

# **THE MAN AND THE MESSAGE**

**1888 Message Study Committee**



# Introduction

Introduced as the first of the special “1888 Centennial Series,” this book is highly recommended by the Adventist Review, the Ministry, and thought-leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The dust jacket asks, “Why did A. T. Jones, often defended by Ellen White, turn against the Adventist Church?” The answer given is, “a fatal flaw in his character.” The almost forgotten story of A. T. Jones is catapulted into a vital issue because Ellen White’s credibility is intertwined with his career. Why would an inspired prophet “often defend” a man with a “fatal flaw” in his character? Hundreds of times she endorsed his message, even as “the beginning” of the work of the fourth angel of Revelation 18 (cf. Selected Messages, Book One, pp. 234, 235; Review and Herald, Nov. 22, 1892).

Also at stake is confidence in the Lord’s choice of an agent to herald that wonderful message. We read that He selected “the very men He did select to bear this special message. ... God has chosen the

very men He wanted” (Letter H-27, 1894 [1245]1). Why would He make such a bungling appointment? Ellen White insists that Jones was a special “delegated messenger” with “heavenly credentials.” His mission was an extremely sensitive one involving unique eschatological import. The Pentecost early rain and the 1888 latter rain were to be interrelated. (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 97; RH, Sept. 3, 1889; Mar. 18, 1890.)

This book follows the decades-long tradition of previous volumes, *Captains of the Host* by A.W. Spalding, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts* by L. H. Christian, and *By Faith Alone* by N. F. Pease, which lay considerable blame on the 1888 messengers themselves for the opposition to their message. They impute focal points of blame onto Jones in particular because of his alleged poor personality, flawed character, and supposed theological error in his righteousness by faith message itself.

The problem the reader must now wrestle with

is how to reconcile Ellen White's frequent and glowing endorsements of Jones's message and character with the derogatory judgments Knight's book gives of both.

As an initial step toward clarifying the issue, the reader must recognize that there are "two" A. T. Joneses: (a) There is the 1888-1903 "Lord's messenger" who was highly endorsed and supported by Ellen White (in spite of weaknesses and mistakes, he generally honored his commission and truthfully deserved her commendation. His response to her rebukes was sincere and contrite); and (b) the 1903-1923 Jones is another man, a spiritually sick or deranged individual with failures that become dismal, "like a man who has lost his bearings" (Letter 104, 1911). In the full context of the record of his life and character, (a) and (b) are like day and night. The reader must therefore ponder a fundamental problem: Why should a "splendid man" (as Haskell rated the young Jones to be) degenerate at last to such a spiritual disaster?

## Chapter 1

# The True Fatal Element in Jones's Life

What does Ellen White say about the principal reason both for his opponents' resistance to his message and for the development of his later apostasy? Knight frankly recognizes that he was the Lord's "special" messenger with extraordinary "credentials" from heaven, sent on a unique mission to help prepare a people for the coming of Christ. But Ellen White gives a quite different reason than the one given in Knight's book for the opposition he met and for his losing his way:

**(a)** Jones's so-called faults were never a valid excuse for anyone to reject his message, but his opponents exploited them as a pretext to justify sinful unbelief on their part. Antipathy toward heaven-sent light and enmity against Christ were the true sources of resistance to Jones's message and the messenger (cf. Letter 19d, 1892 [1018-

1032]; Letters S-24, 25b, 1892 [1040-1054, 1004-1017]).

(b) What eventually unsettled both 1888 messengers and deranged their spiritual faculties was neither their message nor any aspect of it, but the unchristlike “persecution” inflicted on them by their brethren. This papal spirit, she insists, was “to a great degree” the cause of their later stumbling:

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 a laborious and soul trying task (General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 419).

The spirit of persecution against those who are bearing the message of God to the world ... is the

most terrible feature of unchristlikeness that has manifested itself among us since the Minneapolis meeting (Ibid., p. 184; Letter 25b, 1892 [1013]).

... At Minneapolis ... I have been shown ... the same ruling spirit that was revealed in the condemnation of Christ. When the Papists were in controversy with men who took their stand on the Bible for proof of doctrine they considered it a matter that only death could settle. I could see a similar spirit cherished in the hearts of our brethren and I would not give room to it for an hour (Ms. 13, 1889 [516]).

I have deep sorrow of heart because I have seen how readily a word or action of Elder Jones ... is criticized. ... Feelings of enmity and bitterness are in the heart (Letter 19d, 1892 [1026, 7]).

She added that his opponents “make capital of every defect in [his] manners, customs, or character” (Review and Herald, October 18, 1892), implying a motivation of unjustified spiritual animosity.

While admitting Ellen White’s “often” enthusiastic support, and while recognizing Jones’s abilities, Knight’s book majors in his weaknesses and mistakes, even to the extent of imputing evil motives gratuitously. An uninformed reader will likely find himself increasingly prejudiced against the righteousness by faith message that Jones proclaimed. Reinforcing this antipathy appears to be the purpose of the book.

Note an early review published in Vol. 1, No. 1 of the Review and Herald’s periodical for writers, Action Line. Far from recognizing Jones as a “special messenger” of the Lord, the reviewer sees Jones only painted in a very unflattering portrait—“a man whose confrontational style and headstrong thinking got him into one difficulty after another.” Readers will conclude that nothing such a quixotic figure said should be taken seriously, and Ellen White must have been wrong in endorsing him.

Even the title sets the stage for denigrating the message: From 1888 to Apostasy advertises to



susceptible minds, even of those who do not read the book, the suggestion that the 1888 message implicitly programs the believer toward apostasy. This is the fear that many Seventh-day Adventist leaders and members entertain today, but which Ellen White labels as “a fatal delusion” (Letter 24, 1892 [1045]). If Ellen White is correct, the impact of this book strengthens that “fatal delusion.” And this a hundred years later.

## Chapter 2

# The Charge of Pantheism

For example, the author darkly suggests that “it is probably no accident that the three foremost ministerial proponents of righteousness by faith in the 1890s—Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott—all got entangled in pantheistic language and sentiments.” Readers will naturally conclude that there is danger in “the concept of the indwelling power of Christ ... inherent in the 1888 message” because it “easily crosses the border into pantheism” (cf. pp. 214, 215).

Pantheism is the false doctrine that an impersonal God is in everything, including the grass and trees.

Thus the phrase “no accident” implies that pantheism is a built-in feature of what Ellen White described as the “most precious message” of the 1888 era (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91). How could she have been so naive?

In the same vein are repeated allegations that Jones's message during the time of Ellen White's endorsements spawned the heretical "holy flesh" fanaticism in Indiana at the close of the century, and eventually led to his own apostasy. If these serious charges are true, the content of his message of righteousness by faith must be suspected of poisonous error.

Our concern is not to defend Jones per se, but what Ellen White says is the "most precious message" he was commissioned of the Lord to proclaim.

Strangely, Knight does not substantiate his charge that Jones became "entangled in pantheistic language and sentiments." In fact, not one word from him is quoted expressing the slightest tinge of it.

However, the author assumes he has evidence for his charge in three sources: (a) friends or enemies claimed that he taught or supported

pantheism; (b) Dr. Kellogg claimed that he endorsed the pantheism in *The Living Temple*; (c) Jones's *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* supposedly exhibits "the problem."

Items (a) and (b) are subjective judgments. The opinions of others are open to question. Jones's friends or enemies could well have been caught up in the general excitement of the time, assuming that Jones was entangled also. Neither is Kellogg's claiming Jones's support in his *Living Temple* preface sufficient to condemn him for pantheism, because he also claimed Ellen White's support for his ideas.

In this respect there is a fine line between truth and error. Ellen White's *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 260, her *Review and Herald* article of May 30, 1899, and her "God in Nature" chapter in *Education* come close to that fine line. They do not teach pantheism, but Kellogg thought they did. If Jones said something in complete harmony with the Ellen White statements cited, prejudiced opponents could seize upon it as suspect.

In those hectic days Jones may or may not have read and understood Kellogg's book manuscript. Members of modern reading committees have been known to pass a manuscript for publication that they had not read carefully. Either way, it can only be condemnation of Jones by default.

A charge like this deserves some foundation in fact. As characteristically open as Jones was in expressing himself, there must certainly be abundant objective evidence of pantheism from his own pen or voice—if he believed it. But there is none. Even if some rare intimidating statement could be wrested to make him appear as an offender for a word, certain it is that in over-all context Jones never taught pantheism.

