

Cleveland, Ohio
June 23rd 1958

Pastor A. V. Olson
General Conference

Dear Elder Olson:

We wish to thank you in this personal letter for your kindness in permitting us to read the report of the Committee on our manuscript. We assure you we have treated the matter in confidence, and have made no copy of any of its statements. You will appreciate our earnest desire to understand wherein the brethren feel our manuscript is in error in its general thesis.

While we have readily submitted to the decision of the General Conference regarding its circulation, we have felt for some seven years that the 1951 report on it did not in reality deal with its subject matter.

During these seven years we have rather anxiously wondered if the vault contained hitherto unpublished Ellen G. White statements that proved the thesis of our manuscript wrong.

The only new statement we had learned of is the one released for the first time in the Review in 1952, now in Selected Messages Vol. 1, pp. 234, 235. May we call your attention to how this statement supports and strengthens the premise of our manuscript:

"An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth (concerning the moral law in Galatians), lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren (E. J.) Waggoner and (A.T.) Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world." (1896; emphasis supplied).

The Committee's Report now presents statements from Sister White attesting the wonderful blessings of the Lord on the movement after 1888. We too have acknowledged in our manuscript these blessings, with both material and numerical progress, and we express therein complete confidence in the Lord's leading and blessing on us as a denomination, and in its final triumph. What we point out in the manuscript is that we are as far from being ready spiritually for the outpouring of the Spirit in "latter rain" power "today" (1950) as were our brethren of the "1888" era. In other words, we are no closer to the ultimate solution of the problem of

lukewarmness and love of self now, than we were in 1888 and thereafter. This spiritual impotence is what we speak of as a lack of true progress, a failure thus far to fulfill the prophetic destiny foretold of our movement in Revelation 18.

We perceive that we have been led by the Lord ever since the 1888 era on a path that we knew not, a "Detour" occasioned by our own stubborn unbelief, but most certainly as much ordained by the Lord as was the "altering of His purpose" brought to view in Israel's history (Num. 14:34, mg). This way is His only effective means of correction, to bring us to our senses in humble repentance and contrition, that our unbelief in His messages of correction may be conquered by beholding the results of our blindness. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." (Jer. 2:19). We are most certainly eating the fruit of our own doings until we shall abhor ourselves.

Every step we take, through the years, toward our ultimate repentance is "gaining ground". The Lord keeps step with us, if we will not keep step with Him. If the brethren would kindly note again what we actually said in our manuscript on the subject of the "Detour", they would understand that we do not in fact recommend "going back to 1893 and starting all over again". We urge that we recognize the significance of our history since that time, and in repentance, contrition, and reconciliation with the Lord, go forward from here.

Instead of this, we are claiming authoritatively that the message of Christ's righteousness was really accepted some 70 years ago, and that we are now, and have been all this while, enjoying the "loud cry", virtually rich and increased with goods. This attitude not only flies in the face of history, but it also constitutes the precise denominational complex which the Laodicean message reproves. The Seventh-day Adventist church being composed of a large proportion of truly honest-hearted workers and laity, the Seventh-day Adventist conscience is disturbed.

We find no difficulty in harmonizing the Spirit of Prophecy statements on pages 5 to 7 of the Report with the inspired statement of 1896 which we quote on page one of this letter. Neither do we have difficulty harmonizing those statements with the thesis of our paper, which is concerned with the reception of the latter rain and giving of the loud cry.

A correction overlooked. Page 17 of the Report, point (3) refers to what appears to be a very flagrant example of misuse of the Spirit of Prophecy writings, but which we had corrected ourselves before submitting the manuscript copies to you brethren in 1950. It is in respect of the citation "Letter 106, 1902". If you will kindly check your copies of this manuscript, we think you will find that we crossed out this citation using pen and ink, blue ink, as we did also with a few other typographical errors or corrections elsewhere. We had no intention of citing that letter, but the citation slipped into our notes and into the stencil. We merely used the expression quoted to state a principle, that the brethren of that era were, as many of us are today, quite sincere in what they did. If you find your copies crossed out there, it will clear us, at least in this instance, of what appears to be a really unethical use of Sister White's words.

