

THE RECEIVING OF GIFTS, CONCESSIONS OR GRANTS

Resolution Introduced in the 1895 Session, Feb. 20.

"The Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions submitted the following additional report:--

"Your Committee on Resolutions would respectfully submit the following:

"Whereas, Opportunities have arisen and doubtless will arise in the future to secure from various civil governments grants and donations, and,--

"Whereas, To seek or even to accept any such thing from any civil government in any country would be a violation of the fundamental principles of separation of Church and State, therefore,--

"11. Resolved, That we ought not as a denomination either to seek or accept from any civil government, chief, ruler, or royal chartered company, supreme, local, or otherwise, any gift or donation, concession or grant, either of land, money, credit, special privilege, or any thing of value, to which we are not in common with all others justly entitled as men without any reference to our religious profession or religious work. This does not preclude the receiving of aid from rulers, royal personages, or private individuals when such assistance is rendered by these parties in their individual capacities.

"12. Resolved, That in harmony with this resolution, the General Conference Association be instructed to pay an equivalent for all government land that may be secured in Africa or elsewhere."--GCB 1895, p. 283.

The Resolution Discussed

"The committees having no further reports to submit, the Chair announced the order of business to be the pending motion to adopt Resolution 11, page 283.

"Elder A. T. Jones took the floor. The speaker contended that our position

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on the entire separation of Church and State should be without a conditional 'but'--it should be a clear and decided one. All these resolutions implied doubts and a disposition to compromise. The circumstances of Israel in Medo-Persia and Babylon had been referred to, but did not illustrate the case, since the people were then in captivity, and under the power of a hostile nation. We should look for primitive principles. Christ in his discussion of principles pointed them back to the beginning. Divorces and polygamy were allowed, but in the beginning 'it was not so.' Had Israel not forsaken God, the books of Esther and Nehemiah would not have been written. The speaker reviewed at some length the circumstances in which we are at present placed.

"D. H. Lamson remarked that though there was something peculiar in the circumstances of Israel as depicted in Nehemiah and Ezra, until there were features of their relation to the civil power which he could not explain on the ground of entire separation from the State.

"Wm. Healey said that the circumstances of Israel in captivity were not applicable to the question, because the favors that the king bestowed upon them were simply the restoration of the rights which had been forcibly taken from them. If a government were to bring a general persecution upon a religious community, and carry away the people in captivity, and after some year a new administration should come in, which would restore the people to their original condition, there would be nothing in accepting that restoration which would compromise the relation of that church to the State. However, the speaker thought that the resolution might be somewhat improved, and moved to strike out the words 'chief, ruler, or royal chartered company.'

"J. M. Rees seconded this motion, and it was carried without discussion.

"The resolution as it then stood was discussed by A. T. Jones, R. C. Porter, D. T. Jones, C. P. Bollman, and W. W. Prescott. The question was called for. The latter speaker remarked that the passage or value of the

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present resolution was of comparatively small importance compared with its benefit as an educator. He therefore trusted that the discussion would be allowed to proceed, and that questions would be freely asked and answered. The original commission of Christ to the disciples was given when there was but one government in the world, and that government was totally opposed to the gospel, and those who carried it must do so under the penalty of death or the confiscation of property. But he went forth asking no special privileges or immunities from the government.

"G. E. Fifield, Wm. Healey, W. W. Prescott, S. H. Lane, A. T. Jones, O. A. Johnson, D. T. Jones, R. A. Underwood, and C. P. Bollman participated in the discussion that followed. The latter moved to strike out the words 'private individual,' and the motion was seconded by W. D. Curtis. This motion was spoken to by L. H. Crisler, D. T. Jones, and others. Carried.

"D. T. Jones then moved, and S. H. Lane seconded, to strike out the words 'credit' and 'special privilege.' This motion was spoken to by L. D. Santee, A. T. Jones, D. H. Lamson, W. W. Prescott, D. T. Jones.

"The period of the meeting having expired, the motion to adjourn was carried. . . .

"The discussion of the resolution was animated and instructive. There was no clashing of sentiment, nor of personal feelings, and much that was helpful was brought out, and all felt that the meeting had been a profitable one, and were able to see the issue before us much clearer than before."--GCB 1895, pp. 340-41.

#### No Action Recorded

Note: The General Conference Bulletin fails to record any action adopting the resolution.--A. L. White.

*Good News*

"Now with reference to the business connected with the General Conference: as you have the Bulletin, and will look that over, you will follow the business transactions from day to day; also the devotional meetings and the Bible studies. I think that the business proceedings were given more fully in the last Bulletin than at any time before. The business passed off quite nicely, and quite satisfactorily in a general way. We had many evidence of the Lord's blessing and presence. . . .

Since receiving the last mail from Australia, and reading the many communications sent by your mother, I see some things in a clearer light than I have viewed them before. Only yesterday I finished reading those communications; and I am more thankful than I can express, with reference to the instruction she has given, and the light she has thrown, on certain matters connected with the religious liberty movement. I have been greatly burdened all the year over the way some things have taken shape in that line. I have spoken to, and warned some of our brethren at different times; but from the fact that, with a multitude of matters that necessarily come to me to look after, I have not been able to follow along and give all these matters the careful study that others have done, therefore I am not so well posted on every question as I ought to be." . . .

"I have felt bad over what has seemed to me to be extreme positions taken on various questions. During the Conference I felt very sorry for the resolution that was brought in concerning the Matabeleland question, etc. I had not seen the resolution until it was read on the floor. It went through me at first with a shock. I did what I could to assist in modifying the terms of the expression, but that was all that it amounted to. If we had had the instruction that came to us in the last mail from Australia, many things that were said would not have been said, and the resolution, if offered, would have been

of an entirely different nature. Well, it shows me more and more that I can not place any dependence upon any man or set of men; it makes no difference who they are or where they are.

"But while this is so, it greatly increases the responsibilities of the one who stands in the position that I do, and in view of these things, I feel, many times, as though I would sink in the earth. My only comfort is in the thought that the work is the Lord's; and I am glad that that is so. He has had it in charge all these years until now, and He will still have it in charge. In the past He has many times overruled our mistakes because we did it ignorantly. I hope that He will still do so; for otherwise we should be in a most trying position."

(O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, Mar. 28, 1895)