

April 16, 1965

(Personal)

Elder R. J. Wieland  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, Mich.

Dear Brother Wieland:

I have received two letters from you, dated Dec. 27, 1964 and Feb. 21, 1965. Response has been delayed because of the pressure of previous commitments—completing a major book, finishing an accompanying brochure, preparing three articles for the SDA Encyclopedia, giving a series of lectures to the Columbia Union leaders in January, a week of worship periods with the General Conference staff, continuing the writing of my new book, along with the serious illness of Mrs. Froom, beginning six weeks ago. This unexpected sickness disrupted many things.

At last I can turn to your communications. I did not want to answer hastily, for too much is involved as concerns you and your future. Because of this I shall answer with considerable fullness. Your first letter asked for something not in my power to grant. But it did reveal what you are evidently seeking for--access to the classified E. G. White statements, from documents that Mrs. White strictly charged should be held as classified, confidential, restricted, and private. On those you will simply have to take the word of those who have such access. I will have more to say on that later.

Your second letter was still more revealing. It showed that what you really want is to argue, to challenge, to debate. In that I am not interested. Were I to flatten every one of your contentions with evidence that would convince others, you would simply come up with another series. It is clear that with such an attitude a continuing dialogue could go on endlessly, but would be profitless. In that you remind me of M. L. Andreason and his unhappy proclivities that had such a sad end. That was his favorite technique. Answered on one point he always came up with another.

But most serious of all is the declaration, in the third paragraph of the opening page of your second letter, indicating that you have apparently taken a final, fateful stand, reaffirming the position you took years ago in your "1888 Re-Examined." It is the crucial point of your letter. You here say:

"The responsible leadership of the Church at and after 1888 resisted, spurned, misapprehended, and rejected" the message of of Righteousness by Faith there presented.

This re-iteration of your past stance has such serious--really frightening--involvements that I shall write you with great frankness. I shall tell you precisely what I am compelled to conclude, what I fear for you, and will utter a warning--appeal concerning what may come to you if you persist in your determined course. You will doubtless not like what

I have to say, but I must say it, nevertheless,

Brother Wieland, you have here made a most grave charge, a most serious indictment--especially as a reiteration in 1965. I can only describe it as a bold, bald, blatant accusation that impugnes the loyalty, denounces the integrity, and impeaches the honesty of our highest post-1888 leaders. It charges them with malfeasance in office, moral turpitude, leading the Advent Movement astray, and unfaithfulness to God and His "truth in verity." It discredits them as unworthy of respect, having forfeited all right to our confidence. I should think you would turn pale at the enormity of your accusation--for you might be wrong. For this charge I verily believe you will have to answer before Almighty God.

You have presumptuously arraigned these leaders at the bar of your judgment. They are incriminated upon your charges. They are discredited by your opinions. They are impeached by your court. And you apparently consider your judgment as the dictum of the supreme court, for you set up your pronouncements as superior to a dozen other competent judges and tribunals. That evinces a self-confidence that is shocking, a pride of opinion that bodes ill for you.

By your charge you have besmirched the characters of these past leaders, and cast aspersion on their conduct. In so doing you, I firmly believe, have grossly wronged and slandered them. But more than that, in maligning them you have struck at the Church itself, of which they were the chosen leaders. But on that, more later.

Actually, your assault on these past leaders in none other than character assassination. You imply that they were reprobate, culpable, guilty of apostasy. But such an onslaught, under the cover of distance and darkness, is a cowardly act, for you know that they cannot face you as their accuser, to defend their names and the fidelity of their ministry, and thus expose your slander. Such an act of desecration of their graves, as it were, should cause you to cringe, for you will surely have to answer for it before the Judge of all the earth.

I feel duty bound to press the point that I take a most serious view of your now reiterated, entrenched position. You have apparently dug in permanently. You have seemingly taken your stand, and do not intend to budge. To me, your re-affirmation is none other than a form of sacrilege--a besmirching of the honor and integrity of revered leaders who in the silence of death cannot challenge you, answer you, expose your fallacy, and put you in your place. It is striking from behind the sanctuary of the grave. It is digging up their bones and desecrating their sepulchures.

