

July 30, 1904.

Eld. Geo. I. Butler,
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Dear Brother,-

The spirit moves upon me about once in so often to write you a letter. Somehow I feel better after I have unloaded a few things upon you. If you get tired of my communications, you must let me know and I will not trouble you any more. The fact is there is nobody among the leading brethren to whom I feel free to write except you and Uncle Stephen; and I somehow have enough faith in you to believe that you are not only honest but level-headed enough to do a little thinking on your own behalf, and that you are not only not afraid to think but that you have courage enough to speak out what you think once in a while.

I have been in a state of great perplexity ever since this controversy arose to know what could be the real root of the difficulty. I think I can say with entire honesty that if at any moment since the confusion started in I could have seen any way in which I could have brought the thing to an end by straightforward, honorable means, I would have undertaken to do it no matter at what cost. I have not had any campaign against anybody or any desire to injure or down anybody. I have had too heavy burdens on my back to want to undertake any new jobs of conquest.

I have studied hard to find out what was the real basis for the objection to my theology which you and some of the rest have thought so bad. It is charged that I have been philosophizing about God, but after looking carefully through the Living Temp

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and thinking over all the things I have written and said, I cannot see wherein I have undertaken anything of the sort. I have recognized that God was a universal presence, and that we owe the maintenance of our bodies to his constant care. I have concluded that this was a personal presence from the fact that it is intelligent and purposeful, and indicative of the operation of a will controlling and adapting movements and forces to meet constantly arising emergencies and changing conditions.

I have recognized also at the same time that God is bodily and personally present in heaven on His throne. I stated this clearly in the Living Temple so that no one would have any reason to doubt that I believed it. How God could be bodily present in heaven and personally present on earth is something I did not try to explain. Those who are finding fault with me are the ones who are philosophizing. I simply accepted the fact and did not think it necessary to try to explain it except by the recognition that God is infinite and omnipotent. I have never attempted to philosophize about God or to speculate as to what he is or how he could be personally present in heaven and on earth at the same time. You will not find one thing in any of my writings or in anything I have ever said in this line. I have simply accepted the fact that God is and that He is the source of all life; that as Moses says He is the life.

I believe the Scripture and I find nature teaching the same thing that the Scriptures teach us. There is nothing dangerous in this doctrine. It has not made a heathen of me nor a skeptic, but has cured me of skepticism. It has not made me a pantheist, for I do not worship everything nor believe everything to be God. I believe there is only one God, that is the God of the Bible, the God that made me and all things and is a present help in time

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of trouble. Before I saw this truth I have^d a very weak faith. I prayed but I hardly dared to believe that God would answer my prayers or that He did answer my prayers, for I doubted whether I had influence enough to get a hearing. Since my faith in God has become established by recognizing Him as the source of my life and of all life, it is just as natural for me to turn to the Lord for help in all my difficulties and trials and troubles and in everything I undertake, as it is to turn to water to satisfy my thirst or to food to satisfy my hunger. You know I am naturally skeptical, but these truths that I have sought to express in the Living Temple have cured me of skepticism. I have had no temptations towards skepticism whatever since I became settled in this faith, and what I say for myself I must say for my colleagues, also. There are no skeptics among them. There is no tendency to skepticism among ~~them~~ ~~them~~ our medical students or our nurses. The Life Boat Mission in Chicago which I started and in which I have taken an active interest for the last thirteen years, is not the sort of soil in which skepticism is likely to grow. When one sees constantly before his eyes men whom the grace of God has transformed from thieves, drunkards, cut-throats, safe-breakers, and wife-beaters, pickpockets, villains of every stripe, to humble, meek, patient, gentle, sober Christian men, he cannot doubt the power of God to transform men's characters and to change men's hearts, and to do it instantly.

When a man lives and walks daily among the sick, as I do, and finds himself hourly face to face with cases which are too hard for him, which are apparently hopeless, so that he is compelled to confess his incapacity, his ignorance, one cannot for-

get when he has once known and felt the fact that there is a source of power to which he may appeal for help; and when one feels his utter inability to do anything of himself under such circumstances, he cannot but feel grateful enough that there is a source of help to which he can turn with hope and confidence that his petition will be heard. And when one sees all about him every day men and women who are being step by step drawn back from the very jaws of death by an unseen healing power working intelligently, beneficently, marvelously, it is impossible to doubt that that same power which healed the blind, which made cripples to walk, which cleansed lepers, which said "Thy sins be forgiven thee," is still in the world doing the same work for souls and bodies of men which was done along the shores of Galilee nineteen centuries ago. My experience and my study has persuaded me that creative power, the same power which made Adam, which made Job, which made me, is here now maintaining the lives of men, healing the sick bodies and the sick souls of men. I have found no evil in this belief, but have found comfort and rest and peace in it and have seen ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ scores of sinners converted from evil ways when this truth entered their souls.

For holding this belief I am called a pantheist. Sister White herself has denounced me. I have struggled hard to see wherein is the evil and the error of it. I cannot see it, and I have made up my mind that I cannot renounce a truth which has done everything for me and which is the only anchor to which I can cling. If I renounce this truth, I do not know what else to lay hold of. This truth is worth more to me than any position which the Seventh Day Adventist people can offer to me, or anybody else. It involves no speculation and no philosophy; it is

nothing more than a simple faith in the testimony which the Bible itself bears respecting God, to the soundness of which all the living world about us testified.

