

A BRIEF LOOK AT "1888"

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Chapter 1

The History of the 1888 Message

George Santayana wisely said, "A nation that does not know its history is fated to repeat it." We could well paraphrase him to say that a denomination that does not know its own history "is fated to repeat it." We must know it before the gospel commission can be finished: "The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work."

If the time is near for "the closing work", as we hope, we may also believe that the time is here when the "history of the past" must be faithfully, honestly "rehearsed." "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." For once in history we must not repeat history.

Ancient Israel failed on the borders of the Promised Land, to turn back for forty years of wandering. The New English Bible says that Moses sent twelve "leading men" to "explore" the Canaanites' land, "whether it is easy or difficult country in which to live." Ten "explorers" thought it was "difficult," and two thought "it is easy.... Let us go up at once and occupy the country."

Seventh-day Adventists understand this episode as a "type," and our 1888 history and its aftermath as the "antitype." The Lord sent two "messengers" to "explore" the finishing of the gospel commission, who brought a report that it is "easy" rather than "difficult if only we believe the word of the Lord; and He sent the message first to "leading men" at the 1888 General Conference Session.

Throughout her seven decades of service as special messenger to the remnant church, Ellen White revealed more than human ability to discern true issues beneath the surface. Never is her prophetic gift more clearly enhanced than in her comprehension of the 1888 message and its

history. For example:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders [A.T.] Jones and [E.J.] Waggoner.... This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world,... proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

Chapter 2

The "Beginning" of the Fourth Angel's Message

Jones' and Waggoner's message was "good news" of deliverance from sin, an "easy" conquest by faith of the only remaining hurdle between God's people and entering their Promised Land. Ellen White soon recognized it as the "beginning" of the long-awaited "Loud Cry" that is to lighten the earth with glory:

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

Frequently she referred to the message as the initial outpouring of the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit. As a farmer's crops need rain if the harvest is to come, so the Latter Rain is to ripen the "grain"

and prepare "for the sickle." This is "the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul ... that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man." And Satan's slanderous charges against God can never be silenced and the "great controversy" resolved for the government of God, until His people receive this "completion" of grace "in the soul." Ellen White and the 1888 messengers spoke openly and frankly about getting ready for "translation" then and there.

She also said that Israel's "leading men" refused the message so that it was shut "away from our people in a great measure" and "by the action of our own [leading] brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world." God's plan was to give the message first to the leadership; they were to give it to the laity; and the church unitedly was to give it to the world.

Had the purpose of God been carried out in giving the message of mercy to the world, Christ would have come, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.

Like Israel's history at Kadesh-Barnea, can any aspect of our history be more important than our preparation for the sealing, our reception of the Latter Rain, and giving of the Loud Cry, and a preparation for the coming of Christ?

Chapter 3

Why Was This History So Long Neglected?

Until 1988 there was a strange reticence to recognize these facts of our history. The situation was similar to what prevails even now among the Jews, who picture Jesus as a clever and gifted rabbi but ignore or deny that He was the Son of God, the true Messiah. They still maintain that their ancestors did not reject or crucify Him, but lay the blame instead on the Romans. Since 1988 several books and magazines have been published officially that frankly tell the truth about our 1888 history, for example: *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888*, by Arnold Wallenkampf, and the February 1988 Ministry magazine.

Speaking of the 1888 history, Ellen White said that we were "just like the Jews." Until 1988, our "official" histories generally maintained: (1) The 1888 message was merely "the same doctrine that

Luther, Wesley, and many other servants of God in the popular churches had been teaching;" "the recovery, or the restatement and new consciousness, of their faith in the basic doctrine of Christianity;" "a re-emphasis" of what the Evangelical churches had believed all along and that Seventh-day Adventists had finally gotten wise enough to believe. (2) Our "leading men" in general gladly accepted the message: "the rank and file of Seventh-day Adventist workers and laity accepted the presentations at Minneapolis and were blessed," and the 1888 Conference "stands out as a glorious victory,... the final outcome was good,... rich in both holiness and mission fruitage."

Many Seventh-day Adventists have now been shocked to discover that this is not true. The 1888 message was the "beginning" of the Loud Cry rather than a mere "reemphasis" of Lutheranism or Calvinism. The first clear recognition of this to come from our presses occurs in Dr. L.E. Fromm's Movement of Destiny (1971):

1888 truly signaled the beginning of the "time"

of the Loud Cry and Latter Rain—and significantly of the inception of the added light and power of the Augmenting Angel of Rev. 18:1.

We entered the "time of the Latter Rain and Loud Cry" in 1888 as verily as in 1798 we entered the "time of the end." ... 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 related to us.