But it is more: To me it is bearing "false witness," a transgression of the moral law, controvening the facts, with no chance for them to refute you, to turn your attack, and put you in contempt. I repeat for emphasis: The seriousness of it all is that your assault is a direct denial of their integrity, probity, and fidelity. It is a craven attack upon their honesty, truthfulness, and uprightness. It constitutes a libel, a slander--defaming, blackening, belittling. As such it is effrontory, impudence, brazenness. And in the ultimate, it actually constitutes an unholy attack upon the Church itself.



That, to me, is the gravity of your declared opposition. That is why it chills and alarms me. That is why I fear for you, and your future. Who can study the record of such attacks through the years and not be deeply concerned.

As stated, the most serious aspect of this whole matter is the implied charge of apostasy against the Seventh-day Adventist Church itself. The grave implications of such an allegation must not be lost upon you. You pontifically assert what Mrs. White was never commissioned nor permitted to charge or indict, and what our responsible leadership since 1888 has never declared or believed. Just how you derived such overtowering insight, and who authorized you to bring such an indictment is a matter for serious heart searching.

But that is not all. Just how will the Church react to your self-initiated and reiterated dictum is something for you to ponder. This cannot and will not pass without an inevitable reckoning. After all, you are a credentialed Seventh-day Adventist minister. And like all other ministers you are accountable to the Church for your words, your conduct, and your relationships as they affect the Church. You are subject to authority the same as any other worker.

You cannot call a fellow minister a perverter, a corrupter, and an apostate without being ultimately called to account for your words. But you have extended such a charge to compass the Church leadership--and, in consequence, the Church itself. One of these times there is bound to be a reckoning. It cannot be otherwise, within the framework of our church polity.

I appeal to you to think this through and to take the initiative in rectifying the wrong that you have committed before you are brought to book by others. If you are wise you will heed my admonition. It is tendered privately and sincerely, as a fellow minister who has had a long period of observation in Church affairs, and who for many years had to do with problem cases of this kind. In my view, you had better act first, and without much delay.

You are on perilous ground on another count. You have pitted your individual judgment against the combined, considered appraisals of men like W. C. White, A. G. Daniells, A. W. Spalding, L. H. Christian, A. V. Olson, H. W. Lowe, Arthur White, R. L. Odom--and others today that I need not mention. And pre-eminently Mrs. White, E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones. That evinces an overtowering conceit that is alarming. Just how do you conceive that you have a perception that surpasses all others, a discernment that invalidates the studied conclusions of all special investigators? On this I fear that you are just plain obstinate. I fear your stubbornness has gotten the upper hand.

In pitting your personal investigative proclivities against all others you presuppose that the specialists are all wrong and you alone are right. The meticulous findings and judgment of all others is faulty, and yours is superior to those just named. In other words, all others are out of step, and you alone in step. The way you have set yourself in judgment against all others reveals a self-confidence not often encountered.

Look more closely at the names cited. First, there was W. C. White. No man in our history had a more intimate knowledge of Ellen White's every statement, writing, and position in the critical years from 1888 to the time of her death in 1915. He was the custodian of all of her writings, her constant companion, her confidant and appointed spokesman. He denied in recorded testimony the positions you attribute to her. I ask, who knows more about her declarations, he or you? I understand, though, that you denied his veracity.

Your opinions are also squarely against the mature and informed conclusions of A. G. Daniells, with whom I was intimately associated for years as his junior associate. He pioneered this investigation in 1926, and I first helped him then. I know his laborious search, and views, based upon his unique relations with Mrs. White, and his full access to the facts as chairman of the White Trustees. In his study he was not seeking to bolster a position, but to find the truth.

You are in direct conflict with A. W. Spalding, who was closely associated with the leaders of the movement--to whom you refer--as confidential secretary to several in the years immediately following 1888, and who worked with them for decades thereafter. As our commissioned historian, he had unlimited access to the facts and the sources. I knew Spalding well. He repudiates your positions. You are also at avariance with L. H. Christian who was in responsible leadership for many years, was personally present (in his late teens) at the '88 conference, was closely associated with our leaders for decades following 1888. His denial is positive, as was that of Clifton L. Taylor.