(c) We do have objective evidence to examine in *The Consecrated Way*, but it also is negative. Knight believes he sees pantheism there, but what he sees is Jones's linking the human experience of righteousness by faith with the Saviour's work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. From the

beginnings of the Adventist movement Ellen White linked the two, and *The Great Controversy* in particular emphasizes the relationship (cf. pp. 425-432). There is a vast difference between an impersonal God dwelling in trees and grass and Christ dwelling in the believing human heart by faith (cf. Ephesians 3:17). Neither can His Vicar, the Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, be fairly called pantheism.

The reason the Pacific Press did not market Jones's book in 1905 (written well before that date) is not that the editors could actually find pantheism or heresy in it, but because by the time the book was printed the author had gone to the wrong side of the Battle Creek crisis.

Fortunately, *The Consecrated Way* is widely available today so that anyone can see the evidence for himself. If pantheism is Christ dwelling in the believer's heart by faith, cleansing it through His High Priestly ministry, then the Apostle Paul had to be a pantheist (cf. Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 7:25, etc.).

## Chapter 3

# The Charge of “Holy Flesh” Teachings

There is evidence that Jones labored actively and earnestly to oppose the theology and the spirit of the “holy flesh” fanatics (cf. Review and Herald articles from December 11, 1900 to January 29, 1901). Yet Knight postulates the ominous specter of “a direct line” and influential “similarities between Jones’s theology and that of the holy flesh advocates” (pp. 56, 170). Jones is assumed to be a guilty party, accused of “stimulating” and laying “an excellent base” for the 1900 fanaticism as early as 1889 and 1895: “Many of its holy flesh ideas were extensions of his teachings on righteousness by faith,” says Knight (p. 57). Yet Ellen White strongly endorsed those “teachings”.

This brings us to one of the most serious issues facing the church today: is it wrong to teach the possibility of overcoming sin?

Jones had preached the supposedly evil doctrine of “the power to overcome every tendency to sin” and “that the indwelling of Christ’s divine nature and power would enable individuals eventually to keep God’s commandments” (pp. 56, 57). This “misled” people, says Knight. According to him, the Jones-Waggoner message of righteousness by faith which exalts and glorifies Christ’s power to save “to the uttermost” is dangerous. Ellen White tells of her efforts with Jones and Waggoner:

When we speak of the grace of God, of Jesus and his love, speak of the Saviour as one who is able to keep us from sin, and to save to the uttermost all who come unto him, many will say, “O, I am afraid you are going where the holiness people go.” ... In the revival work that has been going forward here during the past winter we have seen no fanaticism (General Conference Bulletin, 1891, p. 260 [904]).

The proof for Knight’s charge, he claims, is



Jones's sermon at Ottawa, Kansas of May 18, 1889. The reporter's account of it in the Topeka Daily Capital is sketchy and almost certainly not verbatim. In order to condemn one of our own ministers whom Ellen White endorsed, we must go to a non-Adventist newspaper for evidence!

When compared with Jones's other, more completely transcribed sermons that we have on record, the style is clearly not that of his speaking. The reporter obviously summarizes in his own words what he thought he heard the speaker saying. But even so the printed summary contains no hint of "holy flesh" error. Here is the passage that supposedly is dangerous (note that in comparison with Jones's normal style of speaking, this idiom is distinctly foreign to him):

It is only by faith in Christ that we can say we are Christians. It is only through being one with him that we can be Christians, and only through Christ within us that we keep the commandments—it being all by faith in Christ that we do and say these things. When the day comes

that we actually keep the commandments of God, we will never die, because keeping the commandments is righteousness, and righteousness and life are inseparable—so, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” and what is the result? The people are translated. Life, then, and keeping the commandments go together. If we die now, Christ’s righteousness will be imputed to us and we will be raised, but those who live to the end are made sinless before He comes, having so much of Christ’s being in them that they “hit the mark” every time, and stand blameless without an intercessor, because Christ leaves the sanctuary sometime before He comes to earth.

The phrase “made sinless” is not found in any of his subsequent sermons accurately reproduced in the 1893 and 1895 Bulletins. If one wishes to make him an offender for a word one could read into it an implication of eradicating the sinful nature. But through all the years of his ministry Jones never once taught such an idea. Instead, he consistently held that those who are living on earth when Christ

returns will overcome all sin while they still retain their sinful flesh or nature (see, for example, Review and Herald, April 18, 1899; Lessons on Faith, pp. 90-92).

Thus it is very likely that “made sinless” is the reporter’s choice of words as he took notes and condensed what he thought he heard. But the basic idea in the 1889 sermon is still solid Adventist truth:

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 ... there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth (The Great Controversy, p. 425).

Ellen White was present at the Kansas meeting and commended Jones for his message: “Sabbath Brother A. T. Jones talked upon the subject of justification by faith, and many received it as light and truth” (Letter C-14, 1889 [317]). One month later she rebukes Uriah Smith because “you place Elder Jones in a false position” (Letter S-55, 1889, June 14 [336]). Could we be repeating Smith’s error today?

Jones’s 1889 contribution is that it is by a mature faith and not by works that this high standard can be reached. And the faith is “in Christ,” not a self-centered concern of fear or hope of reward which was the underlying motivation of the “holy flesh” proponents. About this same time Ellen White was enthusiastic about his message, expressing no hint of dangerous error:

Elder A. T. Jones has labored faithfully to instruct those assembled, and in breaking to their souls the Bread of Life. We have felt very sorry that not only every Seventh-day Adventist church but every church, whatever their faith and

doctrines, could not have the precious light of truth as it has been so clearly presented, ... to see the plan of salvation so clearly and simply defined (Diary, April 7, 1889 [280]).

Brother A. T. Jones gave a discourse full of the meat and fatness of good things (Letter W-1, 1889 [287]).

[At Ottawa, Kansas] light flashed from the oracles of God in relation to the law and the gospel, in relation to the fact that Christ is our righteousness, which seemed to souls who were hungry for truth, as light too precious to be received (Review and Herald, July 23, 1889).

The entire tenor of Jones's message throughout his career was in stark contrast to that of the "holy flesh" fanatics.

But Knight cites a Review and Herald editorial of November 22, 1898, as conclusive evidence that Jones did teach "holy flesh." "Most pertinent, perhaps, is the fact that Jones taught holy flesh

through his Review editorials in 1898. On November 22, for example, he wrote: ‘Perfect holiness embraces the flesh as well as the spirit’” (Knight, pp. 169-171).

On the surface this appears conclusive evidence. But what is Jones’s context? The editorial is entitled “Saving Health,” a plea for health reform. Immediately preceding Knight’s brief excerpt, Jones has quoted Paul, deriving his supposedly-fatal words directly from Scripture: “Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” 2 Cor. 7:1. Was Paul as guilty of teaching “holy flesh” as was Jones?

No other evidence from Jones’s voluminous fifteen-year record of sermons, editorials, or books, is quoted. Using that one Scriptural word in his November 22, 1898 editorial as the main evidence against him literally makes him “an offender for a word,” which Isaiah says we shouldn’t do to a brother (29:21). Jones’s writings show that he consistently and strenuously opposed the “holy

flesh” doctrines and spirit en toto.

But the “holy flesh” fanatics are said to have claimed Jones’s support, says Knight, as his opponents claimed his support for pantheism. Now we must seize upon this to condemn him, even though his own writings and labors demonstrate the opposite: “R. S. Donnel, the Indiana Conference president [who taught holy flesh], had treated Jones as his mentor,” “claiming that Jones was with him in belief and action” (pp. 169, 170, 57).

This reminds one of the Muslim’s prayer, “Allah, save me from my friends; my enemies I can take care of.” It is well known that the Indiana “holy flesh” enthusiasts rejected Jones’s view of the nature of Christ, a blatant repudiation that would hardly indicate they were following him in any significant way. If fanatics claiming one’s support makes one automatically guilty, then Ellen White is also in serious trouble.

Knight cites Jones as teaching in his 1895 sermons the supposedly terrible idea that through

faith in the mighty power of the Saviour believers can “overcome every tendency to sin” (p. 57). Knight regards this as an evil root of the “holy flesh” heresy. But he reads into the passage what is not there. Jones said that Jesus Christ “is a Saviour from sins committed, and the Conqueror of the tendencies to commit sins” (General Conference Bulletin, 1895, p. 267). He never said that Christ eradicates sinful tendencies (which would be “holy flesh”)—rather, He conquers them, enabling the believer to deny and overcome them instead of fulfilling them. This ends up as pure New Testament teaching, the heart of applied, practical Christianity (cf. Romans 6:12-16; 13:14; Titus 2:11, etc.).

Knight suggests that Ellen White rejected the ideas in Jones’s 1898 editorial (p. 170), but gives no evidence. To be consistent he should blame her writings principally for the “holy flesh” fanaticism, for she repeated far more often the same supposedly-fatal phrase linking holiness with the body (*italics are ours*):



The sanctification set forth in the Sacred Scriptures has to do with the entire being—spirit, soul, and body (The Sanctified Life, p. 7).

