

1988

RE-EXAMINED

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Prologue

These two authors have served a lifetime of commitment to, and love for, the Seventhday Adventist Church. Nothing that they say in this treatise is to be understood as critical or judgmental of the church or its leadership to which they remain completely loyal.

We are making one simple inquiry: Has the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness been proclaimed and published in our official press one hundred years later?

Whether the answer turns out to be yes or no, the inquiry is not trivial. The 1888 message of justification by faith was identified by Ellen White as "the third angel's message in verity." If she was correct, it must follow that this gospel message is the very lifeblood, the essence, of this church's existence and mission and the only hope for its future. Hence we need offer no apology for investigating the available evidence. Our prayer is that we may be enabled to pursue the inquiry with

an objective spirit and to fulfil Paul's entreaty that we should ever speak the truth in love.

Again, whether the answer to our question turns out to be yes or no, it will not in the least call into question whether the church is making great progress numerically, socially, financially, and even spiritually. In other words, if perchance our inquiry should lead to a negative answer, this would not mean that the Lord has forsaken the church or its leadership. It would only mean that repentance and reformation are in order.

For example: it is now generally agreed that the message was "in a great degree" rejected by the leadership a century ago, yet outwardly the church has made great progress numerically and financially ever since. A church does not need the pure gospel in order to prosper in these ways—witness the Roman Catholics, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and a host of Evangelical denominations. Some enjoy fabulous church growth and boast of what we as yet do not have—numerous megachurches. Yet they know nothing

about "the third angel's message in verity."

In fact no church or denomination anywhere needs "the third angel's message in verity" unless it is dedicated to one unique objective: preparing a people for the second coming of Christ, and for meeting the issues of the mark of the beast and the seal of God, which immediately precede that coming.

If we choose to abandon that objective, it follows that this inquiry is much ado about nothing, and deserves no one's serious attention.

But if we hold to that objective as the reason for our existence as a denominated people, then the subject matter of this inquiry assumes vital importance. It is general knowledge that serious problems confront this church on almost every level. There is no end of discussion about why these problems have become so severe and difficult to resolve.

We begin with the firm conviction that the

gospel "is the power of God unto salvation." If this is true, it must follow that those problems are directly related to a failure to grasp what is that gospel; and recovering it must then be the surest way to solve our problems.

Our Centennial saw some very good news develop, evidence that the Lord has been working. There is reason to be encouraged if we love the prospect of "a most precious message" yet to lighten the earth with glory.

1988 Re-Examined

One hundred years ago a gloriously refreshing wind of the Spirit swept briefly through the Seventh-day Adventist church. It came in the form of a heart-stirring message telling of a "grace [that] did much more abound" than abounding sin, bringing refreshment that Ellen White recognized (for the first time in her life) to be the beginning of the long-awaited latter rain and loud cry.

She declared the hearts of church members and ministers to be as parched with spiritual drought as were the ancient hills of Gilboa. The message fell indeed like gentle spring showers. She was so happy that she could hardly sleep at night for joy, for the quickening heart-beat reminded her of the joyous Midnight Cry of 1844. Here was the delicious hope renewed for the first time in 45 years that a message could actually prepare a people for the harvest and the coming of the Lord. This is why she labelled it "the third angel's message in verity."

Where A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner preached in our churches with the support of Ellen White, there was clarity and power. But the rich blessing she anticipated had to be aborted. Another dreary century of history had yet to go by.

The confusion came because the leadership simply and sincerely could not find it in their hearts to welcome the 1888 message. The church press deepened the perplexity by publishing conflicting ideas. So serious was the opposition that in less than three years a plan was proposed to exile Ellen White to Australia." A few months later in the spring of 1892 E. J. Waggoner was exiled to England under similar circumstances. Thus the trio proclaiming the heaven-sent "most precious message" was disbanded. And so "in a great degree" and "in a great measure" the message failed and the beginning of the "loud cry" became a whisper.