Chapter 4

The Common Denominator of All History

There is a significant factor that is a common denominator in Israel's ancient history and in our denominational history. This is the reality of man's basic "enmity against God" which is evident even among religious people like those who murdered the Prince of Life. This is always the essence of sin, and it is demonstrated all through Israel's history. When the "leading men among the Israelites" at Kadesh-Barnea rejected the appeal of Caleb and Joshua, "the Lord said to Moses, 'How much longer will this people treat Me with contempt?'" Israel's constant tendency was "to deride the messengers, scorn His words and scoff at His prophets" until their "enmity" finally blossomed into ultimate expression in crucifying the Son of God. This same enmity is demonstrated in our own denominational history!

Had Ellen White not rescued the 1888 "explorers" from their opponents, they would have suffered the modern equivalent of the fate that threatened Caleb and Joshua by "the leading men among the Israelites." As A.W. Spalding says, "The preaching of Waggoner and Jones was trying to some of the older men in the cause ... [and] seemed to them like treason." There was "personal pique at the messengers," and a "tumult of clerical passions ... let loose." But Ellen White intervened and "championed" the cause of the two young messengers, "and it was chiefly this support, indeed, which won for it the hearts of the people." Modern Israel's opportunity to enter the "Promised Land" of the Loud Cry was as decidedly rebuffed as ancient Israel's at Kadesh-Barnea. Speaking eight years later "of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones," Mrs. White declared unequivocally that

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 [the "leading men"] has been in a great degree kept away from the world.

Until quite recently, the standard view maintained by our official publications has been that our "leading men" gladly received the 1888 message and that the entire episode of our history is one we can rejoice over as a definite "plus." We have fulfilled precisely our Lord's prediction of us as it is in the original Greek: "Thou sayest, Rich I am and I have been enriched." The concurrence of our historians' view with the idle boast of Laodicea is so striking that we note a few examples:

The General Conference at Minneapolis ... in 1888 is a notable landmark in Seventh-day Adventist history. ... It stands out as a glorious victory. ...

... The final outcome was good.... The Lord gave His people a marvelous victory.

... It marked the beginning of a new era of spiritual awakening and growth.

It was really at the General Conference session of 1893 that light on justification by faith seemed to gain its greatest victory. ...

... The aftereffect of the great Minneapolis revival was ... rich in both holiness and mission fruitage.

The last decade of the century saw the church developing, through this 1888 gospel, into a company prepared to fulfill the mission of God.

The rank and file of Seventh-day Adventist workers and laity accepted the presentations at Minneapolis and were blessed.

Does this mean that the church as a whole, or

even its leadership, rejected the 1888 message? Not at all. Some rejected it—a vocal minority. Others accepted it gladly. Others were at first confused, but soon accepted it. ... The new leadership wholeheartedly endorsed the new emphasis.

In fact, the strongest assertions of "acceptance" and "victory" ever published appear in the volumes, *Through Crisis to Victory 1888-1901*, by A.V. Olson, and *Movement of Destiny*, by L.E. Froom. But there is inconsistency in maintaining on the one hand, as Froom does, that the 1888 message was the beginning of the Loud Cry and being forced on the other hand to recognize that many decades of inexplicable delay have followed.

The candid reader soon recognizes that something somewhere must have gone drastically wrong. Where Ellen White said, "Satan succeeded ... in a great measure," these historians say we enjoyed "a glorious victory." We must distinguish between Satan and Christ.

Chapter 5

The Background of the 1888 Message

For those who have not had time to read deeply into the history of the 1888 message, here is a brief outline:

The Seventh-day Adventist church was "born" in an experience of true love for Jesus which was evident in the 1844 movement."

Although our people had become aware as early as 1856 that the Laodicean message applied uniquely to the remnant church, the message had not done its work. By the 1880's the church had settled into a generally lukewarm condition.

In the 1880's, Ellen White wrote burning messages of appeal to the church at large to accept the counsel of the True Witness. She often said that we had "left [our] first love."

While the church was retrograding spiritually, it was advancing financially, in number of adherents, and in the prestige of its institutions. A heart-preparation for the coming of Christ receded into the background.

Our ministers and evangelists enjoyed almost uninterrupted success in arguing and debating the doctrines of "present truth" before the people. Pride and self-esteem flourished in the ministers and leadership.

As early as 1882, the Lord began to prepare two messengers who in His providence would be ready by 1888 to call the church to repentance and revival, and thus to present a clearer understanding of "the third angel's message in verity." Passing by those whom He could not use, He gave these young men "heavenly credentials."

The Lord educated and disciplined them so that they were able to honor His name at the time of the 1888 Conference. Ellen White supported them

unequivocally. Their message was pure, beautiful gospel truth.

