

Revised & Enlarged

***The* 1888 MESSAGE**

An Introduction

Robert J. Wieland

A Book to Fill an Empty Place in Adventist Thinking

Q: *What is the most important issue facing the Church today?*

A: Understanding the "everlasting gospel" that must "lighten the earth."

Q: *When did that gospel most clearly shine upon the Adventist church?*

A: Says Ellen White: in the "most precious message" of 1888.

Q: *Why did she expect it to turn the church upside-down?*

A: Astonishingly, it was "the beginning" of the loud cry and the latter rain.

There is an insatiable world-wide hunger to know just what was that powerful 1888 message. Why does it trigger lively discussions even more attention-grabbing than women's ordination?

Much has been published by the official Adventist press *about* "1888," but this book has a special purpose. Now the 1888 messengers are allowed to tell the Adventist grand jury in their own words *in ample context* what their message actually was (and is). Its controversial Good News ideas are not glossed over, but faced head-on.

In its earlier edition published by the Review and Herald, 20,000 copies went out all over the world. This one is revised, enlarged and updated by the author.

A missionary and widely read author, Robert J. Wieland has stimulated renewed study of the fascinating message of 1888 as "present truth"—soul-winning Good News that heals the disease of lukewarmness.

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Foreword

In *The 1888 Message—An Introduction* the author brings into focus Seventh-day Adventist history and sets forth spiritual insights that disclose the reason for the existence of this church. True-hearted church members are asking with increasing persistence:—

* Why has time (and sin) continued so long when the gospel commission should have been completed by now?

* What has hindered finishing the cleansing of the sanctuary?

* How much longer will the church talk about the latter rain before the blessing actually comes?

* Does God really call us to the standard of character perfection while we still have a sinful nature?

* Is it possible for a corporate community of God's people to prepare for the second coming of Christ?

The author has sought out the evidence that the Lord sent Seventh-day Adventists a message in 1888 that was precious above all earthly values, a

message to prepare His sons and daughters for victory in the final conflict between good and evil, and then for translation. The beauty, simplicity, and truth of the message that is to lighten the whole world are made clear.

The reader will find good news, glad tidings, the hope and encouragement that will enable the final generation to be "saints" who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). The book also sets forth the supreme "business" of Christ—being a Savior! His grace teaches mortals how to say "No" to the pressures of temptation, both from within and from without. The author demonstrates that the message of 1888 is not merely a "doctrine," but a living, vital experience based on doctrine, with relevance in today's world.

This book springs from many years of study, going back to the late 1930s. Subsequently the study was crystallized and in a unique way became the basis of a provocative manuscript prepared in 1950.¹ Now, after these many years the author's appeal remains the same. And the mystery, the haze, and in many cases the total ignorance, about the epic 1888 General Conference are cleared away. The entire church may have the blessings wrapped within the message. This work is documented for the careful scholar, yet will fascinate lay members.

Although many are confused about it, Seventh-day Adventists have a distinct contribution to make to the world—a reason for existence that precludes their being just another church among many others. With all that the Lord has said through His messenger regarding the great blessing to be found in the 1888 message, it is certain that the church as a whole—in all its departments and among all its personnel, its ministry, and its laity—greatly needs the spiritual truths set forth in this book. To understand this and our history, and its bearing on the final atonement, is to sense the true meaning of God's call to Laodicea to "repent."

May the Lord use the message found herein to bring into focus the spiritual perception required. May the "beginning of the latter rain and loud cry" of 1888 be no longer bottled up, but come to fruition. Then the church will recognize the divine plan, and unitedly will give to the world the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory.

Donald K. Short

To the Reader

There is need to define what this book means by "the 1888 message," and some readers will doubtless need a thumbnail sketch of the events that have come to be known by Seventh-day Adventists as "1888."

At the General Conference session held that year in Minneapolis, two young men (A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) providentially conveyed to the delegates a beautiful message of justification by faith that became controversial because some opposed it. Many of the delegates, especially the older ministers and leaders, made the message (and the messengers) unwelcome.

A few rejoiced and truly accepted the message. Foremost among them was a little lady sitting on the front row, Ellen G. White. But no official person

¹ Finally published in 1987 as *1888 RE-EXAMINED*.

seems to have thought the message important enough to take it down in shorthand and transcribe it so that posterity could know firsthand what they said at that meeting.

Hence, we really do not have the "1888 message" itself in the exact words of the two young messengers at Minneapolis. Some will run with this and say this book therefore is a waste of time.

But this does not mean that we must despair of understanding what the message was or that the title of this book is a misnomer. Certain facts make it possible for us to reconstruct a fair and accurate concept of what they taught:

1. We know from his writings what Waggoner taught in the months immediately *before* the 1888 Conference.

2. We likewise know what he taught in the weeks immediately *after*.

3. We have Waggoner's book which he presented to the delegates at the Minneapolis Conference itself, which articulates the message which he believed regarding the gospel of justification by faith and particularly the nature of Christ and the two covenants (*The Gospel in Galatians*). His rejection of the contemporary Adventist legalism is clearly evident.

4. We know that Waggoner and Jones were in perfect agreement in their understanding of righteousness by faith both at Minneapolis and for about a decade after 1888. There were two messengers, but Ellen White spoke repeatedly of what they brought us as being one "message."

5. Ellen White's endorsements of their message are not confined to the so-called lost utterances at Minneapolis. She continues to endorse their ongoing presentations for years after the 1888 Conference, through 1896 and even later.

6. We can find help in reconstructing their message in seeing how their contemporaries caught its essential ideas, both in opposition and acceptance. For example, W. W. Prescott and S. N. Haskell were among those who responded favorably and began to echo their concepts, as they appreciated the Biblical and Ellen White support for them.

7. L. E. Froom tells us that Waggoner's widow wrote her husband's Minneapolis presentations in shorthand and transcribed the notes to be the basis of his book *Christ and His Righteousness* (Pacific Press, 1890).²

Naturally we do not understand that there was perfection or any degree of infallibility in what Jones and Waggoner said. But Ellen White repeatedly spoke of them in terms like these: "the Lord's messengers," "Christ's delegated messengers," "men divinely appointed," "servants of God... with a heaven-sent message," "men He has chosen," "young men [whom God sent] to bear a special message," "His chosen servants" "whom God is using," "the Lord [is] working through brethren Jones and Waggoner," "He has given them precious light," "if you accept the message, you accept Jesus," "'messengers I [the Lord] sent to My people with light, with grace and power,'" "a message from God; it bears the divine credentials," etc. Endorsements such as these continue through 1896 and occasionally even later.³ "Messengers" is an authentic Bible word. When ancient Israel sinned themselves into captivity in Babylon, their fault was not only "misusing" the Lord's "*prophets*," but "mocking the *messengers* of God" (see 2 Chronicles 36:16).

² See Froom's *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 200, 201, first edition.

³ A collection of these endorsements is found in the Appendix of this author's "*Lightened With His Glory*," pp. 146-174.

Our definition is clear: the 1888 message is understood in this book to be the essential and prominent ideas that were taught by Jones and Waggoner at the 1888 Conference *and in the decade following*. Our method will be:

- (1) to keep as close to the 1888 date as possible;
- (2) to present what Jones and Waggoner taught with repetition or with strong emphasis;
- (3) to present what they were manifestly in perfect agreement on;
- (4) to limit our presentation to their teachings where we find clear Ellen G. White (and of course Bible) ongoing support; and
- (5) to take into account as well how at least "some" of their contemporaries understood the essentials of their message.

When we sometimes quote from Jones and Waggoner in later years (of necessity), it will be with careful scrutiny and selectivity to be certain that the ideas presented are in harmony with their earlier teachings, and with the five guidelines mentioned above.

If anyone should object that quotations after 1888 are not the 1888 message, the answer is that Ellen White's continuing support for years thereafter and her emphasis on the importance of the ongoing message are very significant. In fact, her most impressive endorsements come in 1896. And the complete, balanced picture of what they taught in the decade after Minneapolis must be a fair understanding of what was *implicit* in the message given in 1888. Like all human beings, Jones and Waggoner grew in their understanding (so did Ellen White!). Reasonable common sense cannot fail to give us a clear picture.

It is impossible that Ellen White could have continued her repeated and enthusiastic endorsements so long if she had suspected even an inkling that either one or both of the "messengers" had departed from the true faith at that time. She was an inspired prophet with sanctified, penetrating insight; her credibility as such is intertwined with that message of Jones and Waggoner. Never in her long career did she endorse anyone's contemporary message so heartily or persistently. We're skating on thin ice if we say that she was misinformed, naive, or mistaken.

Further, there is something even more important than Ellen White's crucial support in evaluating their message: the ultimate test of truth is the Bible itself. It is this author's conviction that they derived their concepts from their own firsthand study of the Scriptures in the light of the "great controversy" motif of Seventh-day Adventists, and from the unique idea of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Some say that we don't need the message which they brought us because we have the same Bible they had, so we can find the message there as they did. But logic forces us to see this as false reasoning. We could just as fairly say that Paul and the apostles got their message from the Old Testament, so we don't need the New. And the Jews didn't need Isaiah or Jeremiah because they had the same Pentateuch the prophets used. The truth is that they needed and we need every ray of light that the Lord sees fit to send. Jones and Waggoner were "the Lord's *special* messengers," "*delegated*" to bring us "a *special* message." "God has sent men to bring us the truth that we should not have had unless God had sent somebody to

bring it to us."⁴ None of us can be so arrogant as to claim the unique status of those 1888 "messengers."

As with all of us, they were indebted to those who went before them, including Luther, Calvin, and Wesley; but they validated their message from Scripture alone. They saw the truth of justification by faith from a new and fresh perspective, that of the unique eschatological understanding inherent in the Advent movement. In recent years it is becoming increasingly evident that there is solid Biblical support for their essential concepts.

Further, confirmation of their fresh interpretation of Scripture is found in various competent theological studies of our day. For example, a doctoral dissertation for the University of London presents evidence that their view of the nature of Christ was held by a significant number of reformers throughout the Christian era (Harry Johnson, *The Humanity of the Saviour*, London: The Epworth Press, 1962). Some modern theologians such as C. E. B. Cranfield also understand the nature of Christ virtually as did Jones and Waggoner (see the *International Critical Commentary* on Romans 8:3,4).

It is my prayer that your heart response to the message will be what Ellen White's was when she heard it personally for the first time at the conference in Minneapolis: "Every fiber of my heart said Amen" (Manuscript 5,1889). That has been my response, ever since I first began to understand it, even before I knew of Ellen White's endorsements.

Robert J. Wieland

⁴ Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p. 608.

Chapter One

A Beginner's Guide to the 1888 Message

Why It's Important To Understand

A nagging sense of hunger disturbs many. "I wonder if the 1888 message is important enough to take my time?"

Yes, it is. It's what the hungry Adventist heart world-wide is yearning for.

The reason why hits you like a clap of thunder. *That message was the "beginning" of a Spirit-filled explosion unprecedented since the day of Pentecost.* It was the initial "showers of the latter rain from heaven." It was Good News refreshment for which drought-stricken hearts everywhere were famished.

It was to "lighten the earth with glory." Yes, a light must penetrate to Islam, Hinduism, Catholicism, Protestantism, paganism. A "voice from heaven" must get through to every human soul, "Come out of Babylon, My people," fulfilling the long-awaited prophecy of Revelation 18. There was to be a "mighty" fourth angel added to our present logo of the three angels pictured on every Seventh-day Adventist church and school.

At this point you are taking a deep breath.

Is the message *that* important? Since the first-century apostles turned their "world upside down," no message has ever done a work like this, although the 1844 Midnight Cry came close. The Lord seriously wanted to prepare a people *right then* to meet the final issues of earth's history. The agenda was not "Get ready to die," but "Get ready for translation."

Rather disturbing, to say the least.

But His message was not a terrifying, thunder and lightning demand, "Do the impossible!" Instead of a fear-laden do-it-yourself works trip, it was a faith-experience. Like dew falling on parched crops, the message was a gentle shower of grace which "abounded much more" than all the abounding sin the devil could invent. It captured one's heart. Lights of joyous hope began to go on, because one saw the character of God in a different way. Ellen White described it like going around a corner and coming face to face with Jesus smiling at you, not frowning, "a Saviour nigh at hand, and not afar off," taking you by the hand and saying, "Come, *let's go to heaven.*" Bible Good News aroused a sunlit dream in discouraged hearts. It was astounding! Teenagers were won. God was not trying to find a way to keep you out of heaven, but to get you ready to go in. Every dark page of the Bible began to glow with Good News light.

Should not such a message meet with a tumultuous welcome from "us"? Yes, it should, and the shepherds' news of the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem should have brought the priests down *en masse* from Jerusalem to welcome Him. But something strange happened with "us," as with them. Except for a tiny minority of its hearers, the message met the same reception from "us" a century ago that Jesus got from the Jews two millennia ago. An inspired voice said that if He had been there in person physically, "we" would have treated Him as they treated Him.

What was the message itself?

Was it only the ordinary Evangelical teaching that we've heard all our lives, "Jesus loves me this I know, we must try harder to be good. We sin, and then Jesus forgives us; why re-invent the wheel?" Some of our own scholars have sincerely maintained that the 1888 message was only a "re-emphasis" of 16th century Reformationist teachings, or of the Evangelicals of our day.

But scratch the surface, and a different picture shows. Ellen White saw that the 1888 message went far beyond the popular Sunday-keeping churches. It was "the third angel's message in verity," "new light," "a message which is present truth for this time," "light from heaven," "the light which is to lighten the earth with its glory." It was not only that Jesus pardons sin; *He saves from its power and slavery even now*. There is hope even for addicts. It was the most thorough *gospel* message the modern world has heard, because it was rooted in the cleansing of the sanctuary truth. Here are some of the outstanding ideas that the 1888 message recovers (sources are listed at the end).

1. It was a refreshing idea of justification by faith. The usual idea a century ago (and today) was that justification by faith is only forgiveness or pardon for past sins, a legal maneuver on God's part that clears one of guilt, but leaves the believing sinner in neutral gear. There is no real progress in overcoming sin until sanctification. But the 1888 message saw far more. What rejoiced Ellen White's heart when she heard it is that justification by faith makes the believer obedient to all the commandments of God.⁵ It does what many think is done only in sanctification. You don't have to wait for sanctification to find what it takes to keep those commandments! In genuine justification by faith your heart is reconciled to God; it is not a mere judicial declaration of acquittal for past sins. Such a clearer understanding means that you *already* enjoy victory over sin, because it is impossible for one's heart to be reconciled to God and not at the same time be reconciled to His holy law.

This powerful truth of practical godliness rests on a firm foundation of another one that is refreshing:

2. The message was a new look at the cross of Christ. The first beginnings were an 1882 "vision" in which young E. J. Waggoner caught a glimpse of the cross as the center and substance of the third angel's message.⁶ When Christ gave His blood for the sins of the world, *He redeemed the lost human race*. No one is exempt from intimate involvement, because "He,

⁵ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92.

⁶ *The Everlasting Covenant*, preface.

by the grace of God, [tasted] death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9). In other words, He died every person's *second* death, his final punishment for sin.

And He did all this before we had any chance to say yes or no. Jesus has involved Himself with every human soul at the deepest level of his being, that hidden source of his intimate personal fear of eternal death. Christ's sacrifice has already "delivered" him from that fear which has enslaved him through "all [his] lifetime" (vss. 14,15). (The sinner can resist and reject, and thus be lost, for Christ will force no one to be saved).

Isaiah says, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of *us all*? Paul says He is *already* "the Savior of *all* men, especially of those who believe." And John adds that He is the "propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*" (Isaiah 53:6; 1 Timothy 4:10; Romans 5:16-18).

Does Christ do nothing for us until we initiate the process and elect Him to be our personal Savior? Is He *only a possible* Savior, with a big IF ... ? Must the sinner do something first, like believe, or obey the commandments in order to make Christ become his Savior? Do we function as our co-savior, helping to save ourselves? No, says the 1888 message: Christ's sacrifice is more than merely *provisional*. It is *effective* in that He has purchased our present life and all we possess and are; and more, He has purchased eternal salvation for us and *given us the gift in Himself*.⁷ (But we can reject it after He has done His part.)

The spiritual paralysis of lukewarmness comes from deep within us, thinking of Christ like a bank that does nothing for you until you first make a deposit. He is impersonal, distant, you must take the first step. In other words, your salvation depends on your own initiative. In contrast, Christ has already deposited eternal life and all its blessings to the undeserving credit of *your account*. It is yours already "in Him." Now cash the check and realize the blessing *by faith*. Such "faith works by love" and itself produces inward and outward obedience to the One who has given all for us. All this is in the experience of justification by faith.

This means that the only reason any soul can be lost at last is that he has resisted and rejected what Christ has already accomplished for him. By unbelief he has deliberately thrown away the gift that God put in his hand. Such unbelief is the sin of sins, but it is the world's universal sin. To state it another way: if anyone is saved at last, it will be due to *God's initiative*; if he is lost at last, it will be due to his own initiative. *Stop resisting* His grace.⁸

Why is this so important to understand? Because fear as a motive is not strong enough to prepare people for the coming of Christ. It may wake someone up temporarily, but that's all. There is a higher motive which Ellen White describes:

The shortness of time is urged as an incentive for us to seek righteousness and to make Christ our friend. This is not the great motive. It savors of selfishness. Is it necessary that the terrors of the day of God be held before us to compel us through fear to right action? This ought not to be. Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion.⁹

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

⁸ Cf. *The Glad Tidings*, p. 42; *Steps to Christ*, p. 27.

⁹ *That I May Know Him*, p. 320.

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth,... and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul.¹⁰

3. But there's more Good News. Christ's sacrifice has reversed for all men the "condemnation" which came upon us all "in Adam." He literally saved the world from the premature suicide that sin would have brought upon us. So every loaf of bread comes stamped with His cross. "Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and blood of Christ."¹¹ When this grand truth comes into focus, we see it all through the Bible:

The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.... The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world (John 6:33,51).

God's act of grace is out of all proportion to Adam's wrongdoing... And again, the gift of God is not to be compared in its effect with that one man's sin; for the judicial action, following upon the one offence, issued in a verdict of condemnation, but the act of grace, following upon so many misdeeds, issued in a verdict of acquittal.... It follows, then, that as the issue of one misdeed [Adam's] was condemnation for all men, so the issue of one just act [Calvary] is acquittal and life for all men (Romans 5:15-18).

Here is power to motivate!

The practical result of believing this Good News? In experiencing justification by faith, we already experience a change of heart. We were on the outs with God, at enmity with Him; now we see Him as a Friend. In other words, we have "received the atonement," which means we are reconciled to Him (vss. 7-11). We've been redeemed from eternal death! It's like someone long on death row who gets a last-minute reprieve. So, says Paul, "present yourselves to God as *being alive from the dead*." The burden is lifted from the weary heart when such "peace with God" flows in. From now on, no sacrifice is too difficult to make for the One you know has already saved you from hell itself.

Such love constrains one to live for Him, so that it becomes actually easy to be saved and hard to be lost. This Good News idea is an essential part of the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness (Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 26:14).¹²

Is it too good to be true? Someone will ask, "Does Ellen White agree?" The answer is that she loved this Good News. Her favorite illustration was

¹⁰ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 480.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 660.

¹² *Lessons on Faith*, pp. 11,82-85,132,133.

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation which on January 1, 1863, declared all the slaves in the Confederate territories legally free; but none knew *experiential* freedom until he heard the news, believed it, and acted on it. Ellen White saw that this gospel message spelled the end of our worldwide lukewarmness. This kept her awake at night for joy.¹³

4. Now comes another blessing. Coming now into sharper focus, justification by faith *is seen as much more than a legal declaration of acquittal. In making the believing sinner become obedient to all the commandments of God, the blessing includes the sabbath commandment.*¹⁴ *The seal of God is the secret of overcoming those many addictions that plague the sinful human race.* It becomes impossible for anyone who truly believes the gospel to go on living in sin, which is transgression of the law of God.¹⁵ Many sincere Sunday-keepers will gladly begin to keep the seventh-day Sabbath when they see it in this relationship with justification by faith and the cleansing of the sanctuary which began in 1844. We are told the Sabbath truth fails to bring conviction to hearts unless it is joined to this cleansing of the sanctuary.¹⁶

5. But there's a problem. All this still leaves a hook on which to hang a doubt until we can grasp what faith is. Is it a self-motivated grasping for the reward of heaven, with a combined fire escape from hell? Owning a beautiful home here on earth involves an egocentric-motivated desire, which (we can say) is OK. But when one becomes a Christian does he simply transfer his desire for equity in real estate to an even better place in heaven? *If so, such motivation is still mired in self-interest* And self-interest can arouse only a measured devotion, which is lukewarmness.¹⁷

The 1888 message revealed a new and higher motivation—a concern for the honor and vindication of Christ, as a bride feels for her husband. It transcends her own selfish desires. *Faith is revealed as a heart-appreciation of the great love revealed at the cross, irrespective of our desire for reward or fear of hell.* All self-centered motivation is transcended.

Such "faith... worketh by love"—no end of good works for a lifetime and eternity!

6. And still more Good News to come. All of us are sick spiritually and need a physician for our souls. Jesus had to undergo special training to qualify as our great High Priest (or Divine Psychiatrist):

"As the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death [the second] He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage... In all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15)

The word translated "destroy" means "to paralyze." True, Satan is not dead yet, but when you believe this Good News, he is paralyzed.

¹³ Cf. *Ministry of Healing*, p. 90; *1888 Materials*, pp. 217, 349.

¹⁴ *Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 51 -67; Jones, *Review and Herald*, November 10, 1896, January 17, 1899.

¹⁵ Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, May 1, 1893.

¹⁶ See Ellen White series of articles in *Review and Herald*, January-April, 1890; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 337.

¹⁷ *Lessons on Faith*, pp. 9-33; *The Consecrated Way*, p. 87.

7. Christ as a High Priest has come so close to us in taking our human nature that He knows the full force of all our temptations. He "resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." Whatever your temptation, however low you have fallen into sin, however terrible is your feeling of despair, however poisoned your guilt, "He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them." He is on duty in the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary 24 hours a day, and never sleeps (Hebrews 12:4; 7:25).

It's as if you are the only patient this Physician has; He gives you His full-time attention. Imagine yourself as a sick person being the only one in the hospital with the full staff of doctors and nurses serving you! That's *you* in Christ's intensive care unit! *Believe* how good the Good News is, and your life is changed from the deepest inside out.

This first chapter is only a brief preview of the refreshing Good News in this "most precious message." Each of the following chapters will develop it further.

Chapter Two

There Must Be a Reason! *Why the Long Delay in Christ's Coming?*

"What has gone wrong?" asks the devout orthodox Jew in his anguish and bewilderment at the Wailing Wall.

Even today as he pores over the ancient predictions the Lord made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he is perplexed. "When will the God of our fathers awake and fulfill His long-delayed promise to send our Messiah to Israel? When will He make Jerusalem the joy of the whole earth? Or have our grand hopes been only in vain?"

Those Jews fortunate enough to get close to their one remaining holy place in Jerusalem gather at their ancient Wailing Wall at the southwest corner of the old temple site. There they pour out their complaints and entreaties to the God of their ancient patriarchs.

I would like to tap them on the shoulder and say, "Friends, I have good news for you. You may stop your wailing! The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has not been asleep nor is He uncaring. He has kept His promise. He *did* faithfully send the true Messiah—in Jesus of Nazareth. The problem is that your ancestors failed to recognize Him when He came, and they crucified Him."

I would also add: "Now please repent and accept Him, and enjoy all the blessings He brought you!"

Do devout Seventh-day Adventists also have their own Wailing Wall?

Ponder the never-ending stream of appeals and calls to prayer that come in the annual Week of Prayer readings, the camp-meeting sermons, the General Conference sessions, and Annual Councils, calling on faithful Seventh-day Adventists to pray that the Lord will keep His promise, that He will open the windows of heaven to pour upon His people the refreshing showers of the latter rain. Ever since Ellen White described what she saw in her May 14, 1851 vision concerning the "refreshing" of the "latter rain,"¹⁸ we have cherished the hope that some glorious day the God of our pioneers would grant the blessing which would bring the world task of witnessing to a triumphant close.

The latter rain would consist, they understood, of an ultimate gift of the Holy Spirit to ripen the gospel grain for the "harvest," even as the second Palestinian rains fulfilled the fanner's dreams. The early rain fell in the autumn, and the latter in the spring. So there is a latter rain of the Holy Spirit at the opposite end of the Christian era from Pentecost.

It will lead into the loud cry of the third angel's message—the final glorious enlightening of the world. All will hear the message and will take either the seal of God or the mark of the beast. And then, according to Ellen White and the founders of this church, the Lord will come in power and great glory.

Why haven't these pleading petitions of over a century been answered?

Every round of appointed convocations leaves the same nagging frustration of no latter rain. Why does a spiritual paralysis of lukewarmness permeate the world church?

These are questions that thoughtful people can't help but ask, especially youth. Why consecrate yourself to a life of sacrificial toil if the second coming hopes that nourished the pioneers seem so remote to us now? Many

¹⁸ *Early Writings*, p. 71.

of our youth are losing interest in the second coming of Christ. It fades further into the shadows of uncertainty.¹⁹ Now we're digging in for the 21st century, adding buildings to buildings, feathering our nests for what looks like a long future. Like the devout Jews waiting for the coming of their Messiah, many hope against dim hope that the forefathers weren't really mistaken after all. We were told in 1850 that "time is almost finished."²⁰ In truth, the honor of the God of the pioneers is involved. *Is He faithful? Is He even alive?*

Surely some heavenly beings would like to tap us on the shoulder and say, "The pleadings of many years were answered—the Lord did keep His promise to the pioneers. He has *already* given the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry. But like the Jews, your forefathers failed to recognize the heavenly gift. They rejected it as did those who rejected (their Messiah two thousand years ago."

Such news would be as startling to most Seventh-day Adventists today as our proposed announcement would be to the Jews at the Waning Wall.

But it is true.

A single tenuous disclosure of such news is buried in the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*, Vol. 2, page 1581, under the heading "Loud cry," like a slender crack in the earth at Qumran hid the presence of fabulous manuscript riches in a hidden cave. The unpretentious entry reads, "Loud cry... already begun in revelation of Christ's righteousness."

Following up this innocuous lead, we turn to the statement cited:

The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.²¹

This is no mere obscure, localized blessing given at some little country prayer meeting. God's bright promises cherished by the Advent pioneers in 1851 were at one time fulfilled—at least the "beginning" of them—at a General Conference Session.

When and why did Ellen G. White make this earth-shaking announcement?

The original source is a *Review and Herald* article of November 22, 1892. "The revelation of the righteousness of Christ" refers to the message of 1888, which was then plodding four years along in its baffling course of history among us. After due reflection, this courageous lady was ready to say it boldly: the message which came since the Minneapolis Conference was the "beginning" of the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would lead into lighting the earth with the glory of the fourth angel of Revelation 18.

The seismic impact of that word is unprecedented, for never before or after did she say that about any other message she heard.

¹⁹ See *Adventist Review*, Special Issue, January 2, 1992.

²⁰ *Early Writings*, p. 64.

²¹ *Selected Messages*, Book One, p. 363, emphasis supplied.

This raises some painful questions that will never go away, even if we stay here another century. If the inspired messenger had the insight to see the real meaning of the 1888 message, why has a century dragged on since? Three brief years before the 1888 message began to sound, she said that when the latter rain and the loud cry should at last begin, "the work will spread like fire in the stubble."²² Later she said, "The final movements will be rapid ones."²³ But people on Planet Earth are being born faster than we know how to reach them with the message we have. Each passing year leaves us with a bigger witnessing task.

We may think we are making great progress "on schedule," but most candid Seventh-day Adventists confess a sober conviction that the world is simply not yet lighted by the glory of that "other angel's" loud-cry message. And if we baptize billions of people and all settle down to be as lukewarm as we are, that would not hasten the coming of the Lord.

What can solve the impasse?

Four years after the 1892 statement Ellen White frankly pinpointed what happened. A tragic development forced an era of bright hope to draw to a close:

An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth [the law in Galatians is especially the moral law], lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis [1888] against the Lord's message through Brethren [E. J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.²⁴

Let us analyze this statement made in 1896:

1. "The special power of the Holy Spirit" that God wanted to impart to our people in 1888 was Pentecostal in its dynamic scope. That means the blessing was complementary to the original gift of the Holy Spirit to the early apostles.

2. The message would have provided "efficiency" in carrying the Seventh-day Adventist truths "to the world." This must include the Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and pagan portions of the world. It would have enabled the fledgling Adventist Church, weak in numbers and material resources, to have enjoyed the kind of success the early apostles experienced after Pentecost, "conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2). There was spiritual dynamite in the message itself.

²² *Selected Messages*, Book One, p. 118.

²³ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 11.

²⁴ *Selected Messages*, Book One, pp. 234,235.

3. But the "victory" was "won" in reverse gear. Pentecost was re-played backwards. "In a great measure" and to "a great degree" "Satan succeeded," not Christ. To that extent "the enemy" prevented our people from receiving the light, and kept it away from the world. This simple fact accounts for the century plus that has dragged on, bringing world wars and agonies unspeakable for millions of people. As Jeremiah laments, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" (The rapid growth of Third World baptisms enlarges the spiritual problem, for the same lukewarmness that characterizes the homeland church is now spreading to the world church. If the latter rain is spiritual moisture, the lack of it has to be spiritual drought. The solution as a spiritual "refreshing" must come to the heart of the world work).

4. The agents whom Satan employed to accomplish his purpose were not the Roman Catholics or persecuting Protestants, but "our own brethren." Their attitude became an "action," a deliberate choice, a resistance and rejection. In all fairness it should be recognized that these were primarily the general and local conference leadership of the day, "acting" in behalf of the church as did the Jewish leaders who acted in behalf of their nation in rejecting their Messiah. Over a hundred times Ellen White reiterated this "just-like-the-Jews" insight.²⁵

How to handle these disturbing realities is a problem that has occupied decades of discussion, and has been addressed in thousands of pages of books. But in most cases, reality has not been clearly faced. Inquiring minds are now demanding the full disclosure of truth.

For many centuries the Jews have had a similar problem.