Now the second century following the aftermath of 1888 has begun with a Centennial commemoration. Will its memory fade away as did

the 1944 Centennial commemorating the Great Disappointment? After more than fifty General Conference sessions, can we forget the outstanding one of 1888 which has haunted us for a century? Some want us to. Those who resent 1888 appear to support complacency, lukewarmness, and worldliness. One church member wrote in the Adventist Review, "Whew! Am I glad 1988 is about over. Perhaps now we can quit speculating on what direction God was leading the Adventist Church in Minneapolis during 1888."

There is no need for speculation as to what direction God was leading, because the record is clear: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones." The Lord knew what His people needed: "Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family."

Try as we may to forget, our history will not disappear. As long as time lasts, heaven's

confrontation with this people will persist. The Lord Jesus loves this church too much to abandon it. The message the Lord sent was to bring before the world the uplifted Saviour, to impart the gift of His own righteousness to the human family. He commanded that the message be given to the whole world as the essence of the third angel's message. It was to awaken the world with "a loud voice" and be attended with the outpouring of His Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Will Not Let Us Forget 1888

Heaven came near and appealed to the delegated leadership in 1888. So impressed were their successors who met in the Rio de Janeiro Annual Council, October 7-14, 1986 that they voted to hold a special Centennial commemoration in the same Minneapolis which originally gave the notable session its name.

When the first notice of the proposed meeting was published in the Review, it reminded the church that something went seriously wrong at the first Minneapolis meeting: "This was the only

General Conference session where Ellen G. White was publicly defied." Would she again be "publicly defied" one hundred years later?

This same Review gave the reason for the proposed meeting: "Church leaders initiated the commemoration to affirm the righteousness by faith doctrine and raise the level of [its] awareness among church members." This same Annual Council called the church to adopt a "global strategy" for evangelizing the world.

Our history affirms that this was what the Lord tried to give us at Minneapolis I—a strategy for illuminating the world with the glory of the full-orbed everlasting gospel. Therefore if the Lord's messenger is not to be defied again, we must now face what that divinely inspired strategy was and whether or not it is now accepted. She tells us what happened a century ago:

An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition

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

The divine strategy which the church needed a century ago was a message so simple that it can be likened to the trumpets, lamps, and broken pitchers that Gideon's band of three hundred used to rout Midian's huge army, or to David's pebbles with which he met Goliath.

Could Minneapolis II get the church back on course, and rediscover that message strategy? Or for those who thought the church never went off

course, could it "affirm the righteousness by faith doctrine and raise the level of [its] awareness among church members?" Could we come "to believe in a finished work"? There was genuine hope that this might be true, and the purpose of the 1986 Annual Council action was sincere.

During the forty plus years preceding the Centennial our publishing houses have produced numerous books about 1888. Our Centennial events now demonstrate that most of these books raised serious doubts about the word of the Lord's messenger and injected confusion into the facts of our denominational history. This meant that Minneapolis II faced a serious problem before it ever convened.

Preparation for the Centennial

In early fall of 1987, a highly recommended new book came from the church presses, FROM 1888 TO APOSTASY, The Case of A, T. Jones. Its thesis became the keynote of the Centennial, setting the stage for a new interpretation of the

message and the messengers.

The title suggests that there was something inherently dangerous in the message itself in that it led to "apostasy." 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." Immediately disturbing questions arise: why did the Lord choose a fatally flawed agent for His special work? Ellen White often said that he was "the Lord's messenger," "the servant of God," "God sent this young man," he was God's "chosen servant," etc. And why would the Lord send a message so potentially lethal that it inclined its bearers toward "apostasy"? Was Ellen White naive when she supported A. T. Jones so enthusiastically? Must we discount her endorsements of him?

The mystery deepens when we note that Jones was the only Seventh-day Adventist minister in history who shared with his colleague E. J. Waggoner what Ellen White said were "heavenly credentials." She expressed similar enthusiastic

approval not occasionally but hundreds of times. Taking context into account, we find that she says not one word opposing the seminal doctrinal or theological teachings of Jones or Waggoner during the crisis era of 1888 and its eight-year aftermath. Her support was total, open, and honest. Why the disaster?