Although most of the "leading men" rejected their message Ellen White's support made it possible for Jones and Waggoner to visit institutes and camp meetings with her after the 1888 Conference, where the message demonstrated its "credentials" in phenomenal revivals and reformation. "Like a wave of glory, the blessings of God swept over us," she said. "We felt the deep movings of His Spirit." Never since the "Midnight Cry" of 1844 had the Holy Spirit so wonderfully endorsed a message among us.

This created a new problem concerning the message. A spirit of "jealousy" came in among the "leading men" and now "they hated it the more, because it was a testimony against them. They would not humble their hearts to repent, to give God the glory, and vindicate the right." They "stood to bar the way against all evidence." In the midst of these stirring revivals, Ellen White wrote plaintively in the Review & Herald, "How long

will those at the head of the work keep themselves aloof from the message of God?" Due to their opposing influence, "the people ... do not know whether to come and take hold of this precious truth or not."

Although "many" of the leading brethren in fact rejected the message and only a "few" in heart accepted it, some later confessed how mistaken they were. These "confessions" are the basis for most of the historians' insistence on a "glorious victory." However, many previously unknown Ellen White statements now disclose how leaders who "confessed" later returned to their spirit of unbelief and rejection, or failed to help in the crisis. As the nineteenth century at last turned into the twentieth, "not one" of the initial rejectors was helping to proclaim the message effectively!

Ministers who lived through that era generally reminisced their personal assumptions that the 1888 message was well accepted. Their "affidavits" allegedly prove that "there was no denomination-wide or leadership-wide rejection, these witnesses

insisted." But these brethren did not have the discernment of the gift of prophecy, and could not rightly discern the significance of what was happening.

We wish to afford the honored brethren of that era the utmost respect and deference which they are due. But do we dare accept their assumption in clear contradiction to the testimony of the Lord's messenger who exercised the gift of prophecy? To doubt or contradict Ellen White's judgment here is to discredit her life ministry, for never was she so emphatic about any stand she ever took as she was regarding the 1888 message and history.

Chapter 6

The Reaction Against the Message

A basic "enmity against God" was the underlying factor of "the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones." Ellen White statements are so clear and forceful that it is impossible not to grasp their import:

I can never forget the experience which we had at Minneapolis, or the things which were there revealed to me in regard to the spirit that controlled men. ... They were moved at the meeting by another spirit, and they knew not that God had sent these young men to bear a special message to them which they treated with ridicule and contempt. ... I know that at that time the Spirit of God was insulted.

How long will you hate and despise the

messengers of God's righteousness? ... If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ.

They began this satanic work at Minneapolis. ... Yet these men have been holding positions of trust, and have been molding the work after their own similitude, as far as they possibly could.

Since the time of the Minneapolis meeting, I have seen the state of the Laodicean church as never before. ... Like the Jews, many have closed their eyes to light, and in walking apart from Christ, feeling need of nothing, as there was when He was upon earth.

If God spares their lives and they nourish the same spirit that marked their course of action before and after the Minneapolis meeting, they will fill up to the full the deeds of those whom Christ condemned when He was upon the earth.

So strong was the opposition to the 1888 message and so enthusiastic was Ellen White's

endorsement of it, that our brethren indulged serious doubts about Ellen White's inspiration. In fact, she was openly "defied" and in 1891 was exiled to Australia.

All the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.

Has our wandering in the wilderness been long enough? Should we not recognize the truth that "enmity against God" has indeed been our basic sin of Laodicea, the root of our self-sufficient pride that we are "rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing?"

Chapter 7

The 1901 General Conference Session

Thoroughness requires that we examine another attempt to promote self-satisfaction regarding our assumed acceptance of the 1888 message. This is the theory that the 1901 General Conference "reorganization" canceled the 1888 unbelief and undid the tragic effects of the rejection of the 1888 message. There is no question that the "re-organization" was a blessing and has resulted in stability and progress for the work of the church ever since. But did the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry go forth with power after the 1901 Conference? Again, we must let Ellen White speak:

His [the Lord's] power was with me all the way through the last General Conference [1901], and had the men in responsibility felt one quarter of the burden that rested on me, there would have been

heartfelt confessions and repentance. A work would have been done by the Holy Spirit such as has never yet been seen in Battle Creek. ...

The result of the last General Conference has been the greatest, the most terrible sorrow of my life. No change was made. The spirit that should have been brought into the whole work as the result of that meeting, was not brought in because men did not receive the testimonies of the Spirit of God. As they went to their several fields of labor, they did not walk in the light that the Lord flashed upon their pathway, but carried into their work principles that had been prevailing in the work at Battle Creek.