You have also set your opinions currently against Arthur W. White who has the most complete knowledge of the content of all personal testimonies of any man living. He teaches regularly in this field of the Spirit of Prophecy, lectures constantly thereon, and is custodian of all of Mrs. White's original writings. He too emphatically denies that Mrs. White held or condoned your asserted positions. (Miss Bessie Mount is another competent White Estate worker, with an amazing knowledge of E. G. White writings. She likewise rejects your assertions.)

Your dictums were similarly denied by the late A. V. Olson--a man of God, of wide experience, and the chairman of the E. G. White Board, who for years devoted himself to the intensive study of the evidence on this and related points. He was a man of discernment and of honesty in investigation, who never gave up until he had compassed all the evidence. He emphatically and specifically denied the validity of your charges and positions. I counselled with him constantly, and I know.

Passing Frank Chaney, who was assigned research on points in this field and spent much time in the vault, and whose findings contradict you, we take special note of R. L. Odom, another thorough scholar and balanced investigator, who devoted years to this area of evidence, and probably knows the E. G. White published writings more completely than any other living man, because of producing the three-volume Index. We have talked over this many times. He is similarly perturbed over your assertions, and repudiates them. (Norval F. Pease, who also did considerable study in the field,

as seen by his book By Faith Alone, similarly denies such rejection by the leadership.)

As far as I am aware your contention is not supported by any reputable Adventist historian who knows the full facts. That fact should give you pause, but seemingly it does not. You are likewise in conflict with the contemporary testimony of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner--as recorded in the days of their loyalty to the Movement in teaching Righteousness by Faith. In the decade following 1888 they never believed or supported your contention. It was always simply and only that "some" had rejected. This was the same as Ellen White maintained, and the dozen men I have named. Your contention thus stands out like a sore thumb, conspicuously alone, and in conflict with the virtually unanimous verdict of our scholars. That in itself ought to startle you. But apparently it does not faze you.

We will skip my own qualifications--though I have probably done as much research, through the past 25 years, in the published and unpublished E. G. White writings as any one, outside the staff itself. I have no axe to grind, no personal postulate to sustain. I simply search until I have gathered all the facts, so as to get a true and balanced picture, that I may reach sound conclusions. I too am compelled to deny your allegations. I submit that you have a lot of temerity to contradict the findings of this whole group of men, and maintain that you alone discern and tell the truth.

It is amazing. It evinces an egotism and a pride of opinion that separates you from your brethren. But it is you yourself who has created the distrust and suspicion as to your own competency and balance. Don't blame others for your troubles. Your chickens have simply come home to roost. You have built up the barriers that separate you. You have created the ostracism that you resent, and cannot understand.

I see no evidence that you are open-mindedly seeking the whole, balanced picture. Rather, you are out to bolster a pre-determined, constricted position, to sustain a previous, unsound commitment. I am also well aware that no man can be convinced against his will. It is with reluctance, and regret, that I have come to such conclusions. I had thought that others had been too harsh on you in their judgments. But it is now apparent that they were forced to their conclusions.

You pick out E. G. White expressions that suit your contentions, without finding the balancing statements that give the rest of the picture, and thus change the conclusions. That is why I do not have confidence in your procedures in investigation.

Regretfully, I have been forced to the conclusion that you do not actually want evidence--that what you really want is a chance to vindicate yourself, and to argue--that you are not open-mindedly seeking unbiased evidence. You are set on proving that your committed positions were right, and all others wrong. You are not seeking to correct your own misconceptions but to sustain your pre-conceived opinions, based upon partial, selected evidence, acquired in your self-appointed quest. I am disappointed and disillusioned.