The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness. ... His body is a fit temple for the Holy Spirit (In Heavenly Places, p. 200).

Through obedience comes sanctification of body, soul, and spirit (My Life Today, p. 250).

When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. ... It is here ... that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality. ... We are to ... preserve our bodies holy, our spirits pure, that we may stand forth unstained amid the corruptions teeming around us in these last days (Testimonies, Vol. 2, pp. 355, 356).

This fanaticism in Indiana was rooted in others' perversions of true concepts of righteousness by

faith, particularly Ballenger's. His heretical enthusiasm intruded itself as an embarrassment to Jones. The prevailing climate of resistance to the ongoing 1888 message naturally provided nurture for this confusion. This fanaticism need never have happened; "we" invited the devil to do his thing.

Haskell, who investigated the heresy on the spot, said that it was "a false application of righteousness by faith," but did not in any way blame Jones for it (Knight, p. 171).

## Chapter 4

# The Charge of Jones's Fanaticism from the Beginning

In her day, Ellen White said she had “deep sorrow of heart because I have seen how readily a word or action of Elder Jones ... is criticized” (Letter 19, 1892 [1026]). Knight pours upon him multiplied aspersions and imputations of bad motives or heresies. Words or actions that could reasonably be interpreted as innocent are cast in the worst light possible. Yet Jones is the only Seventh-day Adventist minister in history who shared with his colleague what Ellen White said were “heavenly credentials” (Review and Herald, March 18, 1890; Ms. 9, 1890 [543]). What prompts this unusual vilification? Neither Canright nor Conradi has been so severely maligned.

For example, because it had been the young, uneducated Jones's hap to work as a beginning

minister with W. L. Raymond in the Northwest, Knight says he imbibed Raymond's errors, or, worse still, actually led him astray (pp. 20, 21, 180). But Raymond's root problem was one that Jones never in the least exhibited in his lifetime—Raymond had “new light on Revelation” that denied the third angel's message; and the reason he opposed the leading brethren was because they rejected that obvious heresy (cf. Letters 19, 20, 1884; Testimonies Vol. 5, pp. 289-297). There is no trace of a theological or spiritual link between the two.

Again, because Ellen White endorsed Jones and the 1888 message, he is said to have been “proud of that endorsement” and arrogantly “mentioned it publicly ... to bolster his authority,” this as early as 1893 (p. 226). But a study of Jones's entire 1893 sermon Knight cites as the incriminating evidence reveals as humble a spirit as it seems possible for any fallen human being to exhibit under the circumstances. Consider this, for example:

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. ... Each one for himself—we are not to begin to examine one another. ... Brethren, I do not say these things to find fault, or to condemn; but I say them in the fear of God, that each one of us may know where we stand. And if there be any of those roots from Minneapolis lingering these four years, ... let us see that we here and now root up the whole thing, and prostrate ourselves at the feet of Christ (cf. General Conference Bulletin, 1893, pp. 178-185).

Knight further ridicules Jones that he was “absolutely certain that he was always right,” exhibiting “arrogant tendencies” (pp. 159, 160). His voluminous 1893 and 1895 sermons reveal the opposite: a kind, humble, contrite spirit. Nothing there sustains Knight’s charge of his “abrasive and cocksure personality” (p. 63). What Knight says was “abrasive” Ellen White says was only “plain”

talk: “Brother Jones talked very plainly, yet tenderly” (Letter W84, 1890 [642]). See Appendix B for evidence from Jones’s contemporaries.

True, he was aggressive in his calls for repentance and reformation, but even after 1893 Ellen White said he was a “faithful watchman.” She wrote her most enthusiastic endorsements in 1894, commending his forcefulness. “Brother Jones ... is ardent in his faith.” She added for good measure that “truth is always aggressive” (Letter H27, 1894 [1247]).

Knight undercuts his own judgment of Jones as cherishing a “long war” with Uriah Smith by noting that when he became Review editor, “surprisingly enough, ... they seemed to work well together.” Perhaps this shows that he was not as unbrotherly to work with as Knight represents him to be. His use of “surprisingly” suggests a prejudiced judgment.

One would naturally expect that Jones’s “abrasive ... personality” would annoy opposing

U. S. Senators and Congressmen who had no obligation to exercise a supposedly difficult brotherly love as our own church leaders had. But note Senator H. W. Blair's reminiscence of Jones as "a man whom I shall always remember with respect on account of his great ability and the evident sincerity with which he presented his views to the committee" (p. 76).

Not all his contemporaries saw Jones in the unfavorable light of his unbelieving opponents. J. S. Washburn, a nephew of G. I. Butler, attended the Minneapolis Conference. He recalls his personality thus:

I introduced myself to Jones [in 1889, on the way to Ottawa, Kansas] somewhat fearfully but found him very friendly and kind. I learned to like him, went with him to meeting, spent a weekend with him, walked up and down the river with him, talking a great deal. ... I ... recognized that what Jones was preaching was truth (Interview at Hagerstown, Maryland, June 4, 1950).

Of course, this was the early-era Jones; but Knight's thesis is that this "abrasive" personality and self-seeking character were his problem all the way through his career from beginning to end. Even his first humble remark as he was baptized at Walla Walla suffers Knight's imputation of fanaticism (p. 15). Has Knight found a Christian whose unusual devotion troubles him?

The evidence supports Ellen White's frequent remarks that Jones's "heavenly credentials" were clearly evident during the immediate post-1888 era, far outweighing the occasional times when he failed to control his sharpness of utterance. When defending him, Ellen White acknowledged that he was only "human" and in the "intensity of [his] feelings ... may make mistakes," and may speak "stronger" than "will impress minds favorably" (Letter 25b, 1892 [1010, 1011]). But overwhelmingly she supported and endorsed him throughout those critical times. Could it be that the Lord purposely permitted Jones to exhibit some personal weaknesses so that willful opposers could find hooks on which to hang their doubts? If so,



behold the goodness and severity of the Lord!

Contrary to Knight's implication, Jones was clearly in no way to blame for "the wrought-up state of feeling" that prevailed at Minneapolis (Ms. 15, 1888 [164]), and according to Ellen White he gave no genuine reason for the negative feelings that prevailed so long afterwards, at least for about a decade. She even says of the "divinely appointed" 1888 messenger (Ms. 8-A, 1888) that his talking "strongly" was exactly what was needed, and that the Lord Himself had moved upon him to do so:

God ... sees the temperament of the men He has chosen. He knows that none but earnest, firm, determined, strong-feeling men will view this work in its vital importance, and will put such firmness and decision into their testimonies that they will make a break against the barriers of Satan (Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 412,413).

Let no soul complain of the servants of God who have come to them with a heaven-sent

message. Do not any longer pick flaws in them, saying, “They are too positive; they talk too strongly.” They may talk strongly; but is it not needed? God will make the ears of the hearers tingle if they will not heed His voice or His message. He will denounce those who resist the word of God (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 410).

Opponents would of course judge such “strong talk” as “abrasive” when in reality it was not. They simply resented calls to reformation, as have most religious leaders throughout history. Correctly, Knight recognizes that those who rejected the message formed “a hard-core resistance” and “just did not seem to like Jones” (p. 49). Ellen White adds that the ancient Jewish leaders thought Christ abrasive, too, and times almost without number she compares them to those who persistently resented Jones’s message (cf. Ms. 9, 13, 15, 1888 [69-171]; Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 64, 65, 75-80, etc.).

The reader will want to see for himself the objective evidence in Jones’s 1893 and 1895 sermons. He will note there a notably humble,

sweet Christian spirit, nothing that displays a “habit of publicly belittling those who disagreed with him” (Knight, p. 53). Instead, he repeatedly included himself specifically as the most needy, corporately including himself among the rejectors of the latter rain truths at Minneapolis (cf. Bulletin, 1893, pp. 164-166, 185).

There was something noble in this 1893 confession, something a little Christlike, for he was one of those who brought the message and thus could hardly have been with those who rejected it. He could have gotten on his knees and said amen to Christ’s prayer:

They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head ... Then I restored that which I took not away (Psalm 69:4).

Suppose that an angel from heaven could have presented the straightforward truth of the 1888 history to that 1893 congregation; would some unbelieving, truth-resenting souls consider him as abrasive? Ellen White’s writings imply that the

answer is yes. But she was joyful that at last someone besides herself discerned what the spiritual issues were.