What historians assume took place after the 1901 Conference Ellen White spoke of only as "what might have been." At the time of her death in 1915, she still regarded the repentance, revival, and reformation she longed for as something yet future.

Chapter 8

The Failure of Jones and Waggoner

Jones and Waggoner both lost their way. Does that mean their message was erroneous or unreliable? Ellen White answers this question:

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; because the Bible is true [quotes Isa. 8:20]. 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 truth sent of God.

She frequently spoke of them as "the messengers" of God's righteousness," "whom the

Lord recognized as His servants," "witnesses for God," "Christ's delegated messengers." They were "men whom God commissioned to bear a special message to the World," "Men divinely appointed." "God has sent these young men," and "is working through these instrumentalities." "God has ... upheld them, ... given them a precious message," evidencing "heavenly credentials."

Then why did they lose their way? "To a great degree" the real reason was the unchristlike "persecution" their brethren inflicted on them. It was easy enough for Luther to suffer persecution at the hands of the Roman Church which he could identify as "the little horn" of Daniel or the "harlot" of Revelation. But how could Jones and Waggoner endure "persecution" from the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which they knew to be the remnant church? "To a great degree the guilt" for Jones' and Waggoner's failure rests on those who opposed them. Note the following:

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.

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 interpretations 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 a laborious and soul-trying task; for they have had to meet difficulties and obstacles which need not have existed.

The Lord will provide hooks (or permit Satan to do so) for all who wish to hang their doubts on them. The failure of Jones and Waggoner provides for many the "fatal delusion" which their sinful

unbelief desires:

It is quite possible that Elder Jones and 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 are not under the control of the Spirit of God.

Speaking of that "most terrible feature of unchristlikeness that has manifested itself since the Minneapolis meeting," Ellen White says that "sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it." If the coming of the Lord is as near as we say it is, then it follows that the time has come for that truth to be "seen in its true bearing." We should however note the fact that neither Jones or Waggoner ever gave up the Sabbath, or their faith in Christ or in the Bible, and there is evidence that both were repentant, humble Christians when they died. In today's climate of church fellowship both would

likely remain members.

The history of Calvary and the history of 1888 have something in common: both are revelations of buried "enmity against God" in the hearts of God's people. Not a single Jewish history recognizes the full truth that Jesus was the divine Son of God, and that "enmity against God" caused the Jews (and not the Romans) to instigate His murder. But the prophet Zechariah tells us that before the Latter Rain can be poured out, the people of God in the last days will receive "the Spirit of grace and supplications: then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son. In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

We err when we assume that the 1888 message was the mere presentation of theological doctrine:

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. When men see their nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

This "work" still awaits the doing; hence the finishing of the gospel commission in all the world still awaits the power. A message of genuine "righteousness by faith" would have accomplished the "work," had it been truly accepted. Afraid to face our true condition as "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked," we have invented a theory of "acceptance," so we can assure ourselves that we are "rich and have been enriched" (cf.. Revelation 3:17).

Chapter 9

The "Alpha" and the "Omega"

As a result of rejecting truth in the 1888 message, we became vulnerable to being deceived by clever error. The pantheism heresy of the early years of this century was an "iceberg" that almost sank the good ship Zion. Inspiration identified it as the "alpha" of Satan's long list of deceptions that were to culminate in a future "omega" error of frightening power." In fact, our constant tendency ever since the "alpha" has been to seek "light and power" from non-Seventh-day Adventist sources in understanding and communicating the gospel. Inevitably, confusion has followed. Undoubtedly we shall soon face highly sophisticated temptations to import a "holy spirit" from the popular churches, whose Pentecostalism is sweeping the world and enticing our own pastors, conference leaders, and writers in periodicals with visions of great "church growth." Ellen White's counsels make disturbing reading in the light of this current enthusiasm.

The truth of Seventh-day Adventist history does not indicate that the Lord has (or will) cast off His people. "The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat."

But the present deadlock cannot go on forever. Something will have to "give": either the conviction that "the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (which this author refuses to surrender); or that the church has ceased to be the agent which the Lord will employ in finishing His work on earth (again, this author refuses to accept this solution); or we shall have to surrender our spiritual pride, and let our "glory" be laid "in the dust" by accepting the full truth of the Lord's "teaching in our past history."

This will be genuine justification by faith.

Chapter 10

What was the 1888 message?

Jones' and Waggoner's messages at the 1888 Conference itself were not reproduced in the Bulletin, as in later years. But that does not mean that the "most precious message" Ellen White endorsed so enthusiastically is lost to us. The Lord loves us more than to give the "beginning" of the Latter Rain only to let it slip through the fingers of undiscerning brethren, and to disappear forever. It is possible to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Several facts must be noted:

Ellen White did not identify only the actual 1888 Conference presentations as "the beginning" of the Loud Cry. Her well-known November 22, 1892, statement includes presentations of the "messengers" since the Conference:

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.