The mimeographed item, "Adventist Leadership Did Not Reject the Message of 1888," was not submitted as documentary evidence. It was simply a summary of points. It was not prepared for you, but was merely sent out of courtesy. In your second letter you proceed to deny each of these summarizing points. The smug complacency of your denials--the I-know-better complex of your whole reaction--would indicate that your mind is made up, and closed. I therefore see no value in further discussion of those points.

You admonish me that if I publish those twelve points my reputation as a scholar will be "tarnished" in the "eyes of posterity"--a startling thought of extended time, coming from you. But I hardly think that your record of failure to convince a single one of our scholars who have specialized in this field, makes your observation too weighty.

You haggle over Jones' meaning of "some." Frankly, I am not interested in your interpretation of his semantics of 1921. And I have neither the time nor the disposition to argue about it. Argumentation is your trouble, but it gets you nowhere. I have a constructive work to do, and am unwilling to be diverted into a fruitless sparring match.

Now back to your first letter again. Either you forgot, or thought I would forget, that my communication of Dec. 21, 1964, stated that further discussion of the evidence would have to be based on your repudiation of all sympathy for, and support of, the Brinsmead positions. The cold truth is that the Brinsmeadites are using you and your "1888 Re-Examined" as a prize document for supporting and promoting their own anti-denominational positions and activities. Your total silence on that point in my letter would indicate your reluctance--if not indeed your refusal--to do so. I therefore felt, and feel, no obligation to share any further evidence with you. You apparently want evidence chiefly that you may attempt to counter and confute it.

You have maneuvered yourself into an unhappy position. You have provided the key document which the Hudsons, Brinsmeads, and other anti-denominational fighters consider their choicest ammunition against the Church. Al Hudson has assumed the position of spokesman and distributor of your item. All four Brinsmead outlets cite and circulate your treatise as choice ammunition in their warfare. A man is bound to be judged by the company in which he is found, especially when he declines to repudiate them.

The very fact that Hudson was given, or obtained, copies of your exchanges with the committees with whom you dealt, and published and exploited them, leads me to wonder if our correspondence (conducted on a purely personal and unofficial basis) might also somehow, sometime, find its way into Hudson's hands. You can hardly blame me for wondering. When I showed you a "Confidential" communication--plainly so marked in bold at the top--you immediately violated that confidence by writing to the daughter of the individual concerned to see if I had told the truth. That is another reason why I would hesitate to disclose further evidence.

A. L. Hudson had to be disfellowshipped, and is not even a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yet he poses as your spokesman, defender,

explainer, and exploiter. Why, I ask again, is yours the material, the ammunition, that they constantly fire at the denomination?

Nevertheless, despite your unwillingness to meet the stipulated condition of my letter, you press me to "permit you to see such evidence," that you may "have a chance to consider it." (No acceptance, or change of position is assured.) As I see it, you simply ask me to open to you classified information to which I have had access under stipulations, but which I am not permitted to share with you. You could never get direct access through the E. G. White Board, for you were never asked or authorized to delve into these matters. I have no authority to grant what the Board would refuse--to satisfy the curiosity of your self-appointed quest that has brought upon you so much perplexity, conflict, and grief.

Your anxiety for information has nothing to do with the ethics of the situation. Because you ventured onto unauthorized ground and took a position based on fragmentary evidence that you obtained, you can hardly expect others to violate these governing restrictions in order to help you out of your dilemma. After all, there are rules that govern our relationship to authority--especially Spirit of Prophecy stipulated rules. Don't blame others for your self-created problems. You seem blinded by your previous commitments.

You are well aware that you have never been asked by the Church to become the supreme interpreter either of our history, or of the Spirit of Prophecy communications thereon. Yours is an assumed pedestal upon which you have clambered of your own initiative, and from which you decline to budge. Obviously the Lord never called you to the role you have assumed. The evidence of the years would support such a conclusion. I know I would be lost in the field of higher mathematics or electronics. I leave that to others, trained and competent in those fields. Though I cannot understand it all, I am compelled to trust their competence. And Ranger II did hit the moon on target, even if I don't understand just how. The interesting thing about it all is that these specialists do seem to know their "stuff." The marvels that are performed attest their competence.