We are indebted solely to A. T. Robinson for his report 43 years later of the famous 1888 remark “blurted” by Jones about the ten horns that he says “called forth an open rebuke from Sister White” (statement, January 30, 1931; Knight, p. 35). Much of the “evidence” for Jones’s alleged harshness rests on magnification of that apparently trivial incident. One wonders why Ellen White herself never saw fit to mention it, not even in her diary, frank as she was. Unbelievably, there is no hint of a single harsh or abrasive word by Jones alluded to in Ellen White’s most extensive and detailed write-ups on the 1888 Conference (Mss. 21, 24, 1888, Ms. 30, 1889 [176-181, 203-229, 352-381]). There is nothing but the warmest endorsements throughout. Her enthusiastic attitude is summed up, “Every fiber of my heart said amen” (Ms. 5, 1889 [348, 349]). Would she say that of someone who was “abrasive”?

## Chapter 5

# The Charge of Fanatical Faith-healing

Knight imputes fanaticism to Jones in the faith-healing interest of that era (pp. 49, 58, 170), and says Ellen White cautioned him about going to extremes (p. 58). But we have no evidence that she generally accused him of fanaticism in this respect.

In fact, we have what appears to be the opposite. Dr. Kellogg complained that ministers had been praying for the sick and encouraging them to believe they were healed when in fact they were not; and one or more died who should have sought medical help. He specifically says he does not know for sure if Jones was involved but would like to believe he was:

I refer to the fanatical zeal of some of our leading brethren in what they are pleased to call the exercise of faith, but it seems to me it should be

properly termed presumption instead. The thing has been going on for a long time here in Battle Creek, and has given us no little trouble (J. H. Kellogg letter to W. C. White, October 2, 1891).

I do not know to what extent Prof. Prescott, Eld. Jones, Eld. Loughborough, or any other individuals are responsible for this course. I have not made any investigation. ... It seems to me that Bro. Jones, Prof. Prescott, and Eld. Loughborough are all sufficiently intelligent and sensible men to take a right view upon this matter if it is set before them in such a way as to command their attention and respect (Ibid., October 21, 1891).

What we know for sure is that General Conference and Review and Herald opposition to the 1888 message influenced Dr. Kellogg to indulge an unreasonable prejudice against both Jones and Waggoner. This deprived him of practical spiritual nourishment that they could give, which he desperately needed, creating the famine in his soul that left him too weak to resist the temptations that later overthrew him. Further, his

excessive professional reliance on science called forth these cautions from Ellen White, who firmly supported praying in faith for the sick:

Be careful how you take a position against Elder Waggoner. Have you not the best of evidence that the Lord has been communicating light through him? I have, and the people where he has labored have been greatly blessed under his labors. ... There will be circumstances that appear very inconsistent to your judgment and reason, and you criticize these things. ... [You need] altogether a different kind of faith. ... The scantiness of the working of the Holy Spirit upon the church is to be deplored. ... Exalt science less. ... If we had less to say in regard to microbes, and more in regard to the matchless love and power of God, we should honor God far more. ... Your own letter has called this out; I have not had a line from Dr. Waggoner or A. T. Jones since I came to Australia (Letter K18, 1892 [977-986]).

My brother, I am not pleased to have you feel as you do in regard to Brethren Waggoner, Jones,

and Prescott. ... They must work in their line, and you must work in your line. ... We have every evidence that the Lord is using Elder Jones, Elder Waggoner, and Professor Prescott. ... Do not let any bitterness enter your soul (Letter K86a, 1893 [1147, 1156, 1158]).

J. S. Washburn, a logical-minded and successful evangelist, tells us that though he had rejected Jones's message at Minneapolis, he was deeply impressed with the fervent yet reasonable spirit that he revealed there:

A. T. Jones had a wonderful Christian experience. ... I felt Jones was undermining the faith. But I was perplexed to hear him praying and said to myself, 'That man prays as though he knows the Lord! ... I couldn't understand how such a bad man as Jones must be in opposing Smith so sharply could pray as he did if he were so wrong (Interview, op. cit.).



## Chapter 6

# Understanding the Post-1903 Tragedy

There is much justification for Knight's severe criticisms of the post-1903 Jones. As the new century dawned, he became harsh and overbearing. He was not only human, he was weak. Like all mortal sinners, the tendencies toward this were in his soul all the time. Even so, the chamber of horrors portrayed in chapter after tedious chapter becomes depressing to read, like conducting an odoriferous post-mortem. Long before one gets to the end of the book he already knows the patient has died.

It is an incorrect methodology to read into Jones's pre-1897 "words and actions" the imputation of indulged arrogance, extremism, or harshness that became uncontrolled only in his later years.

The process of his eventual failure to overcome is said by Ellen White to be directly related to his brethren's rejection of the "most precious message" (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91) he was commissioned to bear. They wanted to impute failure to him, and their prophecies became self-fulfilling. This makes his case unique:

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 (General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 419).

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. . . . 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 (Letter 19d, 1892 [1023, 1025]).

For some strange reason, it seems that God did not “bid him stand in His strength, and vindicate” his ministry. The Lord permitted the instrument to fail. Obviously, this tragedy is a test to us, a hook on which to hang our present doubts if we want to cherish them. Since the Lord permitted this luxury to be supplied our brethren a century ago, it seems that we are not to be deprived of hooks on which to hang our cherished doubts.

Many today are enmeshed in this “fatal delusion,” for they leap to disparage the message because of the failure of the messenger. To be sure, this is normal human reasoning and commonly held prejudice; but it needs to be informed by the enlightenment of the Spirit of Prophecy. Here is how that “fatal delusion” operates:

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 (Letter S-24, 1892 [1044, 1045]).

What Knight fails to see is the effect which rejection of the message and messenger had on Jones. It was like what happened to Dr. Kellogg; his brethren's unjust criticism made him "put on the coat of irritation and retaliation" although he was truly "the Lord's physician" (Bulletin, 1903, p. 86). It was never the Lord's will that we lose him. Those who did not exercise the Gift of Prophecy pronounced self-fulfilling prophecy. To regard him as "a designing, dangerous man ... may produce a condition of things to drive him to the very things they condemn," said Ellen White (Letter B-20, 1888 [102]). The context of her similar remarks about Jones indicates how the same process worked in his soul.

For example, she specifically lays the greater blame for the Anna Rice fiasco of 1894 on the party of Smith and Butler who treated Jones and Waggoner as *persona non grata*, even after their

confessions. Jones desperately needed wholesome fellowship when he “carried forward the work with faithfulness, ... the mouthpiece for God,” and “brought the draught from the wells of Bethlehem,” yet the opposing brethren gloated over his misstep:

They triumph over those who have made a misstep. ... They ... grieve and distress one of the Lord’s chosen messengers. ... Those men of experience ... began to question, to find fault and to oppose. ... They thought they could discern many flaws in the men whom God was using. The chosen agents of God would have been rejoiced to link up with the men who held aloof from them, questioning, criticizing, and opposing. If union had existed between these brethren ... some mistakes and errors which have occurred would have been avoided. ... Whom will God hold accountable for these late errors? He will hold the very men accountable who should have been gathering light and united with the faithful watchmen in these days of peril (Letter H-27, 1894 [1240-1255]).

This church possessed in Jones a very unusually gifted person, and according to Ellen White, one specially “delegated” by the Lord to be a herald of the loud cry message. But he was not prepared to cope with the phenomenal rejection of that message within the Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership itself. There may lurk in the shadows some profound providential reason for Jones’s failure that we do not yet understand.

Clearly, Jones thought nothing could hinder the success of the loud cry message in the 1890s. There was a touch of Calvinism in his convictions. He could not foresee our century of continuing confrontation which would counteract the supposedly “sovereign” will of the Lord. This is the reason for his driving demands for reformation in his day. He felt a mandate in the years following 1888 which Ellen White repeatedly says was divinely motivated; but he lacked the prophetic gift to see beyond rejection.

During the period of Ellen White’s endorsements (1888-1897), he generally relied on

the Lord for guidance and demonstrated a significant measure of the Lord's strength-made-perfect-in-weakness. Even as late as 1901 he was trying to overcome. Ellen White wrote him a sharp rebuke:

One of authority said to me, "Say to my servant, Alonzo Jones, that he is to stand as a representative man. ... The meekness of Christ must be revealed." You have naturally a dictatorial spirit, and it has increased in your efforts to eradicate the evils which have come in since the Minneapolis meeting. ... You have a most powerful truth to present, and it will exert its power if your life testifies to your close relation to Christ (Letter J-64, 1901 [1755]).

Jones responded humbly: "I feel myself so condemned before God that I repented, and in contrition of spirit asked him to forgive me for every word I had spoken which, though truth, it would have been better not to speak" [1756].