Further, Ellen White's enthusiastic endorsements of their ongoing message extended through 1896, even into 1897. In 1889 she supported "this light which these men [Jones and Waggoner] are presenting" and said that "the very message the Lord has sent to His people at this time" is being presented in their "discourses." "The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness." 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." 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." In 1893 she exulted that "light and freedom and the outpouring of the Spirit of God has attended the work" of Jones. In 1895 she spoke frequently of how "God has given them [the two messengers]

His message. They bear the word of the Lord. . . . These men . . . have been as signs in the world, . . . moved by the Spirit of God. . . . Christ's delegated messengers." "God has upheld them, . . . He has given them precious light, and their message has fed the people of God." As late as 1896 she said that "he who rejects the light and evidence God has been liberally bestowing upon us, rejects Christ." Scattered over the years, these endorsements number close to three hundred!

There is no indication in her writings to suggest that Jones and Waggoner corrupted the 1888 message or departed from the truth at this time. While we cannot claim for them (or anyone else) "perfection" in every detail, her multiplied and enthusiastic endorsements of their message clearly indicate that she regarded its essential elements as thoroughly correct. Her support of their message is unprecedented in her long career; if her mature judgment and discernment were faulty here, her entire lifework must suffer as to credibility. We can be sure that as long as the Lord's servant continued pleading for acceptance of their message, so long at

least their message remained valid. The Lord would never appeal to His people to eat spoiled fruit.

Chapter 11

The essentials of the Jones / Waggoner message

The first three sentences that Waggoner published in book form soon after the 1888 Conference summarize in miniature their "most precious message." As the oak is in the acorn, the essential elements of their view of the nature of Christ, sinless living, and the cleansing of the sanctuary are here in a nutshell:

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."

The idea is clear as sunlight: (1) See Jesus as He truly is; (2) consider His work as High Priest; and (3) exercise that faith in Him which will transform the believer into "a perfect Christian." Here was the "beginning" fulfillment of the promise of Early Writings of a "refreshing" which will "give power . . . and prepare the saints to stand . . . when the seven last plagues shall be poured out." The method of the 1888 message was simplicity itself. We will briefly summarize it in seven particulars, providing references in the endnotes which the interested reader can pursue further if he desires to read the writings of the 1888 messengers themselves:

Christ is a Saviour "not afar off, but nigh at hand." This was how Ellen White described her initial impression of the message of Jones and Waggoner in meetings immediately following the 1888 Conference. And in order to "consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is," it is necessary to see Him as a Saviour who "is able to succour them that are tempted," and who can

"rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation." The "Christ" of Roman Catholicism "is a long way off; . . . I need somebody that is nearer to me than that," says Jones:

It has always been Satan's deception, and has always been the working of his power, to get men, all men, to think that Christ is as far away as it is possible to put Him. The farther away men put Christ, even those who profess to believe in Him, the better the devil is satisfied. . . . Is Christ away off still?—No; He is "not far from every one of us." . . . And as certainly as you get a definition of "not far," you have the word "near." He is near to everybody, to us; and He always has been.

Shortly before the 1888 Conference, Waggoner published a booklet, *The Gospel in Galatians*, in which he clearly taught the same as he taught immediately after the Conference: that Christ "took" or "assumed" our sinful nature, that He might truly be "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Thus He came "nigh at hand." Both messengers alike emphasized this identical

view.

The Roman Catholic "Christ" must be "exempt" from our identical conflict with temptation and sin. In Him must be "an infinite separation" from sinful humanity; He must take "His human body from one who was . . . humanly perfect." "How could He be sinless if He was born of sin-laden humanity?" asks Fulton Sheen. Hence there must be the invention of an "Immaculate Conception" wherein Mary His mother is herself "preserved free from all stain of original sin." This is so she can give Him a flesh or nature different from ours. He must take "holy flesh" or sinless nature if He is to have a righteous character. Had He truly taken our nature, it would have been impossible for Him to remain holy, for sin would be too strong for Him. Thus Romanism logically justifies sin, and the view that Christ must take a sinless nature does the same.

Jones and Waggoner rightly perceived that the Roman Catholic "Christ" is the Antichrist, who virtually excuses and indulges sin by presupposing

that it is "impossible" for anyone who is in sinful flesh to live without sinning. Catholicism as "the man of sin" "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God" by insisting that sin must be perpetuated in the universe. It can never be "condemned . . . in the flesh," and Satan must, therefore, emerge from the "great controversy" triumphant. And if the understanding God's remnant people have of Christ is also beclouded so that He is "afar off" to them, they too must perpetuate sin because they will never be able to overcome it even by the grace of Christ:

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 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 ministry? Is it fair that we should thus put Him, His sacrifice, and His ministry practically upon the same 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"?