They have been embarrassed trying to explain to their children why their long-promised Messiah has not appeared. When Joseph Wolff begged his father to explain who was the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, his father sternly forbade him ever to ask the question again. The only safe course for us is to welcome questions that lead to the full disclosure of the truth.

The world church can never be motivated to finish the world gospel task unless we understand why the coming of the Lord has been so long delayed. Unearthing the simple, honest reality will accomplish what committee resolutions or high-tech promotional drives can never do. It will renew the bright second coming confidence that motivated the pioneers.

To be sure, a long list of depressing reasons for the mysterious delay can be compiled.²⁶ But the simple solution to all of them was to have been provided in the truly Pentecostal outpouring of the latter rain of 1888. Therefore that rejection is the *one basic cause of the long delay*. Thus it merits the special attention of this generation, just as the *one basic problem* that has afflicted the Jews for the past two thousand years has been their rejection of their Messiah.

²⁵ A few examples: pp. 169, 369, 406, 522, 695, 912, 1057, **1651**, in **the Ellen G. White 1888 Materials**. There are 109 such statements.

²⁶ L. E. Froom in *Movement of Destiny* devotes two long chapters, called Nos. 1 and 2, to "Second Advent Delayed; Divine Reasons Disclosed" (pp. 561-603). The impact can be confusing and discouraging. The one simple solution to all the problems that have delayed Christ's coming *is faith*—true genuine, complete faith *in Christ*. This lack the 1888 message was intended to supply.

This comparison is not farfetched. From the time of the 1888 Conference itself and for years that followed, Ellen White seemed obsessed that we were re-enacting their tragedy. Here is a brief example:

When I have been made to pass over the history of the Jewish nation and have seen where they stumbled because they did not walk in the light, I have been led to realize where we as a people would be led if we refuse the light God would give us. Eyes have ye but ye see not; ears, but ye hear not. Now, brethren, light has come to us and we want to be where we can grasp it... I see your danger and I want to warn you...

If the ministers will not receive the light [spoken at the 1888 Conference itself], I want to give the people a chance; perhaps they may receive it.... Just like the Jewish nation.²⁷

Eight days later she repeats the theme:

When the Jews took the first step in the rejection of Christ, they took a dangerous step. When afterward evidence accumulated that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they were too proud to acknowledge that they had erred... Just like the Jews, they [the brethren] take it for granted they have all the truth, and feel a sort of contempt for anyone who should suppose they had more correct ideas than themselves of what is truth. All the evidence produced they decide shall not weigh a straw with them, and they tell others that the doctrine is not true, and afterward, when they see as light evidence they were so forward to condemn, they have too much pride to say "I was wrong"; they still cherish doubt and unbelief, and are too proud to acknowledge their convictions....

It is not wise for one of these young men [Jones or Waggoner] to commit himself to a decision at this meeting, where opposition, rather than investigation, is the order of the day.²⁸

By 1890 Ellen White dares to take the case of "just like the Jews" over the heads of the General Conference leadership, appealing to the people themselves:

Those to whom Christ has entrusted great light, whom he has surrounded with precious opportunities, are in danger, if they do not walk in this light, of being filled

²⁷ Manuscript 9,1888; talk given October 24,1888; 1888 *Materials*, p. 152.

²⁸ Manuscript 15,1888; talk given November 1,1888; *ibid.*, pp. 169,170.

with pride of opinion and with self-exaltation as were the Jews.²⁹

We should not be found quibbling, and putting up hooks on which to hang our doubts in regard to the light which God sends us. When a point of doctrine that you do not understand comes to your attention, go to God on your knees, that you may understand what is truth, and not be found, as were the Jews, fighting against God...

For nearly two years we have been urging the people to come up and accept the light and the truth concerning the righteousness of Christ, and they do not know whether to come and take hold of this precious truth or not.³⁰

How long will those at the head of the work keep themselves aloof from the message of God?³¹

What should we say to help the Jews at the Wailing Wall?

A modern converted Jew trying to help his people asks them a simple question. If a farmer driving a horse and wagon to town has a wheel fall off, does he look down the road *ahead* to see it, or does he go *back* to where he lost it? He tells his Jewish brethren to study firsthand the New Testament records concerning Jesus of Nazareth, that they might see in Him the fulfillment of the prophecies they are vainly waiting for in the future.

So, let's study the extant records of *the content* of the 1888 message itself. Let's permit its glorious light to shine into our own hearts. We'll find mind-stretching concepts that are almost wholly unknown by this present generation.

Then, once we have done our homework and thoroughly understand what was "the beginning" of the latter rain and the loud cry, we'll be prepared to understand current history, to avoid counterfeit deceptions, and to give a healing message for mankind that will prepare many millions to welcome the return of our Lord.

That message is what we're searching to understand.³²

²⁹ *Review and Herald*, February 4, 1890.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, March 11, 1890.

³¹ *Ibid.*, March 18.

³² As we proceed, we do not want to give the false or fanatical impression that we regard the 1888 messengers as infallible or impeccable—perfect in their every expression of truth (neither are any of us today!). We agree with Ellen White: "Do I say that they will not make a statement or have an idea that cannot be questioned or that cannot be in error? Do I say so? No, I do not say any such thing. Nor do I say that of any man in the world. *But I do say God has sent light, and do be careful how you treat it*" (1888 *Materials*, p. 566; emphasis added).

Chapter Three

Can We See the True Outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Our Final Exam Is Coming Soon

Sometimes students in school study for a final exam only to find that their test is just one question. But that one can be so probing and comprehensive that it strains their capabilities.

It could well be that our Final Exam will consist of one question: *Where do you recognize the true outpouring of the Holy Spirit?* It may be possible we will be confronted by two demonstrations side by side, one the genuine Holy Spirit and the other a counterfeit more clever than a Taiwan Rolex. The one "test question:" *Tell which is which.*

Before the 1888 "beginning" of the latter rain, Ellen White had already warned that we will have to meet very close counterfeits of the Holy Spirit. Our personal choice of which is which (with no access to "experts" to tell us) will determine our eternal destiny:

Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children.... The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit.³³

This chapter entitled "Modern Revivals" exposes many of the false ideas that were popular among revivalists in the nineteenth century. No such counterfeit could deceive anyone with a true understanding of "righteousness by faith." But there was much confusion in the nineteenth century; and there is even more today. The subjectivism of the modern "Pentecostal" movements with their seductive miracles had its toots in 1888-era revival movements that swept through the popular (1 lurches.

If this "holy spirit" was a counterfeit, where is the real One? There must be a genuine somewhere, for we have these divine promises:

It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit;... and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:17-21).

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen... And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Revelation 18:1-4).

Decades ago a former General Conference president confessed that he recognized the initial fulfillment of the prophecy of that "fourth angel" in the 1888 message:

In 1888 there came to the Seventh-day Adventist Church a very definite awakening message. It was

³³ The Great Controversy, p. 464.

designated at the time as "the message of Righteousness by Faith." Both the message itself and the manner of its coming made a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of ministers and people, and the lapse of time has not erased that impression from memory. To this day, many of those who heard the message when it came are deeply interested in it and concerned regarding it. All these long years they have held a firm conviction, and cherished a fond hope, that some day this message would be given great prominence among us, and that it would do the cleansing, regenerating work in the church which they believed it was sent by the Lord to accomplish.³⁴

Elder Daniells felt he had to add: "The message has never been received, nor proclaimed, nor given free course as it should have been in order to convey to the church the measureless blessings that were wrapped within it."

Our denominational publications demonstrate the truth of his statement. Except for ideas implicit (but largely unseen) in Spirit of Prophecy writings, research shows that for decades before and after 1926 the unique 1888 message itself has been as lost and buried as Pompeii beneath old Vesuvius's ashes. We may have much so-called "righteousness by faith," but it is a far cry from the light that the Lord gave this people in the 1888 message. And not only has the charismatic movement made attempts to seduce the remnant church through an extremely subjective "gospel," but the opposite extreme of a purely objective Calvinist or Reformationist "gospel" has exploited our widespread ignorance of the 1888 message. And persisting almost incessantly, the legalism of a century ago still largely prevails from generation to generation.

Ellen White encouraged the church:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God... It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.³⁵

Furthermore, it was the general conviction of those close to Ellen White that the latter rain had begun. Here is one example (A.T. Jones speaking):

I received a letter a little while ago from Brother [G. B.] Starr in Australia. I will read two or three sentences because they come in well just at this place in our

³⁴ A. G. Daniells, *Christ Our Righteousness*, p. 23; 1926.

³⁵ *Testimonies to Ministers* [1895], pp.91, 92.

lessons: —"Sister White says that we have been in the time of the latter rain since the [1888] Minneapolis meeting."³⁶

Two years earlier E. J. Waggoner had confessed:

***When we have strong faith that Christ is abiding in us, we can go forth to work for others with power, and join our voices with those of the angels in heaven, and then the message will go with a loud cry.... I rejoice tonight in the belief that the loud cry is now beginning.*³⁷**

And if that is not enough, here is the recorded confession of the congregation assembled at the 1893 General Conference session. A. T. Jones is asking questions, and the congregation is responding:

***Now brethren, when did that message of the righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: "Three or four years ago."] Which was it, three? or four? [Congregation: "Four."] Yes, four. Where was it? [Congregation: "Minneapolis."] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some in the congregation: "The loud cry."] What is that message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry—the latter rain. Then what did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain—the loud cry of the third angel's message.*³⁸**

That "congregation" included the assembled, official delegates. Let us in imagination join them that night as they listen in hushed attention:

And, brethren, the time has come to take up to-night what we there rejected. Not a soul of us has ever been able to dream yet the wonderful blessing that God had for us at Minneapolis, and which we would have been enjoying these four years, if hearts had been ready to receive the message which God sent. We would have been four years ahead, we would have been in the midst of the wonders of the loud cry itself, to-night. Did not the Spirit of Prophecy tell us there at that time that the blessing was hanging over our heads?

The General Conference president, O. A. Olsen, was moved by this presentation. The next day he bared his soul to the assembled delegates:

This place is becoming more and more solemn on account of the presence of God. I presume that none of us have ever before been in quite such a meeting as we are

³⁶ General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 371.

³⁷ Ibid, 1891, pp. 245,246.

³⁸ Ibid., 1893, p. 183.

having at this time. The Lord is certainly coming very near, and is revealing things more and more, things which we have not heretofore so fully appreciated nor understood...

I felt very solemn last evening. To me the place was terrible on account of God's nearness, on account of the solemn testimony that was borne to us here....

Some may feel tried over the idea that Minneapolis is referred to. I know that some have felt grieved and tried over any allusion to that meeting, and to the situation there. But let it be borne in mind that the reason why anyone should feel so is an unyielding spirit on his part.... The very idea that one is grieved, shows at once the seed of rebellion in the heart.³⁹

Another of the prominent speakers in 1893 who at least partially recognized what was happening was W. W. Prescott:

Now when I think that for four years we have been in the time of the latter rain, and that God has wanted to pour out his Spirit that these gifts might be restored, that his work might go with power; and that he wishes us to join gladly in the work and co-operate with him with the whole heart, it occurs to me that we have been the hands that have been holding on and the feet that wouldn't go, and rather than tear the whole body to pieces the body has waited.⁴⁰

This heart-throbbing recognition of the latter rain leaps at one continually from the brittle yellowed pages of the 1893 *General Conference Bulletin*. Never since the glorious days of the Midnight Cry of 1844 had the hearts of God's people burned with such an eschatological hope:

Then when that message of God's righteousness—the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, God's right doing—when that is received and is allowed to be carried on, and is held by his people, what does that mean about the work of God on earth? —It will be but a short time until the whole thing is done...

Now is the time that the work will be closed up shortly, and we are in the midst of the scenes that close up this world's history... but the latter rain is the teaching of righteousness. When did that message of the righteousness of God, as such, come to us as a people? [Congregation: —"Four years ago."] Where? [Congregation: "At Minneapolis."]...

³⁹ Ibid, p. 188.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 463.

Now, that message of the righteousness of Christ is the loud cry. It is the latter rain.⁴¹

Wouldn't they have been astounded to know that at least another century must roll by before God's gracious call would be heeded?

Many books have been written since then about this history. L. E. Froom's *Movement of Destiny*, published in 1971, courageously identifies the 1888 message as the *beginning* of the latter rain:

There was thus, in the nineties, not only an exposition but a manifestation of the power of Righteousness by Faith that was an earnest of the power of the crowning Loud Cry climax destined to come, samplings of which were then given. Mrs. White expressly stated that what was taking place was actually the beginning of the Latter Rain (p. 345).

The message at Minneapolis became most precious to the heart of [F. H.] Westphal. It was "sweet music to my soul," he declared. He went back to Plainfield, Wisconsin, and told the church that the Latter Rain had started. As a result, one farmer sold his farm, put much of his money into the Lord's work, took up canvassing, and was finally ordained to the ministry (p. 262).

He who denies that the Loud Cry began to sound in 1888 impugns the veracity of the Spirit of Prophecy. He who asserts the Latter Rain did not then begin to fall challenges the integrity of God's message relayed to us (p. 667).

As all students of these backgrounds are aware, these truths of 1888 have not yet come to their full tide, as we are told that they must and will before and as we enter upon the final phase of our witness to the world. They will yet definitely become the throbbing, all-pervasive heart of our final presentation to the world. The "final movements" will be "rapid ones," Spirit-filled, Christ-centered, full-message, Righteousness-by-Faith-surcharged movements... The glorious truths of 1888 will triumph (p. 521).

"The blessed hope" that inspired the Advent pioneers was the hope of seeing Jesus personally at His return, and being translated without dying—for His glory. The 1888 message rekindled this hope. A. T. Jones has been quoting *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 187, which says, "Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." Now for his clincher:

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 243.

Brethren, that is where we are. Let us act like it. Let us thank the Lord that he is dealing with us still, to save us from our errors, to save us from our dangers, to keep us back from wrong courses, and to pour upon us the latter rain, that we may be translated. That is what the message means—translation—to you and me.⁴²

A few days later they were back again, obsessed with the same white-hot topic:

Brethren, is there not a lot of good cheer in the thought that... the latter rain is to prepare for translation? Now, where is the latter rain to fall, and when does it? Now is the time for the latter rain: and when is the time for the loud cry? [Voice: "Now."] What is it to prepare us for? [Voice: "For translation."] It brings good cheer to me that the tests that the Lord is giving us now, are to fit us for translation. And when he comes and speaks to you and me, it is because he wants to translate us, but he cannot translate sin, can he? Then, the only purpose that he has in showing us the depth and breadth of sin, is that he may save us from it and translate us. Then, shall we become discouraged when he shows us our sins? No; let us thank him that he wants to translate us, and he wants to do this so much that he wishes to get our sins out of the way as soon as possible.⁴³

Closely linked with the thought of preparation for translation was a heart appreciation of the health-reform message:

Now another thing right there. We are living in view of another fearful fact, that is, if that message which we are now to give, is not received, it has attached to it the fearful consequences that the wine of the wrath of God will be received. ... And the work which is to bring all face to face with that fact, as it is there recorded, is now begun. Therefore, will not that give a power to the health reform that it has not yet had? When the health reform was given to the people of God, it was defined as that which is to fit the people for translation... But we have to go through the seven last plagues before we are translated; and if a man's blood is impure and full of gross material will he be able to pass through that time, when the air is sick with pestilence? Indeed he cannot.⁴⁴

But something even more impressive was looming before them.

⁴² General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 185.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 205.

⁴⁴ A.T. Jones, *ibid.*, pp. 88,89.

An event of national importance also conspired to make the 1888 era one of almost breathtaking significance—a national Sunday law. Seventh-day Adventists had always believed that virtually simultaneous with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain will come such a law prefigured in the mark of the beast prophecies. They were closer to the final crisis then than we are even with all the agitation today from the "Christian Right."

In two centuries of American history, Congress has never come so close to passing a national Sunday law as during the height of our 1888 interest in righteousness by faith. "In 1888 Senator H. W. Blair of New Hampshire introduced a Sunday bill into the United States Congress enforcing Sunday in all Federal territories as a 'day of worship,' also a religious-education amendment to the Constitution."⁴⁵ Just after the 1888 session in Minneapolis, Ellen White wrote:

We see that efforts are being made to restrict our religious liberties. The Sunday question is now assuming large proportions. An amendment to our Constitution is being urged in Congress, and when it is obtained, oppression must follow.⁴⁶

Hardly had A.T. Jones finished his duties at that session than he was called to Washington, D. C, to make a presentation before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor, December 13, 1888.⁴⁷ His success in opposing Blair's Sunday bill naturally made his righteousness by faith presentations more impressive. The Lord was leading him and blessing him. Further agitation for the Sunday closing of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago created a tense climate for the delegates to the General Conference session of that year:

To begin with and to lay the foundation for what is to come, we will look at the situation as it exists to-night before us in the United States government. And for this reason I shall relate the experiences of the hearing that took place lately in Washington.⁴⁸

When they [Congress] put that restriction there, and said that the directors should sign an agreement to close the World's Fair on Sunday, on the "Christian Sabbath," as Congress declared Sunday to be, before they could receive any money; they had just as much right to say that the World's Fair directory should sign an agreement to submit to Christian baptism before they could receive any of the appropriation....

If Congress can define what the Christian Sabbath is they can require anything else in the Christian religion.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, revised edition, p. 1437.

⁴⁶ *Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888.

⁴⁷ "The National Sunday Law, Argument of A.T. Jones," Oakland, California, *American Sentinel*, 1890.

⁴⁸ *Bulletin*, p. 39.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

These are some of the things that are taking place before us. Now the study will be what is soon to come upon us from what is now taking place before us. When we see that, as the testimony has said, we will see the necessity, recognize the necessity, that the Holy Spirit shall be recognized, received, presented to the people. And that is where we are, brethren, as Brother Prescott has said. The only question is, Shall we seek God for the power of his Holy Spirit?⁵⁰

Those of our people who were awake were deeply stirred.

Well they might be! Congress had declared officially that "the Christian Sabbath" is Sunday, something no American Congress has authority to do. Clergymen were declaring themselves ready to trample upon the convictions of Sabbath-keepers. Our people were thinking of these familiar words: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law" (Psalm 119:126). Elder Jones made a powerful appeal:

Then is not that word the prayer that God has put into our mouths at this time?... Are you living day by day... in the presence of that terrible fact that it is time for God himself to work, if his integrity is going to be maintained to all the world?... It brings us to the point of such consecration as not a soul of us ever dreamed of before—unto the place of such consecration, of such devotion, as will hold ourselves in the presence of God, with that fearful thought that "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law."⁵¹

Righteousness by faith is meaningless unless it actually motivates to sacrificial service. The Jones-Waggoner message was practical and effective. It not only demanded, but actually motivated to, complete devotion:

We are to warn the people of the world against this power [the beast and its image]... and to draw them away from it unto God. Now can I do that with any force at all, if I have any connection with the world or worldliness? [Congregation, "No."] If I may partake of a worldly spirit, and a worldly disposition and inclination, I want to know how I am going to warn the people to separate from the world utterly? How is there going to be enough force in my words to get anybody to do it?... I do not care whether you are a minister or not, if you are only a Seventh-day Adventist, or even only a professed Seventh-day Adventist,... I want to know how you are going to make that profession worth anything, or have any power at all upon people of this world, if you are in any way connected with this world in spirit, in mind, in

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 52.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 73.

thought, in wishes, in inclinations? No sir; a hair's breadth, a connection with the world as thin as a hair, will rob you of the power that there must be in this call that will warn the world against this evil power of the world, so that they shall be utterly separated from it.⁵²

The message matched the crisis.

In bold, simple words the messengers called for the ultimate measure of consecration to the Lord:

That is a splendid picture that Brother Porter read awhile ago; that the prophet looked for those who give this message, but looked too low. Said the angel, "Look higher." Thank the Lord, they are above the world. That is where they belong. Above the world, upon a foundation which God has established for them to walk upon. And every one who is down so low that any one has to look to the world to see them—such as these cannot give the third angel's message. We are to be above the world. Then cut loose, brethren.

Appeals such as the following were what led a farmer of Plainfield, Wisconsin, to sell his farm and enter the Lord's work:

Brethren, it is the worst thing that can happen to a Seventh-day Adventist who has means, when God has to pass him by and find somebody else that will give what is wanted. A Seventh-day Adventist left to himself, is the worst off man in this world. We have come to a place where God wants us to use all we have. And when we believe this our means and ourselves will be for his use.

And his work will soon be done, and then we shall not need any more means. That is the situation now.⁵³

Not since the midnight cry of 1844 had human hearts been so deeply stirred.

The latter rain and the loud cry had begun! No wonder the General Conference president felt the solemnity of the hour: "This place is becoming more and more solemn on account of the presence of God. I presume that none of us have ever before been in quite such a meeting as we are having at this time." How would you have felt to be listening to these words:

It is time for the third angel's message to reach every nation on the globe....

Well then are you ready to go? That being the message that is to go, does it not become every professor of that message to hold himself in readiness to go to the

⁵² Ibid., p. 123.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 111; cf. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, p. 262.

ends of the earth, when God calls him to go?... Then every man is unfaithful to the trust which God has given us in the third angel's message, if he holds himself back from the call of God to go anywhere on the globe, isn't he? Then that brings us again face to face with such a consecration as there has never been among Seventh-day Adventists. It brings us face to face with such a consecration that home, family, property, everything, is surrendered into the hands of God to let him call us and send us or such means as we have, where he pleases and do what he chooses with us...

These things as they stand now, make a greater strain upon real, actual faith than we have ever had yet.... I tell you it draws on a man. I find that it draws on me. Well, all I can say, brethren, is, Let it draw.⁵⁴

Elder S. N. Haskell had the same conviction. And he later *did* go to the ends of the earth, giving up his home:

Then what will we do if we are possessors of this grace? Why, I expect we will leave our homes. I expect we will be glad to leave our homes, and devote them to the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be the means of carrying the truth to the uttermost parts of the earth.... If our interest is circumscribed, we may offer a few prayers—and that is all good; we may send out a few periodicals—and that is all good; but how many of us will give ourselves, will give up our interests, and let our interests and our lives be so interwoven in the work of die Lord, that our practice will be in direct harmony with the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?⁵⁵

Some made just such a consecration of their all to Jesus. The message had power unprecedented since the Midnight Cry. Ordained ministers even were rebaptized.⁵⁶ This kind of consecration will melt the hearts of ministers today:

That is the one thing, not who shall be greatest in the Conference, or who shall be greatest in the church, or who shall have this or that position in the church, or the Conference Committee. That is not it. But, "Who shall approach the nearest to the likeness of Christ?"... Brethren, that is where we are.⁵⁷

Will we in this generation see the glory of God displayed in the finishing of His work?

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 110, 111.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

⁵⁶ W. S. Hyatt was one of these (*Froom, Movement of Destiny*, p. 257). Dr. and Mrs. Daniel H. Kress were also (*Under the Guiding Hand*, pp. 112,113).

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

What was the content of the 1888 message that had such great power to move hearts? It can be summed up in one word—Christ.

For once, two Seventh-day Adventist ministers caught a glimpse of what must become our grand theme for the world:

Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world... The sinner must be led to look to Calvary; with the simple faith of a little child he must trust in the merits of the Saviour, accepting His righteousness, believing in His mercy.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ *Gospel Workers*, pp. 156,157.

Chapter Four

Christ, the Heart of the 1888 Message

A Clearer View of the Savior Heals the Alienated Heart

Jones and Waggoner were united and emphatic in uplifting Christ as the Divine One. Their mature presentations were not marred by any lingering sense of Christ being less than eternally pre-existent and equal with the Father. Note how Waggoner exalts Christ in *The Glad Tidings*, page 141:

Christ was Mediator before sin came into the world, and will be Mediator when no sin is in the universe, and no need for expiation [forgiveness]... He is the very impress of the Father's being... He did not first become mediator at the fall of man, but was such from eternity. No one, not simply no man, but no created being, comes to the Father but by Christ.

In his small book, *Christ and His Righteousness* (1889, 1890), Waggoner repeats thirty-one times his belief in the full, eternal deity of Christ. The widely promoted idea that he was an Arian or a semi-Arian is refuted by this and other evidence. One recent work published by the Review and Herald asserts that Waggoner taught "that Christ was a created god" [small g].⁵⁹ He never taught this.

Jones joined Waggoner in the same proclamation of the full eternal Deity of our Savior:

In the first chapter of Hebrews Christ is revealed as God, of the name of God, because He is of the nature of God. And so entirely is His nature of the nature of God, that it is the very impress of the substance of God. This is Christ the Saviour, Spirit of God, substance of substance of God. And this it is essential to know in the first chapter of Hebrews in order to know what is His nature revealed in the second chapter of Hebrews as a man.⁶⁰

The very heart of the 1888 message was a clear revival of New Testament justification by faith. But the messengers succeeded in clearing away the debris of many centuries of contentious dispute. What enabled them to make this breakthrough? Not superior wisdom or talent! Their understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary restored their vision to near-apostolic purity, and was intended by the Lord to prepare a people for Christ's coming. For example:

⁵⁹ Woodrow Whidden II, *Ellen White on Salvation*, p. 90.

⁶⁰ *The Consecrated Way*, p. 16.

The just shall live by faith. How much of a man's life must be just? —All, every moment; for the just shall live by faith...

No deed that we can do can be just by the law only. By faith alone can a man or any act of his be just. The law judges a man by his works, and the law is so inconceivably great that no human act can rise to its height. There must therefore be a Mediator through whom justification shall come....

All the deeds of humanity are vitiated...

In Christ is the perfect righteousness of the law, and the grace to bestow the gift of his righteousness through faith. And of this the prophets themselves are witnesses, for they preached justification through Christ, by faith...

There is but one thing in this world that a man needs, and that is justification—and justification is a fact, not a theory. It is the gospel.... Righteousness can only be attained through faith; consequently all things worthy to be preached, must tend to justification by faith....

We need the righteousness of Christ to justify the present just as much as to make perfect the imperfect deeds of the past.⁶¹

[We] wonder that any should ever suppose that the doctrine of justification by faith is going to lower the law of God. Justification carries the law on the face of it... It establishes the law in the heart. Justification is the law incarnate in Christ, put into the man, so it is incarnate in the man....

Christ gives his righteousness, takes away the sin, and leaves his righteousness there, and that makes a radical change in the man.⁶²

As we shall see in a later chapter, Waggoner's relating justification by faith to the law in no way echoes the error of the Roman Catholic council of Trent *counterfeit* of justification by faith. The 1888 view of justification by faith was to prepare a people of whom the Lord could say, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, *and the faith of Jesus*"(Revelation 14:12, emphasis supplied).

Both messengers were charmed with the glory of Christ.

⁶¹ Waggoner, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1891, p. 75.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Waggoner urged that we "consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is."⁶³ How can we do that?

To see Him "just as He is" requires a full, balanced view of Christ as both our Substitute and Surety, *and* our Example and Model. It is impossible to appreciate Him as our divine Substitute unless we also "see" Him as our Example. The latter makes glorious the former, and the former makes effective the latter:

He should be "lifted up" in all His exceeding loveliness and power as "God with us," that His Divine attractiveness may thus draw all unto Him.⁶⁴

The fact that Christ is a part of the Godhead, possessing all the attributes of Divinity, being the equal of the Father in all respects, as Creator and Lawgiver, is the only force there is in the atonement.... If Christ were not Divine, then we should have only a human sacrifice.... He could have no righteousness to impart to others.⁶⁵ ***The sinner's surety of full and free pardon lies in the fact that the Lawgiver Himself, the One against whom he has rebelled and whom he has defied, is the One who gave Himself for us.***⁶⁶

Jones and Waggoner laid the foundation of their message faithfully on the idea that Christ, being our Substitute, imputes His righteousness to the believing sinner. This was the view that the sixteenth-century Reformers held, that our acceptance with God is based entirely on the substitutionary work of Christ—never on an iota or scintilla of our own work:

Since the best efforts of a sinful man have not the least effect toward producing righteousness, it is evident that the only way it can come to him is a gift...

It is because righteousness is a gift that eternal life, which is the reward of righteousness, is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ has been set forth by God as the One through whom forgiveness of sins is to be obtained, and this forgiveness consists simply in the declaration of His righteousness (which is the righteousness of God) for their remission. "God, who is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4), and who delights in it, puts His own righteousness on the sinner who believes in Jesus, as a substitute for his sins. Surely, this is a profitable exchange for the sinner, and it is no loss to God, for He is infinite in holiness, and the supply can never be diminished... God puts

⁶³ *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

His righteousness upon the believer. He covers him with it, so that his sin no more appears....

At last the sinner, weary of the vain struggle to get righteousness from the law, listens to the voice of Christ and flees to His outstretched arms. Hiding in Christ, he is covered with His righteousness; and now behold! he has obtained, through faith in Christ, that for which he has been vainly striving... It is the genuine article, because he obtained it from the Source of Righteousness...

There is in the transaction no ground for finding fault. God is just, and at the same time the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; He is equal with the Father in every attribute. Consequently the redemption that is in Him—the ability to buy back lost man—is infinite. Man's rebellion is against the Son as much as against the Father, since both are one.⁶⁷

But what the 16th century Reformers never did, Jones and Waggoner went on to do.

They built upon this foundation a grand edifice of Biblical truth that is unique and distinctly Seventh-day Adventist as a completion of the Reformation begun long ago. They developed a message of righteousness by faith parallel to and consistent with the unique Adventist truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary. "The message of Christ's righteousness" that is to lighten the earth with glory is ministered from the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ our High Priest is completing His work of reconciliation on this antitypical Day of Atonement.

This required a clearer view of Christ's sacrifice on His cross, and of 11 is righteousness manifested in human flesh, clearer than had ever been seen before.

We are told by an inspired pen that the loud cry of the third angel's message will be more light than noise:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character.... Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.⁶⁸

We will see how the 1888 message itself fulfilled that specification required of a true outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. But we must first take a brief look at how Ellen White related herself to the message of Jones and Waggoner. Efforts have been made to discredit their message by representing Waggoner in particular as having apostatized from the truth a few weeks or months following the 1888 Conference.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 60-66).

⁶⁸ Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415.

Two important factors must be noted:

1. Competent modern theologians are beginning to support the view that Waggoner taught at and following the 1888 Conference.