Jones's later tragic failures are abhorrent

enough to contemplate, as a post-mortem of a once-healthy human is unpleasant. But who is largely to blame for destroying this man? “To a great degree” it was “we” who were responsible for turning a once “splendid man” to such a fate. So concludes Ellen White.



## Chapter 7

# The Charge of Evil Motives

Knight holds Jones to ridicule because he once told the General Conference Committee that “for years ... he had been convicted that he was destined to be editor of the Review” (p. 165). He “was quite certain that he was God’s chosen messenger to clean up Adventism, beginning with Battle Creek” (p. 172).

According to Ellen White, Adventism certainly needed cleaning up. From far-away Australia she encouraged Jones to press for reformation. She recognized that he was indeed “the messenger of God” to help in that task and generally supported him in his efforts, albeit with needed cautions and counsels (Letter O-19, 1892 [1025]).

The Lord was coming soon, he felt. Could any of us have had better vision? We too would have believed what Ellen White kept saying, and would have been impressed with current American

church-state developments. But was Jones's zeal for reformation necessarily arrogance on his part? With the context in mind, studying the records does not substantiate such a cynical judgment.

Perhaps even his Review confession was in truth a request for his brethren's prayers rather than a gloating over selfish ambition. Reformation was needed, and few others were concerned enough to do anything firm about it. Is there not some wholesome self-respect that any servant of the Lord should have?

Although Ellen White had often said that he was "Christ's delegated messenger" "whom God has commissioned," a man "divinely appointed," sent with "a message of God to the Laodicean Church" (Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 78-80, 97; MS 8a, 1888; Letter S-24, 1892 [121-128, 1052]), he knew nothing about many of these hundreds of endorsements. But is it not possible that at times he could mingle at least a measure of appropriate humility with sensing something of his calling? The printed evidence leans strongly in his favor.

One brief sample of his spirit may be enlightening:

[Christ] bears our nature forevermore. That is the sacrifice that wins the hearts of men. ... Whether the man believes it or not, there is a subduing power in it, and the heart must stand in silence in the presence of that awful fact. ... 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” (Bulletin, 1895, p. 382).

What he tried to do, without success, Ellen White tried to do in 1901 (and even she eventually failed; cf. Testimonies, Vol. 8, pp. 104-106). Someday the Lord may again send someone to effect reformation, someone who contritely overcomes where Jones failed. Repentance alone will enable us to recognize the Lord’s leading when that day comes.

A century later, here is a book repeating what Ellen White said happened after 1888: “There are

some who have criticized and depreciated, and even stooped to ridicule, the messengers through whom the Lord has wrought in power” (Bulletin, 1891, pp. 256-258 [904]).

## Chapter 8

# “Warmth” and the Doctrinal Content of Jones’s Message

Several inaccuracies in *From 1888 to Apostasy* lead to distorted conclusions.

(a) We are told that Ellen White was—

not ... concerned with the law in Galatians, [or] the covenants. ... Nor do we find her expounding upon the human or divine nature of Christ or sinless living as key elements of the message. She was not even obsessed with the doctrine of righteousness by faith. Her special interest was Jesus Christ (p. 69).

Knight frequently disparages the idea that Ellen White defended the actual content of the Jones-Waggoner message. He insists that she was concerned with “experiential Christianity rather than doctrine” (p. 72). But the evidence indicates

that she did treat the 1888 doctrines as intensely important in order to experience that true, vital faith in Jesus Christ—the covenants, the nature of Christ, and the theological content of righteousness by faith. To say that the “doctrine of righteousness by faith” was unimportant to her creates insurmountable problems with her writings.

For example, her Manuscript 15, 1888 appeals were largely focused on the need of the brethren to listen to, study, and accept the unique Scriptural and doctrinal elements of the message, not just its “spirit” [163-171].

She took an unequivocal stand on the doctrinal issue of the two covenants. She specifically rejected the theological views of the 1888 opponents, and linked the true Jones-Waggoner understanding of this unique doctrine with receiving Christ, demonstrating how a false concept hinders spirituality and practical godliness:

Since I made the statement last Sabbath that the view of the covenants as it had been taught by

Brother Waggoner was truth, it seems that great relief has come to many minds. . . . I thought it time to take my position, and I am glad that the Lord urged me to give the testimony that I did (Letter 30, 1890).

Night before last I was shown that evidences in regard to the covenants were clear and convincing. . . . [You opponents] are spending your investigative powers for naught to produce a position on the covenants to vary from the position that Brother Waggoner has presented. When you had received the true light which shineth, you would not have imitated or gone over the same manner of interpretation and misconstruing the Scriptures [as] did the Jews (Letter 59, 1890).

She also took a firm stand on the doctrinal issue of the law in Galatians—not at Minneapolis, but later. The evidence is in her Letter 96, 1896 [1575]. The context throws light on her remark at Minneapolis that “some interpretations of Scripture, given by Dr. Waggoner, I do not regard as correct” (Knight, p. 72). Our author uses this

one November 1, 1888 statement to disparage the general message presented by Jones and Waggoner, implying that they were in error on whatever one might wish to reject in their message. He says flatly: “Jones and Waggoner had error mixed in their message” (p. 69).

But the context of her November 1, 1888 statement is overwhelmingly supportive of the unique doctrines and truths they taught. She herself needed time to ponder what she heard. Note how her one statement of apparent disagreement is extremely tentative and is misunderstood, being balanced and even offset by frequent clear statements of unqualified endorsement of their doctrine:

Dr. Waggoner has spoken to us in a straightforward manner. There is precious light in what he has said. Some things presented in reference to the law in Galatians, if I fully understand his position, do not harmonize with the understanding I have had of this subject; but truth will lose nothing by investigation. ... I would have



humility of mind, and be willing to be instructed as a child. The Lord has been pleased to give me great light, yet I know that He leads other minds, ... and I want to receive every ray of light that God shall send me, though it should come through the humblest of His servants. ... Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct. But I believe him to be perfectly honest in his views. ... I know it would be dangerous to denounce Dr. Waggoner's position as wholly erroneous. ... I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the doctor has placed it before us. ... Is it not possible that through earnest, prayerful searching of the Scriptures he has seen still greater light on some points? 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. If our ministering brethren would accept the doctrine which has been presented so clearly—the righteousness of Christ in connection with the law, ... their prejudices would not have a controlling power (Ms. 15, 1888, emphasis supplied [163, 164]).

I had heard for the first time the views of Elder E. J. Waggoner. ... I stated that I had heard precious truths uttered that I could respond to with all my heart, for had not these great and glorious truths, the righteousness of Christ and the entire sacrifice made in behalf of man, been imprinted indelibly on my mind by the Spirit of God (Ms. 24, 1888, p. 14 [217])?

I had not one doubt or question in regard to the matter. I knew the light which had been presented to us in clear and distinct lines. The brethren had all the evidence they would ever have that words of truth were spoken in regard to the righteousness of Christ (Ibid., [223] omitted in Selected Messages, Book Three).

If Ellen White's "I" in the one perplexing sentence in Ms. 15 is italicized, as it might well have been in the verbal emphasis she gave in that November 1 talk, all apparent contradiction is easily resolved: "Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct.

But ... [it is] possible that he has seen still greater light on some points. That which has been presented harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me.” She clearly expressed her willingness to exchange preconceived personal opinions for greater light. And she did later accept what she initially was hesitant to endorse (Letter 96, 1896 [1575]).

How can it be a safe methodology to press one or two phrases of doubtful import into a virtual contradiction of many hundreds of others (cf. Knight, pp. 72, 145)?

How could Ellen White consider unimportant her own frequent doctrinal presentations of overcoming all sin through faith in the High Priest’s closing ministry (cf. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 425, 623, etc.)? What rejoiced her soul in the Jones message was how it complemented hers, the hopeful, encouraging assurance that shone through like sunlight in his doctrine of overcoming sin. Not one word does she say questioning in the least the doctrinal or

theological teachings of Jones or Waggoner.

## Chapter 9

# Jones and the Nature of Christ Issue

Knight recognizes that the famous Baker letter cannot fairly be construed as a rebuke of Jones's or Waggoner's position (p.145), but he contradicts himself by saying "it is highly probable" that Baker was teaching what they were (p. 146). Thus the stage is set for the reader to question or reject the clear 1888 view of the nature of Christ. Yet this truth as they understood it was an essential part of their message at the time of the 1888 Conference:

**(a)** Waggoner held the view immediately before Minneapolis, because he taught it in *The Gospel in Galatians*, published in 1888 (p. 62).

**(b)** It appears in his *Signs* editorials published immediately after Minneapolis, beginning January 21, 1889. (Fromm says that Waggoner's wife told him that those editorials were an edited transcript

of his 1888 presentations which she had taken down in shorthand. This is a reasonable explanation of how he could produce such articles so soon after the close of the Minneapolis Conference (see Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 200, 201).