Therefore, say the 1888 messengers, we must see the Christ of the Bible as One who has come "near" to us. God sent His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." This "likeness" is not "simulated," a plastic resemblance, but is very reality. The same dative construction in the Greek is found in Philippians 2:7 where we read that he "was made in the likeness of men."

But being sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" does not make Christ a sinner:

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." . . . In Jesus Christ the mind of God is brought back once more to the sons of men; and Satan is conquered.

Though He was "tempted in all points like as we are," yet He was "without sin." He was "that holy thing," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Jones and Waggoner had "no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ." They clearly taught that "in taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin." Never did they say that Christ "had" a sinful nature; always they used the inspired verbs, "He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor them that are tempted," or He "assumed" our nature. The glory of the "message of Christ's righteousness" is that He "took" our equipment, but His performance was perfect. He "condemned sin in the flesh," judged it, cast it out, defeated it for all

eternity, "abolished in His flesh the enmity," cast it out of its last stronghold, that of human nature. Thus He trod the serpent on the head, and crushed him forever. Glorious victory! Jones and Waggoner caught the vision and rejoiced to bring such a message of "good news" to the world.

Chapter 12

Righteousness by faith in the true Christ

Righteousness is by faith in this true Christ. "Faith" is the key word in understanding the "truth of the gospel." Jones and Waggoner invested the word with a meaning far deeper than the popular churches had been able to comprehend, for they rightly discerned the agape dynamic of the sacrifice of Christ (though they never used the word). Thus they recognized faith as the sinner's response to, or heart-appreciation of, that truly magnificent love. Said Jones:

Ever since that blessed fact came to me that the sacrifice of the Son of God is an eternal sacrifice, and all for me, the word has been upon my mind almost hourly: "I will go softly before the Lord all my days."

"With the heart man believeth unto

righteousness." It is "heartwork." The outstanding fruit of the 1888 message was that it reached and captured human hearts. The "messengers" and those who heard them were often moved to tears, not of sentimentalism, but truly Pentecostal in depth of heart response, and even ministers requested re-baptism!

Here was revival of genuine New Testament faith, because the New Testament dimensions of the love of Christ (as agape) were once more recognized in their "length, breadth, depth and height." The third angel's message came of age in the 1888 insights. The pagan-born doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul had beclouded the cross of Calvary so that many could not appreciate its true dimensions as an infinite sacrifice, a death equivalent to that of the "Second death." Now at last the 1888 messengers related the true Adventist concept of the nature of man and the "second death" to the cross, and in consequence rediscovered the apostolic faith that once turned the world upside down. This took them far beyond the Reformation.

Chapter 13

Justification is forensic effective

Justification by faith is forensic-effective, and therefore produces obedience to all the commandments of God. The Jones-Waggoner view of justification is in harmony with the finest theological thought. They saw that there is a purely legal or extrinsic justification based upon the finished work of Christ, but this legal justification "came upon all men." They boldly and courageously proclaimed its application to "every man," even "the whole World." They saw the "Good News" as a proclamation of what is already an accomplished fact, "Be ye reconciled to God," and not a mere "provision" contingent on the sinner's initiative in taking the first step in "acceptance." God has already taken the initiative, they insisted; and no one can be lost unless he "resists" what a gracious Saviour has already accomplished for him. God's love is active, not

passive. The sinner's salvation does not depend on his seeking after God, who (as many assume) plays hide and seek with him. Rather, he must believe that God's love has been seeking him.

When "faith comes" to the sinner, justification ceases to be merely legal, forensic, or extrinsic work. In other words, faith itself is a heart-appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ and there is a change of heart in actual justification by faith. And this change of heart is not "works" in any sense, nor is it "sanctification" in the common understanding of the word. Faith is a reconciliation with God. It is a melting, a humbling of the heart, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

Therefore in justification by faith, the sinner is not "made righteous" in any sense of an infused merit that eradicates his sinful nature. He has no merits of his own, as he has no works of his own; but he is "made obedient." This is the 1888 idea of being "made righteous." The sinner has "received the atonement," and his enmity against the law has

been removed by the "mighty argument of the cross." "The love of Christ constraineth us" and becomes the new motivation to holy living.

Ellen White was overjoyed when she heard Jones and Waggoner present this message at, and after, the 1888 Conference. "Every fiber of my heart said amen," she said, because here at last was the unique, distinct Seventh-day Adventist concept of justification by faith "which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God." Thus it was a message that went beyond that of the popular churches.