Those who object to the view which I have presented are the speculators, the philosophers, those who are trying to find out about God, and who are his depreciators,--not I. I recognize God as present in heaven and personally active here on earth. The objector says "God cannot be personally present in heaven and personally present here on earth and everywhere else at the same time." I do not try to explain how God can be personally present in heaven and present in all his works at one and the same time. I simply accept the fact which the Bible teaches and which nature teaches. Those who deny this deny the plain teaching of the Scriptures. They deny the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the apostles, men who knew certainly as much as do modern theologians. Christ said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He also said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Was God personally present in Christ, or was he present only in some impersonal, some vague, mystical way? Christ used the personal pronoun in speaking of him at any rate. He said "He," (That is the father who was within him) "doeth the works." So God was an intelligent, personal presence in Christ.

The apostle said "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col.2:9). So it seems God was manifested in Christ bodily. There can be no question then that God was personally present in Christ. Yet Christ said as he stood by his grave after the resurrection, "Touch me not for I have not yet ascended to my Father." So God was still in heaven, personally present there, as well as in Christ. Here is a proof that

God can be personally present in heaven and personally present on the earth at the same time.

Now let me ask you another question. Was God personally present in the tabernacle of the wilderness? Was He personally present in the temple that Solomon built? David when the pestilence fell upon Israel after David numbered Israel, prayed to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan when the tabernacle which Moses made in the wilderness five hundred years before was at Gibeon, and the text says that David "called upon the Lord and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering." So it seems that God was still in heaven though he was also in the tabernacle in Gibeon.

In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the tabernacle which he had made for God to dwell in, and in which God promised to dwell, used repeatedly the expression, "Then hear thou from heaven," and the expression, "Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place." Solomon also said "I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever." He also said, "But will God in very deed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" When God was personally present in the temple, was he not also personally present in heaven?

The controversy which the brethren have raised with me is not with me but with the Bible. It is with Solomon, with Moses, with the Lord Jesus Christ, with the apostles who believed in the personal presence of God in the person of Christ, in the Temple, in the ministration of the Holy Spirit. This is what I believe and all I ever have believed. The difficulty is not that I have sought to limit God or explain God, but that these

brethren have undertaken to limit the power of God by maintaining that He cannot be personally present in heaven and personally present here on earth; though Solomon, Paul, Christ, and many others of the inspired writers clearly believed that the Infinite One could be personally present both in heaven and on earth at the same time.

Of course, I do not argue that God is bodily present in both heaven and earth, and I have never spent any time in trying to fathom the mysteries of the infinite since I was a young boy. I discovered before I was twenty that the questions of infinity were too great for me, and that I must give them up, and I did. I spent many years of my life trying to find a consistent faith on which I could stand without any questioning, and with no doubts and fears, and since I have come to realize that God is great enough to be personally present in heaven and on earth also, I have been at rest. I have never yet found anybody whose faith has been disturbed by this belief. All the disturbance there has been has been that created by a misrepresentation of the views which I hold.

I had a good opportunity last Sabbath to see the power of truth upon the heart of the heathen. We have with us a native Hindu from Calcutta. He came here for relief from bowel trouble. He came an out and out heathen. He has been here for some weeks. When I found he was about preparing to go back, I felt that it would be a terrible thing for him to go back without taking the gospel light with him; so I was determined to make an effort to help him. I had him brought to my private office last Sabbath, and with my Bible in my hand, I endeavored to present to him the gospel as I understand it, and I had the satisfaction before I left him of kneeling with him, and hearing him pray ear-

nestly to the Lord to lead him into all truth and give him strength to follow truth. He expressed his faith in Christ and in the Bible, and a desire to be baptized. I hope he is really converted. It is no small cross for him, as he is a young man, and all his parents and friends are heathen. They are wealthy land-owners, and he will have to go back to much tribulation and persecution. This seemed to worry him some, but I hope the Lord will strengthen him for what he must endure. I asked him his belief in God. He said, "God is in heaven and everywhere." I said to him, "Is God in the tree?" "Yes," he said, "God is in the tree." "Then," said I, "is not the tree God? Should not we worship the tree?" He said, "No. The tree is not God. We should not worship the tree. We should worship God who made the tree."

I met to-day a lady, a physician, who was for a dozen years a missionary to India. She said to me, "I one day saw a Brahmin making a sign of worship before a flower. I said to him, 'Why should you worship the flower?' He said, 'I do not worship the flower, but the life that is in the flower. A man can make something which looks like a flower. He can paint it the same color as the flower, but it will not be a flower. It will not have in it the life that makes it what it is. This life is the same as the life which is in me. There is one life. It is in all living things. I worship this.'" The poor Hindu, not having the Bible, has no conception of the character of God, but he does recognize his power, and his life, and in his ignorance this recognition may be of some service to him, and God may recognize his poor attempt to worship, if he is otherwise sincere and lives up to all the light he has.

We are going through remarkable experiences. It is a ter-

rible ordeal to me to have to sit down quietly and keep perfectly quiet and still while I see men and women who have been my friends for years embittered against me by misrepresentation, and made to turn away from me as though I was a viper and a leper by the circulation of things that are not true. It is no small trial to me that Sister White should give her countenance and her support to this campaign of misrepresentation and falsehood. Nevertheless I will not take my stand against her. She is mistaken, and the Lord may sometime permit her to see that she has been mistaken. Willie selected fragments from my book which did not fairly represent the spirit of it at all, and read them to her as representing the purpose and character of the book. One can make even the Bible appear to be a dangerous book by this method. A man some time ago undertook to prove that suicide was commanded in the Bible. He put these two texts together: "Then Judas went and hanged himself." "Go thou and do likewise."