(c) Both taught their message of Christ's righteousness in solid theological unity throughout the 1890's. They always considered their view of the nature of Christ as the essential king-pin of their message. Both saw the opposing view that Christ took only the sinless nature of Adam before the fall as a legacy of Romanism (see *Bulletin*, 1901, pp. 403ff; *The Consecrated Way*, pp. 35-39). To pay lip service to their "exalting Christ" without giving due weight to this essential theological element of their Christocentric message is inconsistent. Jones said in 1895 that "the salvation of God for human beings lies in just that one thing" (*Bulletin*, p. 233).

Incidentally, Knight's assertion that the true 1888 message is lost, not being stenographically

reported at Minneapolis, is misleading on two counts: (a) Waggoner's message immediately before and immediately after constitutes compelling evidence; in no way could his Minneapolis presentations be a temporary, isolated island of inconsistency; and (b) Ellen White's numerous endorsements concern the ongoing Jones-Waggoner message as presented on through 1896, and even 1897. There is no hint in her hundreds of endorsements that a significant difference developed between their Minneapolis teaching and their later message.

Knight's discussion of the nature of Christ rightly recognizes the need of a balanced viewpoint. But Ellen White urges us to be "careful, exceedingly careful" how we use language in speaking of this truth. A number of his expressions appear less than "exceedingly careful," and can inject confusion where clarity is so desperately needed. Indeed, the Seventh-day Adventist Church yearns to come into unity on this topic, and for that purpose accuracy of expression is essential.

For example, Knight attributes to the 1888 messengers (and those who appreciate their message) the fault of allegedly teaching “the ‘sinfulness’ of Christ’s human nature,” or of speaking of “Christ’s ‘sinful’ nature,” or of saying that He had “tendencies toward sin” and “was born with a moral nature exactly like ours” (pp.133, 134). He adds that “Waggoner ... had been teaching that Christ had sinful tendencies, since at least January 1889” (p. 136).

A perusal of Waggoner’s January 21, 1889 editorial reveals that he did not say what Knight attributes to him, certainly not in overall emphasis.

It might be possible in some rare instance to fix on the two 1888 messengers the charge of saying that Christ “had” a sinful nature and thus make them offenders for a word; but in the vast majority of their voluminous statements they consistently used the “exceedingly careful” expressions of Scripture: Christ took our fallen sinful nature, He took upon Himself a nature in which sinful tendencies had to be resisted and crucified, and



thus He was like us in all respects except sin. They agreed with Ellen White's classic statement, "He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted" (Medical Ministry, p. 181, emphasis supplied).

Their burden was not finespun, debatable theology, but practical godliness.

In this connection Knight subtly imputes to Jones the terrible implication that Christ's mind was sinful. This should be enough to blacklist him for all time and eternity. Note the following:

For Jones the Fall did not merely mar the image of God in man; it obliterated it. Adam and Eve could not tell the truth to God in Eden, because their mind was in bondage to Satan.

It was in this depraved human nature that Christ became like us with "not a particle of difference between him and you" (p. 137).

In context, Jones gives no such impression. In fact, it is the opposite of what Knight conveyed. He clearly differentiated between the flesh which Christ took in His incarnation, and our sinful mind which He did not take (Bulletin, 1895, pp. 327-333):

Now as to Christ's having "like passions" with us; in the Scriptures all the way through He is like us, and with us according to the flesh.

He is the seed of David 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. Don't drag His mind into it. His flesh was our flesh; but the mind was the mind of Christ (p. 327).

Knight also imputes a blasphemy to Jones, citing an 1895 statement "that Christ 'was sinful as we'" (p. 137). But there is nothing like blasphemy to be found in the context. Jones makes clear his concern for the soul-winning, practical-godliness truth inherent here:

The righteous one, who knew no sin, [was] made to be sin for us! Our sins were upon him; the guilt and the condemnation of these were not hid from God. O, it was a terrible thing, that he should undo himself, and become ourselves in all things, in order that we might be saved,—running the risk, the fearful risk of losing all—risking all to save us. ... Weak as we, sinful as we,—simply ourselves,—he went through this world, and never sinned (Bulletin, p. 302).

The obvious meaning is that Christ took our sinful nature. What is remarkable in Jones's 1895 presentations is not an incidence of careless, imprecise expressions, but a general carefulness. Few theologians have trod these mine-filled paths without making mistakes. The Holy Spirit's blessing is evident in those solemn sermons.

The Baker letter is in no way a rebuttal of Jones's view of Christ's righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh." What Baker was teaching is unclear; Ellen White never published the letter,

indicating that she had no intent to counter the 1888 concepts; yet an obscure statement from this letter has become the chief Adventist cornerstone of a modern doctrinal concept only one step removed from the Roman Catholic dogma of an “immaculate conception.”

## Chapter 10

# What “Corporate Repentance” is Not

Knight dismisses the idea of corporate repentance as “not very helpful” (p. 64). Whether or not corporate repentance is helpful is not in our province here to discuss, but our author gives evidence that he does not understand what the idea means: “It has a Biblical base. Unfortunately, that base rests upon the corporate nationhood of Israel in the Old Testament. Since the beginning of the gospel era God has worked with individuals rather than nations or groups (p. 64).”

Three errors contribute to a misunderstanding here:

(a) The author has failed to grasp the 1888 concept of the two covenants. Rather, he holds in principle with the opponents of that era. Righteousness by faith has never been

dispensational as he implies. The Lord saved Abraham exactly as He saves us—by his individual faith. Abraham’s true descendants were never merely his fleshly progeny; always it was “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” The success of ancient Israel as a corporate nation always depended on the individual faith of its members.

(b) He fails to see the Christian church as the new Israel. As a “body” composed of believing members the church today stands in the same position before God as did that nation long ago (cf. *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 703-715).

(c) He fails to give the word “corporate” its true theological meaning. He assumes that it is “a creedal enactment by the church leaders for the members” (p. 64). But it does not refer to legal or organizational “incorporation” through parliamentary law proceedings or hierarchical structure. As a theological term, “corporate” denotes the individual believer’s relationship to Christ as the Head of the body, and to all other members of His body. The apostle Paul uses the

word thus: “If we have become incorporate with [Christ] in a death like his, we shall also be one with him in a resurrection like his” (Romans 6:5; cf. Ephesians 1:1, 13, etc., NEB).

Those who see the need for corporate repentance define it as personally repenting of sins we may not have individually committed but which we could or would have committed but for the grace of Christ. It is a truth inherent in Christ’s righteousness being imputed 100 per cent to the believer. The sin of 1888 is our sin “but for the grace of Christ,” just as the sin of Calvary is likewise ours through our corporate identity “in Adam.”

If corporate repentance is to be rejected, it must be on other grounds than those advanced by Knight.

## Chapter 11

# **Knight's Solution to Our Spiritual Problem**

Knight's quote from Bert Haloviak that "the various factions within the Adventist Church still 'need each other' as they seek to find and apply the full-orbed gospel to their lives" is more than true (p. 74). A hundred years ago, the General Conference did their best to silence Jones and Waggoner and would have succeeded had it not been for their defense by Ellen White. And now in our Centennial year we must beware lest we repeat that sad history.

Our denominational problems could be solved in an incredibly short time if we would let the Holy Spirit do His unifying work in our midst. We certainly need each other. If we will learn the lesson of 1888, we will be willing to listen to each other.



Knight makes an earnest plea for “caringness” in the Adventist Church. Without doubt, we need this. But to appeal for “caringness” without seeing how to achieve it is vain, and inevitably deteriorates again into the futility of our century-old “rich and increased with goods” complex.

According to Knight, we do not need the actual message the Lord sent us in 1888. Incredibly, we need “an experience” of “warmth” while at the same time by-passing the “theological positions” and the “doctrines” of the message which the Lord sent to us in order to provide it: Mrs. White ... was not interested in doctrinal issues at the 1888 conference.” We are “not to fixate on the words of Jones and Waggoner.” “The message of 1888, as Ellen White viewed it, is not doctrinal” (cf. pp. 66, 68, 69).

However, Knight quotes her out of setting. The “danger” she was warning about was not that of “dwelling” on the true Biblical doctrines of righteousness by faith, but on the cold, proof-text “doctrines” that our ministers had thought were the

third angel's message, such as the Sabbath, the state of the dead, etc. We will quote Knight's appeal with his emphasis:

The great need of Seventh-day Adventists in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was warmth, caringness, and a personal experience with Jesus in their daily lives. That is still the greatest lack of the church. Only when individuals put away the spirit of Minneapolis and take up the spirit of Christ will they be ready for the Second Coming. The meaning of 1888 is to learn its central lessons and to start living the caring Christian life now. The meaning of 1888 is to face forward, not backward. The meaning of 1888 is the call for Adventists to put away their theological disputes as being all-important, and to treat each other like Christians even though they disagree. Only then will they be in a position to testify convincingly that they have Christ's message for a dying world. Also, we should never forget that Ellen White, Adventism's foremost interpreter of 1888, was not obsessed with the Minneapolis event (p. 71).

