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Robert Fine

HT: 113-C

December 31, 1902

Elder W. C. White.
1025 Jefferson St.
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Brother:

Last night I sent you a telegram stating that the Review Office East Building was totally destroyed by fire that evening, and that the cause was unknown. Today I will send you a Battle Creek paper giving an account of the disaster. As far as we know, the presentation in these papers is substantially correct.

A few minutes after six Brother Evans came, by appointment, to my office, to go over one of the new tracts we are preparing for the campaign. He and Brother Palmer and I finished the examination of the tract about twenty minutes past seven; then Brother Palmer left. The Tabernacle bell rang for the second time for service; and while Brother Evans and I were sitting chatting together, our light went out. We sat a moment, and as it did not return, I glanced out of the window and saw a light shining on the street. On opening the window I discovered that the east building was on fire. Brother Evans and I rushed into the street, to find the whole press-room ablaze. In a minute or so the fire engines came from the city, and began work; but it was perfectly evident from the start that the fire was beyond all control. We endeavored to get into the front office to rescue documents and furniture, but we could do very little. The building was filled with a dense oily smoke, calculated to suffocate one in a very short time. Brother Robert succeeded in getting some of his furniture and materials from the artists' department, and I believe a few boxes of books were thrown from the windows on the east side. With these very small items, the building, with all its contents, was destroyed. The fire was a very wicked one. It did its cruel work on short notice. At eight o'clock the roof fell in, and the machinery on the upper floors began to tumble. In an hour after the fire was discovered everything was gone, and the walls were falling.

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Fortunately the wind was blowing quite strong from the Southwest, almost from the South. This carried the flames away from the West Building over into the park.

We cannot at this hour say much about the losses. Of course they will be heavy. That building and its contents were insured for about \$110,000. To what extent the plates are destroyed, no one knows. Many were scattered throughout the building, being used, and some were piled up outside of the vaults. These are gone. There is a question as to whether the vaults were really fire-proof. This cannot be ascertained until the fire is entirely extinguished, and the rubbish cleared away.

This morning the directors held a short board meeting at 7:30, and at nine o'clock we met all the employees in the chapel. We are endeavoring to encourage everybody as much as possible. A relief committee of five was appointed, and another committee of five to advise the employees with reference to their future work was also appointed. We shall encourage as many of these hands as possible to enter the canvassing work. The directors are to meet this evening at five o'clock, to give the situation more extended study. We shall meet all the employees again tomorrow morning at nine.

Today telegrams of sympathy are coming from printers, publishers, and business firms all over the country. They offer every assistance in their power.

We have arranged to have the REVIEW AND HERALD printed on time next week. I think the work will be done by the Ellis Publishing Co.

The question of rebuilding and reopening business is, as you would naturally expect, the question of concern by many. The citizens hope we will rebuild, and offer help. But we shall not be in any hurry to settle this question. We must take time to seek the Lord, and counsel with our brethren regarding it.

I was planning to leave here Sunday for Huntsville. I do not know whether my movements will be delayed by this disaster or not. If you have any suggestions, send them at once, that I may hear from you by Sunday morning.

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I am hoping that we can distribute our employees about so that the most of them can be employed in our institutions, canvassing work, and missionary fields. We do not intend to allow one family to suffer during the winter for the necessities of life, and we do not want one employee to be tempted to give up the truth in order to get employment to earn a living. We shall do all we can along these lines.

Hoping to hear from you, I am

Yours sincerely,

Signed) A. G. Daniels

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