

THE QUESTION OF AN ANTI-MEAT PLEDGE

A Review of the Circumstances Relating to the
E. G. White Appeals for a
Revival of Health Reform Teachings

Occasionally inquiries are received at the office of the Ellen G. White Publications concerning a letter written by Ellen G. White to Elder A. G. Daniells on March 29, 1908 in which an anti-meat pledge was proposed. Through the years since then portions of this E. G. White letter have been published privately, and at times have been accompanied by assertions that the leaders of the General Conference, and Elder Daniells in particular, did not accept this testimony and failed to act in harmony with it. Sometimes a pledge has been set forth in such a way as to make it appear that Ellen G. White suggested its wording. The following is a copy of such a pledge card sent to our office on July 25, 1951:

"THE PLEDGE

I solemnly promise, before God, to abstain from tobacco, spirituous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh-meats, butter, spices, rich cake, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and animal fat of all kinds, baking powder, soda or saleratus, in any form, and cheese, and from all exciting articles of food, and to abstain from eating between meals, and to do all I can to induce other to do likewise.

Testimony and pledge sent to the General Conference
March 29, 1908"

It is a fact that in a letter to Elder Daniells of March 29, 1908, Sister White did propose the signing of an anti-meat pledge. But no part of the above pledge is from the pen of Mrs. White for she did not at any time frame the wording for such a pledge. For reasons which are obvious when all the facts are taken into consideration, the text of Ellen G. White's personal letter to Elder A. G. Daniells was not published for general use either by Mrs. White or by the Trustees. These facts are as follows:

1. On March 29, 1908, Ellen White penned a letter to Elder A. G. Daniells, but she did not send it to him until late in May 1908. After expressing her agreement with plans for the erection of a meeting-house in Takoma Park, Ellen White pointed out the responsibility of the believers and workers in Washington, D.C. to the thousands of residents in that area who had not yet heard the third angel's message. Then under a subheading of "Backsliding in Health Reform" the following was stated:

"I am instructed to bear a message to all our people on the subject of health reform; for many have backslidden from their former loyalty to health reform principles. The light God has given is being disregarded.

"A true reformation needs to take place among the believers in Washington in the matter of healthful living. If the believers there will give themselves unreservedly to God, He will accept them. If they will adopt in the matter of eating and drinking the principles of temperance that the light of health reform has brought to us, they will be richly blessed. Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh meats, tea and coffee, and rich and unhealthful food preparations, and who are determined to make a covenant with God by sacrifice, will not continue to indulge their appetites for foods which they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people.

"The Lord has given clear light regarding the nature of the food that is to compose our diet; He has instructed us concerning the effect of unhealthful food upon the disposition and character. Shall we respond to the counsels and cautions given? Who among our brethren will sign a pledge to dispense with flesh meats, tea, and coffee, and all injurious foods, and become health reformers in the fullest sense of the term?"

The letter continues in much the same vein with two further references to the matter of a pledge.

In a letter under date of October 12, 1911 written by W. C. White to F. M. Wilcox from Ogden, Utah, we learn that

"Copies of this letter [March 29, 1908] were sent to several members of the General Conference Committee, and some of them, feeling keenly the weakness brought into our work by the backsliding among our people in the matter of meat-eating, felt that

it would be a benefit to act upon the suggestions made in Mother's letter. But the officers of the General Conference, and especially those who have labored long in foreign countries, and who have engaged in controversies in various foreign lands over this and kindred questions, felt that the movement on the part of our people to pledge themselves to not eat flesh, would cause unnecessary strife and unnecessary criticism of our people in mission fields. The officers of the General Conference advised that we should not make the pledge against flesh meats a general issue, and it was agreed that the matter should rest until we could give it deliberate consideration.

"When we came to the General Conference of 1909, and Mother saw the multitude of delegates from the foreign mission fields, she presented an address on Health Reform, adapted to the occasion."

2. A copy of Ellen White's letter to Elder Daniells reached Dr. W. A. Ruble, Secretary of the General Conference Medical Missionary Council and a member of the General Conference Committee.

Dr. Ruble was giving attention to the publication of articles and tracts promoting health reform interests in the denomination and on June 18, 1908, he sought permission from Mrs. White's office to duplicate and circulate the letter sent to Elder Daniells.