There is a serious flaw in this methodology that takes us back to square one and tends to vitiate the significance of a hundred years of history. The idea is to disparage objective Bible truth and to exalt subjective experience, forgetting that the latter can not be solid and lasting when the former is confused. Our decades of flirting with the evangelical “Victorious Life” enthusiasm should be enough to convince us. Because Knight’s philosophy is so widely prevalent, we must analyze it:

**(a)** He rightly says that the spiritual condition of the church in the 1888 era was like that of ours today. What did the Lord do then to correct this sad deficiency of “caring,” this lack of Christlike love? He sent “a most precious message” of justification by faith, that of 1888. This was an objective gospel.

**(b)** But Knight has insisted that the actual doctrinal and theological content of that “most precious message” that “the Lord in His great mercy sent” is not only unimportant, but erroneous

and dangerous in significant ways.

(c) Thus he has rejected the Lord's only means of healing that very condition of the church in the 1888 era. Now we have the same problems a hundred years later. What solution does he suggest for us today? It is "wrongheaded" he says to consider the 1888 message and history as "a solution to the failure of the denomination" (p. 99). Forget the doctrinal content and history of the 1888 message, and "start living the caring Christian life now."

This means spiritual revival and reformation, all very good; but we must "start" without benefit of the specific means that the Lord provided in order to achieve that end.

Where in history has any lasting revival and reformation permeated the church without understanding pure gospel truth? A century of history tells us that we cannot pull ourselves up by our emotional bootstraps of induced enthusiasm. We cannot achieve "caringness" without clearly

appreciating what Paul calls “the truth of the gospel.” The best we can achieve otherwise is a social-gospel injection of pop psychology. The window-dressing of “caringness” may be impressive, but the true love of Christ will be absent apart from comprehending the true gospel of Christ. One can’t accept a UPS parcel while rejecting the UPS van.

Ellen White’s context clearly supports the distinctive theological verities of the 1888 message. Scripture truth is essential to understand in order for “warmth” to permeate the church in a permanent, effective way. Otherwise we make nonsense of her appeals.

(d) Legalism majors in traditional appeals to “start living the ... Christian life now” apart from clear gospel truth. Such appeals sound good; they are highly popular (as legalism always is, especially in committees); the easy, natural thing is to nod the head, say amen and vote, “Let’s do it.” And we have been resolving so for a century. Our Reviews and General Conference Bulletins testify

of continuous pious exhortations ... “we-must-be-more-faithful,” “we-must-get-up-earlier,” “we-must-pray-more,” “we-must-study-our-Bible-more,” “we-must-love-more,” “we-must-be-more-Christ-like,” “we-must-sacrifice-more,” “we-must-visit-our-neighbors-more,” “we-must-work-harder.” But telling people what to do without providing true New Testament motivation falls far short of gospel Good News.

Ellen White rejoiced in the message of Jones because she saw in it a motivation whereby these familiar legalistic imperatives of Adventism could be translated into joyous gospel enablings. (Letters and personal testimonies from a growing number of youth and older church members bear personal witness first-hand to the spiritual power inherent in the unique “Good News” truths of that message. This is a phenomenon that has probably not been known since the 1888 era).

(e) Knight says we must not look backward but forward. While this is patently true, he fails to see that the real need of the church is the recovery of

the pure truth of justification by faith, of which popular Evangelicalism is not the proper source. There is hope for the church if we will believe Ellen White's counsel, "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" (Life Sketches, p. 196, emphasis supplied). This does not mean an "obsession" with 1888, but it surely means mastering the truth about it so we can face forward with understanding.

Knight disparages an interest in the 1888 message, saying Ellen White "was not obsessed with the Minneapolis event" (p. 71). Why then would she write those 1,812 pages?

(f) Our need for unity is acute. Theological disputes bring confusion and discouragement to thoughtful new believers. There is no living prophet to whom we can look with informed confidence as was the case a century ago, and Ellen White's voluminous writings appear to admit of multiple interpretations. To date, no leader has arisen who can successfully command the unity we

need in understanding her apparently contradictory writings. What can bring about the unity that Knight with all the rest of us desires?



## Chapter 12

# What is Our Best Hope?

Our best hope, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, is the restoration of that "most precious message" that the Lord sent, the "beginning" of the latter rain and the loud cry (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91). It is the true context of most of Ellen White's apparently contradictory writings, and her calls for revival and reformation:

(a) It enjoys her enthusiastic, repeated endorsement, never equaled.

(b) It is transparently Biblical. Scripture supports the unique elements of that message, whereas our standard understandings of today are in marked contrast to the glorious Good News essentials therein. The world is truly dying for want of these truths.

(c) The message has stood the test of time, plenty—a whole century. No one can find valid

fault with it.

**(d)** Rightly understood, the message appeals positively to the best instincts of both liberals and conservatives in the church, and especially to youth. It is our best hope for unity.

**(e)** The later faults of its original messengers do not invalidate it.

**(f)** It offers the only healing balm for the subtle disease of legalism which afflicts both liberals and conservatives.

But the function of this highly endorsed Centennial book is to destroy confidence in that “most precious message” which the Lord sent. It is like the Jews determining to have a messiah while neglecting or rejecting the One the Lord already sent them.

The reader must ask himself whom he chooses to believe—uninspired critics or the agent of the Gift of Prophecy who counsels us: “Let not the

chosen of God be found in opposition to the messengers and messages He sends” (Letter J-16j, 1892 [1038]).

We believe that all Seventh-day Adventists who read and ponder Knight’s book should ask themselves whether Ellen White’s appeal is still applicable after a hundred years:

I know that a work must be done for the people, or many will not be prepared to receive the light of the angel sent down from heaven to lighten the whole earth with his glory. Do not think that you will be found as vessels unto honor in the time of the latter rain ... if you are ... cherishing roots of bitterness brought from the conference at Minneapolis ... I appeal to you, men in responsible positions. ... The Lord looks with disfavor upon those who ... manifest a satanic disrespect toward those whom they should highly regard (“To the General Conference,” B-24, 1889 [442, 443]; emphasis supplied).

Here we are a full century after Minneapolis

and its history. Ellen White still asks plaintively, “Must we leave our brethren to pass over the same path of blind resistance, till the very end of probation” (Letter 0-19, 1892; [1025])?

## Appendix A

# **George R. Knight vs. Ellen G. White**

### **Knight on A. T. Jones**

Had “egotistic toes” (12).

“Careless mouth and harsh speech” (33).

“Self-confident” (35).

“Never mastered the art of ... Christian kindness” (34).

“Harsh words and pompous attitudes” (35).

“Confrontational” (53).

“Habit of publicly belittling those who disagreed with him” (53).

“Perennial problem of extremism” (101).

“Never mastered Christian virtue of temperance” (56).

“Fairly direct line from Jones ... to the holy flesh movement” (56).

“Abrasive and cocksure personality” (63).

“At his best under pressure” (77).

“Found ... problem [of unchristian spirit] impossible to overcome” (82).

“Ever excitable” (100).

“Rashness ... [his] special weakness” (102).

“Sensational language” (113).

“Employed syllogistic logic to milk out the most extreme position possible” (119).

“With characteristic modesty ... claimed [he was] divinely appointed” (165).

“Taught holy flesh” (170).

“Convinced he was God’s man for the hour, ... those who did not cooperate with [him] were against God” (174).

“Highhandedness” (175).

“Extremism and harsh manners” (176).

“Rigid inflexibility” (83).

“At his self-confident best during the 1893 ... Conference” (94).

### **Ellen G. White on A. T. Jones**

“Bear[s] the word of the Lord” (TM 97).

“The Lord recognized [him] as His servant” but

opponents taunted him “with being fanatic, extremist, and enthusiast” (TM 97).

“Christ’s delegated messenger” (Idem.).

“Man whom God has commissioned ... [with] demonstration of the Holy Spirit” (TM 79,80).

“God’s messenger” (Ms. 8a, 1888).

“Man divinely appointed” (Ms. 8a, 1888).

“The Lord’s messenger” (Ms. 8a, 1888)

“The message given us by A. T. Jones ... is a message of God to the Laodicean church” (Letter S-24, 1892).