They are simply giving up error and taking the Bible for what it reads. Some of these will be cited later in our study as favoring the same view of justification by faith. When Waggoner said that justification by faith "makes a radical change in the man," he meant that the believing sinner is "made obedient to the law." This is not the Roman Catholic view by any means!

2. Ellen White's enthusiastic endorsements of the Jones-Waggoner message continued for years after the 1888 Conference.

Here are a few examples (emphasis supplied):

In 1889 she supported "this light which these men *are* presenting," and said that "the very message the Lord has sent to the people *of this lime is* being presented in their discourses." ⁶⁹ "The present message— justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness."⁷⁰ In 1890 she spoke of "the evidences given in the past two years of the dealings of God by His chosen servants, ... whom God *is* using."⁷¹ In 1892 she continued: "God *is* working through these instrumentalities... The message given us by A.T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner *is* a message of God to the Laodicean church."⁷²

In 1893 she exulted that "light and freedom and the outpouring of the Spirit of God *have* attended the work" of Jones.⁷³ In 1895 she spoke frequently of how "God *has* given them His message. They *bear* [present tense] the word of the Lord... These men... *have been* as signs in the world,... moved by the Spirit of God,... [and were] Christ's delegated messengers."⁷⁴ "God *has* upheld them,... and he *has given* them precious light, and their message *has fed* the people of God."⁷⁵ As late as 1896 she said that "he who rejects the light and evidence God *has been* liberally bestowing upon us, rejects Christ."⁷⁶ Scattered over the years, these endorsements number over two hundred!

Conclusion: the only way to charge apostasy on Waggoner during this period is to discredit Ellen White by assuming that she was either naive, misinformed, or derelict in her duty.

A most essential element of the 1888 message was a refreshing breakthrough in understanding justification by faith. But before we examine it, our next chapter considers another essential concept taught by both Jones and Waggoner. Documentary evidence exists to show that Waggoner held this view *before, during, and after* the Minneapolis Conference, even in the face of strong opposition. It was a unique understanding of "Christ's righteousness," and forms an integral part of the message he and Jones presented with Ellen White's endorsement.

⁶⁹ Manuscript 5, 1889, *1888 Materials*, p. 348; *Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, September 3, 1889.

⁷¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 466.

⁷² Letter S24, 1892; *1888 Materials*, p. 1052, emphasis added.

⁷³ Letter, January 9, 1893, *ibid.*, p. 1122.

⁷⁴ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 96, 97.

⁷⁵ Letter 51a, 1895, *op.cit.* p. 1353.

⁷⁶ Letter, May 31, 1896, *op.cit.*, p. 1565.

Chapter Five

The Sinless Christ: Tempted as We Are *How He Saves Us Who Are Tempted*

In looking into the basic ideas that made the 1888 message of (Christ's righteousness unique and powerful, we shall keep very close to Ellen White's parallel comments on the message and history of that era. In describing the revival meetings held at South Lancaster early in 1889, she directs us to the vital heart of the practical godliness aspect of the Jones-Waggoner message:

Both students and teachers have shared largely in the blessing of God. The deep movings of the Spirit of God have been felt upon almost every heart. The general testimony was borne by those who attended the meeting that they had obtained an experience beyond anything they had known before....

I have never seen a revival work go forward with such thoroughness, and yet remain so free from all undue excitement. There was no urging or inviting. The people were not called forward, but there was a solemn realization that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance... We seemed to breathe in the very atmosphere of heaven.... What a beautiful sight it was to the universe to see that as fallen men and women beheld Christ, they were changed, taking the impression of his image upon their souls.... They saw themselves depraved and degraded in heart... This subdues the pride of the heart, and is a crucifixion of self.⁷⁷

The Jones-Waggoner idea of the divine, eternally pre-existent Christ coming to rescue man *where he is*, taking upon His sinless nature our sinful nature and experiencing all our temptations within His soul, and yet completely triumphing over them—this was a central feature of their message. It was closely tied to their unique view of justification by faith. Christ's righteousness was dynamic and glorious, the fruit of lifelong conflict even unto "the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Speaking of the same meeting, Ellen White goes on to express her joy, like this:

On Sabbath afternoon, many hearts were touched, and many souls were fed on the bread that cometh down from heaven... The Lord came very near and convicted souls of their great need of his grace and love. We felt the necessity of presenting Christ as a Saviour who was not afar off, but nigh at hand.

The key to understanding the heart of the 1888 message lies in that phrase—"a Saviour who was not afar off, but nigh at hand." He who is "the way, the truth, and the life" made Himself manifest to youth at the college as One "*nigh at hand*," "*Emmanuel*,... God with us," not with Him only, but "with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Who is Jesus Christ?

He comes to us in the 1888 message in a unique way. And the baffling, often misunderstood, history of that message demonstrates the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Let Christ be revealed in His fullness, and Satan for sure will be aroused to oppose. It is so even today.

Was Christ indeed "in all points tempted like as we are" from *within* as well as from *without*? Or was He so different from us that He could not feel our inward temptations?

Was He really and truly man? Or was He tempted only as the sinless Adam was tempted? Can we be sure that He was He tempted as we are tempted? Or was He tempted in some mysterious non-human way, irrelevant to our understanding, like turning stones to bread?

We have our initial clue from what Ellen White said of that early 1889 meeting that Christ was revealed in the message as "One nigh at hand." And

⁷⁷ *Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889.

she says," We felt the necessity" of presenting Him so—Ellen White heartily joined with Jones and Waggoner in their presentations.

This was what so impressed Ellen White's soul during this "revival work."

This was not cold theology; this was life. "Both students and teachers" *"beheld Christ"* "It was genuine justification by faith, for it subdued "the pride of the heart, and [was] a crucifixion of self." "What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself."⁷⁸ Let us look at a simple, straightforward example of the Jones-Waggoner message of Christ's righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Waggoner is summarizing what he has taught ever since and before the 1888 Conference:

There were two questions handed me, and I might read them now. One of them is this: "Was that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary born in sinful flesh, and did that flesh have the same evil tendencies to contend with that ours does?"...

Now I do not know anything about this matter, except what I read in the Bible; but that which I read in the Bible is so clear and plain that it gives me everlasting hope. [Voices: Amen!] I have had my time of discouragement and despondency and unbelief, but I thank God that it is past. That thing which for years of my life made me discouraged, after I had as earnestly and conscientiously as anyone ever did, tried to serve the Lord—that which made me give up in my soul and say, "It is no use; I cannot do it," was the knowledge, to some extent, of the weakness of my own self, and the thought that those who in my estimation were doing right, and those holy men of old of whom we read in the Bible, were differently constituted from me so that they could do right. I found by many sad experiences that I could not do anything but evil...

I ask you: If Jesus Christ, who is set forth by the Father as the Saviour, who came here to show me the way of salvation, in whom alone there is hope—if his life here on earth was a sham, then where is the hope? [Voice: It is gone.] "But," you say, "this question presupposes the very opposite of the fact that his life was a sham, because it presupposes that he was perfectly holy, so holy that he never had even any evil to contend with."

That's what I am referring to. I read, he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." I read of

⁷⁸ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 111, from *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 9, p. 62.

his praying all night. I read of his praying in such agony the drops of sweat like blood fell from his face; but if that were all make-believe, if it were all simply show, if he went through that and there was nothing to it after all, if he were not really tempted, but that was merely going through the motions of prayer, of what use is it all to me? I am left worse off than I was before.

But O, if there is One—and I do not use this "if" with any thought of doubt; I will say since there is One who went through all that I ever can be called upon to go through, who resisted more than I in my own single person can ever be called upon to resist [Voices: Amen!], who had temptations stronger than ever has come to me personally, who was constituted in every respect as I am, only in even worse circumstances than I have been, who met all the power that the devil could exercise through human flesh, and yet who knew no sin—then I can rejoice with exceeding great joy. [Voices: Amen!].... And that which he did some nineteen hundred years ago is that which he is still able to do, which he does to all who believe in him.⁷⁹

Before we go further, let us catch what Waggoner was saying: (a) Christ was really tempted as we are; (b) He prayed because He had to; (c) He was "constituted in every respect as I am" except that He knew no sin; (d) He met "all the power that the devil could exercise through human flesh" (obviously, through temptations within and without), (e) Yet Christ "knew no sin," and demonstrated in His flesh and life a perfect righteousness, (f) All who believe in Him truly will know His power to save *them* from sinning.

But to be fair we need to hear Waggoner out.

He continues, discussing the Roman Catholic view of the nature of Christ in the flesh:

Was Christ, that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary, born in sinful flesh? Did you ever hear of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception? And do you know what it is? Some of you possibly have supposed in hearing of it, that it meant that Jesus Christ was born sinless. That is not the Catholic dogma at all. The doctrine of the immaculate conception is that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born sinless. Why?—Ostensibly to magnify Jesus; really the work of the devil to put a wide gulf between Jesus the Saviour of men, and the men whom he came to save, so that one could not pass over to the other.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ General Conference Bulletin, 1901, pp. 403, 40.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 401.

This "wide gulf" is the very error that Ellen White spoke of in her March 1889 statement above, which "we felt the necessity" of avoiding. Waggoner reveals his awareness in 1901 of continuing opposition to the 1888 message:

We need to settle, every one of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not. There are a great many that have got the marks yet, but I am persuaded of this, that every soul who is here to-night desires to know the way of truth and righteousness [Congregation: Amen!], and that there is no one here who is unconsciously clinging to the dogmas of the papacy, who does not desire to be freed from them.

Do you not see that the idea that the flesh of Jesus was not like ours (because we know ours is sinful) necessarily involves the idea of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary? Mind you, in him was no sin, but the mystery of God manifest in the flesh,... the perfect manifestation of the life of God in its spotless purity in the midst of sinful flesh. [Congregation: Amen!] O, that is a marvel, is it not?

Suppose we start with the idea for a moment that Jesus was so separate from us, that is, so different from us that he did not have in his flesh anything to contend with. It was sinless flesh. Then, of course, you see how the Roman Catholic dogma of the immaculate conception necessarily follows. But why stop there? Mary being born sinless, then, of course, her mother also had sinless flesh. But you can not stop there. You must go back to her mother,... and so back until you come to Adam; and the result—there never was a fall; Adam never sinned; and thus, you see, by that tracing of it, we find the essential identity of Roman Catholicism and Spiritualism....

[Christ] was tempted in the flesh, he suffered in the flesh, but he had a mind which never consented to sin...

He established the will of God in the flesh, and established the fact that God's will may be done in any human, sinful flesh....

Every body, your body, and my body, is prepared by God that Christ may do the will of God in it.⁸¹

The simple idea Waggoner is presenting is that what Christ accomplished by overcoming in His flesh on earth, He can accomplish in the flesh of all who understand the pure gospel and believe in Him truly. *Righteousness is by faith.* Note his conclusion:

⁸¹ Cf. Butler, *The Law in Galatians*, p. 58.

When God has given this witness to the world of his power to save to the uttermost, to save sinful beings, and to live a perfect life in sinful flesh, then he will remove the disabilities and give us better circumstances in which to live. But first of all this wonder must be worked out in sinful man, not simply in the person [flesh] of Jesus Christ, but in Jesus Christ reproduced and multiplied in the thousands of his followers. So that not simply in the few sporadic cases but in the whole body of the church, the perfect life of Christ will be manifested to the world, and that will be the last crowning work which will either save or condemn men...

Now when we get hold of that, we have healthful living in mortal flesh, and we shall glory in infirmities.... I could be perfectly content never to know any higher joy than this, that Jesus gives us, the experience of the power of Christ in sinful flesh—to put under foot, and make subservient to his will, this sinful flesh. It is the joy of victory; and there can be a shout in the camp when that is done...

He brings victory out of defeat; out of the depths of the pit he lifts us up, and makes us sit together with Christ in heavenly places. He can take the child that is born in sin, it may be even the product of lust, and can make that very child to sit with the princes of God's people. The Lord has shown us this in that he did not conceal His own ancestry from us... We have mourned the fact that we inherited evil tendencies, sinful natures, we have almost despaired because we could not break with these inherited evils, nor resist these tendencies to sin.... Jesus Christ was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh."... Jesus was not ashamed to call sinful men his brethren....

Thus we see that no matter what our inheritance may have been by nature, the Spirit of God has such power over the flesh that it can utterly reverse all this, and make us partakers of the divine nature....

O, may God help us to see some of the glorious possibilities in the gospel ... so that we may say, "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart," revealing its power even in my sinful, mortal flesh, to the everlasting praise of the glory of his grace.⁸²

⁸² General Conference Bulletin, 1901, pp. 406-408.

The basic idea remained clear and undistorted. Note what Waggoner wrote in a letter to G. I. Butler, February 10, 1887, and published late in 1888 (he presented copies to the delegates at the session):

Read Rom. 8:3, and you will learn the nature of the flesh which the Word was made: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ was born in the likeness of sinful flesh... [then quotes Philippians 2:5-7 and Hebrews 2:9].

These texts show that Christ took upon himself man's nature, and that as a consequence he was subject to death. He came into the world on purpose to die; and so from the beginning of his earthly life he was in the same condition that the men are in whom he died to save. Now read,

Rom. 1:3: The gospel of God, "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." What was the nature of David, "according to the flesh"? Sinful, was it not? David says: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5. Don't start in horrified astonishment; I am not implying that Christ was a sinner... [quotes Hebrews 2:16,17].

His being made in all things like unto his brethren, is the same as his being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, "made in the likeness of men." One of the most encouraging things in the Bible is the knowledge that Christ took on him the nature of man; to know that his ancestors according to the flesh were sinners. When we read the record of the lives of the ancestors of Christ, and see that they had all the weaknesses and passions that we have, we find that no man has any right to excuse his sinful acts on the ground of heredity.

If Christ had not been made in all things like unto his brethren, then his sinless life would be no encouragement to us. We might look at it with admiration, but it would be the admiration that would cause hopeless despair... [quotes 2 Corinthians 5:2].

Now when was Jesus made sin for us? It must have been when he was made flesh, and began to suffer the temptations and infirmities that are incident to sinful flesh. He passed through every phase of human experience, being "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4); and this scripture is said by Matthew to have been fulfilled long before the

Crucifixion. So I say that his being born under the law was a necessary consequence of his being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, of taking upon himself the nature of Abraham. He was made like man, in order that he might undergo the suffering of death. From the earliest childhood the cross was ever before him.

You say: "That he did voluntarily take the sins of the world upon him in his great sacrifice upon the cross, we [General Conference and Review and Herald leadership] admit; but he was not born under its condemnation. Of him that was pure, and had never committed a sin in his life, it would be an astonishing perversion of all proper theology to say that he was born under the condemnation of the law." It may be a perversion of theology, but it is exactly in harmony with the Bible, and that is the main point....

You are shocked at the idea that Jesus was born under the condemnation of the law, because he never committed a sin in his life. But you admit that on the cross he was under the condemnation of the law. What! had he then committed sin? Not by any means. Well, then, if Jesus could be under the condemnation of the law at one time in his life, and be sinless, I see no reason why he could not be under the condemnation of the law at another time, and still be sinless...

I simply cannot understand how God could be manifest in the flesh, and in the likeness of sinful flesh.... I simply accept the Scripture statement, that only so could he be the Saviour of men; and I rejoice in that knowledge, because since he was made sin, I may be made the righteousness of God in him⁸³

What makes this rather extended statement on the nature of Christ so interesting is that Waggoner actually published it in 1888, and then only after allowing the subject matter to mature in his mind for over a year.

From interviews with Waggoner's wife, From informs us that she took down her husband's studies at the 1888 Conference in shorthand and transcribed them. Waggoner then edited these notes for articles in (he *Signs of the Times* and later published them in his *Christ and His Righteousness* and other books.⁸⁴ Waggoner hardly had time to unpack his bags after the 1888 Conference before he was writing in the January 21, 1889 *Signs* (the passage also appears in slightly edited form in *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 26-30) as follows:

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon himself the likeness of man, in

⁸³ Waggoner, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*, 1888, pp. 60-62.

⁸⁴ From, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 200, 201.

order that he might suffer death, it must have been sinful man that he was made like, for it is only sin that causes death. Death ... could not have had any power over Christ if the Lord had not laid on him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon himself the flesh, not of a sinless being but of sinful man, that is, that the flesh which he assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the very words upon which this article is based. He was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh."...

Although his mother was a pure and godly woman, as could but be expected, no one can doubt that the human nature of Christ must have been more subject to the infirmities of the flesh than it would have been if he had been born before the race had so greatly deteriorated physically and morally... [quotes Hebrews 2:16-18 and 2 Corinthians 5:21].

This is much stronger than the statement that he was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was made to be sin.

... Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon himself sinful nature... [quotes Galatians 4:4,5].

Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to the Father. Why should this be, if he had not been oppressed by the enemy, through the inherited weakness of the flesh? He "learned... obedience by the things which he suffered." Not that he was ever disobedient, for he "knew no sin," but by the things which he suffered in the flesh, he learned what men have to contend against in their efforts to be obedient...

Some may have thought, while reading this article thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus, by bringing him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the "divine power" of our blessed Saviour, who himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man, in order that he might exalt man to his own spotless purity, which he retained under the most adverse circumstances.... His humanity only veiled his divine nature, which was more than able to successfully resist the sinful passions of the flesh. There was in his whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet his divine nature never for a moment harbored an evil desire, nor did his divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that all men can possibly suffer,

he returned to the throne of the Father, as spotless as when he left the courts of glory.... Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them "come boldly unto the throne of grace," where they are sure to find grace to help in time of need, because that need is felt by our Saviour, in the very time of need.

The observant reader will note: Waggoner did not say that Christ "had" His own sinful nature. He says Christ "took" *our* sinful nature, a nature that had within it all the capability of being tempted from within or without, a nature like ours with all the results of our heredity, but never for a moment did Jesus yield to temptation.

Did Ellen White fully endorse this concept of Christ's righteousness?

At the 1888 Conference itself she said, "I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the doctor [Waggoner] has placed it before us... That which has been presented harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience."⁸⁵ "The righteousness of Christ in relation to the law" is obviously not His pre-incarnation holiness in heaven, but His character and sacrifice wrought out in His incarnation "in the likeness of sinful flesh." As we have seen above, Waggoner made clear to Elder Butler that he believed Christ was "born under the law... [as] a necessary consequence of His being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, of taking upon Himself the nature of Abraham." It would be impossible for Ellen White to endorse as "the beauty of truth" Waggoner's concept "of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law" unless it included this tremendous idea of Christ taking "our sinful nature" and yet developing therein a perfectly sinless character.

In fact, she was enthusiastic about the over-all message she heard from him:

When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in the Minneapolis Conference it was the first clear teaching of the subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the communication between myself and my husband. I have said to myself, it is because God has presented it to me in vision that I see it so clearly, and they [the opposing brethren] cannot see it because they have not had it presented to them as I have; and when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said amen.⁸⁶

How could Ellen White have said something like this if Waggoner was merely reemphasizing Lutheran and Calvinist ideas or what the Evangelicals of their day were saying?

⁸⁵ Manuscript 15, 1888, *1888 Materials*, p. 164.

⁸⁶ Manuscript 5, 1889, *Ibid.*, p. 349. Ellen White's post-1888 writings abound with support for the 1888 view of the nature of Christ. See for example. *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 23, 24, 25, 26, 49, 70, 112, 116, 117, 143, 311, 664, 756. See also strong support in *Review and Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890, and in her *Christ Tempted As We Are*, tract published in 1894.

And this message was not the hair-splitting, partisan, cerebral theological contentions that are so common among us today.

It was simple, powerful, soul-saving Good News that won sinners, including tempted teenagers!

Chapter Six

Ellen White Supports the Jones-Waggoner Idea

The Bible Supports It, Too!

This concept of Christ's righteousness was unwelcome to Elder Butler, the General Conference president who contended sharply with Waggoner,⁸⁷ as it is unwelcome to some in our midst today.

It was so unwelcome that some protesters wrote Ellen White complaining about this message of Waggoner and Jones. She replied with vigor in a morning talk at Battle Creek on "How to Meet a Controverted Point of Doctrine":

Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature....

Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame.⁸⁸

All through the 1890's Ellen White made clear her unequivocal support of this key concept of the 1888 message because it had to do with getting ready for the coming of the Lord. In all her multitudinous endorsements of the message there is not the slightest hint that she was making any reservations about its central feature. In February 1894 she published a little tract entitled "Christ Tempted As We Are":

But many say that Jesus was not like us, that He was not as we are in the world, that He was divine, and therefore we cannot overcome as He overcame. But this is not true; "for verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham... For in

⁸⁷ Cf. *The Law in Galatians*, p. 58, and Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians*, p. 62.

⁸⁸ Morning talk, January 29, 1890; *Selected Messages*, Book One, pp. 408,409.

that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Christ knows the sinner's trials; He knows his temptations. He took upon Himself our nature.⁸⁹

And if, as she says (and she is quoting the Bible), Christ was tempted as we are, what does she mean on her page 11? She must mean what she says:

The Christian is to realize that he is not his own... His strongest temptations will come from within; for he must battle against the inclinations of the natural heart. The Lord knows our weaknesses... Every struggle against sin ... is Christ working through His appointed agencies upon the human heart. Oh, if we could comprehend what Jesus is to us and what we are to Him.

In her *The Desire of Ages*, page 49, she expresses her convictions for the world to read, written during this post-1888 period. In none of her previous writings on the nature of Christ did she express the idea quite so clearly and forcefully:

It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

Did Christ "take" the sinless nature of Adam before the Fall?

He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3). He was not created as a replica of Adam, formed of the dust of the ground anew with the breath of life breathed into His nostrils. He was "like every *child* of Adam" in accepting "the results of the working of the great law of heredity." To say that Christ "had" or "took" the sinless nature or the sinless mind of the pre-fall Adam is a pathetic failure to grasp reality. Christ's mind was *agape*, an amazing love that prior to the cross of Calvary was never comprehended even by the unfallen universe. Adam in his sinless state was ever so innocent, but he certainly did not have the mind of *agape*. He was not prepared to die for Eve to save her, but to die in sinful despair with her. There are lengths, and depths, and breadths, and heights in that *agape* that passed his knowledge.

The glorious paradox must ever be kept pure and clear. Christ's mind was *agape*, yet He came close to us who are sinners:

⁸⁹ Pp. 3, 4.

Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those he wished to save. In him was no guile or sinfulness; he was ever pure and undefiled; yet he took upon him our sinful nature.⁹⁰

The emphasis in her writings after 1888 is overwhelming. It would be wearisome to drag the reader through them all. Here are a few brief examples:

In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground man must travel, our Lord prepared the way for us to overcome.... There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us.⁹¹

Temptation is resisted when a man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed.⁹²

In this conflict the humanity of Christ was taxed as none of us will ever know.... These were real temptations, no pretense... The Son of God in His humanity wrestled with the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming temptations that assail men—temptations to indulgence of appetite, to presumptuous venturing where God has not led them, and to the worship of the god of this world, to sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life.⁹³

Error is always divisive; truth is always unifying.

Did Jones and Waggoner perfectly agree with each other in their presentations of Christ's righteousness? It is really phenomenal that two men temperamentally "unlike as garden fruit and apples of the desert" (a phrase from A. W. Spalding) could thread their way through the maze of hidden theological pitfalls awaiting anyone who studies these subjects, and yet remain in such vital unity. They believed in unity, they appealed to the church to be in unity, and they admirably demonstrated unity during the time when their message was the critical issue facing the church.

They were not concerned with splitting theological hairs or settling semantic difficulties. They were primarily messengers, reformers, evan-

⁹⁰ *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1896.

⁹¹ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 122, 123.

⁹² *The Youth's Instructor*, July 20, 1899.

⁹³ Letter 116, 1899; *Selected Messages*, Book One, pp. 94, 95.

gelists, soul-winning shepherds, burdened with the finishing of God's work in their generation. Their theology was concerned only with making a people ready for the coming of the Lord. Note one of Jones's presentations of the righteousness of Christ:

Being in all things made like us, He, when tempted, felt just as we feel when we are tempted, and knows all about it: and so can help and save to the uttermost all who will receive Him. As in His flesh, and as in Himself in the flesh, He was as weak as we are, and of Himself could "do nothing" (John 5:30); so when He bore "our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4), and was tempted as we are, feeling as we feel by His divine faith He conquered all by the power of God which that faith brought to him, and which in our flesh He has brought to us.

Therefore, His name is called Immanuel, which is "God with us." Not God with Him only, but God with us.⁹⁴

It is on the words of Jesus that Jones bases his convictions on the nature of Christ and His righteousness. As such, Jesus' own words (John 5:30) deserve our closest scrutiny, for they are neglected in current disputes:

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Was Jones correct in his understanding?

In these words of Jesus lies the acorn of truth that produced the oak of the 1888 message. Here the Lord discloses the internal struggle within His flesh and His soul that makes the term "Christ's righteousness" meaningful and relevant to the needs of fallen mankind. This is the basis for Waggoner's statement noted above—"There was in His whole life a struggle."

Jesus had to do something constantly that the sinless Adam never had to do—He had to deny an inner will ("mine own will") that was perpetually in potential opposition to His Father's will. This struggle came to a climax in Gethsemane, where He prayed in agony, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). Such an internal struggle could be possible only to One who knew "the clamors of our fallen nature," yet never yielded to them.

Seen in this light, Christ's victory appeared to Jones and Waggoner as a glorious dynamic righteousness, the fruit of struggle and conflict rather than the usual concept of a passive entity of holiness divinely inherited and easily natural. Let us catch the high points of Jones's presentation of Christ's glorious righteousness:

If He were not of the same flesh as are those whom He came to redeem, then there is no sort of use of His being made flesh at all. More than this: Since the only

⁹⁴ *The Consecrated Way*, p. 2.

flesh that there is in this wide world which He came to redeem, is just the poor, sinful, lost, human flesh that all mankind have; if this is not the flesh that He was made, then He never really came to the world which needs to be redeemed. For if He came in a human nature different from that which human nature in this world actually is, then, even though He were in the world, yet, for any practical purpose in reaching man and helping him, He was as far from him as if He had never come: for, in that case, in His human nature He was just as far from man and just as much of another world as if He had never come into this world at all....

The faith of Rome as to the human nature of Christ and Mary, and of ourselves, springs from that idea of the natural mind that God is too pure and too holy to dwell with us and in us in our sinful human nature: that sinful as we are, we are too far off for Him in His purity and holiness to come to us just as we are.

The true faith—the faith of Jesus—is that, far off from God as we are in our sinfulness, in our human nature which He took, He has come to us where we are; that, infinitely pure and holy as He is, and sinful, degraded, and lost, as we are, He in Christ by His Holy Spirit will willingly dwell with us and in us, to save us, to purify us, and to make us holy.

The faith of Rome is that we must be pure and holy in order that God shall dwell with us at all.

The faith of Jesus is that God must dwell with us, and in us, in order that we shall be holy or pure at all.⁹⁵

Jones sees great significance in Paul's phrase "in the flesh" in Romans 8:3, as referring to the flesh of Christ, that Christ actually condemned sin *in* His flesh, and thus condemned it in all flesh. With this understanding, Jones sees the word *likeness* as meaning more than superficial appearance that really means unlikeness:

Only by His subjecting Himself to the law of heredity could He reach sin in full and true measure as sin truly is... There is in each person, in many ways, the liability to sin, inherited from generations back, which has not yet culminated in the act of sinning, but which is ever ready, when occasion offers, to blaze forth in the actual committing of sins....

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 35, 39.

There must be met and subdued this hereditary liability to sin,... this hereditary tendency that is in us, to sin....

Our liability to sin was laid upon Him, in His being made flesh....

Thus He met sin in the flesh which He took, and triumphed over it, as it is written: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin IN THE FLESH." . .

To keep us from sinning, His righteousness is imparted to us in our flesh; as our flesh, with its liability to sin, was imparted to Him....

Thus, both by heredity and by imputation, He was laden with "the sin of the world." And, thus laden, at this immense disadvantage, He passed triumphantly over the ground where, at no shadow of any disadvantage whatever the first pair failed...

And by condemning sin in the flesh, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, He delivers from the power of the law of heredity; and so can, in righteousness, impart His divine nature and power to lift above that law, and hold above that law, and hold above it, every soul that receives Him.⁹⁶

On his next page follows the powerful evangelistic appeal, the basis for Ellen White's judgment that "this is the message that God commanded to be given to the world":

God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh Christ taking our nature as our nature in its sinfulness and degeneracy, and God dwelling constantly with Him and in Him in that nature—in this God has demonstrated to all people forever, that there is no soul in this world so laden with sins or so lost that God will not gladly dwell with him and in him to save him from it all, and to lead him in the way of the righteousness of God.

And so certainly is His name Emmanuel, which is, "God with us" (emphasis supplied).

It is clear that this message is based entirely on Scripture.

Jesus' own words in the Gospels of John and Matthew disclose to us the nature of His own inner struggle against temptation (John 5:30; 6:38; Matthew 26:39). When He took a will upon Himself that had to be constantly

⁹⁶ Pp. 40, 41, 42, 43.

denied in order to follow His Father's will, the struggle was so intense in Gethsemane that He sweat drops of blood. Paul saw that He denied self (Romans 15:3).

This explains how He was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [and yet] condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3). Paul explains how we "were in bondage under the elements (*stoicheia*) of the world: but... God sent forth his Son,... made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:3-5). Christ was sent to solve the problem of sin *where it existed*, entering the sphere where these powers had become entrenched. And having invaded enemy territory, He conquered. He assumed fallen human nature, the fallen psyche, that had been invaded by the evil powers, and alone in enemy-occupied territory He won the victory for us.

To be made "under the law" in Galatians 4:4 cannot possibly mean under the physical terms of the ceremonial Jewish law, for that would mean that the only ones He came to "redeem" were literal Jews. "Under the law" therefore clearly means the same sphere of "the elements of the world" that we all have known. He knew our conflict with the will, and *where we failed, He overcame*.

He has reconciled us "in his body of flesh by his death." "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 1:22; 2:15, RSV). He "abolished in His flesh the enmity" that alienates us from His Father (Ephesians 2:15).