If she was wrong in her endorsements, it would follow that the Lord Himself erred in choosing "the very men He did select to bear this special message.... God has chosen the very men He wanted." Yet this book appears to be an effort to turn this generation of Seventh-day Adventists away from a serious consideration of the actual message Jones and Waggoner brought, insisting that it contains the seeds of error. Thus the Centennial has been built on the foundation of an a priori denigration of the message and messengers it was designed to commemorate.

But this personal judgment of scholars was fated to suffer a sharp contradiction. Throughout our history, the Lord has always blessed the

testimony of Ellen White when it was made available to our people. Often it has come at crisis times. Now it came again just in time to meet this issue.

At the time this book against Jones was published, the Ellen G. White Estate released a four-volume set, Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, which will henceforth become the norm for understanding our 1888 history. In the Lord's providence, the church for the first time ever was permitted to see her complete testimony regarding this controverted history and message. These 1,812 pages make clear beyond debate her assessment of Minneapolis I and its two messengers. Many who read the four volumes immediately saw the nature of the conflict. Although they were "only men," fallible and in need of reproof (as are all of us), it became clear that the 1888 message and messengers did certainly have Ellen White's full, sincere, unqualified support.

The Centennial Year Begins in Conflict

The Centennial year was launched with a special issue of the Review, "Christ Our Righteousness." The cover displayed a beautiful background picture of a symbolic white robe. The issue contained seven articles by contemporary authors and one by Ellen White. Her original article (written in 1890, 1888 Materials, pages 810 and onward) is entitled, "Danger of False Ideas On Justification By Faith." In the conflicts in her day between different ideas of righteousness by faith she warned against spurious ideas opposed to the 1888 concepts. Our Centennial demonstrates that there is still profound conflict today.

The only recognition of Jones and Waggoner in this special Review was their pictures with a caption telling how they "played prominent roles in the 1888 Bible Institute and General Conference session as eloquent proponents of righteousness by faith in Christ." Strangely, while their contemporary opponent was allowed to speak in this special Review, they themselves were not

permitted a word. If the Lord sent the "most precious message" by them one hundred years ago, why should they not be allowed to speak? How can we honor messengers and at the same time silence them?

The next significant communication came in the special 64 page February Ministry. Thirteen authors presented scholarly articles with scores of citations. Many hundreds of editorial hours had to be invested in this exceptional magazine. But again neither Jones nor Waggoner were allowed to contribute an article. Only their pictures were displayed.

However, Ministry published charges against them of personality weaknesses, aberrant theology, with sinister inferences and hints of disapproval by Ellen White (which were not substantiated).

A unique item in this issue was a book review of 1888 RE-EXAMINED, a revised and rewritten manuscript which these two authors originally presented to the General Conference Committee in

1950. For nearly 40 years the authors had refrained from publishing it. But in view of the scheduled Centennial and what they felt was an urgent need for the church to know Ellen White's view of the 1888 history, they decided that their work should be made available in printed form. This is why they revised, updated, and printed their manuscript in 1987. During the Centennial year nearly ten thousand copies found their way around the world.

The Ministry book review was decidedly favorable (the original draft before Ministry editing was even more favorable). It closed expressing the sincere desire of the authors: "They hope that the revised 1888 RE-EXAMINED will prove to be a contribution in due season." Comments and appraisals from around the world indicate that many believe that "season" has come.

The overtones of the February Ministry and certain admissions in the Adventist Review made clear that at last some long-suppressed truths concerning our 1888 history were being openly admitted.

For example, never before has the church been frankly told that "in many ways the Minneapolis meeting was a disaster ... [with] open rebellion against Ellen White on the part of a large number of our ministers." Never before has the church realized that during the 1888 crisis Ellen White was at one time so distressed because of the rebellion against the Lord that she wondered whether He might have to call out another movement. (A sad result of continuing opposition to the message is that unprecedented numbers of church members are now wondering the same thing; they need help).