In reply, Elder W. C. White after some delay wrote July 24, 1908, as follows:

"The testimony sent to Elder Daniells, dated March 29, regarding backsliding on health reform, contains some statements regarding local conditions in Washington which Mother desired that our brethren there should read and study, but which she does not think it would be well to give a wide circulation. That part of the testimony which is of general interest will soon be prepared for publication." --W. C. White to W. A. Ruble, July 24, 1908.

3. In the meantime, under date of June 26, 1908, Elder W. C. White wrote to Elder Daniells, informing him of the Ruble request and inquiring regarding any use he had made or intended to make of the March 29 communication which had been sent to him about "four weeks ago." In his reply dated July 17, 1908, Elder Daniells stated:

"This letter came to the office while I was in the Central West. When I returned to Washington nearly all the members of our committee had either gone or were just leaving for different states to attend the camp-meetings. I had a heavy volume of work

needing immediate attention. One feature of the message perplexed me. I felt that I must have a little time and quiet calm to consider what was written. I have been called away from Washington two or three times and the brethren attending campmeetings have only just begun to get back. All are in now except Elder Spicer.

"The point that perplexes me is the suggestion to circulate a temperance pledge which includes abstinence from flesh foods and 'some other foods that are known to be injurious.' I feel that I need counsel regarding this before I shall know just how far to go in this direction. . . .

"Now it seems to me that we should do a lot of careful preparation in the way of teaching before we press the signing of a pledge. If we do not, it looks to me that we shall have a lot of unhappy divisions in churches and families. We have ministers and brethren who are not well balanced. Let these men get among our Scandinavian, German, and Russian brethren who have not been led along this road as far as some have been and try to force this pledge and we shall have trouble. A few years ago some of our good brethren in England pressed advanced views on health reform. This teaching was taken up by some extremists in Germany and pressed to the point that nearly wrecked a number of churches. Elder Conradi had to step in and counteract this work. . . .

"We have not given this important part of our message [health reform] the attention we should of late. Some have backslidden on this point. We must reform. It would be terrible for our people to go back to the general use of flesh foods, tea, coffee, etc. My heart responds to this message and I am ready to stand in the front ranks in making a strong effort to help our people to reach a higher standard.

"But it is my conviction that we must begin with care to educate. Let doctors and ministers give good clear talks on the subject. Let tracts be prepared which will give the people facts regarding the dangers of flesh foods. Let us place the whole question on a high attractive platform. In my tent and church work in New Zealand, I had no trouble in persuading the people to become vegetarians when I took pains to give them good plain reasons which appealed to their reason.

"As I am hoping to see you soon I ask the privilege of talking with you about this question before taking steps to circulate a pledge. When we have done this and counseled with your mother then I shall take the matter up just as she says the Lord directs that we should do. The Health Reform question is a great one and a perplexing one."

4. Elder W. C. White reports that Sister White gave hearty assent to this proposal. An interview between her and Elder Daniells was held in about two weeks time at her home, late in July or early in August, 1908. We

have on file from Elder Daniells himself a statement telling of that particular interview. In a letter dated April 11, 1928, in recounting that experience, he says:

"As expressed in my letter of July 17, 1908, addressed to Elder W. C. White, I felt the need of further counsel with Sister White before taking any action regarding the circulation of an Anti-Meat Pledge. The Lord says, 'Come let us reason together.' In my long association with Sister White, I had always found her ready to enter into the most careful and extended consideration of matters that perplexed me. I desired just such an interview with her concerning the Anti-Meat Pledge suggested in her letter of March 29, 1908.

"This interview was granted me on my first visit to Sister White's home after making the request for it in my letter of July 17th. In that interview we talked over the food problems in various countries,--Europe, Russia, South America, China and various mission fields as well as the situation in North America. We also talked at length about the circulation of an Anti-Meat Pledge--whether it should be for the Washington, D. C. church or all our churches through the world. We reviewed the uninstructed condition of the masses of our people regarding the broad principles of health reform and the harm that had at various times been done by extremists.