The author of Hebrews piles words on words to make his meaning clear. Only the supreme sophistry of a master enemy could have inspired the Roman Catholic Church to becloud these inspired concepts through centuries of history:

He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same... Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren... In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:11-18).

We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15,16).

Some read into one unpublished Ellen White letter an esoteric meaning that presumably contradicts all the voluminous emphasis in her other writings on Christ's righteousness in the likeness of sinful flesh. It is said that she was trying to rebuke Jones and Waggoner. But she does not implicate them. She cautioned an obscure evangelist in New Zealand to be "exceedingly careful" how *he* taught "the human nature of Christ." She wasn't trying to shoot down the 1888 messengers:

Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin.... Not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity....

Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood. Truth lies close to the track of presumption. In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity....

Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption....

On not one occasion was there a response to his [Satan's] manifold temptations. Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground, to give him any advantage. Satan found nothing in Him to encourage his advances.⁹⁷

Several important factors must guide our understanding of this testimony:

1. The caution against careless, imprecise, or sloppy terminology is needed by all of us. This is a topic that requires exactness in the use of inspired words. For example, it is not right to say that Christ "had" a sinful nature, for this may be construed "to mean more than" it implies. The correct statement is that "He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succour those that are tempted."⁹⁸

2. The letter means exactly what it says in its context. But there is no reason to twist it out of its context, and make of it a condemnation of the 1888 message as taught by Jones and Waggoner. In fact, its author is telling Baker that he would be safe if he would follow Jones's and Waggoner's example, and stick to their precise and sharply defined expressions. This is evident in that she used syntax and terminology almost identical to that of Waggoner about seven years earlier. Let us compare Waggoner's and Ellen White's statements side by side—both describe Christ's battle with temptation in the flesh and His perfect victory:

WAGGONER, January 21, 1889 (Signs):

His humanity only veiled his divine nature, which was more than able to successfully resist the sinful passions of the flesh. There was in his whole life a

⁹⁷ Letter 8, 1895; *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1128, 1129. Woodrow Whidden II admits on one hand that no one knows what Baker was teaching yet then insists that he "most likely received his views from" Jones and Waggoner and that it "is clear that Baker's understanding... was very similar to" theirs (*Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ*, pp. 60, 61), so suggesting that Jones and Waggoner primarily deserved Ellen White's condemnation.

⁹⁸ *Medical Ministry*, p. 181.

struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet his divine nature never for a moment harbored an evil desire, nor did his divine power for a moment waver.... He returned to the throne of the Father, as spotless as when he left the courts of glory, (emphasis added)

ELLEN WHITE, Letter 8, 1895:

Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; he could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in him an evil propensity.... Never in any way leave the slightest impression that a taint of, or an inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that he in any way yielded to corruption... On not one occasion was there a response to...[Satan's] manifold temptations. Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground (emphasis added.)

3. The idea that Ellen White was writing this letter to Baker as an oblique or backhanded rebuke to Waggoner and Jones is preposterous. Anyone who appreciates Ellen White's open and honest character knows she was no coward to try to beat around the bush behind one's back. She knew well how to address herself to *them* if she at all wished to correct their teaching that Christ took our fallen, sinful flesh or nature. Never once did she do so in any written communication extant.

4. She made no attempt to publish this letter during her lifetime. (In fact, it never came to light until the 1950s.) This would hardly be characteristic of Ellen White if she felt that Jones's and Waggoner's teachings had misled the world church.

5. W. W. Prescott's understanding of the nature of Christ was the same as Jones 's and Waggoner's. He had been visiting Australia shortly before the writing of this letter to Baker, and had presented clear sermons at the Armadale camp meetings in October which Ellen White attended. She wrote as follows of Prescott's Armadale sermons:

In every sermon Christ was preached, and as the great and mysterious truths regarding his presence and work in the hearts of men were made clear and plain,... a glorious and convincing light... sent conviction to many hearts. With solemnity the people said, "We have listened to truth tonight."

In the evening Professor Prescott gave a most valuable lesson, precious as gold... Truth was separated from error, and made, by the divine Spirit, to shine like precious jewels...

The Lord is working in power through his servants who are proclaiming the truth, and he has given brother Prescott a special message for the people. The truth

comes from human lips in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God.⁹⁹

6. Never did Jones or Waggoner set Christ before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. The etymology of "propensity" is the Latin *propendere*, "to hang or lean forward or downward" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*). We get our word *pendulum* from the same source. The word *propensity* implies a "response to gravity," "a definite hanging down" instead of resistance. It is actual participation in sin, and Ellen White used the word in its finest 19th century English meaning.

7. To equate "propensities of sin" with Christ's taking upon His sinless nature our sinful nature is not correct. Although we are "born with inherent propensities of disobedience" as sinners, and thus have evil propensities, it is also true that "we need not *retain* one sinful propensity," even though we will still have a sinful nature until the moment of glorification.¹⁰⁰ If that is true, then Christ could have taken our sinful nature and yet not have had an evil propensity!¹⁰¹ Ellen White did not equate "evil propensities" with "tendencies" or "inclinations," which we all have as "the results of the working of the great law of heredity" and which Christ took upon Himself in His battle with temptation as we must fight it. She stated that Christ had "to resist the inclination" that would have led to sin.¹⁰²

Even though some non-theological dictionaries equate *propensities* with *inclinations*, the etymological roots are different. "Inclination" implies only the capacity "to *feel* strong pressure exerted" but not "« *response*" thereto. Indeed, we must be "careful, exceedingly careful."

Nevertheless there were questions and tensions throughout the 1888 era, hindering the acceptance of the gracious message of salvation. Jones considers one of the questions:

In Jesus Christ, we meet him whose holiness is a consuming fire to sin... The all-consuming purity of that holiness, will take every vestige of sin and sin-fulness out of the man who will meet God in Jesus Christ.

⁹⁹ *Review and Herald*, January 7, 1896.

¹⁰⁰ *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7 p. 943.

¹⁰¹ We are conceived, nurtured in the womb, and born in a state of separation and alienation from God. And prenatal influences involve us in the sins of our parents, so that we are born with propensities to sin, and we go astray from the womb. We must be "born again." In contrast, Christ was conceived, nurtured in the womb, and born as "Immanuel, God with us," not in alienation from God. Totally sinless, He took our sinful nature.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 930. Whidden vigorously contests the understanding of "propensity" (derived from *propendere*) being a response to gravity like a pendulum hanging down, not up (pp. 61-66). He contends that a propensity is "equivalent" to or "equated with" *having* a sinful nature or sinful flesh (pp. 63,64), thus Christ could not have *taken* our sinful flesh or nature without His *becoming* a sinner. He cites non-theological dictionaries that define "propensity" as equivalent to "inclination" or "tendency." But these dictionaries don't recognize that "we need not *retain* one sinful propensity" while we still have sinful flesh. How did Ellen White use the word? An alcoholic cannot have a "propensity for alcohol" without a previous response to temptation, and Christ never responded. Whidden represents us as teaching that Christ *had* or *possessed* a sinful nature. No, He "*took* upon *His* sinless nature *our* sinful nature." Whidden's position logically requires a break in Christ's genetic inheritance from a *sinful* David and Abraham (which Scripture affirms), and requires an unbroken genetic link direct from a *sinless* Adam. Would this not be the essence of Roman Catholicism? Christ's identity with us was complete through the fallen "flesh and blood" which He *took* from Mary; He was unique in that He *had* a sinless nature as the Son of God, "Immanuel,... God with us." Thus He "*condemned* sin" in *our* sinful flesh.

Thus in his true holiness, Christ could come, and did come, to sinful men in sinful flesh, where sinful men are...

Some have found, and all may find, in the "Testimonies" the statement that Christ has not "like passions "as we have. The statement is there; every one may find it there, of course... [Testimonies, Vol. 2, p. 50].¹⁰³

Now there will be no difficulty in any of these studies from beginning to end, if you will stick precisely to what is said, and not go beyond what is said, nor put into it what is not said. Now as to Christ's not having "like passions" with us: In the Scriptures all the way through he is like us, and with us according to the flesh... He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Don't go too far. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, not in the likeness of sinful mind. Do not drag his mind into it. His flesh was our flesh; but the mind was "the mind of Christ Jesus."... If he had taken our mind, how, then, could we ever have been exhorted to "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"? It would have been so already.¹⁰⁴

Jones was merely saying that never "for one moment" did Christ *yield* or *consent* to participation in sin. He uses "mind" in Paul's truest sense—that of purpose or choice. We must look beyond the confusing controversies that we have built up in our day in order to see the simple charm of the 1888 message in its beauty. Some nights after revival meetings following the Minneapolis session, Ellen White could not sleep for joy. The Holy Spirit was working on the hearts of college youth through these presentations of the righteousness of Christ:

Meetings were held in the College which were intensely interesting [if righteousness by faith is not interesting, there is something wrong with it!].... The Christian life, which had before seemed to them undesirable and lull of inconsistencies, now appeared in its true light, in remarkable symmetry and beauty. He who had been to them as a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness, became "the chiefest among ten thousand," and the one "altogether lovely."¹⁰⁵

Concluding his presentation of Christ's righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh," Waggoner makes this powerful appeal to the heart:

But someone will say, "I don't see any comfort in this for me. To be sure, I have an example, but I can't

¹⁰³ George Knight portrays Jones as dishonestly trying to cover his tracks in this discussion, and as embarrassed by this statement (*From 1888 to Apostasy*, p. 188).

¹⁰⁴ *General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, pp. 312, 327.

¹⁰⁵ *Review and Herald*, February 12, 1889.

follow it, for I haven't the power that Christ had. He was God even while here on earth; I am but a man. Yes, but you may have the same power that He had if you want it. He was "compassed with infirmity," yet He "did no sin."...

Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them "come boldly unto the throne of grace," where they are sure to find grace to help in time of need, because that need is felt by our Saviour in the very time of need. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."¹⁰⁶

Surely today we also must feel "the necessity of presenting Christ as a Saviour who is not afar off, but nigh at hand"! A dying world needs to see Him thus.¹⁰⁷

Chapter Seven

The 1888 Messengers Do Not Destroy Their Message

Unraveling a Mysterious Adventist Dilemma

When one begins to realize that the 1888 message was the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, a perplexing question comes up immediately: What happened to the messengers themselves?

Both developed serious problems in their later years. And many today have superficially assumed that this demonstrates that their message itself

¹⁰⁶ Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 29, 30.

¹⁰⁷ In an effort to win acceptance from the Evangelical churches, the General Conference in 1958 published *Questions on Doctrine*, which virtually repudiated the 1888 view of the nature of Christ. Ironically, only four years later The Epworth Press of London published Harry Johnson's doctoral dissertation as *The Humanity of the Saviour*, which powerfully supports the same view of the nature of Christ taught by Jones and Waggoner. Johnson's book has made a profound impact on some leading Evangelical scholars who have abandoned the view that *Questions on Doctrine* sought to mollify, and today support the 1888 view (obviously not knowing anything about 1888). They include *The International Critical Commentary* and *The Word Biblical Commentary*. Some modern Evangelical authors whose conscience drives them to take practically the same view as Jones and Waggoner are: Anders Nygren, Karl Barth, J. A. T. Robinson, T. F. Torrance, C. E. B. Crannell, Nels F. S. Ferre, and Leslie Newbigen. With no help from Ellen White they base their views solely on the Bible—obviously a providential encouragement to Seventh-day Adventists to trust more fully the biblical basis for Ellen White's endorsements of the Jones and Waggoner message. Seventh-day Adventists must not be slow to recognize Bible truth that Evangelical scholars are forced by honest conscience to see.

could not be true. Although he never gave up the Seventh-day Adventist message, Jones was disfellowshipped, largely due to personal problems with his brethren. Waggoner remained "a Christian gentleman" to the end, but he suffered a tragic domestic failure and for a time fell prey to what appeared to be pantheistic error.

Those who have opposed the 1888 message have justified themselves by trying to apply Jesus' words to the 1888 messengers: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:16, 17). On the surface, applying these words to the Jones-Waggoner history has caused many people for decades to reject their message. And such reasoning has on the surface seemed plausible.

However, with prophetic insight, Ellen White has declared emphatically that such reasoning in the case of Jones and Waggoner is not correct. It is in fact "a fatal delusion."

There is a unique factor in this case that many have overlooked.

To reject the message on the grounds of Jones's and Waggoner's later problems is like someone rejecting the Seventh-day Adventist message because he has happened to meet an unworthy member of that church. Many people do indeed reject a true message for such subjective reasons, but in the process they lose a great blessing. Jesus says to us, "Judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). And for us to reject the 1888 message for such a subjective reason is to postpone indefinitely the renewed blessings of recovering the latter rain and the loud cry message.

One wishes that Jones and Waggoner could have finished their life course in honor. If they had done so, no one could today find any "hooks" on which to hang his doubts about their message. After all the history of the past century, we would be compelled to believe! But the Lord seems determined not to force us to believe.

Their later personal failures are the great disappointment of the 1888 history, as October 22, 1844 was in the beginning of our history as a movement. Both are embarrassing, and both require understanding, or we shall make serious mistakes. It seems that the Lord Himself has permitted both as an almost overmastering point of confusion and a stumbling block for anyone who is looking for an excuse to reject truth.

The following are some reasons why it is a "fatal delusion" to reject or even to lightly regard the 1888 message because of the weaknesses later of the messengers themselves:

1. Jones's and Waggoner's later errors and mistakes were not due to a fault or weakness inherent in their message itself. As early as 1892 Ellen White painfully sensed the impact of the persecution they were enduring, and predicted the possibility of their later defection. But she made it clear that if this sad development should take place, it would in no way affect the validity of their message:

It is quite possible that Elder Jones or Waggoner may be overthrown by the temptations of the enemy, but if they should be, this would not prove that they had had

no message from God, or that the work that they had done was all a mistake.¹⁰⁸

Should the Lord's messengers, after standing manfully for the truth for a time, fall under temptation, and dishonor Him who has given them their work, will that be proof that the message is not true? No... Sin on the part of the messenger of God would cause Satan to rejoice, and those who have rejected the message and the messenger would triumph; but it would not at all clear the men who are guilty of rejecting the message of God.¹⁰⁹

But what could possibly cause Jones and Waggoner to lose their way? If no fault in the message led them astray, and if they were indeed entrusted by the Lord with a "most precious message," could any temptation be strong enough to overthrow them? The next exhibit will throw light on this reasonable question.

2. They were forced to endure "unchristlike persecution" from their brethren that subjected them to pressures that no others have been called to endure in quite the same way:

I wish that all would see that the very same spirit which refused to accept Christ, the light that would dispel the moral darkness, is far from being extinct in this age of the world...

Some may say, "I do not hate my brother; I am not so bad as that." But how little they understand their own hearts. They may think they have a zeal for God in their feelings against their brother if his ideas seem in any way to conflict with theirs; feelings are brought to the surface that have no kinship with love... They would as leave be at sword's point with their brother as not, and yet he may be bearing a message from God to the people, just the light we need for this time...

They take step after step in the false way, until there seems to be no other course for them than to go on, believing they are right in their bitterness of feeling against their brethren. Will the Lord's messenger bear the pressure brought against him? If so, it is because the Lord bids him stand in His strength, and vindicate the truth that he is sent of God...

I have deep sorrow of heart because I have seen how readily a word or action of Elder Jones or Elder Waggoner is criticized. How readily many minds overlook all the good that has been done by them in the few years past, and see no evidence that God is working through

¹⁰⁸ Letter S-24, 1892; *1888 Materials*, pp. 1044, 1045.

¹⁰⁹ Letter O-19, 1892; *ibid.*, p. 1025.

these instrumentalities. They hunt for something to condemn, and their attitude toward these brethren who are zealously engaged in doing a good work, shows that feelings of enmity and bitterness are in the heart... Cease watching your brethren with suspicion.¹¹⁰

Consider the situation that Jones and Waggoner were in. It was unique, something difficult to duplicate in sacred history:

a. They knew their message had come from the Lord.
b. They knew it was the beginning of the latter rain.
c. They knew they had followed the leading of the Lord in proclaiming it under the circumstances that had developed.

d. They keenly felt what Ellen White said was "condemnation," "hatred," "bitterness," and "rejection" on the part of their brethren. And the date of Ellen White's letters indicates that these painful negative feelings of the brethren continued *after* their confessions and tearful repentances expressed from 1890 to 1891.¹¹¹ Ellen White says they continued their opposition right on. They just couldn't get out of the rut that they fell into initially at the 1888 Conference.¹¹² Reject the message once, and you never recover it.

e. In comparison with Jones and Waggoner, Luther had an easy problem in meeting the opposition of the Papacy and Catholic hierarchy toward his message. True, the hatred he had to endure was open, and physically and verbally violent. But what helped Luther "bear the pressure brought against him" (to borrow Ellen White's phrase regarding Jones and Waggoner) was the clear prophetic messages of Daniel and Revelation. He saw Rome as the "beast," the "little horn," the "harlot." Thus the mysterious opposition he had to endure was explainable by the prophecies of God's Word.

f. But the Lord's messengers in the 1888 era enjoyed no such encouragement to help them bear the pressure brought against them. They believed the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be the true remnant church of Bible prophecy. They had confidence in the principles of organization that recognized the General Conference as the highest authority under God. They recognized their brethren as Heaven's appointed leaders of His work. They knew that heavenly intelligences were watching with deep interest the unfolding of the drama. But never had they seen such mysterious rejection of truth. It unnerved them.

g. Jones and Waggoner were both involved in the defense of the national cause of religious liberty as the United States Congress came close to the enactment of a Sunday law, closer than at any other time in American history—a powerful and compelling evidence that the world had reached the time for the loud cry to go forth with unprecedented power. And they knew that their generation was living in the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, when the blindness and unbelief of former generations must not be repeated.

¹¹⁰ Letter 0-19, 1892, *ibid.*, pp. 1019-1027.

¹¹¹ Cf. *Through Crisis to Victory 1888-1901*, pp. 82-114.

¹¹² Cf. Uriah Smith's editorial opposing Waggoner, *Review and Herald*, May 10, 1892, and later articles that year opposing Jones; Ellen White, Letter S-24, 1892, and Letter, January 9, 1893; and testimonies as late as 1897 stating that the opposition was continuing.

h. And yet, to their astonishment, never had history recorded a more shameful failure on the part of God's people to enter in to the realization of immense eschatological opportunity! It seemed to be an unprecedented unbelief and rejection on the part of modern Israel. When the messengers' own hearts were thrilled with a keener Heaven-inspired love than they had ever known, they met an icy "hatred" from brethren whom the Lord called to unite with them in their mission. It seemed to Jones and Waggoner to be the final, complete failure of God's program. What could possibly lie beyond? It was a deranging experience.

i. The date of the Ellen White letters cited above is significant in that during 1892 Waggoner was sent to England under circumstances of extreme privation. The year previous Ellen White was "exiled" to Australia, with "no light from the Lord" that it was His will for her to go other than that the General Conference wanted her out of the way. Thus the team that was proclaiming the message of Christ's righteousness in camp meetings, churches, colleges, workers' meetings, and by personal work, was broken up. Waggoner and Jones would be more than human if they did not feel this as a rejection of their unique message and work, and as a slap in the face.

3. Ellen White said the total impact of this reaction was virtual "persecution":

We should be the last people on the earth to indulge in the slightest degree the spirit of persecution against those who are bearing the message of God to the world. This is the most terrible feature of unchristlikeness that has manifested itself among us since the Minneapolis meeting. Sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it.¹¹³

It is very easy for us to say that the messengers should have borne the pressure against them. We quoted this above:

Will the Lord's messenger bear the pressure brought against him? If so, it is because God bids him stand in his strength, and vindicate the truth that he is sent of God.

But God's infinite wisdom decreed apparently that they were not to vindicate the truth that they were sent of God, at least not by any subjective evidences. It has apparently been His will that this present generation now evaluate their message strictly on the objective evidence inherent in the message itself, aside from all factors that would superficially constitute compelling subjective evidence.

This generation must evaluate the message as it appeared to the 1888 generation—the stumbling block of faulty human personalities present again to provide a hook on which those who secretly want to resist may hang their doubts. In His infinitely righteous "jealousy" the Lord wants to be sure that *not one soul shall ever receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain unless there is a sincere and honest purpose of heart.* Faith, it seems, cannot be perfected without some divinely appointed "hooks" on which we

¹¹³ General Conference Bulletin 1893 p. 184.

are free to hang doubts of sinful unbelief. It is our task now to overcome fully where that previous generation failed.

4. Ellen White assigns a completely different reason "to a great degree" for the failure of Jones and Waggoner than usually applies to apostates:

It is not the inspiration from heaven that leads one to be suspicious, watching for a chance and greedily seizing upon it to prove that those brethren who differ from us in some interpretation of Scripture are not sound in the faith. There is danger that this course of action will produce the very result assumed; and to a great degree the guilt will rest upon those who are watching for evil....

The opposition in our own ranks has imposed upon the Lord's messengers [Jones and Waggoner] a laborious and soul trying task; for they have had to meet difficulties and obstacles which need not have existed....

Love and confidence constitute a moral force that would have united our churches, and insured harmony of action: but coldness and distrust have brought disunion that has shorn us of our strength.¹¹⁴

When apostates leave the fellowship of God's people, abandoning doctrines they once held, our usual judgment is that "they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19). But the evidence in the case of Jones and Waggoner is not so. They were of us, for (he Lord Himself entrusted them with a most precious message. But to a great degree "we" are responsible, for "our" uncharitable judgment (ended to produce the very result assumed.

5. To permit ourselves to entertain prejudice toward the 1888 message because of the failures of the messengers is to "enter into a fatal delusion:"

It is quite possible that Elder Jones or Waggoner may be overthrown by the temptations of the enemy; but if they should be, this would not prove that they had no message from God, or that the work that they had done was all a mistake. But should this happen, how many would take this position, and enter into a fatal delusion because they were not under the control of the Spirit of God... I know that this is the very position many would take if either of these men were to fall, and I pray that these men upon whom God has laid the burden of a solemn work, may be able to give the trumpet a certain sound, and honor God at every step and that their path at

¹¹⁴ Letter, January 6, 1893; *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 419.

every step may grow brighter and brighter until the close of time.¹¹⁵

Unfortunately, Ellen White's prayer was not answered as she had hoped. Satan rejoiced, and those who rejected the message and the messenger "triumphed." Many have "entered into that fatal delusion" for decades, feeling justified to neglect or oppose those elements of truth that in God's design constitute the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry.

Now the hour has struck for an honest evaluation of evidence, that "there should be no more delay.... The mystery of God should be finished" in this our generation.

Chapter Eight

Justification by Faith in the 1888 Message *Powerful Good News!*

If this message was the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, reason insists that it was truth more clearly revealed than had been *seen* by any previous generation of God's people since the former rain bestowed at Pentecost.

Speaking within the 1888 decade and in context referring to the Jones-Waggoner message, Ellen White said:

Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God's word in their native purity. To those who truly love God the Holy Spirit will reveal truths that have faded from the mind, and will also reveal truths that are entirely new.¹¹⁶

How could the 1888 message be a mere re-emphasis of sixteenth-century concepts, important as the Reformers' doctrines were for their

¹¹⁵ Letter S-24, 1892, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 473.

generation? Ellen White said it was "the third angel's message in verity."¹¹⁷ If it was the same as Luther taught, the apostate L. R. Conradi was right when he said that Luther taught the third angel's message in his day, and there is therefore no justification for the existence of Seventh-day Adventists.¹¹⁸

If our message of justification by faith is the same as that proclaimed by theologians and evangelists of Sunday-keeping churches, then the question does become a serious one: what reason do Seventh-day Adventists have for existing? Do they have no distinct contribution to make concerning the gospel? Or is their contribution only "works"? Has the Lord commissioned the popular churches to proclaim *the gospel* and Seventh-day Adventists to proclaim the *law*?

Or at best, are Seventh-day Adventists merely a competitor on the gospel street, a "me-too" voice hawking virtually the same wares as others, like automotive competitors today whose cars are practically identical except in name? In the light of Ellen White's comment about "the third angel's message in verity," it follows that there must be something unique in the 1888 message that sets it apart from popular Evangelical ideas. This is not to criticize the Evangelicals; they just don't see this message.

Jones and Waggoner recognized that there are two phases of a single gift of justification: (1) forensic, or legal, made for all men, and accomplished entirely outside of us at the cross of Christ; and (2) an effective transformation of heart in those *who believe*, and thus experience a *justification by faith*. Ellen White rejoiced in the uniqueness of their message, recognizing that it went far beyond the concepts of the Reformers or of contemporary Christians:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones... It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God... This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.¹¹⁹

The messengers broke through to the amazing discovery that justification by faith is more than a declaration of acquittal for "past sins" (the usual Evangelical and Adventist understanding); it reconciles the alienated heart to God and makes the believer obedient to all the commandments of God:

The correctness of... [Paul's] statement that "the doers of the law shall be justified," is obvious. To justify means to make righteous, or to show one to be righteous...

¹¹⁷ *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

¹¹⁸ See L. R. Conradi, *The Founders of the Seventh Day Adventist Denomination*, pp. 60-62.

¹¹⁹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92.

Deeds done by a sinful person have no effect whatever to make him righteous, but, on the contrary, coming from an evil heart, they are evil, and so add to the sum of his sinfulness. Only evil can come from an evil heart, and multiplied evil cannot make one good deed; therefore it is useless for an evil person to think to become righteous by his own efforts. He must first be made righteous before he can do the good that is required of him, and which he wants to do...

The apostle Paul, having proved that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, so that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight, proceeds to say that we are "justified [made righteous] freely by his grace...."

"Being made righteous freely." How else could it be?...

It is true that God will by no means clear the guilty; He could not do that and still be a just God. But He does something which is far better: He removes the guilt, so that the one formerly guilty does not need to be cleared—he is justified, and counted as though he never had sinned....

The taking away of the filthy garments [in Zechariah 3:15] is the same as causing the iniquity to pass from the person. And so we find that when Christ covers us with the robe of His own righteousness, He does not furnish a cloak for sin, but takes the sin away. And this shows that the forgiveness of sins is something more than a mere form, something more than a mere entry in the books of record in heaven, to the effect that the sin has been canceled... It actually clears him from guilt; and if he is cleared from guilt, is justified, made righteous, he has certainly undergone a radical change... And so the full and free forgiveness of sins carries with it that wonderful and miraculous change known as the new birth;... the same as having a new, or a clean, heart...

Again, what brings justification, or the forgiveness of sins? It is faith.... This same exercise of faith makes the person a child of God.¹²⁰

Jones was in complete agreement:

Justification by faith is righteousness by faith; for justification is the being declared righteous... Justification

¹²⁰ Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 51 -67.

by faith, then, is justification that comes by the word of God.

... The word of God is self-fulfilling... The word of God spoken by Jesus Christ is able to cause that to exist which has no existence before the word is spoken....

In man's life there is no righteousness... But God has set forth Christ to declare righteousness unto and upon man. Christ has spoken the word only, and in the darkened void of man's life there is righteousness to every one who will receive it... The word of God received by faith... produces righteousness in the man and in the life where there never was any before; precisely as, in the original creation....

"Therefore being justified [made righteous] by faith [by expecting, and depending upon, the word of God only], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."¹²¹

Men must not only become just by faith—by dependence upon the word of God—but being just, we must live by faith. The just man lives in precisely the same way, and by precisely the same thing, that he becomes just.¹²²

Here is the word of God, the word of righteousness, the word of life, to you "now," "at this time." Will you be made righteous by it now? Will you live by it now? This is justification by faith. This is righteousness by faith. It is the simplest thing in the world.¹²³

The question immediately arises, Were these 1888 messengers correct when they said repeatedly and emphatically that justification by faith is "*making* righteous?" Or is this in reality a revival of the old Roman Catholic concept of justification by faith which is disguised justification by works?

Some assume that it is impossible that the believer ever *becomes* or is *made* righteous; he is only *declared* righteous when in fact he is not. To teach that justification by faith is *making righteous* has been said to be the insignia of Roman Catholicism.

Yet we have here what Ellen White endorsed as "the third angel's message in verity," the heart of the 1888 message itself. If this is disguised Roman Catholicism, she was a misinformed, naive enthusiast, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church must remain in a state of tragic confusion.

In Testimonies to Ministers she describes in this message a unique element:

¹²¹ *Review and Herald*, January 17, 1899.

¹²² *Ibid.*, March 7, 1899.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, November 10, 1896.

It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.... Therefore God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines... It presents the law and the gospel, binding up the two in a perfect whole."¹²⁴

Jones's and Waggoner's idea of justification by faith as "making righteous" was not the Roman Catholic idea of an infused righteousness poured into the "saint," creating in him a merit on his own, so that his continued sinful deeds cease to be sinful because of his merit. The Roman Catholic idea (widely held by many others as well) is that sin ceases to be sinful in the "saint"; "concupiscence" is no longer an evil to be judged after the sacramental (or legal) justification takes place.

Jones's and Waggoner's teaching was that true justification by faith *makes a believer righteous in the sense that it reconciles him to God, and thus makes him to be an obedient doer of His law.* And this takes place before what we normally speak of as sanctification!

As we saw above, they clearly recognized that millions of years of obedience on the part of the repentant sinner could never atone for his sin; he does not and never will have an iota of merit. But faith in Christ delivers him from his *captivity* to disobedience to the law, and sets him in the path of *obedience*. The faith that operates in justification by faith is a working faith, and the atonement cannot be a true reconciliation with God unless it effects a corresponding reconciliation with the character of God, which is obedience to His holy law. Any so-called justification by faith which declares a man just who continues to disobey the law of God is a lie, for it has distorted both justification and faith, and understands neither.

The 1888 messengers make their point clear:

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God being justified [made righteous, or doers of the law] freely by his grace."... No one has anything in him out of which righteousness can be made. Then the righteousness of God is put literally into and upon all that believe. Then they are both clothed with righteousness, and filled with it, according to the Scripture. In fact, they then become "the righteousness of God" in Christ. And how is this accomplished? God declares his righteousness upon the one who believes. To declare is to speak. So God speaks to the sinner,... and says, "You are righteous," and immediately that believing sinner ceases to be a sinner, and is the righteousness of God. The word of God which speaks righteousness has the righteousness itself in it, and as soon as the sinner believes, and receives that word into his own heart by faith that moment he has the righteousness of God in his heart and since out of the

¹²⁴ Pp. 92-94.

heart are the issues of life it follows that a new life is thus begun in him; and that life is a life of obedience to the commandments of God...