Frankly we are now told that the course taken in 1888 "was an insult to the Spirit of God," and that the light from heaven by some of the leading brethren was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ: "Had Christ been before them, they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ."

Such an unholy history is staggering to contemplate. The reason is that past history always impinges on current history. These admissions had not been officially published since 1896 when this statement first appeared in Special Testimonies, Series A. During this century such frankness has not been prominent. The church must be grateful that the Centennial has opened up that which has been under cover for decades, even denied.

Another encouraging note of progress was the Ministry article on "Corporate Repentance" which recognized that there is indeed a biblical basis for seeing the church as a corporate body at least possibly in need of repentance. The great mass of the church body has moved forward, at least a little. There has been some progress in appreciating the meaning of Christ's appeal in Revelation 3. Our ultimate confrontation is with Him.

Corporate and denominational repentance is Good News, as certain as sunrise when we know the depth of our our sin for what it is. The experience will be the repentance of the ages

(Zechariah 12:10). It is because the Laodicean generation thinks it can see and has no need of eyesalve that it remains cozily lukewarm; and our ears have been so heavy that we have not heard the insistent divine knocking at our door.

The Centennial Year Proceeds

As devout Jews continue to look for their Messiah to come, so devout Seventh-day Adventists have continued to pray for the latter rain to come. In February the Review ran a perceptive series of four articles, "Preparing for the Latter Rain." Here was serious thought—revival and reformation are our urgent spiritual needs, here are steps to receiving the Holy Spirit, here is a role for leaders in reforming the church. But what the Lord wanted to do in 1888 was conspicuously not a part of the series. No relationship was recognized. In fact, as the Centennial year drew to a close another prominent book firmly denied that the 1888 message was the beginning of the latter rain (see Postlogue).

If faithful Jews such as those at the Wailing Wall in old Jerusalem could believe that their long-awaited Messiah actually came nearly 2000 years ago and that their ancestors rejected Him, the Jewish nation would be aroused overnight. If the Adventist Church could sense that "the beginning" of the long-awaited latter rain actually came in 1888 and that we "insulted" that presence of the Holy Spirit and treated Him as the Jews treated Christ, this church would be aroused world-wide. We would see how lightly we have understood our present condition, and repentance would take on a new dimension. The magnitude of our sin would appall us, and with genuine humbleness of heart we would appreciate what the Lord has said.

When the details of our history are read with clear understanding, we will see that the reception of the Holy Spirit a century ago was implicit in the reception of the objective message itself. When the message is truly received today, the gift of the Holy Spirit will be inherent in it, and "preparing for the latter rain" will cease to be only a future hoped-for, subjective experience. But this was precisely

what the official Centennial policy excluded; Jones' and Waggoner's actual message was silenced in every way possible.

Ellen White uses horrendous language in speaking of our heart-attitude toward the Christ of Adventism. She speaks of Him as "injured and insulted Deity." "The course that had been pursued at Minneapolis was cruelty to the Spirit of God." it is no more appropriate for us to petition heaven to grant the blessing of the latter rain without proper repentance and restitution than it is for the Jews to petition heaven to send them their Messiah without the same.

The reaction of our church members to the special January issue of the Review was mixed. Comments from readers in the "Letters" column disclosed a wide variation in Adventist thinking, a disunity serious and tragic in its own right. For some it was "praise be to God!," "I am so happy," while others considered the theology confusing and "in need of clarification." One correspondent wrote, "I find no 1888 message in your special

issue!" Another wrote, "I was almost pleased ... until I read it, and noted the distorted view presented. Conspicuous by their absence were any articles or quotes by A. T. Jones or E. J. Waggoner, the messengers whom God selected to bear the original 1888 message."

By mid-year the planned commemoration was widely heralded, for the meeting was to begin November 2. "Everyone" was invited.