"The conclusion reached by our study was that an extensive well-balanced educational work should be carried on by physicians and ministers instead of entering precipitately upon an Anti-Meat Pledge Campaign. There was a clear understanding arrived at and Sister White thereafter treated me and the whole matter according to that understanding." [Underlining by Compilers]

5. The following paragraphs from Elder Daniells written to W. C. White make very clear his reasons for seeking the interview with Mrs. White and the apparent delay on the Anti-meat pledge:

Supplement to History of the Anti-Meat Pledge by W. C. White

"At my request Elder A. G. Daniells has written out his recollections of some of the statements placed before Sister White, showing why he and several of his associates on the General Conference Committee, did not feel free to engage in the launching of a World Wide and Medical Anti-Meat Pledge.

Statement of Conditions Met by Elder A. G. Daniells

"1. On one occasion when I attended a General Meeting in Norway I met a brother who was working at Hammerfest, Norway. That as you know is in the region of the midnight sun. I had known this worker when he was a strong hardy well man. But when I met him at the general meeting in Bergen he was very pale and

thin and looked to me as though he had tuberculosis. One day I said to him, Brother, what is the matter with you? You look tired and sick. Are you suffering from some disease? His reply was that he did not know that he had any organic difficulty, but he said he had got very thin and was weak so that he felt fatigued after slight effort in his work. As we continued our conversation I found that he was living, or trying to live, on a starvation dietary in that northern region. He said that for a long time he had been a strict vegetarian, and that when he went to Hammerfest he still held to his vegetarianism, but he said there was scarcely any fruit and but few vegetables and he found his dietary very slim. I asked him what the brethren and sisters up there lived on. He told me that they ate reindeer flesh, fish, fowl, eggs, etc., I remarked that they were a very healthy-looking people--in good flesh with rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, and manifested a lot of physical vigor. He said that was so. Then I told him that I thought that in that place he ought to adopt a more liberal dietary, for the case was quite different from what it was in Christiania where he could obtain plenty of fruit, vegetables and other nourishing food. I do not remember now whether I persuaded him to do this or not, but I have always felt that he was doing himself an injury. This is one of the cases I placed before your mother.

"2. Another striking case was the following: While visiting the Scandinavian field I met our missionary who was located way up in Lapland. I was very much interested in him and his field and made a diligent inquiry regarding the people for whom he was working, their way of living, their dietary, and all that related to human life in that snow-covered country. This brother and his wife were both looking strong and robust. I asked them concerning their dietary. They told me that they lived almost wholly on reindeer flesh, fowls, fish, and the like. They told me that that was about all there was up there for food. This brother related his experience in endeavoring to get a bag of potatoes. They were shipped from Bergen north. At a certain port they had to be trans-shipped to a smaller port, and later they were changed to a still smaller craft. He had to go some twenty miles to the port to get them. The freight expense was very heavy. In taking the potatoes from the port to his home they had to be conveyed on a sled, drawn by dogs, over deep snow, in very cold weather, and when he reached home the most of them were frozen. I placed this case before your mother, showing the great difficulty in carrying out a vegetarian diet in such a region. And also the perplexity that might come to those people if some radical vegetarian should in a general meeting attended by these people press the matter of signing an Anti-Meat pledge. I recognize that it might be objected by some that persons living in such places would not be pressed to sign the pledge, but I am not so sure of this. It is strange what some men feel it their duty to do in the matter of eating and drinking. This brings me to another instance.

"3. I have learned from missionaries in one isolated mission station the following: The missionary in charge of the station was a strict vegetarian and radical at that. One day he came to a company of converts and found them just starting to eat their

dinner. In the midst of them was a roasted turkey. The missionary reprimanded them for using flesh food, took the turkey by the legs, went to a pool of dirty water, and plunged the carcass into the pool. This gave those poor native converts great offense, and their feelings grew worse and worse until the whole station was in rebellion against this missionary and he had to be removed. When he found the deep feeling his act had created he apologized but that didn't settle the matter. I did not relate this case to your mother but it is a true statement of what took place in an important mission station. The parties who related it to me were the ones selected to follow this missionary and tried to heal the sore that had been made.

"4. When I traveled through Russia I found conditions very difficult indeed for anyone to live on a vegetarian diet there. It is true that I saw some fruit but I will tell you what the superintendent of that large Russian field told me about bananas. They were not displayed in the shop windows by the actual fruit but by large cards with a beautiful painting of a bunch of fruit, and the missionary told me that about all he and our brethren got from bananas was a good look at the painting. They were so expensive that the common people could not purchase them. What was true of bananas was true of apples, peaches, pears, either fresh or dried. Everywhere I went I found our missionary and the churches eating more or less flesh food, and of course I ate it with them. Now this was not the case in every part of Russia. When we got down in the region of Rodesia on the shores of the Black Sea we found quite a good deal of good fruit, but the long freight haul made the prices prohibitive in the northern sections of the country.