Not all wisdom, discernment, and truth reside in you. All others are not necessarily wrong. You might be mistaken. Your judgment might be warped. Your feeling of need for justification of a position adopted that has brought so much trouble, may well have a bearing. Your mistrust of the judgment of our most competent men has returned upon your own head. You have maneuvered yourself into a situation that is not pleasant. But it is of your own creation. And until you change your stubborn attitude, and yield your superiority-complex in pitting your judgment against the most competent men we have, you will continue to have trouble.

Gifts differ. Not all are evangelists. Not all are pastors, or teachers. Not all are administrators--and not all have the gift of sound and trustworthy research. Your brethren have definitely not felt that God called you to this line. You apparently do. That is where difficulties have arisen and a clash has come. That is why you have had all these years of misunderstanding and conflict with your brethren.



Don't blame others for unwillingness to turn you loose in the classified files that contain Mrs. White's confidential reproofs, encouragements, warnings, and assurances never meant for inquisitive, intrusive eyes. They do not believe that you are a safe man to be given such access. They do not trust your discernment or judgment, your capability of assessment and evaluation, your competency to sift and weigh evidence, or your ability to keep a confidence.

What evidence have you given of such competence, or fidelity? My own contacts with you have not created such confidence, though I started out thinking that perhaps others had wrongfully misjudged you. I don't question your sincerity. Saul of Tarsus was sincere enough, when he was mistakenly persecuting the infant church. But his sincerity was based on misconceptions.

M. L. Andreason demanded the right of unrestricted access to the E. G. White Mss., without surveillance. This was not, and could not be, granted. He was very angry--actually abusive over it. He demanded what no one else, under the E. G. White specifications, has been given. He misused certain early access that he did have. That ended it. He was not a safe man to turn loose in the Ellen White confidential materials, among which--along with highly personal reproofs and exposures of error--are doubtless the most illuminating portrayals of truth in all of her writings.

But access to such simply cannot be given to untried, unauthorized individuals who have preconceived positions to sustain, and are seeking support for a theory they have developed and which is floating about in duplicated and printed form, from which retraction would be humiliating.

If you did have access to all the sources and all the facts, what would you actually do with them? What makes you feel that you either could or would evaluate them correctly? What would be the result of your venture? Your past record surely would not justify the risk. Your method is clear--seeking out E. G. White statements that tend to support the position you have espoused, while ignoring those that confute it and bring into focus a balanced picture. In safe and sound research the whole must always be studied together for balance and truth. Read through prejudiced eyes, by a mind already made up and thus viewed through colored glasses, the entire picture assumes a different color. That is the subtilty and peril of such an approach.

In one of your earlier letters you referred to expressions brought to your attention in the E. J. Waggoner writings, that might indicate that he held a semi-Arian position on the deity of Christ. There again there was failure to take into account all that he says thereon, or such an assumption--or even such a suggestion--would never have been made. That again illustrates superficiality and amateurishness, a not uncommon failing.

At our Friday afternoon get together in the basement of the Park Church, at the last (1964) Autumn Council, you said that as far as you could see, you and I hold virtually the same positions regarding the episode of 1888, and its aftermath. This I emphatically deny. Our conclusions, and our emphasis and influence, are as different as day and night. The fruitage of my presentations is constructive not destructive, positive not negative. They engender confidence in the Hand that led us instead of weakening alle-



gience. They foster unity rather than fomenting unrest and suspicion. They lead to deepened confidence in God's providential guidance, not to perplexity, discouragement, and disaffection. They strengthen instead of disparaging and undercutting. And they harmonize with the total testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy, not just with selected citations. The difference is profound and irreconcilable.

I present the ultimate predominance of the truth of Righteousness by Faith--out of the initial mixed reception, out of the conflict of ensuing decades, and on to the final triumph. As the result of my presentations, truth is up-built, confidence is engendered, loyalty is fortified, dedication is deepened, and unity is buttressed. 1888 was not the beginning of a blackout on Righteousness by Faith, but the beginning of greater light that has not gone out, and will not--though not entered into as it ought to have been. There is more widespread interest and concern over it today than ever before. It will close with a blaze of glory.