But the July 7 announcement in the Review gave the usual boastful recital that at Minneapolis I "the church experienced a turning point at its General Conference session.... Jones' and Waggoner's emphasis on Christ's righteousness gave a new thrust to the Adventist message." This upside-down history raises questions about what the Lord's messenger states about the actual "turning point:" "At Minneapolis ... Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a large measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit." As surely as it is impossible to separate the gospel from the history of the cross, so it is

impossible to appreciate the 1888 message apart from the truth of its history.

The Review announced that "in an effort to recreate the ambience of the 1888 meeting, a pulpit from the historical meeting will be used." But the wooden lectern proved to be a substitute for the living message itself. As a coincidence the announcement stated: "One hundred years later—still waiting the Second Coming—the church will gather at Minneapolis." There is a crescendo of questioning as to why we are "still awaiting" that blessed event.

As time pressed on, the September 1 issue printed a full page invitation to "Celebration '88." The meeting was to be "an opportunity to renew your faith in Christ our righteousness—to discover how this beautiful faith can be applied to life.... This centennial event is designed to revitalize Adventist laity and leaders for finishing the gospel mission." Noble purposes, worthy plans. If the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," how is it possible to "revitalize" our experience by talking

about it without presenting it? Only the objective message itself as the Lord sent it can motivate us to "go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God."

The "celebration" disclosed unconscious seeds of confusion which nourish lukewarmness and bear increasingly bitter fruit at all levels of the world church. To bolster our assurance of progress we have searched for decades for new slogans such as, "To celebrate the joy of discovery in Christ" (meaning?), "How can I apply righteousness by faith to my daily life?.....Alive in Christ1 ... literally implemented during the conference." The "still small voice" must somehow penetrate beyond these formulas.

The September Reviews brought much for the church to ponder. A three-part series raised the question, "100 Years: What Have We Learned?" "After 100 years have we learned the lessons God intended for us in Minneapolis?" The caution was expressed that "grace [can] be cheapened,

obedience be brushed aside," and "not one of the good works of the saints will add to Christ's righteousness. Not one will qualify us to have a place among the redeemed.... Have we learned this lesson? Many Adventists have a pre-1888 religion."

Our post-1888 history demonstrates that a post-1888 religion that lacks the 1888 truths is little better. A reaction against legalism is the natural trend of history (we have witnessed this in our generation). But without the genuine "most precious message" the Lord sent, that reaction drives us into the Evangelicalism of the Sunday-keeping churches. The Review stated: "In this centennial year God is calling us to revival—and it will begin with the message He sent us 100 years ago." Truer words could not be spoken. But where was the message?

The next article sounded for the second time a particularly serious note. The church does have a "corporate identity." Christ's righteousness "should lead us to value the church rather than denigrate it.

... Having committed ourselves to Jesus, we no longer stand alone.... We become part of something much larger—the church.... The church is precious because Christ is the head."

A living faith in Christ as our true Leader, and love to each other, will acquire the meaning of "we" instead of "they," as Christ intended. And if the church is indeed a "corporate entity," it follows that the church will experience a corporate repentance. Step by step we come closer to reality.

However, this same article proceeded to denigrate the 1888 message by casting its "messenger" in the role of an offender. No evidence was cited to uphold the tragic accusation that Jones failed to grasp the "corporate nature of the church." The charge was again based on *From 1888 to Apostasy* which supports its case only by innuendo (page 179). (The author of the book stated clearly in another periodical his avowed purpose of destroying Jones's credibility: "I was doing my best to demonstrate that Jones was aberrant from beginning to end.")

With a biographer cherishing a goal to tear down the character of a man described by Ellen White as the "Lord's messenger" with "heavenly credentials," the Review introduced to the "corporate" body of the church another controversy to scatter and divide us. Well could the Review inquire, "After 100 years, what have we learned?"

The third article assured us, "The glorious message of Christ's all-sufficient righteousness, which the Lord tried to bring to us 100 years ago, has won widespread acceptance." Several questions immediately confront thoughtful readers:

(1) Although denied in denominational books for forty years, it is now recognized that the Lord failed to accomplish what He tried to do 100 years ago. But what caused the failure? Did the Lord make a mistake by choosing the wrong "delegated messengers," or did the leadership rebel against His leading?