The Lord never makes any mistakes in his reckoning. When Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, it was because it was indeed righteousness. How so? Why, as Abraham built on God, he built on everlasting righteousness... He became one with the Lord, and so God's righteousness was his own.¹²⁵

Justification has to do with the law. The term means making just. Now in Rom. 2:13 we are told who the just ones are: "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." The just man, therefore is the one who does the law. To be just means to be righteous. Therefore since the just man is the one who does the law, it follows that to justify a man, that is, to make him just, is to make him a doer of the law.

Being justified by faith, then, is simply being made a doer of the law by faith...

God justifies the ungodly. Is that not right? — Certainly it is. It does not mean that he glosses over a man's faults, so that he is counted righteous, although he is really wicked; but it means that he makes that man a doer of the law. The moment God declares an ungodly man righteous, that instant that man is a doer of the law. Surely that is a good work, and a just work, as well as a merciful one...

It will be seen, therefore, that there can be no higher state than that of justification. It does everything that God can do for a man short of making him immortal, which is done only at the resurrection... Faith and submission to God must be exercised continually, in order to retain the righteousness—in order to remain a doer of the law.

This enables one to see clearly the force of these words, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31. That is, instead of breaking the law, and making it of no effect in our lives, we establish it in our hearts by faith. This is so because faith brings Christ into the heart, and the law of God is in the heart of Christ. And thus "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." This one who obeys is the Lord Jesus Christ, and his obedience is

¹²⁵ Waggoner, *The Gospel in Creation*, 1894, pp. 26-28, 35.

done in the heart of everyone who believes. And as it is by his obedience alone that men are made doers of the law, so to him shall be the glory forever and ever.¹²⁶

Perhaps we can begin to see why Ellen White was overjoyed with this message.

She recognized that here is the "how" of the "what" of Revelation 14, which describes God's people in the last days as those "who keep God's commandments." When she spoke of Christ's righteousness imputed by faith, she was specifically not teaching a mere fictional-book transaction. She was speaking of something real, a "faith which worketh by love." And when she wrote her manuscript entitled "Danger of False Ideas of Justification by Faith," she was not trying to refute the message of Jones and Waggoner; she was upholding their message, and refuting the fictional view that they opposed:

The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point.... The point which has been urged upon my mind for years is the imputed righteousness of Christ... I have made it the subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people.

In examining my writings fifteen and twenty years old (I find that they) present the matter in this same light... living principles of practical godliness...

[Ministers] should keep this matter—the simplicity of true godliness—distinctly before the people in every discourse.... Men are in the habit of glorifying men and exalting men. It makes me shudder to see or hear of it, for there have been revealed to me not a few cases where the home life and inner work of the hearts of those very men are full of selfishness. They are corrupt, polluted, vile; and nothing that comes from all their doings can elevate them with God, for all that they do is an abomination in His sight. There can be no true conversion without the giving up of sin, and the aggravating character of sin is not discerned...

There is danger of regarding justification by faith as placing merit on faith. ... What is faith?... It is an assent of the understanding of God's words which binds the heart in willing consecration and service to God, who gave the understanding, who moved the heart, who first drew the mind to view Christ on the cross of Calvary...

¹²⁶ Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, May 1, 1893.

The law of the human and the divine action makes the receiver a laborer together with God. It brings man where he can, united with divinity, work the works of God... Divine power and the human agency combined will be a complete success, for Christ's righteousness accomplishes everything.¹²⁷

Here we have something in full harmony with the 1888 messengers. She recognized the "new light" sent by the Lord to prepare a people for the coming of Christ. In the same manuscript she saw that the popular "justification by faith" of the Sunday-keeping churches falls short of the truth:

While one class pervert the doctrine of justification by faith and neglect to comply with the conditions laid down in the Word of God— "If ye love me, keep my commandments" —there is fully as great an error on the part of those who claim to believe and obey the commandments of God but who place themselves in opposition to the precious rays of light—new to them—reflected from the cross of Calvary....

Unconverted men have stood in pulpits sermonizing. Their own hearts have never experienced, through a living, clinging, trusting faith, the sweet evidence of the forgiveness of their sins. How then can they preach the love, the sympathy, the forgiveness of God for all sins. How can they say, "Look and live?" Looking at the cross of Calvary, you will have a desire to bear the cross. ... Can any look, and behold the sacrifice of God's dear Son, and their hearts not be melted and broken, ready to surrender to God heart and soul?

Let this point be fully settled in every mind: If we accept Christ as a Redeemer, we must accept Him as a Ruler. We cannot have the assurance and perfect confiding trust in Christ as our Saviour until we acknowledge Him as our King and are obedient to His commandments.... We have then the genuine ring in our faith, for it is a working faith. It works by love.

By 1895-6, Jones's and Waggoner's views matured (all emphasis supplied):

1. There is a legal or forensic justification that applies to "all men":

¹²⁷ Manuscript 36, 1890; *Faith and Works*, pp. 18-28. Ellen White's understanding of faith is crucial to understanding the 1888 message. In the *Review and Herald* of July 24, 1888, she wrote a priceless definition of faith: "You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood."

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son— God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved— Light is come into the world (John 3:16-19).

In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:4-9).

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Our Saviour Jesus Christ... hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

If one died for all, then were all dead: and... he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

In due time Christ died for the ungodly... While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.... When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...

If through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto [the] many.... The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification... As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (Romans 5:6-18).

All alike have sinned, and are deprived of the divine splendour, and all are justified by God's free grace alone, through his act of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23,24, NEB).

Jones and Waggoner grew to understand these texts as follows:

(a) Christ did something for every human being when He gave Himself for the world. He brought two gifts to light by His infinite sacrifice: life *and* immortality.

(b) Life has been given to mankind, for all who come into the world, whether or not they believe in Christ or know of Him. One died for all, and had He not done so, all would be dead. Never has a human breath been drawn since Adam's fall except as the gift of Christ's sacrifice. All people owe even their physical existence to Christ, and are infinitely and eternally in debt to Him for everything they have, with the sole exception of their grave. This

alone is ours by right; this alone we have earned. "The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660).

(c) This gift of life being impossible apart from Christ, He is "the true Light, which lighteth every man" (John 1:9). "Never one, saint or sinner," has known a moment's joy or happy laughter but as the purchase of Christ's blood, whether or not he knows its Source. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all* (emphasis supplied)" and thus "the chastisement of our peace [for all] was upon him; and with his stripes we are [all] healed" (Isaiah 53:6,5). The "we" and the "us all" is the entire human race. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

(d) But since all men deserve nothing but condemnation and death, it is solely by "the grace of God, and the gift by grace," that human life "hath abounded unto [the] many." The sacrifice of Christ has become effective for all men in that "while we were yet sinners [enemies], Christ died for us." Therefore, whatever Adam transmitted to his posterity, Christ has canceled out. He died for the ungodly. This is the only reason *1111* man's life can continue.

(e) Exactly as the offense abounded, so did "the free gift... [come] upon all men unto justification of life." The New English Bible correctly translates Paul: "All are justified" (Romans 3:24).

(f) Therefore the gospel does not tell men that they will be justified if *they* do something first, even if that something is to believe. The gospel tells all men that they are already justified, legally and forensically. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Corinthians 5:19), and our work is simply to exercise the ministry of reconciliation and tell men so. He has committed unto us the *word* of reconciliation, the proclamation of news that is already accomplished.

(g) It follows that the only difference between a saint and a heathen is (hat the former has heard and believed the news, and the latter has either not heard or disbelieved it. The Lord is actively working for the salvation of all men, and He "will have all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). All who do not resist will be drawn to Him. (It is, of course, possible to resist, and a great majority do so and will be lost.)

2. Jones and Waggoner based their view of justification by faith on the idea that a heart-appreciation of the gift and sacrifice of Christ immediately works a transformation in the life. This is not a salvation by works. Nor is it inherent or infused righteousness, as taught by the (Council of Trent. Faith itself involves a change of heart. He who was an enemy of God actually becomes a friend, through faith. This is receiving the atonement (Romans 5:11). The 1888 understanding of faith itself is tooted in Jesus' own definition (emphasis in texts supplied):

God so loved the world, that he gave [not lent] his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish (John 3:16).

Quite independently of law, God's justice has been brought to light... It is God's way of righting wrong effective through faith in Christ for all who have such faith—all, without distinction. For all alike have sinned,

and are deprived of the divine splendour, and all are justified by God's free grace alone, through his act of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus. For God designed him to be the means of expiating sin by his sacrificial death, effective through faith. God meant by this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had overlooked the sins of the past—to demonstrate his justice now in the present, showing that he is himself just and also justifies any man who puts his faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21-26, NEB).

Abraham believed God, and it [his faith] was counted unto him for righteousness... To him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

And therefore it [his faith] was imputed to him for righteousness (4:3-5, 22).

Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:1).

The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?... or, Who shall descend into the deep? ... The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (10:6-17).

A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ... I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.... I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain...

They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham...

Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith....

We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith... faith which worketh by love (Galatians 2:16-5:6).

Jones and Waggoner understood these passages as follows:

(a) Faith is the only proper response of the human heart to God's love. Faith cannot be mere intellectual assent to right doctrine, nor an egocentric grasping for security. Faith comes by the proclamation of the word of the cross. It is the heart acceptance of this appeal, "Be ye reconciled to God," in response to the atonement in the sacrifice of Christ. God does the loving and the giving; we do the believing.

(b) Therefore it follows that a heart-appreciation of the forensic, or legal, justification achieved by the sacrifice of Christ is justification by faith. For all men Christ has brought "life... to light," but only for those who believe has He brought "immortality to light"(2 Timothy 1:10).

(c) Such faith is a crucifixion of self with Christ. With no thought of works of any kind, or a desire for personal reward, the believer joins Christ on the cross:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

This is no painful struggle to yield self—this is a joyous, voluntary act of identification. Only let the love of God shine through, only let the gospel be proclaimed in its purity free from adulteration, and the soul who believes will find no sacrifice difficult:

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

(d) Thus, for God to justify the ungodly does not mean that the *believing* heart is at enmity and alienation against God. Faith includes, it produces, a change of heart. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." There is a change of heart the moment a person believes. Believing is the change of heart! When the ungodly is justified by faith, his heart is melted: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This passage in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is *describing justification by faith*. Here is a grand dimension of the meaning of faith:

The faith essential for salvation is not mere nominal faith, but an abiding principle, deriving vital power from Christ. It will lead the soul to feel the love of Christ to such a degree that the character will be refined, purified, ennobled. This faith in Christ is not merely an impulse, but a power that works by love and purifies the soul.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ *Review and Herald*, August 14, 1891, emphasis supplied.

The 1888 message went beyond the so-called Reformation view that justification by faith is merely a legal transaction taking place millions of light-years away, without respect to the heart of the believer himself. It also went far beyond the usual current "historic" Adventist understanding that regards justification by faith as pardon or forgiveness *for past sins*, while a life of present obedience is labelled as "sanctification." However much justification by faith *depends* upon the legal substitutionary work of Christ outside of the believer, its very essence is a change within the believer. The *merit* on which justification by faith rests is never within the believer, but justification by faith itself is evident *in* the believer: Self is "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). This is why justification *by faith* is dependent upon the justification achieved for all men at the cross. And genuine sanctification is the experience of extended, on-going justification by faith, separated unto God.

(e) The believer's faith is counted for righteousness. Faith embraces the whole of Christ's righteousness. All the Lord asks from the sinner is true faith; He credits him with all the perfect righteousness of Christ.

The 1888 view is not that faith equals righteousness, but that God counts it for righteousness. It's all that Abraham gave the Lord, and it's all that He wants from any of us. It is far more than a mere legal transaction, paper work, as it were. "Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1, emphasis supplied). This so-called definition of faith can best be understood in the light of the imputation of Christ's righteousness: if a sinner has faith, God accepts it as an earnest, or down payment, the assurance of things *God* hopes for. Only if New Testament faith is understood can this magnificent imputation be effective (Romans 3:25, NEB).

God cannot let the sinner enter heaven if even the slightest tidbit of sin mars his character, because the admission of an amount the size of a tiny seed would grow until it again contaminated the universe. But if He waits until the sinner is sanctified before He justifies him, even eternity would not suffice for the process. And if He merely pardons sin in the sense of winking His eye at it, if He justifies the sinner by admitting him to heaven in an unbelieving state, He has merely perpetuated sin and cast contempt upon the sacrifice of His own Son.

But completely aside from works of any kind, God can be just and (lie justifier of the sinner who has such faith, because it is a true heart-appreciation of God's righteousness in setting Christ forth to be "a propitiation through faith in His blood." Were there no blood, no cross, I here could be no legal basis for justification; neither could there be any faith on the part of a sinner. The blood accomplishes both an objective and a subjective atonement.

This is not the "moral influence theory of the atonement," because that blood does "speak" to the repentant human heart. This is how true justification by faith "lays the glory of man [and woman] in the dust."

But in that faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, lies "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

God delights to see it. "This is enough," He cries, and reckons it for righteousness, pronouncing the believing sinner righteous through the merits of the Saviour, who is the living object of the sinner's faith.

(f) The Reformation view was necessarily limited by the prevailing egocentric radius of concern of that age. Embracing as the Reformers did the papal doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul,¹²⁹ they could not escape the limitations of that restricted radius. For the first time in Adventist history, and possibly for the first time in Christian history (at least since the apostles), Jones and Waggoner broke free from the tether of that egocentric concern. They *began* to sense the greater concern of a true Christ-centered view. This glimpse of a larger view was made possible for them, not by the perusal of commentaries or the works of Protestant theologians, but by their knowledge of the distinctly unique Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

All they had to do was to correlate the otherwise sterile doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary with the New Testament concept of justification by faith, and they discovered the message that prompted Ellen White to her enthusiastic avowal, "Every fiber of my heart said Amen."

(g) While "works" (obedience) have nothing to do with this justification by faith, they are inherent in the faith itself. The works were not a noun, but a verb. If one has the all-important verb in the sentence of Christian experience, there is no end to the nouns that will be its objects, leading the believer (and the corporate body of the believing church) all the way into a preparation for translation at the coming of the Lord.

(h) This is why sanctification is the ongoing and ever-deepening reality of justification by faith. One never gets over being justified by faith (that is, made obedient to God's law) until the moment of glorification. There is no need to split hairs over subtle distinctions between the two and anathematize fellow church members who don't agree on where the hairline distinction is, or is not. No one can ever *claim* to be fully sanctified by faith—any tendency to do so immediately negates the reality of justification by faith. At any given moment from the beginning of conversion to the glorious experience of meeting the Lord when He comes, the believer trusts only in the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Since I, who was undone and lost,
Have pardon through His name and word;
Forbid it, then, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ my Lord.

(i) The message of Jones and Waggoner as such swallowed up egocentric insecurity in a greater concern for the honor and vindication of Christ in closing the great controversy. The focus shifted from concern over one's own personal security in depending on *imputed* righteousness to the larger one of a desire that Christ be pleased to see in His people a demonstration of *imparted* righteousness.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Luther himself personally repudiated the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. Nevertheless, the Reformers in general and Calvin in particular still adhered to this pagan-papal concept.

¹³⁰ Ellen White's use of *imputation* is not limited in meaning to a mere legal declaration outside the believer. For example, there is this instance of a statement made during the height of the 1888-message enthusiasm: "Righteousness of Christ imputed means holiness, uprightness, purity. Unless Christ's righteousness was imputed to us we could not have acceptable repentance. The righteousness

This new motivation was infinitely removed from the heresy of "perfectionism." In commenting on the 1888 message, Ellen White said that the former is our "title to heaven," but the latter is our "fitness for heaven."¹³¹ The great clock of God had solemnly struck a note that had never sounded in the days of the sixteenth-century Reformers—the hour was late, and it was time that a Voice proclaim, "It is finished."

As we bow humbly at the foot of the cross where Jesus died, we are all like little children with an infantile grasp of its glorious significance. The widespread personal and denominational pride that permeates our life as a church, the constant tendency to honor and glorify fallible men and women, our infatuation with the pleasures and things of this world— all are indications of how little we understand or appreciate true justification by faith.¹³²

The remedy is not to find something more to *do* in the form of new works, but something to *believe*. And no one can believe except with the broken, contrite heart. Our history, past and current, tells us that we haven't yet learned the one needful lesson:

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1,2).

dwelling in us by faith consists of love, forbearance, meekness, and all the Christian virtues.... All who have this righteousness will work the works of God" (Letter 1e. January 14, 1890).

Her frequent phrase concerning Christ as our "Substitute and Surety" does not imply the popular Reformationist view limited to a legal or forensic substitution:

We need not place the obedience of Christ by itself as something for which He was particularly adapted, by His particular divine nature, for He stood before God as man's representative and tempted as man's substitute and surety (Manuscript 1, 1892).

¹³¹ *Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895; *Messages to Young People*, p. 35. Ellen White borrowed the phraseology from John Wesley (*Works*, Sermon 127, 1790, "On the Wedding Garment").

¹³² How could Jones and Waggoner stop growing at the end of the 1888 Conference? Their 1895-96 studies broke through the fog of Calvinism and Arminianism into brighter sunlight: the special "gift" that grace gives is "justification that brings life to all men" (Romans 5:15-18, NIV; see *Waggoner on Romans*, p. 101 [*Signs of the Times*, March 12, 1896], and Jones's studies in the 1895 *General Conference Bulletin*, pp. 268, 269). Ellen White's support was most enthusiastic during this period.

Chapter Nine

Sinless Living: Possible or Not? *Good News, Not Bad News!*

To ask the wrong questions at the wrong time produces confusion. Whenever "sinless living" is mentioned, someone is bound to ask with a great show of finality: "Are you living without sin? Are you perfect? Can you show me somebody (except Christ) who is perfect?" Laughter usually punctuates the strained silence that follows these taunting questions.

But they are irrelevant to the topic of this chapter. It is obvious even to a child that no true Christian will *ever feel* or *claim* to be perfect. Not the proud Pharisee, but the contrite publican is justified (obviously by faith, for

there is no other way possible). And he prays, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (see Luke 18:10-14). Until Jesus glorifies His saints at His second coming, they "know that in... [them], (that is in... [their] flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). No true Christian will ever claim more than Paul claimed: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect... Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended" (Philippians 3:12,13).

Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation... Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ...

It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of ... [pride and self dependence] is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed...

The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves.¹³³

From the cross to the crown there is earnest work to be done. There is wrestling with inbred sin; there is warfare against outward wrong.¹³⁴

We should begin by asking the right questions at the right time.

And the right time is this time of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, while our great High Priest is completing His work of final atonement.

Christ is to accomplish a work unique in human history since sin began—preparing a body of people for translation. While no child of God will ever *claim* to have overcome all sin, and while it is equally true that we cannot judge of any present or past individual that he has overcome as He overcame, that does not mean that the ministry of Christ in the most holy apartment will fail to achieve such results. However much in the past or in the present we have failed to overcome, for us to say that it is *impossible* to overcome sin through faith in the Redeemer is actually to justify and to encourage sin, and thus to stand on the great enemy's side.

The right questions to ask are:

- Is the sacrifice of Christ as Lamb of God, and is His ministry as great High Priest, powerful enough to save His *people from* (not in) their sins?
- Is He truly able to save "to the uttermost [completely] those who come unto God by Him"?
- Will He be truly successful "as a refiner and purifier of silver... [to] purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3)?

¹³³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 155, 159, 160.

¹³⁴ *Review and Herald*, November 29, 1887.

- When Christ comes the second time, will He find a body of people of whom it can honestly be said, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"?

If the Lord wants to, He can accomplish the preparation of a people for the second coming of Christ. For the first time in human history, a divine announcement is made concerning a corporate body of people from "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people," "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that *keep* the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12, emphasis supplied). Before the grueling inspection of the unfallen universe, they pass the test. The Lord is honored in them. And the next event is His coming (verse 14).

To say that these saints don't really keep the commandments, but Cod pretends that they do, is to violate the context of the three angels' messages. Heaven declares these people to be "virgins... They... follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.... In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (verses 4,5). Jones offers a comment that they—

stand where it can be said of us by the Lord, to the universe, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." And it will be a fact, not merely because He says it, but He will say it because it is a fact.¹³⁵

We know they are sinful by nature, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But in order for this pronouncement to make any sense, the faith of Jesus must have "worked," and they must have ceased to continue giving in to Satan through the clamors of their sinful flesh or nature. *They have overcome even as Christ overcame* (Revelation 3:21). They don't have "holy flesh," but they have a holy character, and righteousness is imparted to them. To try to insert this prophetic glimpse of an overcoming people into the post-Second Advent future is to violate the context. Revelation 15:2 reveals this same group as having gotten the victory *before* the close of human probation.

Previous generations have never clearly understood the truth of Christian perfection "without falling into the trap of perfectionism.

The reason is that the hour for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary had not yet struck. When we come to the "days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (Revelation 10:7). Here is the special contribution that Seventh-day Adventists are to make to the completion of the great Reformation and the fulfillment of the gospel commission. There must be a joining together of the truth of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the truth of justification by faith. And it is here that we begin to sense the real significance of the 1888 message.

It was one of glorious hope, free both from fanaticism and the errors of perfectionism. Both messengers, from the beginning of the 1888 era, were clear and emphatic that sinless living as possible, that God's people *can*

¹³⁵ *General Conference Bulletin*, 1897, p. 279.

overcome even as Christ overcame, and that the key to this glorious possibility lies in His people's faith in the ministry of the High Priest in the most holy apartment.

The first three sentences of Waggoner's *Christ and His Righteousness*, page 5, neatly summarize their concept of sinless living. They are a summary in a nutshell of his Minneapolis message preached only a few weeks before they were published in *Signs* articles:

In the first verse of the third chapter of Hebrews we have an exhortation which comprehends all the injunctions given to the Christian. It is this: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." To do this as the Bible enjoins, to consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for "by beholding we become changed."

Jones and Waggoner together set forth three essential elements of the uniqueness of the three angels' messages. Here is where the 1888 message goes further than the sixteenth-century Reformers were able to go in their day:

1. The message is rooted in the cleansing of the sanctuary truth. The believer is called to "consider the... High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" in His work of cleansing the sanctuary in the anti-typical Day of Atonement which began in 1844. This was essential to Waggoner's radical idea.

2. The reality of Christ's nearness is emphatic. To consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, is to consider the true New Testament teaching that His role as Substitute and Example required Him to take the nature of fallen man in the likeness of sinful flesh, and thus be able to succor them that are tempted.

3. Faith in such a Savior and High Priest will transform one into a perfect Christian. Note the word *transform*. Not only will the true believer be "counted" or "legally reckoned" such; he will actually become a perfect Christian by faith. (But he will never claim such or even be conscious of it himself).

Let us see how Jones's teaching was in full harmony with Waggoner's. In *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, first published as *Review and Herald* articles in 1898 and 1899, he states it simply and powerfully:

In His coming in the flesh—having been made in all things like unto us, and having been tempted in all points like as we are—He has identified Himself with every human soul just where that soul is. And from the place where every human soul is, He has consecrated for that soul a new and living way through all the vicissitudes and experiences of a whole lifetime, and even through death and the tomb, into the holiest of all, at the right hand of God for evermore...

And this "way" He has consecrated for us. He, having become one of us, has made this way our way; it belongs to us. He has endowed every soul with divine right to walk in this consecrated way; and by His having done it Himself in the flesh—in our flesh—He has made it possible yea, He has given actual assurance, that every human soul can walk in that way, in all that that way is; and by it enter fully and freely into the holiest of all...

He has made and consecrated a way by which, in Him every believer can in this world, and for a whole lifetime, live a life holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and as a consequence be made with Him higher than the heavens.¹³⁶

Immediately the question will arise, Is this the heresy of perfectionism? On the same page Jones demonstrates how it is not:

Perfection, perfection of character, is the Christian goal—perfection attained in human flesh in this world. Christ attained it in human flesh in this world, and thus made and consecrated a way by which, in Him, every believer can attain it. He, having attained it, has become our great High Priest, by His priestly ministry in the true sanctuary to enable us to attain it.

We must clearly distinguish between "perfection of *character*... attained in human flesh" and fanatical perfectionism that is assumed to be o/human flesh. Perfectionism is a heresy characterized by one or more of the following false ideas:

1. The eradication of man's sinful nature at any time before glorification at the second coming of Christ.
2. Perfect restoration of mental or physical powers while man is still mortal.
3. Perfection of the flesh.
4. Living without God's enabling grace.
5. An infusion of intrinsic merit, trusting to an inherent holiness or righteousness.
6. Claiming to be saved through some superior holiness.
7. Claiming to have, or trusting in, feeling or impressions that supersede the Word.
8. Believing that it is impossible to sin or to fall after some special "infilling" experience.
9. The assumption that one is secure spiritually because of a purely legal justification while continuing to live for self in transgression of the law of God.
10. The assumption that continued sin ceases to be sinful if one is "saved" or "sanctified."

None of these false ideas is found in the 1888 message.

¹³⁶ Pp. 83, 84.

But we do find a clear call to a preparation for the second coming of Christ. Ellen White recognized the call. Speaking of the message of Waggoner and Jones, she said:

This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.... It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.¹³⁷

Often Ellen White declared that a secret love of sin is the real reason for the rejection of that message. Waggoner tells us that he was indebted to both Luther and Wesley for the beginning of his understanding. Wesley clearly taught the possibility of sinless living in mortal flesh, but he lacked the cleansing of the sanctuary truth. The terrible opposition that Wesley had to meet in his day prefigured that which Jones and Waggoner had to meet. Wesley said of the conflict in his day:

There is scarce any expression in Holy Writ, which has given more offense than this. The word perfect is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them; and whosoever preaches perfection (as the phrase is) that is asserts that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being accounted by them worse than a heathen man, or a publican.¹³⁸

"No," says a great man [Zinzendorf], "this is the error of errors: I hate it from my heart. I pursue it through all the world with fire and sword." Nay, why so vehement?... Why are those that oppose salvation from sin (few excepted) so eager, I had almost said, furious?... In God's name, why are you so fond of sin? What has it ever done you? What good is it ever likely to do you, either in this world, or in the world to come? And why are you so violent against those that hope for a deliverance from it?¹³⁹

Wesley in his day was probably unable to understand the problem in its ultimate perspective. But those who live in the last days will know that I lie dragon is "wroth with the woman, and... [goes] to make war with the remnant of her seed." What makes Satan so uncontrollably angry is I hat there *will* be a people who truly keep the commandments of God! lie says it can't be.

¹³⁷ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92, emphasis supplied.

¹³⁸ *Works of Wesley*, Vol.6 , p. 1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

In fact, the law of God has always been the focus of his warfare, for he has always said of fallen man, "It is impossible for us to obey its precepts."¹⁴⁰ Wesley had to contend with what Ellen White declares we have "to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out."¹⁴¹ That "strange power" is mysteriously active within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As in Wesley's day, she says many ministers today echo the falsehoods of Satan:

Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God...

[But] Christ took human nature upon him, and became a debtor to do the whole law in behalf of those whom he represented. Had he failed in one jot or tittle, he would have been a transgressor of the law, and we would have had in him a sinful, unavailing offering. But he fulfilled every specification of the law, and condemned sin in the flesh; yet many ministers repeat the falsehoods of the scribes, priests, and Pharisees, and follow their example in turning the people away from the truth.

God was manifested in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, by manifesting perfect obedience to all the law of God. Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He corrupted not human nature, and, though in the flesh, he transgressed not the law of God in any particular. More than this, he removed every excuse from fallen man that he could urge for a reason for not keeping the law of God...

This testimony concerning Christ plainly shows that he condemned sin in the flesh. No man can say that he is hopelessly subject to the bondage of sin and Satan. Christ has assumed the responsibilities of the human race... He testifies that through his imputed righteousness the believing soul shall obey the commandments of God.¹⁴²

The date of this straightforward statement indicates that Ellen White was firmly supporting the message of Jones and Waggoner. But had their message been in the slightest degree tainted by the heresy of perfectionism, she would certainly not have supported them in this way. Note that Christ's imputed righteousness accomplishes more than a mere judicial declaration. It actually *makes the believer obedient*.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

¹⁴¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1098.

¹⁴² *Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1896.

The *how* of this glorious development is made clear by something she said over ten years later (1907):

[Christ] made an offering so complete that through his grace every one may reach the standard of perfection. Of those who receive his grace and follow his example it will be written in the book of life, "Complete in him—without spot or stain."

In word and deed Christ's followers are to be pure and true. In this world— a world of iniquity and corruption —Christians are to reveal the attributes of Christ. All they do and say is to be free from selfishness. Christ desires to present them to the Father "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," purified through his grace, bearing his likeness.

In his great love, Christ surrendered himself for us... We are to surrender ourselves to him. When this surrender is entire, Christ can finish the work he began for us by the surrender of himself. Then he can bring us to complete restoration.¹⁴³

A child can see it: perfection of character is not something that is only a legal declaration; it is something Christ desires, and which therefore has not yet been realized in His people. There is a time element involved, a condition: "When [our] surrender is entire, Christ can finish the work he began for us by the surrender of himself." And this "entire surrender" must precede "complete restoration," which again must include translation without seeing death. You can't break the progression.

Here is where genuine righteousness by faith at last comes into its own. We cannot know how to make that entire surrender that is so vitally needed unless we truly understand "the everlasting gospel" of Revelation 14. The 1888 message was the beginning of that divine provision for the latter rain.

No wonder Satan has hated the message!

He has opposed it assiduously, misrepresented it, maligned it, ridiculed it, suppressed it. His cleverest opposition is obviously his subtle counterfeits of righteousness by faith. These can be readily identified because they invariably betray one common denominator—antipathy for the law of God. This takes one of two forms: (1) declaring that the law of God has been abolished or changed; or (2) declaring the law of God impossible to obey. Either position denies the gospel of Jesus, and the latter is the one that most appeals to many Seventh-day Adventists.