Contrariwise, from your "1888 Re-Examined" recital--according to many who as a result of reading it have talked with me about it--doubt and suspicion arise, with eroding distrust of our leadership. A stigma is attached to the Movement. Loss of confidence and uncertainty results. That is clearly not the work of the Spirit of God. I might add that no Brinsmeadite ever quotes me in support of his positions. And no one goes over to them from my presentations. There is a tremendous difference between our viewpoints, and the resultant influence.

I repeat, that wherever your treatise has gone, men have told me in confidence that it has left a trail of doubt, suspicion, distrust, uncertainty, and confusion in their minds. It has weakened confidence in, and undermined loyalty to, the Church. That may seem like a harsh declaration. But scores have sought me out--because I have made a study in depth in this field--and have confided their misgivings and uncertainty. They don't know what to believe, whom to trust, or what is truth. That is the tragic fruitage of your document.

Further, I stand with the ablest historians and most profound students of our history. You, on the contrary, have taken your stand in opposition to their combined testimony. No, we do not stand at all together or bear the same witness. We do not create the same reactions or have the same fruitage. We have wholly different viewpoints. We build on different foundations, and exert contrasting influences. I disavow your committed stand. I do not and cannot condone your conclusions, attitudes, and influence. I have to take my stand against them.

Here is something that disturbs me. From someone in Australia who was in the Brinsmead camp for some time, but who got his eyes opened and withdrew, I recently learned that it was a copy of "1888 Re-Examined," being passed around in Australia in 1950 or '51, that fell into the hands of young Robert Brinsmead, then about 21 years of age. It was this that set him aflame, sparking the latent German Reformed conviction that had been drilled into him in his youth that perhaps he would be the one to bring down the battlements of the denomination.

Your document, it was declared, was the spark that ignited him --and you know the results. This was an eye opener to me. Your unbalanced presentation and your unsound conclusions apparently formed the foundation on which he is alleged to have built. That is the hidden peril of your treatise. That was said to be the relationship to incipient Brinsmeadism. Could it be that that is why you are so reluctant to openly break with it? Is there some kind of inner spiritual kinship?

Your unhappy plight makes me think of Elijah's situation in the wilderness near Beer-Sheba. He was, of course, acquainted both with the theology and the history--as well as the perverseness--of Israel. He knew the polity of the church, and was somewhat of a statistician. In establishing his views he doubtless pressed hard on the "semantics" involved. He had done considerable studying and calculating, in his own way, and had come to certain very sweeping and depressing conclusions.

Israel had unquestionably departed from God--both leadership and people. In fact, Elijah went so far as to feel, and say, that he alone was left with spiritual perception and loyalty to God and truth. He sharply disagreed with the historians and the experts on Israel about the situation. He was right, he felt, and they were all wrong. He only was loyally left, and was maligned and persecuted because of his claims and conclusions. But God had to tell Elijah that his deductions were wrong and his statistics awry. God actually had 7000 that hadn't bowed the knee to Baal--7000 wholly unknown to Elijah. His figures and percentages, and his conclusions, were wrong.

That was pretty hard for Elijah to accept--a very hard pill to swallow. He had done a lot of research--on his own--and the Lord's figures didn't agree with his. But God reads hearts, which Elijah could not do. God knew all the facts, and Elijah did not. Elijah thus actually defamed and willified Israel, and gave a misleading and blackening report. He bore an untrue witness, casting aspersion upon Israel and its leadership. Things were bad enough. But they were not as Elijah thought and declared.

The lesson is plain. We had better not judge, lest we be judged. And when God has not specifically spoken through His Messenger, we had better tread softly. It is not wise to try to out-do the Spirit of Prophecy. Mrs. White has nowhere made the impeachment that you have framed. Don't be another Uzzah, trying mistakenly to steady the ark (2 Sam 6: 6, 7). God doesn't need your hand. Something, some one, needs to jar you, and change you from your perilous course. Some things must be left with God. Numbering Israel is not your prerogative. Its indulgence is fraught with peril. You should cease, retreat, and retract. You need to do some confessing. You have some wrongs to right.