“Some have criticized and depreciated, and even stooped to ridicule the messengers] through whom the Lord has wrought in power” (GCB 1891, pp. 256-258).

“The servant of God” (TM 410).



“God sent this young man to bear a special message” (Letter S-24, 1892).

To “differ with Elder Jones ... is not from the impulse of the Spirit of God” (Idem.).

” [God’s] chosen servant(s) ... whom God is using” (TM 466).

“To accuse and criticize [him] ... is to accuse and criticize the Lord who has sent [him]” (Idem.).

“Men professing godliness have despised Christ in the person of His messengers]” (FCE 472).

“Upon whom God has laid the burden of a solemn work” (Letter S-24, 1892).

“The messenger of God.. .Elder Jones. ... God is working through [him]” (Letter 019, 1892).

“Had a message from God, and you made light

of both message and messenger[s]” (Letter B2a, 1892).

“God has upheld [him], ... given [him] precious light, ... fed the people of God” (Letter 51a, 1895).

“Bro. Jones has been giving the message for this time, meat in due season to the starving flock of God. ... Has borne the message from church to church, and from state to state; and light and freedom and the outpouring of the Spirit of God has attended the work. ... Seeks to arouse the professed people of God from their death-like slumber. ... [Opposers] will be asked in the judgment, 'Who required this at your hand, to rise up against the message and the messengers] I sent to My people with light, with grace, and power?’” (Letter Jan. 9, 1893).

“A. T. Jones spoke to the people, ... and the people heard many precious things that would be to them a comfort, and a strength to their faith, ... this ... all-important privilege” (Ms. 24, 1888).

” [The people] expressed their gladness and gratitude of heart for the sermons that had been preached by Bro. A. T. Jones; they saw the truth, goodness, mercy, and love of God as they never before had seen it” (RH Feb. 12, 1889).

“I considered it a privilege to stand by the side of [Jones] ... and give my testimony with the message for the time” (RH March 18, 1890).

Has “heavenly credentials” (RH March 18, 1890).

“God has raised up his messengers] to do his work at this time. Some ... criticize ... imperfections, because [they think he does] not speak with all the grace and polish desirable. ... Too much in earnest, ... too much positiveness, and the message that would bring healing and life and comfort to many weary and oppressed souls, is, in a measure, excluded. ... [The messages bear] the divine credentials. ... [Sets forth the message] with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose

hearts are not closed with prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us” (RH May 27, 1890).

“Jones speaks ... quite a number ... fed with large morsels from the Lord’s table” (Ms. 10, 1889).

## Appendix B

# The Testimony of Contemporary Witnesses

As we went to press, the Ellen G. White Estate released their 589-page Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis 1888 (Pacific Press, 1988). This supplements the four-volume set of Ellen G. White 1888 materials, containing voluminous letters and manuscripts of brethren who knew A. T. Jones personally.

We have noted how Ellen White said nothing in her accounts of Minneapolis about Jones being harsh or abrasive, or giving his brethren a valid excuse to reject his message. The 1,812 pages contain no evidence that he was harsh at the General Conference Sessions of 1888, 1891, 1893, or 1895. Surely his brethren who knew him well and opposed him vigorously will tell us of these severe personality faults in their letters.

Does this fifth volume contain such contemporary evidence? Did they see him as “abrasive,” “cocksure,” “harsh,” or “arrogant”? Such evidence is totally lacking in this massive collection of documents.

Two brethren speak in a derogatory manner about Jones, but not until 42 and 43 years respectively after Minneapolis. This may indicate that their memories are reading back into the 1888-era Jones impressions from the post-1903 Jones.

One of Jones’s most determined opponents has only good to say of him:

I love Dr. W[aggoner] and Brother A. T. Jones. ... I was especially pleased with the latter, as a man of a good spirit (G. I. Butler letter to Ellen White, March 31, 1887; p. 69).

C. H. Jones says that the opposition against him was “cruel and unreasonable,” which he could hardly say if he felt that Jones had provoked it (letter to Ellen White, August 24, 1890; p. 175). In

1892 W. A. Colcord writes to her of the on-going opposition from Uriah Smith:

If I can discern the voice of the true Shepherd, Elder Jones's appeals are of this nature, and I would not dare to raise up against them, and

[I] feel pained when I see others doing so. ... I would not have said a word, nor written what I have to you, did I not believe that this cross-firing and opposition to the plain, straightforward message of one whom I believe is a chosen servant of God, is in the line of shutting out the light and truth from the people, which they so much need at this time (letter, July 12, 1892; p. 204).

Of all the participants of that era, S. N. Haskell emerges as one of the most level-headed. We cannot accuse him of insincerity. His objectivity is evident in that he does not hesitate to criticize Jones for his mistakes. Consider his 1893 letter to Ellen White:

Some younger men [were] quite officious in

acting an unwise part on points where there was a difference of faith and feeling. ... I think the more the older hands get acquainted with Brother Jones the more of a feeling of harmony there is with him and his positions. So what I have said about some young men I have refferenc [sic] to W. A. Colcord in particular and others outside of Elder Jones (p. 262).

A. O. Tait writes to W. C. White as late as October 7, 1895 of the heart-breaking trials that Jones was forced to endure:

Why, it was only the day before yesterday, Bro. White, that the Chairman of the [General Conference] Book Committee in apologiz-ing to me for the rejection of a manuscript from Bro. Jones, stated in just so many words, that there was such a prejudice against him on the part of the members of the Book Committee who are acting here in Battle Creek, that it was just about impossible to get one of his manuscripts passed through. ... Members of the Committee have vari-ous degrees of antipathy in their minds against



those brethren who are leading out in the presentation of the doctrine of the righteousness of Christ (pp. 295, 296).

Yet in his long letter Tait gives no hint that Jones's person-ality gives these opposing brethren any reason for their "antipathy."

Further, in all the confessions of erstwhile rejectors of the message printed in this volume, not one suggests that Jones's attitude or spirit encouraged them to reject his message.

We must look at the two tentative exceptions which were written nearly half a century later:

(1) W. C. White tells Taylor G. Bunch that Jones's "pomposi-ty and egotism" were a stumbling-block to the brethren's acceptance of his message (December 30, 1930; p. 334). There are several problems with this statement:

(a) The same writer says very different things back in the 1888 era, never breathing a word of

criticism of Jones's spirit or personality. For example, note his account written a few weeks after Minneapolis:

It took considerable planning at first to secure for Alonzo an opportunity to appear before the people of the Battle Creek church at all. Some who returned from the Conf. before it was done had given out that he was a crank, and it seemed as though it would break their hearts to have the people think otherwise; but when he did get a chance to speak, the prejudice was swept away like dew before the sun (Letter to J. H. Waggoner, February 27, 1889; p. 136).

**(b)** No other contemporary eyewitness accounts in this volume support W. C. White's 1930 impressions of "pomposity" or "egotism."

**(c)** It is reasonable to inquire if the passage of 42 years may have befogged the writer's memory.

**(d)** It would be understandable if in 1930 the fresh memories of Jones's post-1903 attitudes

could be superimposed upon or injected into White's recollections of the 1888-era Jones.

(2) A. T. Robinson recalls 43 years after Minneapolis what appears on the surface to be a specific example of harshness:

What was spoken of [by opponents] as an offensive attitude ... was criticized severely by some, and at times they [Jones and Waggoner] were made the subject of ridicule. Perhaps I can best give one concrete illustration of what appeared to justify the attitude taken by some of our leading men. ...

Elders U. Smith and A. T. Jones were discussing some features in connection with the ten horns. ... Elder Smith, in his characteristic modesty, stated that he did not claim originality. ... Elder Jones, in his characteristic style, began by saying, "Elder Smith has told you he does not know anything about this matter. I do, and I don't want you to blame me for what he does not know." This harsh statement called forth an open rebuke

from Sister White (January 31, 1931; p. 337).

As noted earlier in this review, Ellen White does not mention this incident in her diaries or her accounts of the Minneapolis event (Mss. 24, 1888 and 13, 30, 1889). Had the incident been as severe as Robinson says, it seems likely she would have noted it. Neither does any other contemporary witness mention it; yet opponents looking for some excuse to condemn Jones would readily have seized upon it.

We cannot doubt that some such incident took place; Robinson could not invent it. But it is quite possible that 43 years could lend a color to it that was heavily tintured by the memories of Jones's unfortunate post-1903 spirit. It may have been possible that Jones made that remark with a smile, that there was a touch of jest in it. If so, it was unwise and inappropriate. But if he was dead serious, his eyewitness contemporaries give no evidence in these 589-page documents that such harshness was "characteristic" of him at that time. On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence

that the solemn endorsement of the Holy Spirit crowned Jones's ministry.