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GENERAL CONFERENCE, TAKOMA PARK, D. C.

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Electric City
 Washington

COPY

Dear Sister

Your letter addressed to the General Conference, was passed by the Secretary to me, with the request that I reply. I do so only after discussing with several of our leading men here the questions you raise. *Handwritten: "Your questions"* These relate to statements made by Ellen White relative to the relationship of the United States and Great Britain at a time of political conflict.

I fail to find anywhere in Mrs. White's writings any words to the effect that when England declared war, there would never be peace again. In an article appearing in the Review and Herald on February 11, 1904, Mrs. White stated: "The world is becoming more and more lawless. Soon great trouble will arise among the nations,--trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes." Perhaps a memory of these words has given rise to your question on this point. You will observe, however, that no particular nation is named or conflict specified marking the beginning of this troublous time which "will not cease until Jesus comes."

Now back to the statements about the United States and Great Britain. In January, 1862, during the very early days of the Civil War, certain statements were made regarding the attitude of England toward the United States during that conflict. These statements appear in "Testimonies for the Church," Volume I, pages 252-260. That you may more easily have this before you as you read this letter, I am placing copy of this in your hands on a separate sheet.

You will observe that the statement is made that, "When England does declare war, all nations will have an interest of their own to serve and there will be general war, general confusion." Were this statement standing alone we would assume that it would have had its fulfillment when next after January 4, 1862 (the date of the vision) England should make a declaration of war. However, in its setting it is clear that the statement relates to the events and plans of the Civil War.

The context of the passage makes it clear that if the issue in the United States had been the abolition of slavery, England's sympathies would have been with the North. But because the war was to preserve the Union of the States and thus assure the safeguarding of the democracy, England was glad to see the nation weakened through division. She was weighing the situation and considering whether or not to make war in behalf of the secessionist states. She was sounding other nations to determine what their attitude

would be. Other nations were hoping that she would do so, that they might take revenge upon her for what they regarded as past injustices. Some of her colonies would take advantage of such a war to "break their yoke." Notwithstanding these adverse possibilities she would exercise her power against the North, if she thought it would pay. Then follows the sentence in question, "When England does declare war," etc.

Is it not logical to accept this statement, as we do those that precede and follow it, as conditional and as having a local rather than a distant prophetic application? If isolated from its context, and given a future application, even then it could not logically be made to apply later than to the next time that England should make a declaration of war. And she has waged several wars since 1862.

We would point out that frequently the adverb "when" is used as a synonym for "if." The passage in the "Testimonies" was written at a time when the course of England was in the balance. If she had then declared war, in view of the conditions described, there would have been general confusion.

A close grammatical parallel to the structure of this passage is found in Jeremiah 42:10-18. The prophet is discussing the question of whether or not the remnant left in Judah should carry out their purpose to go to Egypt. "If ye will still abide in the land," he promises protection and blessing. "But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land," he gave warnings of judgment and disaster in Egypt." The word "if" is used in other verses following, until we come to the 18th verse, when he says: "when ye shall return into Egypt." And this is followed by an appeal, "Go ye not into Egypt."

Now a few words relative to the humbling of the United States. The statement made by Mrs. White was: "This nation will yet be humbled into the dust." (Volume 1, page 259). This is also in the Civil War setting. Bearing in mind that the article in which these words appeared was published in February, 1862, at a time when it was thought by many that the rebellion would soon be quelled, and that war dragged on for more than three years, with many reverses to the Northern army, it seems clear, from the standpoint of those then living, that this prediction has had its fulfillment.

We fail to find anywhere in the Ellen G. White writings an unqualified statement to the effect that England would humble the United States in the dust. There is, however, another statement in the same paragraph regarding the humbling of the United States, which reads: "If England thinks it will pay, she will not hesitate a moment to improve her opportunity to exercise her power and humble our nation." Notice, please, the first word of this sentence, "If" which makes a humbling by England contingent on her attitude to the United States at the time of the Civil War conflict.

We know from Bible prophecy and statements in the Spirit of prophecy that there are troublous times ahead and that the United States will be seriously involved. It seems clear, however, that the statements appearing in Volume I, which we are discussing in this letter, have their application limited to the Civil War experience.

As we watch the development of affairs in Europe, we can but think of our many loyal people who are brought into suffering and perplexing positions, and I am sure in the minds of each of us there is the thought as to just how soon and to what extent our nation will become involved in the present conflict. We must place our trust in God and move steadily forward with the work He has given to us, preparing each day for His coming.

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White