"5. These statements illustrate conditions in many parts of this old world where we are carrying on our work. I have seen the difficulties our people have in obtaining the kind of food they know is necessary to keep the body in a proper state of health and strength. And what I felt it my duty to place before your mother was the danger of radical extremists forcing their ideas of living upon individuals who were living in places where it would be almost impossible to carry out the views pressed upon them."

Concerning the above report Elder W. C. White testifies he was present and that Elder Daniells' statement "is a correct representation of the interview, and the conclusions resulting therefrom."

As Elder Daniells travelled east he wrote to Elder White on August 17 and closed with these words:

"I greatly enjoyed my visit to California this time and feel the peace and blessing of God as I return east."

6. In March of 1909 a conference president who was publishing several articles in the Northern Union Reaper concerning Health Reform, asked if he might quote from the March 29, 1908 letter written to Elder Daniells in the fourth article in his series. Responding to this inquiry Elder W. C. White wrote:

"A couple of days ago Mother received your letter of March 17, accompanied by clippings from the 'Northern Union Reaper' containing your articles Nos. 1, 2, 3, on the subject, 'Shall We Eat Flesh Meats?' also manuscript for Article four, which you have withheld from publication, and which is made up principally from copy of a letter which Mother wrote to Elder Daniells March 29, 1908, and which you hesitate to publish until you have Mother's consent.

"This morning Mother has read your letter and the article, and she wishes me to write to you that she does not wish this letter published, or extracts from it. [Underlining by Compilers]

"It has been Mother's intention to prepare an article for the 'Review' dealing with this same subject, but of course, she will deal with it somewhat differently when preparing it for publication than she has in this letter." --W. C. White Letter, March 25, 1909.

In her part of the educational work on Health Reform which Mrs. White and Elder Daniells discussed, Sister White prepared two statements which she presented in person at the 1909 General Conference Session held in Takoma Park, Washington, D. C. The first one entitled "A Lesson in Health Reform" was given as a sermon on May 26, 1909. [See General Conference Bulletin, May 30, 1909, pp. 213-215.] The second entitled "Faithfulness in Health Reform" was given as a sermon on May 31, 1909.

A few months later the second sermon was published in Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9, pp. 153-166. It is of interest to note that a large part of the letter addressed to Elder Daniells dealing with the subject of backsliding in health reform was reprinted in this presentation. Other parts were largely paralleled. She did not include a call for an anti-meat pledge, but she gave the following specific counsel:

"I am instructed to bear a message to all our people on the subject of health reform, for many have backslidden from their former loyalty to health reform principles.

"God's purpose for His children is that they shall grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ. In order to do this, they must use aright every power of mind, soul, and body. They cannot afford to waste any mental or physical strength.

"The question of how to preserve the health is one of primary importance. When we study this question in the fear of God we shall learn that it is best, for both our physical and our spiritual advancement, to observe simplicity in diet. Let us patiently study this question. We need knowledge and judgment in order to move wisely in this matter. Nature's laws are not to be resisted, but obeyed.

"Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods, tea and coffee, and rich and unhealthful food preparations, and who are determined to make a covenant with God by sacrifice, will not continue to indulge their appetite for food that they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people. . . .

"There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the Testimonies as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light. Those who claim to believe in health reform, and yet work counter to its principles in the daily life practice, are hurting their own souls and are leaving wrong impressions upon the minds of believers and unbelievers.

"A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth, that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. They have no time or strength to spend in the indulgence of appetite. . . .

"God requires of His people continual advancement. We need to learn that indulged appetite is the greatest hindrance to mental improvement and soul sanctification. With all our profession of health reform, many of us eat improperly. Indulgence of appetite is the greatest cause of physical and mental debility, and lies largely at the foundation of feebleness and premature death. Let the individual who is seeking to possess purity of spirit bear in mind that in Christ there is power to control the appetite.