Therefore any righteousness by faith that becomes a cloak for continued disobedience to God's law has to be a counterfeit. And, according to Jesus, any messenger preaching a brand of righteousness by faith who

¹⁴³ *Review and Herald*, May 30, 1907.

himself knowingly breaks "one of these least commandments" and teaches men so must be an agent of deception (cf. Matthew 5:19).

Does the Bible teach the possibility of sinless living in our sinful nature?

If Christ was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," then the obvious answer is "Yes." Christ is both our Substitute *and* enabling Example. He demonstrated it once for all. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). And of His people it has to be said eventually, "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:5). They will overcome "even as I also overcame" (Revelation 3:21), says Jesus. No saint will ever overcome except through faith in the Great Overcomer, "the author and finisher of our faith." The overcomers acquire no merit to themselves, yet they gain everything by their faith. Christ "is able also to save them to the uttermost... for *such an high priest became us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:25,26).

If we take away the high priestly ministry of Christ in the second apartment as distinct from the first, this idea of preparation for the second coming disappears, and the impact of the Advent movement is reduced to a "me-too" echo of the popular evangelical churches. Our unique message centers in the sanctuary ministry of Christ:

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the message of Revelation 14.¹⁴⁴

There is no need to be afraid of "standing in the sight of a holy God without a mediator."

Remember that this holy God is also our loving heavenly Father, and our Savior. He is not seeking a way to keep us out of heaven; He is seeking a way to get us in! Our part is simply to believe (appreciate Him!) and thus to cooperate with Him and *let Him prepare us for that time* (more about this in our next chapter).

¹⁴⁴ *The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

The Lord will have a people who "not even by a thought [can]... be brought to yield to the power of temptation":

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.¹⁴⁵

"Ah," someone says, "that is just what I was afraid of. I would rather die and go into the grave than stand through the time of trouble. I'm afraid I can't make it! Dying is not so bad these days with all the medical help we have." But if we feel that way, we are really being selfish, in two ways:

- We are depriving the Lord of our demonstration of total loyalty He deserves from us in these last days.
- We are evading an experience, a trial, that someone else will have to endure in our place while we selfishly escape it, but get the same ultimate reward.

If our entire concern is just getting to heaven, getting that "reward," then we certainly are selfish to the core. And those who reason that because the "underground route" is just as effective in the end as going through the time of trouble and experiencing translation, are thinking only of themselves, not of the need that Jesus has for their cooperation in the very end of time.

They may not realize it, but in reality they are seeking to *avoid* Christ. They don't want to get too close to Him. The paragraph that follows the one above makes this clear:

It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits.... It rests with us to co-operate with the agencies which Heaven employs in the work of conforming our characters to the divine model.

Note: there is nothing to be afraid of if only we are willing to "join ourselves to Him" and follow Him "whithersoever He goeth."

When I came back from years of mission service in Africa I enrolled in a university class in advanced Greek translations. I soon began to fear that I could never keep up. Day after day the class discussions seemed to roll like

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 623.

giant waves over my head. I went to the teacher and suggested, "I think I'd better drop this class—I can't keep up."

She told me, "I think you should hang on. Stay in the class, and I'll see that you get through."

And she saw me through! Persistent, patient, determined, she helped me so much that in the end I not only passed, I got an A! She was an illustration of our Heavenly Teacher. If we'll stay in His class, it's *His* work to see that we pass—yes, that we get an A. His business is being a Savior! Let Him be what He is!

It is not by our own works and trying hard that our robes "must be spotless," our "characters... purified from sin." No; it is by "the blood of sprinkling," getting close to that cross so we "feel the blood so freely shed" for us:

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that always feels Thy blood
So freely shed for me!"

Charles Wesley

It's all through the grace of God, which of course we must "receive not in vain." Our own diligent effort is always simply cooperating with the agencies that Heaven employs. "Through faith in the atoning blood of Christ" this marvelous work will be accomplished. And there we come back to that cross again.

And what is faith?

According to John 3:16, it is our heartfelt response to God's loving and giving in our behalf. "Faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25) is the effectual agency in righteousness by faith. Here is a definition:

Many accept Jesus as an article of belief, but they have no saving faith in him as their sacrifice and Saviour. They have no realization that Christ has died to save them from the penalty of the law which they have transgressed... Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression? Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but that you may be saved from your sins...

You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ *Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

Do you begin to see something of the tremendous power of faith? Not that faith itself does anything—Jesus does it. But *righteousness is by faith*, and what it leads to is "to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character." No wonder Waggoner exclaimed in 1889, again only a few days after his presentations in Minneapolis:

What wonderful possibilities there are for the Christian! To what heights of holiness he may attain! No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be filled with the fulness of God's strength. The One stronger than Satan may dwell in his heart continually.¹⁴⁷

What does it mean "to cease from sin"? The answer is clear:

- It does *not* mean to cease from having a sinful nature.
- It does not mean to cease from being tempted.
- It does *not* mean to cease from experiencing the consequences of a sinful heredity or to cease from feeling the tug of allurements from within or without that are the consequences of our having sinned.

It does mean that by the grace of Christ we can cease to *respond* to these pressures!

- It means that we can say No! to every temptation, within or without, and Yes! to the Holy Spirit.
- It means that we can truly become obedient to the law of God, so we can say with Christ, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).
- It does *not* mean pristine perfection of the flesh. Perhaps even Jesus as a carpenter sometimes missed the nail with His hammer and dented the wood instead. It would be foolish to define that as sin. Sin has to do with the will, with choice. Note these verbs of volition:

The sin of evilspeaking begins with the cherishing of evil thoughts.... An impure thought tolerated, an unholy desire cherished, and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised... If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled.... No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin.¹⁴⁸

Luther wisely said that we cannot keep the birds from flying over our heads, but we can stop them from building a nest in our hair. The Lord does

¹⁴⁷ *Signs of the Times*, January 21, 1889.

¹⁴⁸ *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 177, emphasis supplied

not ask us to do more than our Savior did. He too was "in all points tempted like as we are," but He chose constantly to say, "No!" to temptation: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). "No!" to sinful self and all its clamors, no matter how insistent—this we may constantly *choose*, by His grace. And this is precisely what New Testament faith leads one to do. "To consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for 'by beholding we become changed.'"

Someone may ask, "Does this mean that God's people will merely overcome all *known* sin? Or will they overcome *all* sin, even that which is now unknown to them?"

Jones and Waggoner clearly understood that Christ's "final atonement" ministry will enable His people to overcome *all* sin, even that which is now unknown to them. The two greatest sins of all history were unknown sins: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), Jesus prayed concerning those who crucified Him; and I Laodicea's terrible sin of lukewarmness is due to a condition that Christ says the church is not aware of (Revelation 3:17). The Lord can never translate *sin* into His eternal kingdom even if it is buried beneath the conscious surface, for if He did, such buried seeds would spring up anew and contaminate the universe.

At the 1893 General Conference session Jones explained the simple, practical ministry of the Lord, what He is doing, in this time of the cleansing of the sanctuary:

Well, now, let us carry that a little further. He gave himself for our sins; but ... he will not take our sins although he bought them—without our permission. ... The choice is forever with me as to whether I would rather have my sins than to have him, isn't it? [Congregation: "Yes."] ... Then from this time henceforth can there be any hesitation about letting anything go that God shows is sin? Will you let it go when it is pointed out? When sin is pointed out to you, say, "I would rather have Christ than that." And let it go. [Congregation: "Amen."] Just tell the Lord, "Lord, I make the choice now; I make the trade; I make thee my choice; it is gone, and I have something better."... Where in the world is the opportunity for any of us to get discouraged over our sins?

Now some of the brethren here have done that very thing. They came here free; but the Spirit of God brought up something they never saw before. The Spirit of God went deeper than it ever went before, and revealed things they never saw before; and then, instead of thanking the Lord that that was so, and letting the whole wicked business go and thanking the Lord that they had ever so much more of him than they ever had before, they began to get discouraged. They said, "Oh what am I going to do? My sins are so great."...

If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that he is going down

to the depths, and he will reach the bottom at last; and when he finds the last thing that is unclean or impure, that is out of harmony with his will, and brings that up, and shows that to us, and we say, "I would rather have the Lord than that" —then the work is complete, and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character. [Congregation: "Amen."])

Which would you rather, have the completeness, the perfect fulness, of Jesus Christ, or have less than that, with some of your sins covered up that you never know of?... How in the world can that seal of God, which is the impress of his perfect character revealed in us, be put upon us when there are sins about us? He cannot put the seal, the impress of his perfect character, upon us until he sees it there. And so he has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts... He will cleanse the heart, and bring up the last vestige of wickedness. Let him go on, brethren; let him keep on his searching work...

If the Lord should take away our sins without our knowing it, what good would it do us? That would simply be making machines of us...

We are always intelligent instruments—not like... a pick or a shovel... We are intelligent instruments. We will be used by the Lord at our own living choice.¹⁴⁹

This is what Paul speaks of when he says:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14).

Ellen White firmly supports this tremendous idea: "Your circumstances have served to bring new defects in your character to your notice; but nothing is revealed but that which was in you." "His eye ... searches every chamber of the mind, detecting all lurking self-deception." "Undiscovered traits of character... must come to light." "God... reveals their hidden defects,... the moral machinery of their own hearts" "In the closing up of the great day of atonement... the remnant church ... are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives." The sanctuary ministry is a type of removing previously unconscious sin from the heart; the crucifixion of Christ is man's deepest, unconscious sin; and the final judgment will disclose the hidden content of the unrepentant sinner's *unconscious* mind.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Bulletin, pp. 404, 405.

¹⁵⁰ Review and Herald, August 6, 1889; That I May Know Him, p. 290; Testimonies, Vol. 7, pp. 210, 211; Vol. 4, p. 85; Vol. 5, pp. 472, 473; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 201, 202, 357, 358; The Desire of Ages, p. 58; Review and Herald, June 12, 1900; November 10, 1896.

The relationship of this truth to the 1888 revelation of Christ's righteousness is very close:

Christ was in the place, and he had the nature, of the whole human race. And in him meet all the weaknesses of mankind, so that every man on the earth who can be tempted at all, finds in Jesus Christ power against that temptation. For every soul there is in Jesus Christ victory against all temptation, and relief from the power of it. That is the truth.¹⁵¹

We must let Waggoner make clear that "victory against all temptation" in no way means "holy flesh" or "perfectionism":

Now, do not get a mistaken idea. Do not get the idea that you and I are ever going to be so good that we can live independently of the Lord; do not think that this body is going to be converted. If you do, you will get into grave trouble and gross sin. Do not think that you can make corruption incorruption. This corruption will put on incorruption when the Lord comes; not before... When men get the idea that their flesh is sinless, and that all their impulses are from God, they are confounding their sinful flesh with the Spirit of God. They are substituting themselves for God, putting themselves in his place, which is the very essence of the papacy.¹⁵²

In the likeness of sinful flesh, Jesus lived a sinless life. And His commandment-keeping people will have His faith. Waggoner continues in the same sermon:

He has condemned sin in the flesh, showing that even in sinful flesh he can live a sinless life. His perfect life will be manifested in mortal flesh, so that all will see it in the seven last plagues....

If this power could not be manifested before probation ends, there would be no witness to the people; it would not be a testimony to them. But before probation ends, there will be a people so complete in him that in spite of their sinful flesh, they will live sinless lives. They will live sinless lives in mortal flesh, because he who has demonstrated that he has power over all flesh lives in them—lives a sinless life in sinful flesh, and a healthful life in mortal flesh, and that will be a testimony that can not be gainsaid—a witness than which no greater can be given. Then the end will come.

¹⁵¹ Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 234.

¹⁵² *General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, p. 146.

Does this mean that God's people who have overcome even as Christ overcame will be "little Christs" assuming a blasphemous position in the last days?

Such a contemptuous deduction is unjustified. Even though the 1888 messengers insisted that God will have a people who "copy the Pattern," they never in any way intimated that they would "equal" it. Christ as the infinite, eternal Son of God lived a life and died a sacrifice that can never be repeated throughout eternity. But though no ransomed sinner can ever *duplicate* His "act of righteousness ... [that led] to acquittal and life for all men" (Romans 5:18, RSV), can none ever learn to *appreciate* it?

A worthless scrap of broken mirror can be cleansed and polished to reflect the brightness of the sun so as to dazzle one's eyes. But it would be ridiculous to think of it as equaling the sun. The bride of Christ is said specifically to be "bright as the sun" (Song of Solomon 6:10, RSV). But it is always only reflected light, its origin is in Christ.

The important question is, Can the worthless scrap of broken mirror ever be cleansed and polished before Christ returns? Or better, Can 14 4,000 such broken scraps ever be polished until each reflects a unique Facet of the Saviour's character, one precious corporate gem in which "lie shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"?

Can each scrap at last be clean?

Or must each continue to be dirtied and contaminated with continued selfish sinning? If Jesus was "in every respect... tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15, RSV), will it be possible when He ceases His ministry as High Priest that His people also stop "sinning" while they are still in sinful flesh with a sinful nature?

If the answer is yes, then it is possible that His bride can get ready for His coming. If the answer is no, then "the marriage of the Lamb" can never come and the second advent must cease to be a viable hope. The hope and courage of the 1888 message is expressed as follows:

Somebody will form a part of that perfect kingdom of God. We may, or we may not—we have our choice. We can do as we please; but that thing is going to be. There is going to be a people composed of representations of every tribe and nation—white men, black men, yellow men, red men, poor men mostly— some rich men, a few great men, and a great many small men; men of all dispositions, and of all races and nationalities, all over the world—all speaking the same thing at the same time; all manifesting the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is yet to be. Now if we believe and know that the thing must be, it can be done.¹⁵³

When God has given this witness to the world of his power to save to the uttermost, to save sinful beings, and to live a perfect life in sinful flesh, then he will remove the disabilities and give us better circumstances in which

¹⁵³ Waggoner, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, p. 149.

to live. But first of all this wonder must be worked out in sinful man, not simply in the person of Jesus Christ, but in Jesus Christ reproduced and multiplied in the thousands of his followers. So that not simply in the few sporadic cases, but in the whole body of the church, the perfect life [character] of Christ will be manifested to the world, and that will be the last crowning work which will either save or condemn men.¹⁵⁴

Ellen White agrees with this bold, unpopular, courageous idea. Note this statement which occurs near the conclusion of *Christ's Object Lessons*:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. ... At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known...

Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness.¹⁵⁵

The thought of the Bridegroom looms large in the Bible picture of God's people anticipating the coming of Christ. "The righteous deeds of the saints" constitute the "fine linen" in which the Lamb's wife at last is arrayed (Revelation 19:8,7, RSV). Has the Lord prohibited former generations from attaining "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" so they could be among this group? No. There is something uniquely eschatological in this overcoming that history says must be applicable to the last generation. The answer is simply that no former generation has in fact ever attained to the condition that Revelation postulates for the bride of Christ—as a body, His "bride has made herself ready" (19:7, RSV).

There is a great difference between a bride at a wedding and the little flower girl. Both are humans, and both are female; but to borrow Paul's phraseology in Ephesians 4, one is no longer a child. She has attained to "the measure of the stature of the fulness" of her bridegroom in that she is at last prepared to stand at his side in sympathy and appreciation. She can now enter into his purposes and cooperate with him. The bride of Christ may never *equal* Him, but unlike the little flower girl, she at least can *appreciate* Him.

Has our Lord shared with us the mysteries of love in order to teach us the secret of His purpose for those who finally appreciate His great sacrifice? When His "bride has made herself ready," He will come to claim her. The

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁵⁵ Pp. 415, 416.

Bridegroom says, I "will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (RSV). In some sense, there must at last be a mature mutual love and sympathy, a oneness, a true union, with Christ. *This was the real burden of the 1888 message.*

True Christian perfection is the little flower girl "growing up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15, RSV). "Some few in every generation" have individually overcome, reflecting a facet of Christ's character. Enoch and Elijah are obvious examples. But those few never met the full spectrum of temptation as God's people must meet it in the final scenes. The last generation will in a unique sense drink of the cup that Christ drank of and will be baptized with His baptism. He was baptized with (Matthew 20:20-23, RSV).¹⁵⁶

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is one thrilling love story, with the tragic plot developing in the first three chapters and the climax of resolution coming in the last four chapters. The victory was won in (Christ's sacrifice; and all that His people have to do is to have faith in that tremendous accomplishment of their Lord. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But the Lord has been forced to wait all these millennia for that ultimate faith to mature! Unbelief (dis-belief, un-faith) has been and still is our problem. Righteousness is by faith, not by works.

Why has no previous generation or community of saints ever gotten ready for the marriage of the Lamb? Not because God withheld anything from them, any more than something is withheld from the flower girl to prevent her from being the bride. She is not treated unfairly. Prophecy indicates that the unique ministry of the great High Priest in the most holy apartment will be concurrent with the bride growing up and getting ready: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). Here is the secret source of final overcoming.

On the typical Day of Atonement anciently, something did happen *in type* to the people. The Lord said, "Atonement [shall] be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30, RSV). So on the great heavenly Day of Atonement, the High Priest is to "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they... [might] offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3). These will be "offerings" free from that egocentric concern which is the radius of sin itself. A true bride will not marry because she wants a meal ticket; she appreciates her husband's character, and her concern is for him, not for herself.

But at the present time the remnant church is more a flower girl at the wedding than a bride. Most Christians are acquisitive, concerned to get a reward, to get some of the cake or ice cream at the wedding more than to possess the Bridegroom. Few are more concerned to be with Christ than to enjoy the creature delights of the New Jerusalem. This is why they so seldom bear their cross in service, to follow Him *now* "whithersoever He goeth." "I shall wear a crown in my Father's house" is the ditty that we sing, seldom "Crown *Him* with many crowns."

This thought of concern for *Him* marks the presentations of the 1888 messengers. Consider this example which is a "big idea"¹⁵⁷ seldom articulated in our Seventh-day Adventist literature:

¹⁵⁶ *Early Writings*, p. 284; *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 183; and see also S. N. Haskell, *Story of Daniel the Prophet*, pp. 253, 254, where he applies these words of Jesus to the believing ones during the time of Jacob's trouble, after probation closes.

We have seen that the little horn—the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity— has put his own... priesthood... in the place of the heavenly and holy priesthood. ... In this priesthood and service of the mystery of iniquity, the sinner confesses his sins to the priest, and goes on sinning. Indeed, in that priesthood and ministry there is no power to do anything else than to go on sinning; even after they have confessed their sins. But, sad as the question may be, is it not too true that those who are not of the mystery of iniquity, but who really believe in Jesus and in His priesthood and ministry—is it not too true that even these also confess their sins, and then go on sinning?

But is this fair to our great High Priest, to His sacrifice and to His blessed minis try?¹⁵⁸

Is it possible that we should ever in this life come to the place where this transcends our own concern for self and our own personal salvation? Can we ever learn, while in this mortal flesh, to appreciate a "perfect love [that] casts out fear"?

Prophecy says, Yes.

We read in Zechariah 12:10 that a time is coming when God's people will get their vision off their own problems and concern for their own security, and begin to be concerned about Jesus. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as when one mourns for his close, beloved friend" (LXX). The reason the remnant church is lukewarm is that we have hardly grasped the higher motivation. Jones and Waggoner began to understand it. It was an important burden of their message. Jones continues on the same page:

Is it fair that we should thus put Him, His sacrifice, and His ministry, practically upon a level with that of the "abomination of desolation," and to say that in Him and in His ministry there is no more power or virtue than there is in that of the "mystery of iniquity"? May the Lord forever save His church and people this day, with no more delay from thus bringing down so low our great High Priest, His awful [awesome] sacrifice, and His glorious ministry.

When we learn a concern for Him and for His glory, we shall see a new dimension in our familiar text: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Revelation 14:7). Because "the darkness of

¹⁵⁷ The phrase is a quotation: "The... preciousness of truth is so large, why, it is so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of... Preach so that the people can catch hold of big ideas and dig ma the precious ore hid in the Scriptures" (Manuscript 7, 1894; *Evangelism*, p. 169). The phrase was coined during the enthusiasm of the 1888 era and doubtless was inspired by the Jones-Waggoner message.

¹⁵⁸ Jones, *The Consecrated Way*, pp. 121, 122.

misapprehension of God... is enshrouding the world," God's people will make "His character... to be... known," saying to the people, "'Behold your God.'" ¹⁵⁹ Thus they will "give glory" to Him in the hour of *His* judgment when He wins His court trial (Revelation 14:7).

Most of us pray continually, "Lord, bless *me* and *my* loved ones, and don't forget *me* in Thy kingdom. And bless the missionaries so the work can be finished and we can all go home to glory!"

It is wrong to say it is impossible to obey God's law, and that the imputed righteousness of Christ must always cover our continued sinning in the sense of excusing it. How can it glorify our Savior for us to "make ... provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14)? In a moment of sudden, alluring and almost overmastering temptation, Joseph said, "No!" "He refused, and said,... How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8,9). Thus he honored the Lord who died for him. What a tragedy it would have been if he had "made provision for the flesh," and said to himself, "You can't win them all; this one is too strong; it's impossible to obey all the time—Christ's righteousness will have to 'cover' me on this one."

The important issue in the last days is not the salvation of our own poor little souls, but the honor of Christ. The test that will come to God's people before the close of probation will be that of the mark of the beast, a test that has never in all previous history come to them, greater even than the ancient martyrs endured. It will be Satan's masterpiece, perfected after his six thousand years of experience in tempting the people of God. It will be cleverly designed to penetrate to the depths of our souls and if possible sweep us away in the final tide of selfish concern. Such an ultimate test must require an ultimate preparation.

In the meantime, we keep our feet on solid ground.

While we steadfastly deny Satan's cynical charge that it is impossible for believing sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, we remain keenly aware that we are fallen sinners by nature and that we always need a Savior. "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1, RSV). The Holy Spirit always presses good news home to the heart of the contrite sinner who has fallen:

We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God.¹⁶⁰

Jesus loves His children, even if they err.... When they do their best, calling upon God for His help, be assured the service will be accepted although imperfect. Jesus is perfect. Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them, and He will say, Take away the filthy garments

¹⁵⁹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415.

¹⁶⁰ *Steps to Christ*, p. 64.

from him and clothe him with change of raiment. Jesus makes up for our unavoidable deficiencies.¹⁶¹

If one who daily communes with God errs from the path, if he turns a moment from looking steadfastly unto Jesus, it is not because he sins wilfully; for when he sees his mistake he turns again, and fastens his eyes upon Jesus, and the fact that he has erred, does not make him less dear to the heart of God.¹⁶²

If you make failures and are betrayed into sin, do not feel then you cannot pray... but seek the Lord more earnestly.¹⁶³

All this "much more abounding grace" is unlimited; but its purpose is not to encourage us in continual falling into sin! Here is a statement that could be easily wrested from its context to support Satan's charge that it is impossible for us not to continue transgressing God's law:

When, through faith in Jesus Christ, man does according to the very best of his ability, and seeks to keep the way of the Lord by obedience to the ten commandments, the perfection of Christ is imputed to cover the transgression of the repentant and obedient soul...

But now let us note the important context. We *can* overcome! Here's the rest of it:

We can see in the cross of Calvary what it has cost the Son of God to bring salvation to a fallen race. As the sacrifice in behalf of man was complete, so the restoration of man from the defilement of sin must be thorough and complete... Besetting sins must be battled with and overcome. Objectionable traits of character, whether hereditary or cultivated, should be taken up separately, and compared with the great rule of righteousness; and in the light reflected from the word of God, they should be firmly resisted and overcome, through the strength of Christ.¹⁶⁴

"If any man sin, we have an advocate" (1 John 2:1, emphasis supplied). We shall have a Savior forever, but inspiration tells us we shall not have an Advocate or an Intercessor forever.

To prepare a people to meet the test of the mark of the beast is the unique work of Christ as High Priest in His closing ministry. It's His job. This was apparent to Ellen White even in the early days of the Advent movement:

¹⁶¹ Letter 17a, 1891.

¹⁶² *Review and Herald*, May 12, 1896.

¹⁶³ *Our High Calling*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁴ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 135, 136.

As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest,... He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world... This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, "They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image."... The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God.¹⁶⁵

Justification by faith in the light of Christ's closing mediatorial work—this was the burden of the 1888 message; and this will be the topic of our last chapter.

Chapter Ten

Why It's Easy to Be Saved and Hard to Be Lost (or Is It Vice Versa?)

Can the Good News Be Too Good to Be True?

There really ought not to be any question about something if Jesus says it. How can we have faith in Him unless we believe what He says is true? But if there is anything He said that seems to arouse more problems in the minds of good Christians, it's this: to say it's "easy" to be saved and "hard" to be lost. Shocking as it may seem, this is what Jesus said:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;... for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30, emphasis supplied).

¹⁶⁵ Early Writings, p. 254.

Apparently human nature is intent on believing that His yoke is *hard*, that being a true Christian is a fiendishly difficult job, a heroic achievement that requires more than what most people have. And of course such an idea frustrates and discourages many who sincerely desire to follow Jesus, but think they don't have what it takes.

This quotation from Jesus makes up only half of our chapter title:

The other half also comes from His words in a conversation Paul had with Him when he was arrested on the way to Damascus. Paul is telling King Agrippa about the incident:

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.... I am Jesus whom thou persecutest (Acts 26:13-15, emphasis supplied).

Saul of Tarsus was having a battle with his conscience. The Holy Spirit pressed into his soul the constant conviction of sin. For him to go on in his mad campaign against Jesus and His followers, he must repress all the convictions and promptings of the Holy Spirit. This was "hard" on him, and it could have led to severe physical and emotional disorders.

The Lord loved him so much that He actually made it "hard" for Paul to destroy himself through impenitence. And when Saul became the apostle Paul, he never forgot the lesson. Ever afterward he was to teach that it is easy to be saved and hard to be lost *if one understands and believes the "Good News."* Thus, in the words of Jesus, His burden is "easy," and to oppose His salvation is "hard."

Such is the meaning of "righteousness by faith," and the 1888 messengers caught the idea of Jesus and Paul. This was another unique feature of their message, seldom articulated today. Our youth are continually bombarded with the idea that it's hard to follow Jesus, and it's easy to follow the devil. In fact, the idea is entrenched in the minds of many Seventh-day Adventists like the Rock of Gibraltar.

They think that both the Bible and Ellen White teach the Bad News idea. For example, consider a passage from Paul that appears superficially, on the surface, to reinforce it:

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth [strives, contends] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (Galatians 5:16,17).

There are two ways to understand this statement:

(1) The common one is that the evil the flesh prompts us to do is so strong that we simply "cannot do the [good] things that... [we] would." The "flesh" is stronger than the Holy Spirit.

(2) The rarely heard alternative is that the Holy Spirit gives us such a powerful motivation that the flesh loses its tyranny over us, and the believer in Christ "cannot do the [evil] things" that the flesh prompts him to do.

Explanation (1) is Bad News: as long as you have a sinful nature, or as long as you are in "the flesh," you are doomed to continual defeat. And this is exactly what many Christians, especially youth, believe. Their experience constantly reinforces this belief, for they find the flesh all-powerful. Appetite, illicit sex, sensuality, pride, jealousy, hatred, drugs, liquor, materialism, constantly beat back the Spirit, and these victims of (1) find themselves defeated time after time. Surely the Savior's heart goes out to them. He knows how many times they have wet their pillows with tears at night as they review the day's failures.

On the other hand, explanation (2) emerges as the best Good News one can imagine. The Holy Spirit is actually doing the "work," the "striving." Whereas we always thought we had to do the striving, it turns out (according to Paul) that this is the part that the great Third Person of the Godhead does. Fasten your seat belt and hang on tight: Paul's radical idea is that He *is actually stronger than the flesh*. Every moment of every day He strives, or contends, against the promptings of our sinful nature, and *with our consent* defeats them. In fact, He spends as much time with each of us in this constant striving against sin as if we were the only person on earth. His striving against our sinful nature is a twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week job. And He never takes a vacation. He never forces anyone, but He does motivate us.

Which of the two explanations is the correct one?

The 1888 message says, unhesitatingly, the Good News one, for it alone is completely in harmony with the words of Jesus above. It is because Jesus knows that the mighty Holy Spirit does the lifting of the heavy weight that He assures us, "My burden is light." Jones broke through the clouds of darkness and caught Paul's meaning:

When a man is converted, and is thus brought under the power of the Spirit of God, he is not so delivered from the flesh that he is actually separated from it, with its tendencies and desires... No; that same degenerate, sinful flesh is there.... But the individual is no longer subject to these. He is delivered from subjection to the flesh, with its tendencies and desires, and is now subject to the Spirit. He is now subject to a power that conquers, brings under, crucifies, and keeps under, the flesh.... The flesh itself is brought into subjection to the power of God, through the Spirit, [so that] all these evil things are killed at the root, and thus prevented from appearing in the life...

This blessed reversal of things is wrought in conversion. By conversion the man is put in possession of

the power of God, and under the dominion of the Spirit of God, so that by that power, he is made ruler over the flesh, with all its affections and lusts; and, through the Spirit, he crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts, in his fighting "the good fight of faith."...

Jesus came to the world, and put himself in THE FLESH, just where men are; and met that flesh, JUST AS IT IS, with all its tendencies and desires; and by the divine power which he brought by faith, he "condemned sin in the flesh" and thus brought to all mankind that divine faith which brings the divine power to man to deliver him from the power of the flesh and the law of sin, just where he is, and to give him assured dominion over the flesh, just as it is.¹⁶⁶

Some one may say, "Well, that Good News may have been true back in the days of Jones a century ago; but today with all the electronic allurements of modern sin, is it still true now?"

So, we ask: which is stronger, sin or grace? Paul answers unhesitatingly: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness" (Romans 5:20,21).

But this has been difficult for us to believe. How often we have thought that the TV was stronger than reading the Bible, or prayer meeting. We find the world's hold on us so alluring that it seems by comparison that the work of the Holy Spirit is as weak as a radio signal from Mars.

If so, something is not clear to us. *We have not understood the gospel.* We turn again to the 1888 message for some much-needed Good News:

When grace reigns, it is easier to do right than it is to do wrong. That is the comparison. Notice: As sin reigned, even so grace reigns. When sin reigned, it reigned against grace; it beat back all the power of grace that God had given; [That was Saul of Tarsus kicking against the pricks.] but when the power of sin is broken, and grace reigns, then grace reigns against sin, and beats back all the power of sin. So it is as literally true that under the reign of grace it is easier to do right than to do wrong, as it is true that under the reign of sin it is easier to do wrong than to do right (Jones, *ibid.*, July 25, 1899).

