



PROPRIETOR OF

ELLEN G. WHITE Publications

Office Address

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
LAKOMA PARK, WASHINGTON 12, D.C.

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Southern African Division
P. O. Box H.G. 100, Highlands
Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia
Africa

Dear Brother

A day or two ago your secretary brought to me Elder Eva's letter addressed to you, with the request that I give you whatever information I could which might be of service to you in counseling with the brethren there. These cases are very difficult ones.

Sister White's counsel on the question of divorce and remarriage after divorce is set forth very clearly in The Adventist Home and Selected Messages, Book 2. This case may be somewhat like that dealt with in Selected Messages, Book 2, pp. 341,2. This is the case of Will Wales. I will review it briefly to give a little background of what Sister White has written.

Will Wales, some 10 years more or less before this letter was written by Sister White in 1901, was a young minister employed in the work of the church. His wife was of such a character that Sister White, in another reference speaks of how the marriage could not succeed. Finally, things came to the point that Will Wales left his wife, left his work, left the message. He got a divorce from his wife and married another woman. After passing through quite a period of darkness, there came an awakening in their experience and they apparently were received back into church membership. At some time subsequent to this, the father and the brother apparently felt that, to make things right, Will should leave his present wife and return to his former companion. Sister White counseled that this would not work and that no one should endeavor to work out such an arrangement. As time went on, Will Wales and his wife found themselves in Birmingham and they began very earnest missionary work in the church. In fact, they were largely responsible for building up and strengthening that church. This church was located at the headquarters of the local conference. Some of the folk felt that Will Wales should be recognized by the Conference and perhaps made a worker in the cause, perhaps a leading officer of the Birmingham church. There was considerable correspondence over this matter and Will Wales went to see Sister White in California. She made it clear that while the Lord would accept their humble labors, he

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should not be placed in any position of responsibility.

At no time did Sister White advise that the union with a second wife should be dissolved or that by dissolving it, matters could be straightened out. In matters of this kind, there is no possibility of making things right, for whatever steps one takes, someone will be wronged, someone will be hurt. I do not know, Brother Mote, of any case where Sister White broke up a present union. There come to my mind a number of cases where, like Will Wales, there was a divorce not on Bible grounds. The individuals, in their floundering, married when there was no justification from the Bible standpoint in marrying. After they came to the light and saw their mistake, did everything to rectify it, at no time did Sister White advocate that the present existing union should be dissolved, nor did she indicate that the individuals who had sinned but who had confessed and repented of their sins were living in adultery.

I recognize that the knowledge of these facts creates some problems but these are the facts in the case. Sister White was always loath to give counsel at long range on matters of this kind. She felt that those who were on the spot and knew all the circumstances must reach the decisions and give the counsel to those who were involved and concerned.

You have been gone a week now, Brother Mote. We were so glad you could be with us through the last meetings of our Board. We value very highly your counsel and your continued interest. We wish you the Lord's rich blessing as you labor with the brethren in Africa. Please give my greetings to the officers of the division.

With the best of wishes, I am

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White, Secretary
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P.S. In Will Wale's obituary which appeared in the Review and Herald, he is referred to as "Elder," and it is stated that he died with a bright hope of eternal life.

Can't find any reference to him in the Review and Herald.