We have no way of knowing how many copies of our manuscript, re-duplicated, have been read by workers or laymen. But we do know that some readers are loyal and intelligent church members who earnestly desire to

cooperate with their brethren in the finishing of the work in this generation. We ourselves do not desire to attempt a reply to the Committee's Report in self-defense before these readers, and have no such intention. But it occurs to us that some readers of the manuscript will, after some re-reading of the sources available to them, decide that many things in this report will not bear close analysis.

Page 7, Point 3. We have re-read the chapter in Vol. 5, "The Testimonies Slighted", written in 1882. We note statements in this chapter that do justify our application of this testimony to include responsible brethren. Would not a testimony to the Battle Creek church include leading brethren, members of the headquarters church? The more complete extract presented in the Report begins with the words, "The prevailing spirit of our time is that of infidelity and apostasy," evidently reaching out beyond Battle Creek itself. Will not most readers believe that this serious testimony contains principles of very general application, especially to the church leadership of that time? Further, the Report, on page 25, quotes from Letter 32, 1891, making reference to Elder Smith's confession, which acknowledged his taking a wrong stand in the 1882 Bell-McLearn controversy. That fact itself supports our application of statements from this testimony. One of the prominent leaders of the Battle Creek church in 1882, on the wrong side, was also on the wrong side in the 1888 crisis. He needed the warning, very evidently; and it was thus applicable to him.

Page 11, point 4. We have also re-read the chapter in "Testimonies to Ministers" from which we quoted on page 300. We think that unprejudiced readers will concede readily, unquestionably, that Sister White was warning the addressee of this letter against his personal danger of misunderstanding and resisting the light of the loud cry when it should come, and attempting to repress it and bind it about to suit his own ideas. A sentence closely following the excerpt quoted in the Report makes it clear that she was warning Elder Butler, not merely brethren in New York:

"Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to the world." (TM 300, emphasis supplied).

Reproofs in the earlier portion of this letter in respect of his tendency then to repress, restrict, and dictate to other workers, or think for them, make this last paragraph very significant and pointed.

Page 13, No. 6. Admittedly, we have concluded from our studies that much of the declension and unfaithfulness at Battle Creek headquarters in the 1890's was a consequence of the failure to understand and accept wholeheartedly the gracious message of Christ's righteousness. There may always be differences of opinion as to how much; but we feel that the statement we quote on page 1 of this letter might throw some light as to how much of the conditions for which reproof was given in 1896 stemmed from the "1888" blindness. It was also written in 1896.

Page 14, No. 6. Ellen G. White's great burden during these two years, or three, after the "Minneapolis meeting, was the reception of the

message of Christ's righteousness. There are clear statements that indicate that the laity would have gladly received the message; the only problem was with the leading brethren themselves.

Page 16, No. 7, (1). We feel that the remarks above on page 13, No. 5, apply.

Page 18, No. (8). Please compare our manuscript page 68, where the same quotation regarding Great Controversy, Vol. 4, is included. We had no sinister motive for deleting the reference here except for purposes of brevity and relevance. Does not affect our meaning.

Page 18, No. (9). Kindly note that our context in this instance (Manuscript, pp. 13, 14) is not concerned with the reception of Jones' and Waggoner's message, but with the fact that they were indeed the Lord's messengers. Does the extra sentence make any difference here?

