter and my recollections of your remarks that afternoon for evidence as to why you have come to that conclusion. You have not replied to any of the points we made in the letters, showing wherein we have drawn erroneous assumptions. It seems evident that the main reason alluded to in your letter is simply that we have dared to challenge the ideas of some prominent denominational leaders.

Now, I am conscious that there prevails amongst us (and rightly) a tremendous respect for the ideas of leading brethren. But, in times of crisis such as the present, when it is so glaringly evident that these leaders are themselves confused, should we lightly dismiss a tremendous weight of instruction from inspired sources such as the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, in order to uphold brethren who have not thought matters through quite clearly? Was Jeremiah "on the path that Satan trod" because he opposed the kings of Judah, the princes thereof, and the priests thereof? Now, we are certainly not Jeremiah, but how can you know for a certainty that Truth is not supporting the serious statements which we made in those letters, when, as you admit, "we have not had time, in the busy hours of this session, to give the matter any consideration". Obviously, then, there was no opportunity to check the references to which we referred, and to think the matter through with due deliberation. Now, then, is it so certain that we are on the wrong track?

Again, you emphasize the thought that our attitude is one of accusation, fault-finding, obviously the result of our having taken our eyes off Jesus. The implication

is that, without the necessity of seriously considering the doctrinal and historical factors involved in our position, we can be considered wrong because we thus boldly challenge the brethren. I admit freely that our letters were bold and frank, but I would point out that there was absolutely no personal fault-finding in them. Our concern was for ideas, concepts, doctrines. Really, Elder Robison, can you point out statements that were either unkind, un-Christian, or evidencing irrelevant personal thrusts? If, doctrinally and historically, we should eventually be shown to be right, do not the exigencies of the present crisis require forthright, frank, honest treatment? (There was considerable correspondence that preceded those two letters, also).

In all my previous correspondence, the brethren, while not always understanding what was involved doctrinally, have expressed their appreciation of the spirit in which I wrote. Elder J. A. Spicer wrote me:

"I think the phrasing of your letter is kind and sober. . . It may be the Lord has led you to launch an inquiry and mild protest in a way that may bring help to the situation quicker than I thought. . . May your efforts to help the brethren work out for their good and the good of the cause."

Elder Anderson wrote me some time ago:

"I have appreciated very much the spirit that your letter reveals. You have evidently disagreed with Brother ———, but you have maintained a fine Christian spirit."

Elder Cormack replied to a letter addressed to Elder McElhany as follows:

"Elder McElhany appreciates very much the careful Christian approach made in your letter to the important matters which you so carefully discuss. . . The admonitions and warnings that you have so thoughtfully and courteously presented will be of real value to the brethren."

I wish to quote these to you in absolute confidence, Elder Robison, because I have been acquainted with you personally in Africa, and wish to plead for myself on this one point of whether or not I have been showing a Christian spirit. You and I have had several impromptu discussions, once in my car driving to Kampala from Bugema, once at Kendu, once in the RMH cafeteria, about government grants. We disagreed, true; but really, dear Elder, did I show an attitude that would make you think I was Satanic in my difference of viewpoint, at all? I trust that I am not hypocritical when I say that I do love my brethren in this movement, as I love the message and its Author. And if I am positive and decided in my views of some matters, it is because of sincere and deep convictions, rather than personal opposition, selfishness, and love of contention, I trust. Forgive me for this—but I am more jealous for the heavenly credentials of a Christ-like, kind, brotherly spirit than I am for the little card I carry in my wallet. I have prayed that personalities may not becloud the issues of this present matter, but that we may be free to investigate matters without prejudice. And I have confidence that eventually that will be so.

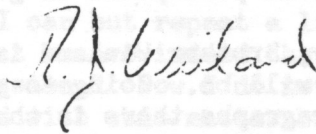
Permit me to mention one or two more points that may require clarification. Though we feel that the prophecy concerning Baal-worship found in T. M. pp. 467, 468, (also Life Sketches, p. 326) is being fulfilled in the present confusion of Babylon's "righteousness by faith" with what should be ours, in no way can that be construed to mean that we doubt the validity and ultimate triumph of this movement as God's one true church. One or two statements in your letter intimate that you think us unsettled in our relationship to this movement. We unequivocally deny that, really, Elder Robison. Frankly, it is because I do not wish to return to the "faith" (let alone communion) of the Presbyterian church, out of which I came twenty-two years ago when I accepted this blessed truth, that I have made the protests that I have written.

Israel had drifted into a truly apostate understanding of God and religious experience in the days of Elijah; but she was not Babylon. She never became Babylon, and she never will. This movement will triumph. Israel will overcome the mistakes of old Jerusalem, and will become fully worthy to enter the New Jerusalem, not long hence. Our point is simply that she hasn't yet overcome those mistakes, and that to insist now on getting a supernatural power to vindicate our present position before the world is dangerous, until this confusion is clarified.

In conclusion, have you informed Brother Sla e of our sailing date being postponed? We, of course, have not. We await confirmation by letter from you now as to our present duty.

With kind personal regards, I remain

Very sincerely yours,



P. S. I have just been reading the chapter to which Elder McElhany referred in his opening address at the Session, Life Sketches, p. 319-330. The closing paragraphs seem rather timely, especially. Also Testimonies to Ministers p. 106, 107, and 109.