In fact, the Sabbath truth is implicit in a full and complete view of justification by faith because the Sabbath is the "sign" of true faith. Where the Sabbath truth is denied, there is very likely a counterfeit view of justification by faith. Seventh-day Adventist evangelism has probably never given these grand truths a fair trial. Rightly conceived, with no "mixture of poisonous error," justification by faith is a message that will raise up people all over the world who will "keep the

commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The fruitage will be phenomenal, and believers will prepare for the coming of Christ in their generation.

Chapter 14

Justification is the dynamic of the message

Seen in this light, justification by faith is the dynamic of the 1888 message. We must not take an extreme view and try to work out an artificially minute "balance" between justification and sanctification, implying that the Reformation taught justification by faith, and the 1888 messengers merely added sanctification. Jones and Waggoner perceived deeper dimensions to justification by faith than did the 16th century Reformers. Not only must we "come out of Babylon"; genuine justification by faith will take us out of Babylon. The distinctive truths of the "third angel's message" invested justification by faith with a "verity" beyond what previous generations had been able to perceive. It was "the beginning" of "great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost."

It is true, according to *The Great Controversy*, that "the great doctrine of justification by faith [was] so clearly taught by Luther." But this does not mean that it was fully taught by him. Ellen White did not say that Luther in his day taught the "third angel's message in verity," as Conradi mistakenly asserted. She specifically said Luther did not teach it; there were aspects of "the message of salvation" in "the gospel" that he "did not proclaim."

And Luther's and Calvin's followers soon departed further from what clarity there was in the Reformers' understanding. The famous Formula of Concord of 1580, years after Luther's death, fixed the so called "Reformation" view of justification by faith in a retrograded mold that failed to recognize its true effective nature.

Chapter 15

The message is consistent with the unique Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary

The 1888 message of righteousness by faith was parallel to and consistent with the unique Seventh-day Adventist truth of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. Here again was something beyond the ken of the 16th century Reformers, or even of Moody or Spurgeon. As early as the Minneapolis Conference itself, Ellen White began to sense the relation of the Jones-Waggoner message to this grand truth. And shortly afterwards, we find her linking the message of justification and righteousness by faith with the work of the great High Priest in His "closing work of atonement" in the Most Holy Apartment. A study of her messages to the ministers and the

church at large after 1888 reveals a preoccupation with this aspect of their message. Here was a work to be accomplished that had never yet been done in human history. She was excited; if the ministers and people would follow Christ by faith in His closing work, the coming of the Lord would be very soon.

Until the turn of the century, Jones and Waggoner were clear in their grasp of the sanctuary truth, and Ellen White supported their published view of its ethical and spiritual implication. The High Priest can never cleanse the heavenly sanctuary of the sins of His people until He can first cleanse them from the human heart; the books of heaven merely record or mirror the state of His people's character on earth. The how of the sanctuary cleansing is therefore closely related to the true message of righteousness by faith."

Seen in this light, there emerge two streams of teaching on "righteousness by faith": (1) the genuine which has its source in the ministry of

Christ in the Most Holy Apartment and (2) the counterfeit which has its source in the one who is seen "trying to carry on the work of God" in the apartment "Jesus has left." He deceives those "professed Christians" who are either ignorant of or who neglect the truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary:

I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the Most Holy, and they cannot be benefitted 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 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. Satan would breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived, and to draw back and deceive God's children. I saw one

after another leave the company who were praying to Jesus in the Holiest, and go and join those before the throne [of the first apartment where Satan carries on], and they at once received the unholy influence of Satan.

Chapter 16

The message was Good News

In every aspect, the 1888 message was predominantly "good news," and thus "the everlasting gospel" for these last days. Both messengers felt constrained to declare that it is "easy" to be saved and "hard" to be lost if one understands the pure "truth of the gospel" unadulterated with the "mixture of poisonous error. Discouragement and defeats are not normal Christian experience in its truest sense; they are always the result of a lack of faith. God loves you actively and persistently; He will not let you be lost unless you insist on crucifying Christ afresh. The Holy Spirit is constantly striving against the evil impulses of our sinful nature, the "flesh," so that the believer "cannot do the [evil] things" that his sinful nature prompts him to do."

This is not "quietism," nor is it passive manipulation which over-rides the free will of the human agent; it is justification by faith in which

"faith works by love and purifies the soul." The believer is "crucified with Christ," so that his will is constantly surrendered to God through faith in the blood of Christ. The gospel becomes for him "the power of God unto salvation."