Self-appointed investigators always have a hard time. They work against unsuperable odds. But when God really calls and places a burden for such on a man, his brethren recognize it and support him. He receives authorization and backing. You have never had that recognition; and are farther away from it today than ever in the past, because of your persistence --if I can judge from the expressions of others. There must be a reason.

Of course there has been delay in the finishing of the work--delay caused by the lethargic attitude of the Church. But there are at least 19 causes which Mrs. White expressly specifies, and not one of them is your thesis that the leadership rejected the message of 1888--a position that she never states or condones. I choose to stand with Mrs. White. My unsolicited counsel ~~is~~ to you is to cease your attempted role as a misunderstood Elijah--alone in your egocentric judgments. Stick to the things in which you are competent and leave these areas to others whom God has called to such, and whose call the brethren have recognized and commissioned to carry out needed, specialized research.

Even the Apostle Paul withdrew his unseemly remarks about the Jewish high priest, Ananias (Acts. 23:3-5). He would not knowingly "speak evil" of the ruler of God's ancient people, despite their situation. That is a lesson you have not learned.

Again: We have a friend, here in this vicinity. She is a unique character, a sincere Christian, and well intentioned. She is neither a nurse, dietitian, nor physician. Nevertheless, she has quite an acquaintance in these fields, for a layman, and is a wide reader. She really has a unique medical vocabulary--impressive when talking to novices. She knows a lot about anatomy, physiology, chemistry, pharmacology, disease and its causes--and cure. She has statistics at her finger tips. And she is always giving advice on what is wrong with you, and how to get well--though she herself is always sick.

But in illness folks pass her by and go to a competent physician who is professionally trained and highly skilled, who is recognized for his scientific researches, and periodically keeps up with the latest thorough post graduate work. He is tops in his field, and ministers to his patients with safety and reliability. He has a recognized and accepted practice.

Again the point is obvious: When skilled medical services are needed, one goes to a trained specialist in the field--not to a well-intentioned but unrecognized novice. That, candidly, is why men do not turn to you to ascertain our theology, to authenticate our history, to ascertain and evaluate the testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy, to make pronouncements upon our past, to pass judgment on our leaders, or to challenge the united judgment of those commissioned to engage in such work, and who always work under wide counsel.

Why can you not sense your limitations? Your training and competence as an authority in this field is not recognized. Your prescriptions are not accepted. You are attempting to do what your brethren do not recognize as valid, sound, and competent. Why persist in a role for which you have no credentials, and in which you have no authority to speak? You only perpetuate your own, and others, perplexities.

Once more: I have a 1958 Buick--well preserved and in pretty good running condition. A couple of months ago I thought I should have it thoroughly checked over and put into tip-top condition. Now, there is a self-trained mechanic in Takoma Park who repairs cars on the side, in his home garage. His main business and skill is in other lines. Auto repairing is a side line--a hobby, an avocation. He fixes some things satisfactorily. But in complex situations he messes things up and in the end the owner has to take his car to a qualified mechanic--at added cost.



Did I take my car to this man? You know I did not. I took it to the approved, official Buick service station in Silver Spring, with its factory-trained experts. They gave it a complete going over, and put it in first class condition. Why to them? Because they are trained experts, qualified to do a competent job. Again the point is clear. We only trust men who are trained and competent, and capable of doing a professional job. You may be trained and competent in certain lines, but that does not thereby qualify you as a competent researcher and evaluator, an expert--much less an authority--on the Spirit of Prophecy. This is a specific skill in itself, a distinctive area of knowledge.

Your brethren do not trust you and your judgment in this field. You have no recognized credentials in this area. Your failure to get denominational recognition in this line is naturally frustrating, but it is inevitable--in the light of all the circumstances. Blessed is the man who knows his limitations and does not try to assume a role for which he is not fitted, and in which he is not recognized as competent, safe, and sound. That is my counsel to you.

Most earnestly,

  
L. E. Froom

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