"If we could be benefited by indulging the desire for flesh foods, I would not make this appeal to you; but I know we cannot. Flesh foods are injurious to the physical well-being, and we should learn to do without them. Those who are in a position where it is possible to secure a vegetarian diet, but who choose to follow their own preferences in this matter, eating and drinking as they please, will gradually grow careless of the instruction the Lord has given regarding other phases of the present truth and will lose their perception of what is truth; they will surely reap as they have sown.

"I have been instructed that the students in our schools are not to be served with flesh foods or with food preparations that are known to be unhealthful. Nothing that will serve to encourage a desire for stimulants should be placed on the tables. I appeal to old and young and to middle-aged. Deny your appetite of those things that are doing you injury. Serve the Lord by sacrifice. . . .

"We do not mark out any precise line to be followed in diet; but we do say that in countries where there are fruits, grains, and nuts in abundance, flesh food is not the right food for God's people. . . .

"We are not to make the use of flesh food a test of fellowship, but we should consider the influence that professed believers who use flesh foods have over others. As God's messengers, shall we not say to the people: 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God'? I Corinthians 10:31. Shall we not bear a decided testimony against the indulgence of perverted appetite? Will any who are ministers of the gospel, proclaiming the most solemn truth ever given to mortals, set an example in returning to the fleshpots of Egypt? Will those who are supported by the tithe from God's storehouse permit themselves by self-indulgence to poison the life-giving current flowing through their veins? Will they disregard the light and warnings that God has given them? The health of the body is to be regarded as essential for growth in grace and the acquirement of an even temper. If the stomach is not properly cared for, the formation of an upright, moral character will be hindered. The brain and nerves are in sympathy with the stomach. Erroneous eating and drinking result in erroneous thinking and acting.

"Greater efforts should be put forth to educate the people in the principles of health reform. Cooking schools should be established, and house-to-house instruction should be given in the art of cooking wholesome food. Old and young should learn how to cook more simply. Wherever the truth is presented, the people are to be taught how to prepare food in a simple, yet appetizing way. They are to be shown that a nourishing diet can be provided without the use of flesh foods. . . .

"Some, in abstaining from milk, eggs, and butter, have failed to supply the system with proper nourishment, and as a consequence have become weak and unable to work. Thus health

reform is brought into disrepute. The work that we have tried to build up solidly is confused with strange things that God has not required, and the energies of the church are crippled. But God will interfere to prevent the results of these too strenuous ideas. . . .

"While working against gluttony and intemperance, we must recognize the condition to which the human family is subjected. God has made provision for those who live in the different countries of the world. Those who desire to be co-workers with God must consider carefully before they specify just what foods should and should not be eaten. We are to be brought into connection with the masses. Should health reform in its most extreme form be taught to those whose circumstances forbid its adoption, more harm than good would be done. As I preach the gospel to the poor, I am instructed to tell them to eat that food which is most nourishing. I cannot say to them: 'You must not eat eggs, or milk, or cream. You must use no butter in the preparation of food.' The gospel must be preached to the poor, but the time has not yet come to prescribe the strictest diet. . . .

"Oh, how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great things. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith." --Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9, pp. 153-165.

The 1911 Experience

In the summer of 1911 representatives of our medical work in California at the early campmeetings encouraged our people to sign a pledge against the eating of meat. The E. G. White letter of March 29, 1908 was read to the people assembled and an anti-meat pledge was circulated.

Elders Andross and Behrens wrote to Elder W. C. White asking his opinion regarding the advisability of going forward with that work. In his reply dated June 7, 1911, Elder W. C. White wrote as follows:

"There are some perplexities in my mind regarding this matter. It seems to me that there are very many families of our people in California and elsewhere that know the evils of meat-eating and the advantages of vegetarianism, and who are so situated that it is easy for them to dispense with meat and depend upon vegetarian diet; yet at the same time their hold upon the principles is so feeble that it would seem to be a benefit to them to sign a pledge.

"But the value of such a pledge will depend very largely upon the way it is worded and the instruction that is given to the people in connection with it. As yet no one has submitted to us a copy of the pledge that was used by our brethren at the Tulare meeting."

Elder W. C. White asked for a copy of the pledge which some of the people were circulating, and when they produced a copy, he said, "I found it was worse than I had feared." The pledge which was handed to him read as follows:

"In compliance with the revealed will of the Lord, and trusting in His help, we pledge ourselves to abstain from the use of tea, coffee, and flesh foods, including fish and fowl."