The believer is not to worry about his personal salvation because the Lord will finish what He started. In fact, as the believer "sees" Christ "just as He is," all insecurity rooted in egocentric concern is transcended by the larger concern he now feels for the honor and vindication of Christ in the "great controversy" The church feels a concern for Him similar to that of a bride for her husband.

Both "messengers" taught a beautiful view of the "two covenants." The "old covenant" experience is inspired solely by self-centered concern and is our vain promise to do what is right.

Theologians assume that God makes bargains with men in which both parties pledge mutual obligations, but God never makes bargains with men for He knows they cannot keep their promises

in human strength (which is nothing.) Therefore the "new covenant" is founded on "the better promises" of God Himself; it is His promise to write the law in the heart of the believer. Our salvation therefore does not depend on our keeping our vain promises to God (which would be impossible) but upon our believing His promise to us "in Christ." Several statements exist in which Ellen White says she was "shown" that Waggoner's view of the two covenants is correct.

(The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary and Bible Dictionary both present the view of those who opposed the 1888 message. And the Sabbath School lessons as recently as the second quarter of 1986 likewise perpetuated the 1890s opposition.)

Chapter 17

Sinless living in sinful flesh prepares us for the Second Coming

The possibility of sinless living in sinful flesh made the 1888 message a true heart preparation for the coming of Christ.⁸⁵ Growing out of their clear views of the nature of Christ and the cleansing of the sanctuary, Jones and Waggoner brought assurance that a people can honor and glorify Christ in the closing scenes of human history. It is possible for us to "overcome, even as [Christ] overcame." He is both our Substitute and our Example. And He is our enabling Example. We are changed into His image by "beholding Him." The message is a consistent, harmonious entity, and all its features are essential if its "power" is not to be vitiated.

The contemporary charge that the 1888 message taught the heresy of "perfectionism" is

false. Jones and Waggoner both specifically refuted the errors of "perfectionism," and their consistent teachings bear no resemblance to it.

Although sinless living in mortal, sinful flesh is possible and will be demonstrated by those who prepare to meet the Lord at His coming, none will ever claim it or even be conscious of it. God's people will trust only in the merits of Christ's righteousness, appropriated by faith. It can at last be truly said that His people "keep the commandments of God" only because they "keep . . . the faith of Jesus." But this keeping of the commandments will not be fictitious; it will not be a mere entry in the books of heaven transferring paper assets. The saints' overcoming will be real; Christ will "save His people from (not in) their sins." Satan's original charge that God has been unfair to require obedience to His law will be proven false. For this reason Christ invites those who "overcome . . . even as I also overcame" to sit with Him on His throne—not a mere gesture, but to share with Him executive authority in concluding the great controversy.

The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary will be contingent on the cleansing of the hearts of His people on earth. In fact, this is the purpose of the ministry of the High Priest in the Most Holy Apartment. He will "save to the uttermost," purging the "conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Not only will God's people overcome what is now commonly spoken of as "known sin"; the High Priest will go "down to the depths, and He will reach the bottom at last . . . He has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our own hearts." Not until that work of Christ is complete can the "seal of God" be placed on the foreheads of those who believe in Him. They will thus overcome all sin.

And this work of "cleansing the sanctuary" is God's work, not ours. Our job is to cooperate with Him, and not "resist our Lord in His office work" as High Priest in the Most Holy Apartment. He will accomplish the work if we do not thwart Him.

Thus the 1888 message faithfully proclaimed the gospel of Christ and "condemned sin in the flesh. It made no "provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof," but made every provision for perfect victory. Doubtless this was the secret reason why it was opposed so adamantly! Never did a message sent by God arouse more determined opposition.

Chapter 18

Why should there be opposition to such Good News?

Why should it be opposed by God's people today?

In brief, the 1888 message was the very essence of Christ's appeal "unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans." It is only to be expected that the wrath of the dragon should be aroused against it. But shall we agree with the dragon, and let him win the war?

Why not heed the Saviour's call, "Be zealous therefore, and repent"? Let there be "good will" towards the "beginning" of the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry. Let "stubborn resistance cease." Too long have we felt ourselves "rich and increased with goods, . . . in need of nothing" so far as understanding righteousness by faith is concerned.

Our Lord's beatitude has eluded us, for we have felt no deep "hunger and thirst after righteousness" —which, of course, can be only by faith. Without a contrite, humble, penitent soul-hunger, we shall never be "filled." Our present widespread self-satisfaction must give way to true self-knowledge. Our world church is exactly what our Saviour says, spiritually "wretched, miserable, poor, and blind, and naked."

When we "gather up the fragments that nothing be lost" of that "most precious message" so long neglected, then we can press our petitions with becoming reverence for greater power, so that our gospel commission can be completed in our generation.