It can never be repeated too often, that under the reign of grace it is just as easy to do right, as under the reign of sin it is easy to do wrong. This must be so; for if there is not more power in grace than there is in sin, then there can be no salvation from sin...

Salvation from sin certainly depends upon there being more power in grace than there is in sin. Then, there being more power in grace than there is in sin, ...

¹⁶⁶ *Review and Herald*, September 18, 1900.

wherever the power of grace can have control, it will be just as easy to do right as without this it is easy to do wrong...

[Man's] great difficulty has always been to do right. But this is because man naturally is enslaved to a power—the power of sin—that is absolute in its reign. And so long as that power has sway, it is not only difficult but impossible to do the good that he knows and that he would. But let a mightier power than that have sway, then is it not plain enough that it will be just as easy to serve the will of the mightier power, when it reigns, as it was to serve the will of the other power when it reigned?

But grace is not simply more powerful than is sin... This, good as it would be, is not all... There is much more power in grace than there is in sin. For "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." ... Let no one ever attempt to serve God with anything but the present, living power of God, that makes him a new creature; with nothing but the much more abundant grace that condemns sin in the flesh, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Then the service of God will indeed be "in newness of life"; then it will be found that his yoke is indeed "easy" and his burden "light"; then his service will be found indeed to be with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."¹⁶⁷

As usual, Waggoner chimes in with some more Good News:

The new birth completely supersedes the old. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." He who takes God for the portion of his inheritance, has a power working in him for righteousness, as much stronger than the power of inherited tendencies to evil, as our heavenly Father is greater than our earthly parents.¹⁶⁸

The context of Waggoner's quotation from 2 Corinthians 5 says, "The love of Christ [agape] constraineth [motivates] us" (verse 14). People get that backwards. *Constrain*, the very opposite of *restrain*, means "to propel," "to push." That love doesn't push us against our will, but the Holy Spirit gives us all the motivation possible, short of that.

In the early days of motoring, some car makers (Locomobile, for example) advertised that their cars were so strong they could climb Pike's Peak. But anyone trying to drive a simple Model T up that steep road found it "hard." The poor flivver would shudder and stall, and the radiator would boil over. The poor man's car just wasn't built for that mountain.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., September 1, 1896.

¹⁶⁸ *The Everlasting Covenant*, p. 66.

Need I say that many Christians view getting ready for the Lord's return as even more difficult?

But now let's drop a 420 cu. in. V-8 engine in that Model T, and then watch it zoom up the steepest road.

It's only a pathetic ignorance of the *agape* in the pure, true gospel of Christ that makes the Christian life seem to us so "hard." The Bible has been telling us that the the Holy Spirit is a mighty power plant to motivate:

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain (Zechariah 4:6,7).

It takes a powerful engine to flatten out steep hills. But that is just what an understanding of the cross does for us:

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

Look at what this actually says:

1. *If One had not died for us, we would actually be dead—all of us.*

2. *Christ bought the entire world with His blood.* Whether we are heathen or Christian, whether we recognize our obligation to Him or not, we are infinitely in debt to Him. All we have and all we are, we already owe to His sacrifice:

To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring.¹⁶⁹

3. *Simply believe this truth, says Paul, and "henceforth" you find it impossible to keep on living a self-centered life.* The "constraint" goes to work immediately, and unless we resist, we shall "henceforth live... unto him who died for... [us], and arose again."

Don't let that phrase, "should not," throw you. In the original language it does not mean our usual vain sighs, "I *should* be more faithful; I *should* pay more tithe; I *should* keep the Sabbath better; I *should* study my lesson more, I *should* sacrifice more," "I shouldn't watch TV so much." The gospel idea is that you will find it *impossible not* to serve the Lord enthusiastically if you comprehend and appreciate the significance of the cross of Christ—what it cost Him to save you.

This idea of the constraint of God's *agape* permeates Paul's teachings. Consider the following:

¹⁶⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:4).

His idea is that God is not standing back, as many conceive of Him, with His divine arms folded in disinterested unconcern while we wallow in our lost condition. He is not saying, "Well, I made the sacrifice for you two thousand years ago; I've done My part—it's up to you now. You must take the initiative. If you want to come, come; and if it seems hard to you, you just don't have what it takes to be a Christian. I have somebody else waiting to take your crown."

How many millions of people feel that way about God! And some shy and timid ones feel, "God *does* have plenty of people ready to take my crown—He doesn't need *me*, and I'm not really sure He *wants* me." In contrast, Waggoner emphasizes the seeking, persistent love of God toward "every man." It is He who takes the initiative, a radically different idea than our usual one:

And we need not try to improve on the Scriptures, and say that the goodness of God tends to lead men to repentance. The Bible says that it does [emphasis supplied] lead them to repentance, and we may be sure that it is so. Every man is being led toward repentance as surely as God is good.¹⁷⁰

When you pray for a loved one, a friend, or a neighbor to be converted, you don't have to wake the Lord up out of sleep to persuade Him to do something that He is reticent to do—not according to what Paul says. The goodness of God is *already* working, leading your person to repentance. The trouble is that we often hinder what He is already seeking to do! We thwart His answer to our prayers because we haven't understood the goodness, longsuffering, and forbearance of the Lord in their true dimensions.

A lady came to prayer meeting each week asking prayer for her unbelieving husband. I don't remember how long it was later, but one Sabbath morning he came down the stairs before breakfast dressed up in his good suit. "What does this mean?" she inquired. With a big smile he answered, "I'm going to church with you and the children." Quick as a flash, out came her true feelings: "But darling, if you lose your job because of the Sabbath, how can we make the car payments, or the house payments?"

Hubby never said a word, went back up, put on his work clothes, and that was the end of it forever.

Instead of begging the Lord to please do something for our loved ones, a better way for us to pray would be, "Lord, thank You that You *an*; *already* leading my loved one or neighbor to repentance. Now please, please, *help me get out of the way!*"

We continue the same passage from Waggoner:

¹⁷⁰ *Signs of the Times*, November 21, 1895.

Not all repent. Why? —Because they despise the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, and break away from the merciful leading of the Lord. But whoever does not resist the Lord, will surely be brought to repentance and salvation.

That sounds revolutionary to many who say, "Well, I just can't believe the Good News is that good! It seems to me that if a sinner wants to be saved, it's only fair that he work hard at it, he must take the initiative, he must *do* something. But this has it backwards. It says that if he stops resisting, he *will* be saved!"

Yes, that's exactly what it says.

However revolutionary it sounds, that is the Good News of the gospel. It presupposes the active, aggressive, persistent love of God as a Good Shepherd taking the initiative to find His lost sheep. Ellen White says the same thing in *Steps to Christ*, page 27:

As Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, ... they begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ...

The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ—but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son (emphasis supplied).

Once you grasp the secret of the Lord's active, seeking love, this Good News begins to leap at you from almost every page of the Bible. Note these beautiful thoughts from Paul's writings:

Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith... Ye are all the children of God in Christ Jesus...

The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 3:23-4:5).

With his clear view of "the law in Galatians," Waggoner has caught the real truth of this passage:

God has not cast off the human race; therefore, since the first man created was called "the son of God," it follows that all men are heirs in the sense that they are in their minority. As already learned, "before faith came," although all were wanderers from God, we were kept under the law, guarded by a severe master, "shut up," in order that we might be led to accept the promise. What a blessed thing it is that God counts even the ungodly, those who are in the bondage of sin, as His children—wandering, prodigal sons, but still children. God has made all men "accepted in the Beloved." This probationary life is given us for the purpose of giving us a chance to acknowledge Him as Father, and to become sons indeed.¹⁷¹

This is strikingly different than the usual idea.

We have supposed that those who lived in Old Testament times were kept "under the law," while in New Testament times faith came. But Waggoner makes clear that even today we are kept "under the law" until faith comes to us individually in our experience. The law is *our* "schoolmaster," a disciplining agent to drive us to Christ. What we do not learn by faith by His grace, we learn by discipline. And all this infinite care is lavished upon us individually in order to conduct us to Christ, "that we might be justified by faith."

This is happening *right now*. Without exception, all of us are "shut up," "under the law," until we reach that place in life where faith "comes." This imprisonment is a part of the drawing process, another evidence of the Lord's persistent and active love for us individually.

It is easy for us to draw a circle that shuts out our apparently unbelieving neighbors. But Waggoner discerned that the Lord draws a circle that *includes* them—at least until they finally beat Him off by never-ending resistance. So often we regard those outside the circle as wolves, not sheep; but the Lord looks upon them as sheep who have wandered away. Another inspired metaphor is that they are children who are minors who aren't yet ready to take over their inheritance of grace (Galatians 4:1-5). Seldom have we known how to recognize them as children of God, kept "under the law" indeed, but still *children* whom the schoolmaster is trying to conduct to Christ.

So Galatians 4 brings us this beautiful illustration of the child of the estate owner who is heir of all things. But the kid runs around the estate barefoot, while the slaves boss him and lord it over him until he comes of age. So, says Paul, with all of us—we are minors, urchins, under the "slaves," until we reach our majority, which is the coming of faith to us individually. Amazing as it may seem, the Lord's infinite program is geared to the saving of lost people!

¹⁷¹ *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 166, 167.

This throbbing evangel shines through further in Waggoner's insight into God's gift of grace already given to every man:

Since the inheritance is through the righteousness of faith, it is equally sure to all the seed, and equally within the reach of all. Faith gives all an equal chance, because faith is just as easy for one person as for another. God has dealt to every man a measure of faith, and to all the same measure; for the measure of grace is the measure of faith, and unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. Christ is given without reserve to every man.¹⁷²

In other words, the astounding truth is that the Lord is actually doing something for every man, woman, and child on the earth! But His work is thwarted until they know it; and they can know it only as someone proclaims the Good News to them.

That's why He has urged us to "go ... into all the world, and preach *the gospel* to every creature," not *Bad News*. And we need to understand that there is indeed power in that gospel if it can be freed from the poisonous legalism error that has frustrated the grace of God. If we have tried to help people and have failed, it is better to recognize that our understanding of that gospel may have been deficient, rather than to blame the people. It is true that some will reject it even when it is presented in its pristine purity. But many more than we usually see today will accept when it is clearly presented.

We find that this virtual obsession with the grace of God runs like a thread of gold through the writings of both Jones and Waggoner:

"For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us,... was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea." For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, "unto the glory of God by us" (2 Corinthians 1:19,20). No promise of God has ever been given to man except through Christ.

Personal faith in Christ is the one thing necessary in order to receive whatever God has promised. God is no respecter of persons: He offers His riches freely to everybody; but no one can have any part in them except as he receives Christ. This is perfectly fair, since Christ is given to all if they will but have Him.¹⁷³

Where does Ellen White stand on this matter? She agrees:

Christ and His mission have been misrepresented, and multitudes feel that they are virtually shut away from the minis try of the gospel. But let them not feel that they

¹⁷² *Signs of the Times*, February 27, 1896; Waggoner on Romans, p. 89.

¹⁷³ *The Everlasting Covenant*, p. 46.

are shut away from Christ. There are no barriers which man or Satan can erect but that faith can penetrate.

In faith the woman of Phoenicia flung herself against the barriers that had been piled up between Jew and Gentile. Against discouragement, regardless of appearances that might have led her to doubt, she trusted the Saviour's love. It is thus that Christ desires us to trust in Him. The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel.¹⁷⁴

**Yes, the shocking truth is that the sinner must resist in order to be lost!
That is how much the Lord loves him.**

But the 1888 message took a giant step even beyond.

It found in Paul's writings clear assurance that the death of Christ on the cross not only *offers* the sinner a provision for his salvation, but it has actually accomplished his justification. The death and resurrection of Christ, and His gift of the Holy Spirit, have done something for every person. Let us look at what Paul says first, and then at Jones's and Waggoner's comments:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:... therefore as by the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:12-19).

Whatever it was that Adam passed on to the human race, Paul makes clear that Christ canceled it, for "all men." But we seem to have found it hard to believe what Paul says. We say, "No, Paul, that can't be true. The free gift of justification came upon a *few* people, not all. It only comes upon those who do something." But Waggoner seems to have caught Paul's idea:

There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given himself for all. Nay, he has given himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift. It is a fact, therefore, plainly stated in the Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not -the

¹⁷⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 403.

slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it. So many spurn the gift offered so freely.¹⁷⁵

However strange those words may sound to us today, they are in harmony with what the apostle himself says. No wonder Ellen White was so enthusiastic about the message! It was Good News, for it presented the character of God in a new and more favorable light. Waggoner says again:

The faith of Christ must bring the righteousness of God, because the possession of that faith is the possession of the Lord himself. This faith is dealt to every man, even as Christ gave himself to every man. Do you ask what then can prevent every man from being saved? The answer is, Nothing, except the fact that all men will not keep the faith. If all would keep all that God gives them all would be saved.¹⁷⁶

Think of all that the sinner must resist if he insists on being lost! No wonder it is "hard." Puny little person that he is, he must fight against the combined strength of Heaven's persistent love. It wears people out! And the requisite motivation to live a truly consecrated life is abundantly provided by the simple appreciation of the truth of this justification that has "come upon all men."

One wonders how Calvin could ever have entertained the idea that Christ died only for the elect. Simply believe that He died for *you*, and forthwith you suddenly see that it becomes impossible "henceforth" to live a self-centered life. The equation ("one died for all" = "then were all dead") has its own built-in power supply. Simply *believe* the astounding truth, and the Lord's burden becomes "light."

Having seen that Scripture fully supports Jones's and Waggoner's big ideas of gospel motivation, it remains to be seen how Ellen White supports them. She has the same idea:

Infinite Love has cast up a pathway upon which the ransomed of the Lord may pass from earth to heaven. That path is the Son of God. Angel guides are sent to direct our erring feet. Heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every man's path, barring his way to vice and folly. He must trample upon a crucified Redeemer ere he can pass onward to a life of sin.¹⁷⁷

It is implicit in her writings that God's love is active and seeking, and must be resisted in order for the sinner to be lost:

God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If there were no light, there would be no shade. But while the shade comes by the sun, it is not created by it. It is some obstruction that causes the shadow. So darkness

¹⁷⁵ *Signs of the Times*, March 12, 1896; Waggoner on Romans, p. 101.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, January 16, 1896; *ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁷⁷ *Our High Calling*, p. 11.

emanates not from God.... Disregard of the light that God has given brings the sure result. It creates a shadow, a darkness that is more dark because of the light which has been sent....

**"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
Gal. 6:7. God destroys no man. Every man who is destroyed will destroy himself. When a man stifles the admonitions of conscience, he sows the seeds of unbelief and these produce a sure harvest.¹⁷⁸**

Do not therefore conclude that the upward path is the hard and the downward road the easy way. All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on. God's love has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves.¹⁷⁹

How shall we reveal God to the world?

Seventh-day Adventists have been accused, and sometimes rightfully so, of teaching that Christ will be full of murderous vengeance and bloodthirstiness when He returns the second time. Evangelists have represented Him as coming with some kind of mysterious cosmic machine gun that emits a lethal ray to murder all His enemies. But the 1888 message presented no such distortion of God's character. The angels told the apostles that it will be "this same Jesus" who returns a second time (Acts 1:11). Sinners will have changed, not He. They will be hardened, not He.

If one smokes six or eight packs of cigarettes a day for years and then comes down with lung cancer or emphysema, can he say, "God has destroyed me"? Truly, "every man who is destroyed will destroy himself."

Note how in one short paragraph alone Ellen White says seven times that the unsaved are lost solely because of their own choice, and not through any arbitrary expulsion inflicted on them by the Lord:

[1] A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. [2] Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them. [3] The glory of God would be a consuming fire. [4] They would long to flee from that holy place. [5] They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. [6] The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. [7] Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.¹⁸⁰

If we want to, can we make salvation hard?

Yes, if we eclipse the cross of Christ, then we must admit that it becomes terribly hard to be saved. Motivation to consecration and devotion

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁷⁹ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 543.

dries up. Temptation to evil becomes overpowering in its appeal. The Saviour becomes "a root out of a dry ground," and His gospel contains "no beauty that we should desire him." Duty becomes a burden, obedience difficult, reading the Bible is boring, prayer is empty, Sabbath-keeping is boring. This is the pathetic "Christian experience" of many church members.

But if we understand the unadulterated gospel of the Lord's grace, Jones says, even *the choice* to bear the cross with Christ becomes easy. And for sure, this matter of choice is the only possibly difficult thing in being saved. If even *that* becomes "easy" in view of Christ's cross, surely we have it made!

If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that he is going down to the depths, and he will reach the bottom at last, and when he finds the last thing that is unclean or impure, that is out of harmony with his will, and brings that up, and shows that to us, and we say, "I would rather have the Lord than that"—then the work is complete, and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character. [Congregation: "Amen."] Which would you rather, have a character [Someone in the congregation began praising the Lord and others began to look around.] Never mind. If lots more of you would thank the Lord for what you have got, there would be more joy in this house tonight.

Which would you rather, have the completeness, the perfect fulness, of Jesus Christ, or have less than that, with some of your sins covered up that you never know of? [Congregation: "His fulness."] But don't you see, the Testimonies have told us that if there be stains of sin there, we cannot have the seal of God. How in the world can that seal of God, which is the impress of his perfect character revealed in us, be put upon us when there are sins about us? ... And so he has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts... He will cleanse the heart, and bring up the last vestige of wickedness. Let him go on, brethren; let him keep on his searching work...

It is simply with you and me a living choice, as to whether we will have the Lord or ourselves, the Lord's righteousness or our sins, the Lord's way or our way. Which will we have? [Congregation: "The Lord's way."] There is no... [difficulty] in making the choice when we know what the Lord has done, and what he is to us. The choice is easy. Let the surrender be complete.¹⁸¹

Waggoner agreed: one has to fight the truth in order to make it "hard" to believe:

¹⁸¹ Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 404.

It is as natural for the child of the infidel to believe as it is for the child of the saint. It is only when men build up a barrier of pride about themselves (Ps. 73:6) that they find it difficult to believe.¹⁸²

Now let Jones, in his forthright, homely way, urge the truth further home:

Can a man live on what he died of ?—No. Then when the man has died of sin, can he live in sin?... A man dies of delirium tremens or typhoid fever. Can he live on delirium tremens or typhoid fever, even if by a possibility he should be brought to live long enough to realize that he was there? The very thought of it would be death to him, because it killed him once. So it is with the man who dies of sin... He cannot live on what he died of.

But the great trouble with many people is that they do not get sick enough of sin to die... They get sick perhaps of some particular sin, and they want to stop that, and "want to die" to that, and they think they have left that off. Then they get sick of some other particular sin that they think is not becoming to them—they cannot have the favor and the estimation of the people with that particular sin so manifest, and they try to leave that off. But they do not get sick of sin—sin in itself, sin in the conception, sin in the abstract, whether it be in one particular way or another particular way. They do not get sick enough of sin itself to die to sin. When the man gets sick enough... of MM, ... you cannot get him to live in it any more.¹⁸³

And what supplies the power to "die" like this to sin? Yes, the cross of Christ. Jones continues:

We have constantly the opportunity to sin. Opportunities to sin are ever presented to us ... day by day. But it stands written: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." "I die daily."... The suggestion of sin is death to me ...in Him.

Therefore this is put in the form of a surprised, astonished question: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"...

"For sin shall not have dominion over you." The man who is delivered from the dominion of sin is delivered

¹⁸² *Signs of the Times*, August 6, 1896.

¹⁸³ *General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 352.

from the service of sin... Jesus died, and we are dead with him. And he is alive; and we who believe in him are alive with him.... "I am crucified with him." As certainly as he is crucified, I am crucified; as certainly as he is dead, I am dead with him; as certainly as he is buried, I was buried with him; as certainly as he is risen, I am risen with him—and henceforth I shall not serve sin (p. 353).

Perhaps the familiar fact of power steering in our cars can help us sense this. Try to steer a car with power steering when the engine is not running. It's hard to turn the wheel. If you have one of those giant highway trucks, it is practically impossible to turn those huge front wheels unless the engine is providing power to the steering mechanism. But if the engine is running, then even a child can twist the steering wheel this way or that. The power makes it easy.

But still, as driver, you must do something. You must *choose* which way you want to go. The engine can never relieve you of that responsibility. You can never sit in your car or truck, fold your arms, and say, "Take me to the post office." But once you *choose* to turn right or left and apply ever so little effort to turn the wheel, immediately the power mechanism goes to work and makes the task easy. This is a fascinating mechanism, for it illustrates the gospel.

To those who think they find it "hard" to be saved, a wise writer addresses some helpful counsel:

Many are inquiring, "How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?" You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice... The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.¹⁸⁴

Another question must be looked at:

¹⁸⁴ Steps to Christ, p. 47.

Is this Good News message mere quietism, the false heresy that the sinner has nothing to do, just be passive, a glob of putty manipulated by the divine will? No, you have your freedom of will.

Some who are afraid of too much Good News superficially assume that this statement contradicts this chapter, but it needs to be rightly understood:

Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God give the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stem battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.¹⁸⁵

Does this nullify the Good News of the grace of Christ? Does it contradict what He said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"? Does Ellen White contradict herself? There are other statements in Ellen White's writings that some quote in order to oppose the Good News aspect of the 1888 message.¹⁸⁶

We must never forget that there are indeed hard, stern battles with self, and endless conflicts. But the point is that our own individual effort is useless apart from the merits and grace of Christ. His cross must never be lost sight of! It actually makes our part easy.

Was His burden light in «the Garden of Gethsemane or on His cross? No. His own hard, stern battle with self in Gethsemane and on the cross was so severe that He sweat drops of blood, yes, even His very heart was ruptured in His final agony. What does it mean? Was He telling us a lie when He said, "My burden is light"?

He suffered all that terribly difficult agony in order to save us. The burden He speaks of in Matthew 11:30 is simply His burden that we share by faith. That faith works by love, and makes it light for us to carry, *for we appreciate the heaviness it was to Him.*

The only difficult thing in being a true Christian is the choice to surrender self to be crucified with Christ. We are never called to be crucified alone—only *with Him.*

But, thank God, it is a million times easier for us to be crucified with Christ than it was for Him to be crucified alone for us! Behold the Lamb of God, and it does indeed become easy:

¹⁸⁵ *Christ's Object Lesson*, p. 331.

¹⁸⁶ Some of these statements are found in *Messages to Young People*, pp. 99-104; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 84; *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 445; Vol. 4, p. 286. Careful study, however, reveals that there is no conflict. The "strait and narrow way" is not *difficult* necessarily—it is *narrow*, meaning that we cannot carry with us the world's baggage of selfishness. We must indeed "fight the good fight of faith," but it is precisely that—a fight of *faith*. We must continually "strive" and "pray without ceasing"; but we must also breathe without ceasing if we would live physically; but is that "difficult"? And we must eat, probably several times daily, as long as we expect to live; is that "difficult"? A healthy person breathes, "stretches" every muscle as a Christian "stretches every nerve," eats, and finds the constant exercise and activity to be joyous, much more so than being inert or inactive.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Isaac Watts

Even if this still seems hard, don't ever forget that it remains *much* harder to go on fighting against love like that, and beating off the persistent ministry of the Holy Spirit, in order to be lost!

Chapter Eleven

The 1888 Message Illuminates The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

The Search of the Century for Meaning

The cleansing of the sanctuary is closely tied to justification by faith. It's the only unique truth that Seventh-day Adventists have to offer the world. Yet we find a strange neglect of it. Many of our church members hardly have an intelligent idea of what the cleansing of the sanctuary is all about. Many pastors never teach it.

We must get hold of this all-important truth if we are to endure the trials of the last days:

The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill...

The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men [justification by faith]. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin.¹⁸⁷

Further, this sanctuary truth is the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist message. A few striking statements found in *Evangelism* make this clear:

The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith (p. 221).

The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement, and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people (p. 222).

God's people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward—where He is interceding for His people (p. 223).

If we know anything at all as to how Satan works, we can expect that he will direct his most sophisticated war against this unique truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary:

¹⁸⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet.... The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith...

The time is near when the deceptive powers of satanic agencies will be fully developed. On one side is Christ, who has been given all power in heaven and earth. On the other side is Satan, continually exercising his power to allure, to deceive with strong, spiritualistic sophistries, to remove God out of the places that He should occupy in the minds of men.

Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel's message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work. (pp. 224, 225, emphasis supplied).

The 1888 message revived interest in this closing ministry of our great High Priest.

It restored "its presiding power in the hearts of believers." Ellen White caught this significance. Having experienced personally the thrill of waiting for the coming of Christ in the 1844 movement, she never lost that first love.

When she heard the 1888 message for the first time, something clicked in her memory. She almost intuitively recognized the Good News in the message that announced to the waiting heart, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" She heard the welcome tread of divine footsteps that but few of her contemporaries wanted to have ears to hear.

That new development was the joining of the Adventist truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary with a more complete revelation of justification by faith. It was like the confluence of two rivers that had flowed separately but now joined to produce a tide that could bear the grounded ship on its way to port. She saw in the message the glorious means of divine grace provided to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord. She was excited. She recognized that "union with Christ" meant *union with Him in His closing work of atonement*, in clear distinction from His work in the first apartment, where the door was now shut.¹⁸⁸

In a series of articles written shortly after the 1888 Conference, she reveals week by week through repetition and emphasis how deeply

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56, 260, 261.

impressed she was. The message of Jones and Waggoner had to do with the reality of the sanctuary truth. Note the week-by-week crescendo in these 1890 Review articles:

We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ's work of cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. Let no man who desires to be found with the wedding garment on, resist our Lord in his office work. As he is, so will his followers be in this world. We must now set before the people the work which by faith we see our great High-priest accomplishing in the heavenly sanctuary (January 21).

Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and he is there to make an atonement for the people... He is cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. What is our work?—It is our work to be in harmony with the work of Christ. By faith we are to work with him, to be in union with him.... A people is to be prepared for the great day of God (January 28).

The mediatorial work of Christ, the grand and holy mysteries of redemption, are not studied or comprehended by the people who claim to have light in advance of every other people on the face of the earth (February 4).

Christ is cleansing the temple in heaven from the sins of the people, and we must work in harmony with him upon the earth, cleansing the soul temple from its moral defilement (February 11).

The people have not entered into the holy place [most holy], where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for his children. We need the Holy Spirit in order to understand the truths for this time; but there is spiritual drought in the churches (February 25).

Light is flashing from the throne of God, and what is this for?—It is that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God (March 4).

We have been hearing his voice more distinctly in the message that has been going for the last two years, declaring unto us the Father's name... We have only just begun to get a little glimmering of what faith is (March 11).

You have been having light from heaven for the past year and a half, that the Lord would have you bring into your character and weave into your experience...

If our brethren were all laborers together with God, they would not doubt but that the message he has sent us during these last two years is from heaven...

Suppose that you blot out the testimony that has been going during these last two years proclaiming the righteousness of Christ, who can you point to as bringing out special light for the people? (March 18).

Ellen White saw how the Jones-Waggoner message riveted attention on the *practical* aspects of Christ's high priestly ministry. This is where those two great rivers, the sanctuary truth and justification by faith, flowed together. Jones saw the practical-godliness relationship clearly. The message didn't cause frustration by *calling for* holy living, it provided *the means* for it:

This cleansing of the sanctuary [in the typical service] was the taking out of and away from the sanctuary all "the uncleanness of the children of Israel" "because of their transgressions in all their sins," which, by the ministry of the priesthood in the sanctuary had been brought into the sanctuary during the service of the year.

The finishing of this work of the sanctuary and for the sanctuary was, likewise, the finishing of the work/or the people.... The cleansing of the sanctuary extended to the people, and included the people, as truly as it did the sanctuary itself...

And that cleansing of the sanctuary was a figure of the true, which is the cleansing of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, from all the uncleanness of the believers in Jesus because of all their transgressions in all their sins. And the time of this cleansing of the true is declared in the words of the Wonderful Numberer to be "unto two thousand and three hundred days,"... in A.D. 1844...

This is done in the cleansing of the true sanctuary, only in the finishing of transgression and making an end of sins in the perfecting of the believers in Jesus, on the one hand; and on the other hand in the finishing of transgression and making an end of sins in the destruction of the wicked and the cleansing of the universe from all taint of sin that has ever been upon it.

The finishing of the mystery of God is the ending of the work of the gospel. And the ending of the work of the gospel is, first, the taking away of all vestige of sin and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness—Christ fully formed— within each believer, God alone manifest in the flesh of each believer in Jesus; and, secondly, on the

other hand, the work of the gospel being finished means only the destruction of all who then shall not have received the gospel (2 Thess. 1:710); for it is not the way of the Lord to continue men in life when the only possible use they will make of life is to heap up more misery for themselves...

The service in the earthly sanctuary shows also that in order for the sanctuary to be cleansed and the course of the gospel service there to be finished, it must first be finished in the people who have a part in the service. That is to say: In the sanctuary itself, transgression could not be finished, an end of sins and reconciliation for iniquity could not be made,... until all this had been accomplished in each person who had a part in the service of the sanctuary. The sanctuary itself could not be cleansed until each of the worshipers had been cleansed. The sanctuary itself could not be cleansed so long as, by the confessions of the people and the intercessions of the priests, there was pouring into the sanctuary a stream of iniquities, transgressions, and sins.... This stream must be stopped at its fountain in the hearts and lives of the worshipers, before the sanctuary itself could possibly be cleansed.

Therefore the very first work in the cleansing of the sanctuary was the cleansing of the people...