Elder Uriah Smith and the confessions. In fairness we think we should point out that we definitely said that Elder Smith was sincere, both before and after his confessions (see pages 85, 87), and that we spoke highly of his contributions to this movement; nor did we disparage his work after his confessions. Apparently the Committee have not discerned our point in discussing Elder Smith and the others: They resisted the manifestation of the beginning of the "loud cry"; their influence contributed largely to the sad effects spoken of in Selected message, Vol. 1, pp. 234, 235. Their repentance, howsoever sincere and accepted of the Lord, came too late to obviate the unfortunate consequence of shutting away from our people and keeping away from the world, "the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory," obviously the light of the fourth angel. The official view of these matters (which we, incidentally attempt to "re-examine") in the books of Elders Christian and Spalding, considers these confessions to have opened the way for the untrammelled progress of the "loud cry" ever since the 1890's. Their repentance was doubtless accepted of the Lord, and just as far as they were able to understand matters, and to that extent effective; and we consider them worthy of a place in the Lord's work thereafter, in the time of delay, and do not represent them otherwise in our paper. Our only point is that their repentance did not undo or cancel the long delay to the finishing of the work that their resistance to light made necessary. It was a similar situation to that of Israel after they rejected the message of Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:40). Does this view truly conflict with the statements in Sister White's letters about brethren Smith and Buttler and others, in the Report?

We do not deny the blessings of the Lord on the 1901 Re-organization. But we have not had evidence that the Re-organization cancelled the effects of resisting the closing outpouring of the Holy Spirit of the Minneapolis era. Great denominational progress has been made since 1901; but we question if the Adventist conscience can believe that the 1901 Conference was the beginning of the loud cry in earnest. If so, how can one explain the pantheism crisis and messages connected therewith?

We feel that we should mention also that we would have no desire to "parade before the world" (Report, page 31) the faults of Elder Smith and others. We are examining the history of the church, and the faults of these brethren were merely incidental in presenting evidence that the loud cry was indeed resisted and arrested some seventy years ago. What we wrote in the manuscript was intended for you brethren to read, not the

world nor even the church; and our purpose was to re-examine what we believed was a serious misunderstanding of the significance of our history, and even the history itself, affecting our present spiritual state.

The Cross and the Reform Dress. We have re-read the reference on page 525 of Vol. 1, concerning the "cross" or "Cross". True, the immediate context was the reform dress. However, if you will please re-read the entire page (not merely the short excerpt in the Report), you will find, we think, evidence that Sister White is indeed speaking of the principle of the Cross, which Seventh-day Adventists should accept, and which distinguishes them from the world. Else why would she quote 1 Cor. 1:18 and Gal. 6:14 in the same paragraph from which we drew our statement? These texts obviously do not refer to the reform dress. The reform dress was presented as a particular and immediate application of accepting the Cross. (We capitalized the word in our quotation, perhaps by error; but note that seldom if ever is the word "cross" capitalized anywhere in the early testimonies).

The Report implies that our use of this quotation is indicative of our handling of Spirit of Prophecy exhibits throughout the manuscript. The question is asked, Was it the Cross of Christ, or the cross of the reform dress? It is interesting in this connection to note that the Vol. 1 General Index, page 729, lists this paragraph reference under the heading:

"Cross of Christ Despised by World 525"

We would agree with the Report that our use of this reference is indeed indicative of our handling of Spirit of Prophecy exhibits throughout the manuscript.

Numerous mistakes occur throughout our manuscript. First, we confess gladly that we were indeed amateurs in writing it; and secondly, we must remind the brethren that the materials were collected, the manuscript outlined, written, edited, typed, and duplicated in a space of six or seven weeks. But we feel that readers of this Report who check the sources will conclude that we have been honest and reasonable in our handling of Sister White's words of inspiration.

With kindest regards, we remain

Sincerely yours,

E. J. Wieland

D. K. Short

"Cross of Christ Despised by the World"

Testimones, Vol. 1, page 525

Something must arise to lessen the hold of God's people upon the world. The reform dress is simple and healthful, yet there is a cross in it. We have been so united with the world that we have lost sight of the cross and do not suffer for Christ's sake.

We should not wish to invent something to make a cross; but if God presents to us a cross, we should cheerfully bear it. In the acceptance of the cross we are distinguished from the world, who love us not and ridicule our peculiarity. Christ was hated by the world because He was not of the world. Can His followers expect to fare better than their Master? If we pass along without receiving censure or frowns from the world, we may be alarmed, for it is our conformity to the world which makes us so much like them that there is nothing to arouse their envy, or malice; there is no collision of spirits. The world despises the cross. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.