The response to the two people who presented that pledge to him is in his own words:

"I told them that I thought that when a pledge was prepared for general circulation that it should come from the Medical Department, and should be based principally upon our general information regarding the dangers of meat-eating."

At a medical council held in Loma Linda, June 23-26, 1911, consideration was given to the attitude of Seventh-day Adventists toward health reform and the sound scientific reasons for the non-use of flesh foods. The question of a pledge was also studied. At that time it was voted to request the General Conference Committee to consider the question at the council to be held in Friedensau in July, 1911. Elder W. C. White reports that the minutes of the Friedensau council "do not show that this matter was considered, and Elder Irwin tells me that no place was found for it in the Council."

In October 1911 Mrs. White's mind turned again to the question of teaching health reform and the advisability of a pledge. In a document dated October 10 she wrote:

Regarding the Testimonies

"Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered. Nothing must be done untimely. Some matters must be withheld because some persons would make an improper use of the light given. Every jot and tittle is essential and must appear at an opportune time. In the past, the testimonies were carefully prepared before they were sent out for publication. And all matter is still carefully studied after the first writing. . . .

Anti-meat Pledge

"I am not prepared to advise that we make the matter of meat eating a test question with our people. There are some things on this subject that I can write out to be read before the churches, which it is essential for believers to understand; but when it comes to making this a test question, I dare not place it before our people in that positive way. There are those who would stumble over such a presentation, and there are others who would make of it a stone of stumbling.

"Let us give this matter due consideration. I am prepared to stand for some things; but not yet are we as a people fully ready for this issue. There should be first a fair representation of the subject, and it should be considered in all its bearings. Read carefully the record of Genesis 18:6-8.

"The Lord has given us much instruction on the subject of meat-eating; and from the light He has given we should not prepare meat and place it on our tables for our families. If meat is not placed before them the temptation to eat it is removed."
--Manuscript 23, 1911.

On October 12 and 13, 1911, Elder W. C. White wrote two letters to F. M. Wilcox, the editor of the Review and Herald, concerning health reform and the anti-meat pledge showing that these topics were still being considered by the brethren.

Elder F. M. Wilcox replied to those letters on October 27, 1911, and a study of his reply will throw light on the thinking of the leaders in those days:

"I have your letters of October 12 and 13, dealing with the subject of health reform, and of some of the opposing positions which have been taken over this matter, together with copy of letter from Sister White to some of the brethren in Washington.

"I have given this subject a great deal of study in a general way during the last few years. I have always felt in fullest sym-

pathy with the principles of healthful living as taught in the TESTIMONIES. So far as meat-eating is concerned, I have been a strict vegetarian for the last fifteen years. In my own personal experience, and in that of my family, I have tried to avoid extremes, and while I have left off the use of meat I have endeavored to supply in its place wholesome, nutritious food. Personally I feel that I am alive to-day as the result of heeding the instruction that has been given. This much by way of my personal experience in order that you may appreciate the standpoint from which I speak with reference to the matter of the pledge against meat eating.

"I have heard during the last few years a good deal of discussion regarding the pledge. I am frank to say that in my own natural feelings there is a prejudice against any measure of this sort. I do not feel that this is the time for this measure to be advocated. Even Sister White I see, according to your letter, shares this doubt. I do not doubt but that the signing of a pledge against eating meat and drinking tea and coffee, would be a source of strength to some of our people in preventing them from doing it. Good might be accomplished in this way, although I believe the evil which would result in the use which some of a fanatical turn of mind would make of it, employing it as a club to pound their brethren, would far more than offset the good which would be accomplished. In my own judgment an aggressive, consistent agitation of the principles of healthful living, is what is needed at the present time. I believe that the principles should be set before our people through public workers, and through the columns of our journals. I believe that the matter should be brought up at conventions and ministerial gatherings and our workers rallied to a consistent, sensible advocacy of the subject. Extremes should be avoided and carefully guarded against. I have felt that the REVIEW should undertake work of this kind. Accordingly, in the REVIEW of October 26, you will observe that I have two articles on the subject of health reform, one entitled "Clean Physical Living," and the other "Vegetarianism versus Flesh Foods." My purpose in writing these articles was to take my stand as the editor of our church paper, on the principles of healthful living, not only on the broad subject, but on some of the details particularly in the matter of vegetarianism, but at the same time I endeavored to strongly strike against the evil of any taking this subject and making it a rule by which they judge of the Christianity of their brethren, urging each one to study the question for himself and not become a censor as to the dietary of his brethren. In the REVIEW of November 2, which goes to press Sunday, I have another article entitled "Extremes in Diet," containing an entire reprint of what occurs under this head in Volume 9, of Testimonies for the Church, pp. 161-163. I state in this article that other phases of the question will be dealt with in the future. My purpose is to take up other phases, seeking to deal with the question on a consistently broad basis, not confining it wholly to the matter of diet, although giving that liberal consideration, bringing in some of the statements from Sister White with reference to meat eating, also securing articles from some of our physicians dealing with the subject on a scientific basis.