And this is the very object of the true priesthood in the true sanctuary.... The sacrifice, the priesthood, and the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary does take away sins forever, does make the comers thereunto perfect, does perfect "for ever them that are sanctified."¹⁸⁹

The Jones-Waggoner message clearly recognized that the forgiveness of sins is a judicial declaration that rests solely on the atonement made at the cross. It has an objective foundation. But they also saw that the Bible word for *forgive* means an actual "taking away" of the sin. Thus, from the time of the 1888 Conference they recognized the distinction between the daily or continual ministry in the sanctuary, and the yearly ministry. There is a difference between *the forgiveness* of sins and the *blotting out* of sins. Written soon after the Minneapolis Conference, the following expresses Waggoner's views:

When Christ covers us with the robe of His own righteousness, He does not furnish a cloak for sin, but takes the sin away. And this shows that the forgiveness of sins is something more than a mere form, something more than a mere entry in the books of record in heaven,

¹⁸⁹ Jones, *The Consecrated Way*, pp. 113-119.

to the effect that the sin has been canceled. The forgiveness of sins is a reality; it is something tangible, something that vitally affects the individual. It actually clears him from guilt; and if he is cleared from guilt, is justified, made righteous, he has certainly undergone a radical change. He is, indeed, another person."¹⁹⁰

The blotting out of sins as the culmination of Christ's closing High Priestly ministry is emphatically taught in the Spirit of Prophecy:

For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the [heavenly] sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary...

As the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which ... [the earthly sanctuary] had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement.¹⁹¹

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling... While the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14 (p. 425, emphasis added).

This is the heart of Seventh-day Adventism!

Our friends in the Evangelical churches would not consider it "dry, stale, or profitless," if we ourselves proclaimed its practical meaning. This is what Jones and Waggoner *began* to see. They rightly discerned that there is no way that the record of our sins could be blotted out of the books in heaven unless first of all the sin itself is blotted out of the human heart. This simple

¹⁹⁰ *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 66.

¹⁹¹ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 421, 422.

insight was not "internalizing" the doctrine; it was *practicalizing* it in the way that *The Great Controversy* emphasized, the book Ellen White had published just before the Minneapolis Conference. Doubtless the above statement from Ellen White strengthened their convictions.

In 1902 Waggoner published an article in the *Review and Herald* enlarging this insight. (Documentation exists to indicate that at this time he still taught the sanctuary truth as Seventh-day Adventists had always believed. See Appendix C).

Though all the record of all our sin, even though written with the finger of God, were erased, the sin would remain, because the sin is in us. Though the record of our sin were graven in the rock, and the rock should be ground to powder—even this would not blot out our sin.

The blotting out of sin is the erasing of it from nature, the being of man. [From other statements made in 1901 it is plain he does not mean the eradication of the sinful nature.]

The erasing of sin is the blotting of it from our natures, so that we shall know it no more. "The worshippers once purged [Hebrews 10:2,3]—actually purged by the blood of Christ—have "no more conscience of sins," because the way of sin is gone from them. Their iniquity may be sought for, but it will not be found. It is forever gone from them—it is foreign to their new natures, and even though they may be able to recall the fact that they have committed certain sins, they have forgotten the sin itself—they do not think of doing it any more. This is the work of Christ in the true sanctuary (September 30).

How far did Ellen White agree with this concept? The following was written during the 1890s:

Forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose... God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.¹⁹²

Let's watch for an important point:

Jones and Waggoner did not teach that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is equivalent to, or consists only of, the cleansing of the hearts of God's people. They fully recognized that there is a true tabernacle in heaven, as the pioneer Seventh-day Adventists believed. Their expressions of their faith fully agreed with *The Great Controversy* words, that "while the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, *while* the sins of penitent

¹⁹² *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 114.

believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, *among God's people on earth.*" In other words, in plain English, the cleansing of the hearts of God's people on earth is parallel to and complementary with the work of their High Priest in heaven. It is He who cleanses the sanctuary, but they *cooperate* in harmony with Him:

That God has a sanctuary in the heavens, and that Christ is priest there, cannot be doubted by anyone who reads the Scriptures... Therefore it follows that the cleansing of the sanctuary—a work which is set forth in the Scriptures as immediately preceding the coming of the Lord—is coincident with complete cleansing of the people of God on this earth, and preparing them for translation when the Lord comes...

The life [character] of Jesus is to be perfectly reproduced in His followers, not for a day merely, but for all time and for eternity.¹⁹³

Waggoner is writing for non-Adventists, seeking to make plain the practical basis of this unique Adventist doctrine. There is no difference *in principle* between the forgiveness of sins in the daily service and the blotting out of sins in the yearly service, any more than there is a difference in the essential quality of the water itself that falls in the former rain and that which falls in the latter rain. Both the forgiveness and the blotting out of sins are through the ministry of the blood of Jesus spilled at the cross of Calvary.

But here is the difference: the typical service of the earthly sanctuary taught that forgiveness can conceivably be rejected by the forgiven sinner, and the sin can be reactivated in the life. That is apostasy. And sin may lie much deeper than we are aware, so that temptations or trials yet to come of greater intensity could cause us to fall (an example is the mark of the beast). There must therefore come at last a sealing, from which there will never be a turning away. This is equivalent to the blotting out of sins, and is a preparation for the coming of Jesus.

As we saw in our previous chapter, no one will ever *claim* such a sealing or blotting out. The closer the believer comes to Christ, the more sinful and unworthy he feels himself to be. But nonetheless, the High Priest is accomplishing His purpose in those who do not resist Him "in His office work."

Waggoner continues explaining the doctrine to non-Adventists in Britain:

We have not time or space here to enter into details, but it must suffice to say that a comparison of Dan. 9:24-26 with Ezra 7 shows that the days mentioned in the prophecy began 457 B.C., and so reach to 1844 A.D... But some one will ask: What connection has 1844 with the blood of Christ, and that blood is no more efficient at one time than another, how can it be said that at a certain time the sanctuary shall be cleansed? Has not the blood of Christ continually been cleansing the living sanctuary,

¹⁹³ *The Everlasting Covenant*, pp. 365-367, emphasis added.

the church? The reply is, that there is such a thing as "the time of the end." Sin must have an end, and work of cleansing will one day be complete... Now it is a fact that since the middle of the last century new light has shone forth, and truth of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus is revealed as never before, and the loud cry of the message, "Behold your God!" is being proclaimed.¹⁹⁴

Sometimes someone's teachings can be more clearly reflected by those who have heard him and accepted, than in his own words. Let us see how this subject was understood by W. W. Prescott at about this same time:

There is a difference between the forgiveness of sins and the blotting out of sin. There is a difference between the gospel being preached for the forgiveness of sins and the gospel being preached for the blotting out of sin. Always, and today, there is abundant provision for the forgiveness of sins. In our generation comes the provision for the blotting out of sin. And the blotting out of sin is what will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord; and the blotting out of sin is the ministry of our high Priest in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary; and it makes a difference to the people of God today in their ministry, in their message, and in their experience, whether they recognize... or... experience the fact of the change... That should be distinctly brought out in the third angel's message; and with that, of course, will come the clearest revelation of the gospel ministry for this time, the blotting out of sin in this generation, thus preparing the way of the Lord.¹⁹⁵

Prescott learned this unique concept from Jones, who taught it in 1893 as follows:

Then, when we as a people, we as a body, we as a church have received the blessing of Abraham, what then?... The outpouring of the Spirit. It is so with the individual. When the individual believes in Jesus Christ, and obtains the righteousness which is by faith, then the Holy Spirit, which is the circumcision of the heart, is received by him. And when the whole people, as a church, receive the righteousness of faith, the blessing of Abraham, then what is to hinder the church from receiving the Spirit of God? [Congregation: "Nothing."] That is where we are... What holds back the outpouring of the Holy Ghost? [Voice: "Unbelief."]¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ British Present Truth, May 23, 1901, p. 324.

¹⁹⁵ General Conference Bulletin, 1903, pp. 53, 54.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 1893, p. 383.

Does Ellen White clearly support this understanding of the significance of the cleansing of the sanctuary?

At the very beginning of Seventh-day Adventist history she made some statements that are perhaps more startling to us today than they were to her generation. We have yet to appreciate their profound import. She is describing the change of Christ's ministry from the first to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, in 1844.

There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father... Those who rose up with Jesus [that is, following Him by faith] would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.¹⁹⁷

If it is true that "Babylon the great is fallen," then it is very obvious that the only possible source of that true love {*agape*) must be the ministry of Christ in the most holy apartment. And those professed Christians who have refused to follow Him by faith must be destitute of the true Holy Spirit. This is what she says on the next page:

I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne [that is, still praying to Christ in the first apartment]; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace.

Do these words mean what they say?

If they do, the terrible reality emerges of a clever enemy of all truth perpetrating upon professed Christians of our generation the most terrible deception of his thousands of years of experience. And the only possible safeguard against being deceived is a correct understanding of the ministry of Christ in the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Again in *Early Writings* the Lord's servant tells us the frightful danger of popular but false teachings of righteousness by faith that come through failure to understand Christ's true ministry in the most holy place:

I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these [three angels'] messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy [apartment], and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious

¹⁹⁷ *Early Writings*, p. 55.

character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten them in his snare... He also comes as an angel of light and spreads his influence over the land by means of false reformatations. The Lurches are elated, and consider that God is working marvelously for them, when it is the work of another spirit...

I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists [those who believe in the second coming of Christ but do not understand the sanctuary truth] and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this—and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant (p. 261).

Who is the spirit spoken of as "another spirit"? It is obviously a counterfeit spirit, designed to resemble the genuine, and if possible to deceive the honest. The mark of the beast will not be a crude, obvious deception! It will include a plastic, counterfeit justification by faith.

Preparation for the coming of Christ involves learning to know Him so intimately that deception will be impossible. This suggests the intimacy of marriage and love that makes such a relationship possible. The following are thoughts that Jones held in the 1890's. Though published first in *Review and Herald* articles in the late years of the decade, they represent convictions that he held much earlier. This was an essential of the 1888 message:

When Jesus comes, it is to take His people unto Himself. It is to present to Himself His glorious church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," but that is "holy and without blemish." It is to see Himself perfectly reflected in all His saints.

And before He comes thus, His people must be in that condition. Before He comes we must have been brought to that state of perfection in the complete image of Jesus. Eph. 4:7,8,11-13. And this state of perfection, this developing in each believer the complete image of Jesus—this is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. This consummation is accomplished in the cleansing of the sanctuary...

And the blotting out of sins is exactly this thing of the cleansing of the sanctuary; it is the finishing of all transgression in our lives; it is the making an end of all

sins in our character; it is the bringing in of the very righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ...

Therefore now as never before, we are to repent and be converted, that our sins may be blotted out, that an utter end shall be made of them forever in our lives.¹⁹⁸

This unusual thought is found in Jones's sermons at the 1893 session, sermons that Ellen White said should be republished (Letter 230, 1908):

"Those who bear every test have heeded the testimony of the True Witness, and will receive the latter rain that they may be translated." [He was loosely paraphrasing what he had earlier read from Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 187.]

Brethren, is there not a lot of good cheer in the thought that it is for that, that the latter rain is to prepare for translation?... And when he comes and speaks to you and me, it is because he wants to translate us, but he cannot translate sin, can he? Then, the only purpose that he has in showing us the depth and breadth of sin, is that he may save us from it and translate us.¹⁹⁹

I have wondered lately whether that is not intentional that it is put in that way, that the mystery of God should be finished, instead of shall be finished. It should have been finished long ago.... What is that? "Christ in you the hope of glory."²⁰⁰

If you are in any way connected with this world in spirit, in mind, in thought, in wishes, in inclinations,... a hair's breadth, a connection with the world as thin as a hair, will rob you of the power that there must be in this call that will warn the world against this evil power [the beast and his image] of the world, so that they shall be utterly separated from it.²⁰¹

Brethren, he is a glorious salvation to those who are free from iniquity. Let him cleanse us from iniquity now, that when his glory appears we will not be consumed, but changed into his glorious likeness itself. That is what he wants.²⁰²

Brethren, we are in the grandest time this world ever saw. Oh, that we may consecrate ourselves to God as becomes us who are living in this grandest of times!... I

¹⁹⁸ *The Consecrated Way*, pp. 123-125.

¹⁹⁹ *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 205.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

tell you, brethren, the power of God is going to do something right away. Oh, that we may surrender all things to him that he may!²⁰³

It is a fearful position. It brings us to the point of such consecration as not a soul of us ever dreamed of before; unto the place of such consecration, of such devotion, as will hold ourselves in the presence of God, with that fearful thought that "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law."...

Brethren, there is that fearful word also that touches that very thought, that came to us from Australia... "Something great and decisive is to take place, and that right early. If any delay, the character of God and his throne will be compromised." Brethren, by our careless, indifferent attitude, we are putting God's throne into jeopardy.²⁰⁴

Part of that most precious message was this larger concern for the honor of Christ. The closer one comes to the cross of Christ, the less he worries about his own security. He will be caught up in a grand concern for the triumphant close of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Waggoner also had the same idea:

"That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" [Romans 3 -A]. God is now accused by Satan of injustice and indifference and even of cruelty. Thousands of men have echoed the charge. But the judgment will declare the righteousness of God. His character, as well as that of man, is on trial. In the judgment every act, both of God and man, that has been done since creation will be seen by all in all its bearings.

And when everything is seen in that perfect light, God will be acquitted of all wrongdoing, even by his enemies.²⁰⁵

God is embarrassed if His people do not overcome!

And no motivation possible can lead His people to overcome selfishness and sin except a concern for the honor and the integrity of His throne. *But this motivation is all-powerful.* It is New Testament faith!

The second coming of Christ is the ultimate validation of the Seventh-day Adventist message. Our very name expresses our confidence in His soon coming. If Christ should never return, we have had no reason to exist as a people, and our 150 plus years of history are a delusion. As Paul says, we would then be "of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). And even if

²⁰³ Ibid., pp. 111,112.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

²⁰⁵ *Signs of the Times*, January 9, 1896; Waggoner on Romans, p. 62.

His coming is certain, but is to be delayed for many decades or even centuries, we still have no reason to exist, for we have said repeatedly that His coming is *near*, because He has said so. Not *our* honor, but *His* is at stake. Who can welcome a dishonest Saviour?²⁰⁶

And if we abandon our faith in the soon personal, visible return of Jesus and fall back on the popular idea that the resurrection will take care of all our problems, we must remember that the resurrection can't happen unless the Saviour comes personally to resurrect the dead. The dead saints are forever prisoners in their graves unless the Lord comes to resurrect them.

Can His people hasten or delay His coming? All too common is the idea that the sovereign will of God has predetermined its exact time irrevocably, as a peg fixed in the mechanism of a time clock. When the peg finally strikes the gong, the curtain will fall on history, and the Lord will return, whether His people are ready or not. This idea is closely related to Calvinistic predeterminism. The Adventist version is that all we have to do is play the waiting and watching game, keeping a wary eye on the incipient Sunday Law while we try to make the best of both worlds. This widely prevalent view of the second coming is thoroughly egocentric, and can produce nothing but continued lukewarmness.

The 1888 message introduced a refreshingly different view—a revival of that deep heartfelt love for Christ that motivated the participants in the midnight cry of 1844. Students at South Lancaster partook of that spirit in the meetings that followed the 1888 Conference. "Nearly every student was swept in by the heavenly current, and living testimonies were given that were not surpassed even by the testimonies of 1844 before the disappointment."²⁰⁷ With a spirit like that, we *want* the Lord to come soon. And He will come as soon as His people want Him to come. The "harvest principle" makes sense:

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29). Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁰⁸

What is *your* heart-response? If you say from your heart with the apostle, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," you are helping to hasten His coming.

²⁰⁶ The dictionary meaning of the word "Adventist" is not simply one who believes in the doctrine of the Second Advent of Christ, but one who believes His coming is *imminent*. We could add: a true Adventist does not only "believe and tremble" about the imminence of the Second Advent (the devils do that!). When we live in fear of the final time of trouble, hoping it doesn't come in our lifetime, are we much better than they? As Paul says, a true Adventist actually "*loves His appearing*" (2 Timothy 4:8). While living in an unprecedented fun-filled, materialistic culture obsessed with pleasure-seeking, a true Adventist wants to pray from the depths of his tempted worldly heart that the Lord *will come soon*. Not so we'll get a great reward, but that *Christ* may soon see of the travail of His soul and be "satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11).

²⁰⁷ *Review and Herald*, March 4, 1890.

²⁰⁸ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

Appendix A

The Heart of the 1888 Message Ten Unique, Essential Concepts

1. Christ's sacrifice is not merely *provisional* but *effective* for the whole world. The only reason anybody can be lost is that he has

chosen to resist the saving grace of God. Salvation is by faith; condemnation comes by unbelief (or non-faith).

2. Thus Christ's sacrifice has literally saved the world from premature destruction and has *legally* justified the entire human race in Himself, as our Second Adam. When the individual sinner hears and believes the pure gospel, he *experiences* justification by *faith*. The lost deliberately negate the justification Christ has already effected for them.

3. True justification by faith changes the heart. It is, therefore, much more than a legal declaration of acquittal; it makes the believer to become obedient to all the commandments of God.

4. This marvelous work is accomplished through the ministry of the new covenant wherein the Lord actually writes His law *in the heart* of the believer. This new motivation transcends fear of being lost or hope of reward in being saved. Abraham's faith enabled him to live under the new covenant, while multitudes of Christians today live under the old covenant because self-centered concern is their motivation. The old covenant was the promise of the people to be faithful; under the new covenant salvation comes by *believing God's promise* to enable us to obey, *not by our making promises* to Him.

5. God's love is active, not passive. As Good Shepherd, Christ is seeking His lost sheep. Salvation does not depend on the lost sheep seeking the Shepherd, or the lost coin seeking its Owner, but on our believing that He is seeking us, and our yielding to Him.

6. It is difficult to be lost and it is easy to be saved if one understands and believes how good this Good News is. A constant resisting of His grace is sin. Since Christ has already paid the penalty for every man's sin, the only reason anyone can be condemned at last is his/her continued unbelief. Non-faith is a refusal to appreciate the redemption achieved by Christ on His cross. The true gospel unveils this unbelief and leads to an effective repentance that prepares the believer for the return of Christ.

7. In seeking lost mankind, Christ came all the way, taking upon Himself and assuming the sinful nature of man after the Fall. This He did that He might save us and that He might be tempted in all points like as we are, yet demonstrate perfect righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh." "The message of Christ's righteousness" that Ellen White endorsed so enthusiastically in the 1888 era is rooted in this unique view of the nature of Christ. The 1888 messengers (A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) recognized that the teaching that Christ took only the sinless nature of Adam before the Fall is a legacy of Romanism, the insignia of the mystery of iniquity which keeps Him "afar off" and "not nigh at hand."

8. Our Savior "condemned sin in the flesh" of fallen mankind. This means that He has outlawed sin. In the light of the cross, the devil cannot force anyone to sin. It is totally unnecessary for us to keep on sinning. Righteousness is by faith; sin is by unbelief. To be truly "human" is to be Christ-like in character, for He was and is truly human as well as truly divine.

9. The only element God's people need in order to prepare for Christ's return is genuine faith which works by love. Righteousness is *by faith*; it is impossible to have faith and not demonstrate righteousness in the life, because true faith *works* by love. Moral and spiritual failures are the fruit of perpetuating Israel's ancient sin of unbelief today, through the

confusion of a false righteousness by faith which follows the confusion of a false christ.

10. Righteousness by faith since 1844 is "the third angel's message in verity." Thus it is greater than what the Reformers taught and what the popular churches understand today. It is a message of abounding grace consistent with the unique Adventist understanding of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, a work contingent on the full cleansing of the hearts of Gods people on earth, which the High Priest will accomplish for all who let Him do so.

—Condensed and adapted from *1888 RE-EXAMINED*, Preface

Appendix B

Was Waggoner an Arian or Trinitarian?

Some charge E. J. Waggoner with teaching Arianism (or at best, semi-Arianism).²⁰⁹ Certain rules of evidence must be considered:

(1) He deserves fair treatment—to be accurately reported; (2) since Ellen White upheld his message in hundreds of endorsements, to misrepresent him would involve her credibility as well; (3) his meaning must be probed in harmony with his over-all message. How could Ellen White support his ministry if he was in error in his basic concept of the deity of Christ?

One published account states that Waggoner (Jones also) taught that Christ was "a created god" (small g), yet Ellen White characterized Waggoner as "a Christian gentleman" (Ms. 15, 1888; anyone who believes that Christ was a "created god" can hardly be a "Christian" though he could be a "gentleman").²¹⁰ His writings give no evidence to support this lethal charge against him.

Some 30 statements in his *Christ and His Righteousness* (Pacific Press, 1890) forcefully assert His full divinity and eternal pre-existence. One isolated and misconstrued statement forms the basis of the charge of Arianism (or semi-Arianism):

(1) Christ... must receive the same honor that is due to God, and for the reason that He is God (note, capital G; p. 8).

(2) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."... This divine Word is none other than Jesus Christ (pp. 8, 9).

²⁰⁹ **Arianism: the idea that Christ was a created being who had a "beginning." Semi-Arianism: the idea that Christ was "born" at some remote point in past eternity and thus had a "beginning."**

²¹⁰ **Woodrow Whidden II, *Ellen White on Salvation* (R & H, 1995), p. 90; see also George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy, The Case of A. T. Jones* (R & H 1987), pp. 133, 146, and *Angry Saints* (R & H 1989), p. 44. One wonders: can a readiness to misquote Jones and Waggoner indicate a deep antipathy for their message during the time of Ellen White's support?**

(3) The Word [Christ] was "in the beginning" (p. 9).

(4) He was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created (p. 9).

(5) [Christ's] "goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity"(p. 9).

(6) In many places in the Bible Christ is called God (p. 9).

(7) Christ's "name shall be called ... the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (p. 11).

(8) God the Father... is addressing the Son, calling Him God (p. 11.).

(9) As the Son of the self-existent God He has by nature all the attributes of Deity (p. 12).

(10) Christ Himself taught in the most emphatic manner that He is God (p. 13).

(11) So truly was Christ God, even when here among men, that when asked to exhibit the Father He could say, Behold Me (p. 14).

(12) He was God (p. 15).

(13) Note the expression, "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." He has His abode there, and He is there as a part of the Godhead (p. 15).

(14) The use of the present tense implies continued existence. It presents the same idea that is contained in the statement of Jesus to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am" (p. 15).

(15) [Christ] declared His name to be "I AM THAT I AM" (p. 15).

(16) "It pleased the Father that in Him all fullness dwell." What this fullness is, which dwells in Christ, we learn from the next chapter, where we are told that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (pp. 15,16).

(17) Christ possesses by nature all the attributes of Divinity (p. 16).

(18) The Father... says to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (p. 18).

(19) We are to honor the Father by honoring the Son (p. 19).

(20) Our object in this investigation is to set forth Christ's rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated (p. 19).

(21) He Himself says, He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last (p. 21).

(22) [Christ's] "goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity"(p-21).

(23) He is of the very substance and nature of God,... the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead (p. 22).

(24) He has "life in Himself (p. 22).

(25) He possesses immortality in His own right, and can confer immortality upon others (p. 22).

(26) Life inheres in Him, so that it cannot be taken from Him (p. 22).

(27) Christ [is] God in the beginning, sharing equal glory with the Father (pp. 22,23).

(28) Christ "is in the bosom of the Father;" being by nature of the very substance of God, and having life in Himself, He is properly called Jehovah, the self-existent One (p. 23).

(29) Let no one, therefore, who honors Christ at all, give Him less honor than He gives the Father (p. 24).

(30) The fact that Christ is a part of the Godhead, possessing all the attributes of Divinity, being the equal of the Father in all respects, as Creator and Lawgiver, is the only force there is in the atonement. It is this alone which makes redemption a possibility (pp. 43,44).

How can scholars disregard thirty such statements and insist that Waggoner was an Arian? The answer is found in the following:

We know that Christ "proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man (p. 9).

This statement, "proceeded and came forth from the Father," is repeated on p. 19 and on p. 21 where the phrase is added, "to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning."

We cannot attribute infallibility or perfection to Waggoner; Ellen White did not even claim either for herself. But if an author writes thirty emphatic statements that Christ was God in the highest sense "in the beginning" and thus eternally pre-existent, and then adds an *apparent* contradiction, we must inquire, what was his overwhelming emphasis? What did he mean?

(a) The heart of this alleged "Arianism" is a quotation from the words of Jesus in John 8:42 where He says, "If God were your Father, ye would love *rat: for I proceeded forth and came from God*; neither came I of myself, for he sent me."

(b) It may be said that Jesus' phrase had reference only to His incarnation. However, Ellen White applies the repeated phrase "I was brought forth" in Proverbs 8:22-31 to Christ in His pre-incarnation "from the beginning" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34). Jesus takes the infinite step of disclosure, saying, "Before Abraham was, I am" (vs. 58). This claim to be "I AM" became the occasion to try to stone Him (vs. 59). Could He liken His disclosure of Himself in "proceeding forth" in the incarnation to His previous disclosure of Himself to the universe, as *Patriarchs and Prophets* suggests? In *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 13-15, Ellen White repeatedly affirms Christ as "the Son of God" from eternity, equal with but subordinate to the Father; but she was not Arian. Her belief in Christ's eternal Sonship does not imply there was a time when He was not, as some mistakenly assume. Waggoner was in agreement with her.

(c) Scripture likewise does not limit the word "Son" to His incarnation: "unto the Son," the Father says in Psalm 45:6, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (cf. Psalm 2:12). To deny Christ's eternal Sonship is to destroy the significance of the Father's love revealed in John 3:16. Peter already knew to declare Christ the "the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Waggoner's idea was that although Christ was truly "in the beginning," eternally pre-existent, He was not eternally *revealed* in His relationship to the Father. Could it have been the entrance of sin, or its possibility, that rendered the disclosure ("brought forth") necessary? Did sin require a revelation to finite creatures of the reality of the Godhead that was already eternally true? If this was Waggoner's thought, it did not mean that Christ had a "beginning," but only that He was revealed to the understanding of the universe.

(d) In 1898 Ellen White stated in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 530 that in Christ is "life original, unborrowed, underived." Those 30 statements above show that Waggoner bravely, courageously taught the same view eight years earlier: "life inheres in Him," "He possesses immortality in His own right," "He has life in Himself."

(e) Can Waggoner's concept fairly be denigrated as Arianism? Only at the expense of short-circuiting his own sanity in his 30-odd statements denying it, and also scuttling Ellen White's enthusiastic support.

(f) There remains a word that some seize as Arianism—Waggoner's statement on p. 22: Christ "is the only-begotten Son of God, He is of the very substance and nature of God, and possesses by birth all the attributes of God." Never did Ellen White say that Christ experienced "birth" before His incarnation, although He was "the First-born" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 51; from

Colossians 1:15, *prototokos*, Greek, "the Pre-eminent One"). His birth in Bethlehem did not give Him "the attributes of God." *He came with them.*

(g) Does the phrase "only begotten Son" on Waggoner's part imply Arianism? (Six times it occurs of Christ in the New Testament). Ellen White and Jones and Waggoner believed in the Sonship of Christ as part of the Biblical portrayal of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which is commonly called the "Trinity." Waggoner never used the word "Trinity," and neither did Ellen White. He did not speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as "identicals" who only role-played three assignments. He believed and consistently taught the truth of the Godhead in the same terms as did Ellen White; any isolated inconsistency cannot fairly invalidate the overwhelming evidence.²¹¹

Lastly, did Jones ever utter an Arian concept? There is no record that he did; and while no one claims that he never made an imperfect statement, it is certain that Arianism never was part of his message of Christ's righteousness.

Appendix C

Information on Waggoner's View of the Sanctuary Truth

What was Waggoner's relationship to the historic Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary and its cleansing?

1. He spoke of the objective work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary as "coincident with" the heart-cleansing work (cf. *The Everlasting Covenant*, pp. 366,367). Ellen White also related the work in the heavenly sanctuary to the cleansing of the hearts of God's people, as quotations in our last chapter indicate. The word *internalize*, borrowed from Roman Catholic mysticism, does not relate to Biblical concepts of finishing "the mystery of God" (Revelation 10:7), which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). To "internalize" such a doctrine would require degrading it to a purely egocentric concern, the opposite of Jones's and Waggoner's viewpoint.

2. Waggoner's last letter of May 28, 1916, is sometimes cited to disparage his teachings about the cleansing of the sanctuary. He says in 1916 that he virtually abandoned the orthodox Seventh-day Adventist view of the sanctuary "twenty-five years" earlier, which would have been 1891. But that which proves too much proves nothing. The following need to be considered:

(a) Nothing in Waggoner's writings between 1891 and 1902 indicates that he had either abandoned or disparaged the sanctuary doctrine.

(b) Between 1891 and 1896 we find numerous ongoing endorsements from the pen of Ellen White concerning his message. There is no hint that she

²¹¹ A statement in the *Signs of the Times* of April 8, 1889 is questionable, "Christ's personality had a beginning." He may have intended to use "personality" in a different sense than "person." When those early 1889 articles were edited and published in book form in 1890 as *Christ and His Righteousness* (PPPA), he omitted that statement. We never see it again later. Why? Probably for the same reason that he omitted his early statement that Christ could not sin; Ellen White corrected him on it.

saw him departing from the faith on this vital doctrine. Knowing her great concern, it seems strange that one who exercised the prophetic gift would fail to discern such a radical departure from the message if it were the case.

(c) To accept at face value Waggoner's probably unedited 1916 statement brings us into very difficult problems (a fatal heart attack prevented Waggoner from personally mailing the letter to Elder M. C. Wilcox). It would require that we consider Waggoner a dishonest hypocrite from 1891 to 1902, because documentary evidence indicates that he taught the sanctuary doctrine publicly and forcefully during that time (cf. for example, the *British Present Truth*, May 23, 1901).

3. Reason compels the conclusion that Waggoner was mistaken in his 1916 letter, rather than his being a craven hypocrite during the years when Ellen White supported him so enthusiastically.

In 1916 he was a frustrated, perplexed, confused man. Furthermore, he was sick (he died that very night). The years of enduring loneliness and unreasonable "unchristlike persecution" (Ellen White's phrase) had taken a toll on him. Because his message was "in a great degree" rejected by his brethren, he was never able to get beyond that beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, never able to satisfy his soul hunger for a better understanding of the significance of the Adventist doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Today we should be able to grasp more than he did then.

What he should have said in 1916 was that as early as 1891 he began to be *tempted* to doubt the doctrine. But it is hardly fair to say that he *yielded* to this temptation while he was publicly teaching it. His characteristic openness and frankness indicate otherwise than such dishonesty on his part.

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