

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

Berrien Springs, Michigan

Box 111, College Station
Berrien Springs, Michigan
May 10, 1965

Dr. L. E. Froom
6340 Eastern Ave., N. W.
Washington 12, D. C.

Dear Elder Froom:

Thank you for your letter of April 16, 1965. When I consider how busy you are and how unimportant I must be, I do appreciate your taking time to write me so much. I have read and re-read your letter, prayed much about what you say, and lain awake nights pondering the serious implications of it all. I have also sought counsel from friends, here.

I stand ready to retract anything I have said that honesty requires when evidence is forthcoming. Just the other day for the first time I came across the following counsel for ministers given at Minneapolis:

"You should not believe any doctrine simply because another says it is truth. You should not believe it because of Elder Smith, or Elder Hilgore, or Elder Van Horn, or Elder Haskell says it is truth, but because God's voice has declared it in His living oracles." (MS 15, 1893, p. 12).

You will agree that I can understand "living oracles" to include the writings of Ellen G. White, and "doctrine" to include by implication interpretations of Seventh-day Adventist history that bear on our understanding of Rev. 3:14-21.

Your letter does not present such evidence to me, but rather appeals to the motive of fear for my own future. To retract on the basis of fear without inspired evidence would hardly, I feel, be the right thing for me to do. As far as I am aware, the Lord has never asked a man to do such a thing. In fact, a man can very well ruin his soul by yielding to a pressure of fear and anxiety, and cravenly retracting without evidence what he has held in good conscience.

I do not wish to take such a course in order to escape any difficulties I may have to face in future. If you will permit me to see the evidence you once offered to let me see, I shall be happy to retract what it requires me to retract, and apologize to the brethren for what I have said. I say this because I pray for an honest heart, to confess truth regardless of cost to myself.

Your letter summons me to the tribunal of God for judgment. I cannot refuse a summons. I am a sinner, and I would approach in Jesus' name confessing my unworthiness in comparison with you to offer the church a thesis in regard to the significance of Seventh-day Adventist history. But I would there renew my appeal that God make clear and plain to His waiting and confused people just what is the real truth regarding our strange history. I have a clear and settled confidence that He will respond to that appeal, to the glory of His name.

Sincerely yours,

R. J. Wieland

P. S. Regarding your statements about Brinsmead: As I have said previously, I am not a follower of Brinsmead and am not connected with him in any way. This I think I have clear evidence for.

However you now introduce a new observation in your suggestion that Brinsmead is a follower of the Midland-Short manuscript. This is more difficult for me to deny because I cannot speak for Brinsmead. Only he could answer that question. It may be true, and it may not be true.

Certainly our manuscript makes clear that we held that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary (a work accomplished in heaven) requires a complementary work of cleansing the hearts and minds of God's people in preparation for the second advent of Christ. Thus we believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary is not confined to a ritual performed in heaven but also has vital parallel ethical consequences for the church here below. We further said that the doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary is our unique denominational contribution to the world, and in the plan of God is yet to become meaningful and prominent in the closing of the work as the third angel's message is heralded to the world with power. We felt there is a close relation between a true understanding of righteousness by faith and the cleansing of the sanctuary.

I do not know to what extent Brinsmead is indebted to our manuscript for his basic concepts. Perhaps none. But I hardly see that your inference that I am responsible for his activities can be valid. Our position explicitly reiterated in our manuscript is that cooperation with the General Conference and the organized church is essential, and under God, is duty.

Forgive me if I appear too frank, but perhaps if the General Conference had held a more objective attitude toward independent research during the past two decades, the Brinsmead agitation might never have been able to assume such serious proportions as it seems to have attained in some quarters.

RJW