"Personally I would like to see a propaganda of the health question brought before this council. In my judgment however, it would be better to bring it forward on a general broad basis without any reference to the question of a pledge. My own judgment is that the pledge would meet with very strong opposition. I fear that its circulation would bring against us the charge that we were fulfilling the scripture of forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats; in fact this has already been argued.

"I have offered these suggestions from the standpoint of my own study of the question. I have done this however, with the utmost confidence in the leadings of the Lord in the work of Sister White, and with full appreciation of the question of healthful living set forth in the TESTIMONIES. I feel confident that more will be gained for the cause of health reform, as I have already stated, by an aggressive, consistent campaign, dealing with the question on a physiological basis, avoiding extremes, and seeking to lead our people to take a sensible, consistent view of the subject. This I believe is greatly needed at the present time, and such a propaganda I shall do all I can consistently to further in the position which I am placed."

The fact that no anti-meat eating pledge has been presented by the General Conference to our people naturally raises the question as to whether this phase of the counsel given Elder Daniells was withdrawn.

It was not withdrawn, but in the discussions of the whole matter by Elder Daniells and Sister White and by the leading brethren of the General Conference it was agreed that a broad plan of health reform education should precede the use of any anti-meat eating pledge; and further, since Mrs. E. G. White herself at the General Conference Session in 1909 counselled that, "We are not to make the use of flesh food a test of fellowship," and again in her statement of October 10, 1911, "I am not prepared to advise that we make the matter of meat eating a test question with our people," we must conclude that the later failure to initiate an anti-meat pledge in no way affects the validity of the counsel given in the Ellen G. White letter of March 29, 1908, nor the agreement concerning the proper procedure.

The narration of these facts and the reading of the accompanying statements indicate that:

(1) The E. G. White letter to A. G. Daniells was never released for publication by Mrs. White or the Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Publications.

(2) Ellen G. White did not draft the wording of any pledge. Any pledge then or now accompanying portions of the E. G. White letter to A. G. Daniells and alleged to be from the pen of Mrs. White is spurious.

(3) Elder Daniells acted promptly in response to the message seeking counsel of Sister White as to the procedure he should follow.

(4) Only eight or nine weeks elapsed from the sending of the letter from Mrs. White to the time that the interview was held in her home.

(5) The course of action agreed upon by Mrs. White, Elder Daniells, and the brethren in the educating of our people on health reform was undertaken by Ellen White and found expression in her statement of appeal presented at the General Conference of 1909, and published later that year in Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9, and in her statement of October 10, 1911.

(6) At the time between the interview and the General Conference Session in 1909 and again in 1911 Ellen White counselled against any precipitous move in the direction of an anti-meat pledge, but she consistently urged our people individually and voluntarily to enter into the better way of living as found in Health Reform.

(7) Mrs. White and Elder Daniells in their relation to this matter proceeded in good faith, and if there has been a failure to continue to advance in health reform, the responsibility cannot be placed upon Mrs. White or Elder Daniells. The closest and finest relations between Ellen G. White and A. G. Daniells continued to the day of her death, and she had such confidence in him that in her Last Will and Testament she appointed him as one of the five trustees of her estate.

Should not a review of the history which is recorded in this document lead us to a re-study of God's purpose in calling Seventh-day Adventists to a reform in dietetic practices and in the attitudes we should take personally toward that counsel today?

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