(2) What was rejected? Was it a "doctrine"

warmed up from the sixteenth century and from contemporary Sunday-keeping churches, or was it the beginning of the latter rain and loud cry, something far greater than popular "evangelical" concepts? (This has now become a topic of serious discussion).

(3) To say that what "the Lord tried to bring us 100 years ago" has since "won widespread acceptance" creates further serious discrepancies. If the Lord tried and failed in 1888, at what point in our history did He succeed? And if He succeeded, why is the church still lukewarm, still hoping that some day yet future the latter rain will come?

The article closes with a perceptive thought: "Minneapolis points us to important lessons. To fail to heed them is to repeat the failures of 100 years ago."

Amen.

More articles poured forth in Reviews as though the editorial policy was firmly set to

destroy the credibility of the 1888 message. A four-part series began September 8 which boldly warned readers to beware of the message of Jones and Waggoner. Although "in the century since [1888] the everlasting gospel has warmed hearts and comforted consciences," "unfortunately, fires of fanaticism and extremism ... have flourished" with their roots in the Jones and Waggoner message. "Trouble over the gospel came through [them], the very ones God employed to proclaim the 1888 message."

The charges become more serious with each sentence. The Lord must have made a terrible mistake in choosing His "delegated messengers": "These men abused the essential truth of 'Christ in you,¹ plunging into pantheism.... Jones and Waggoner posed a formidable threat to Adventist doctrine and leadership. By God's grace the church survived that apostasy." while it is true that both messengers eventually lost their way, Ellen White decidedly lays the blame "in a great degree" on their opposers in the General Conference and insists that their message from 1888-1896 was not

in any way the cause nor did it contain seeds of error.

Almost beyond belief, it is amazing that we celebrate a Centennial by denigrating the principals and their message which we celebrate! Has any nation or church in history celebrated a centennial by casting contempt on those who made the history they celebrate? As Jeremiah asks, "Consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing." The Lord says "My people" do strange things. Anyone who has read even a portion of the 1888 writings will sense that something somewhere is seriously askew.

Five responses found their way into the letters column. The author of the series was asked why there should be such innuendo against the Lord's "delegated messengers," "whom God has commissioned," messengers having "heavenly credentials"? Why should hundreds of Ellen White statements which clearly endorse their ministry be negated? Why should an indictment of the 1888 message be perpetuated in this underground

fashion as it has been for a century?

The author replied personally to one questioner: "I base [my convictions] on the book *From 1888 to Apostasy*, which is regarded as the most authoritative source we have on what happened in 1888 and the succeeding years." When asked for a specific statement of Ellen White to support the indictment, he evaded the question, saying "it's all there" in the book. Indeed, the Centennial committee "regarded" the book as "the most authoritative source" for judging the 1888 message and history, replacing Dr. Froom's *Movement of Destiny* which held that place two decades ago.

No responsible writer claims for Jones and Waggoner more than Ellen White does, but should anyone claim less? They were not prophets, nor infallible, nor were they perfect (nor are any of us); but during the years of her endorsements they surely must have been what she said they were, "the Lord's delegated messengers" with unusual "heavenly credentials." To insist that Ellen White

found fault with their message of Christ's righteousness is to inject into her writings inferences which are simply not there. The Lord has provided no way for us to change our history, Ellen White's testimony, or the actual thesis of the 1888 message as the messengers delivered it.

Yet another serious article appeared in September—a thoughtful two-part editorial which arouses concern in the heart of every true Adventist. Why should Sabbath schools across North America suffer an increasing "paucity of attendance?" Are the abundant empty seats "a sign of a going, vibrant program?" "And the trend is not getting any better.... Sabbath school attendance in North America is in a 15- to 20-year decline, possibly reaching all-time lows." Further: "Sabbath school possibly is entering the most critical, pivotal period in the 135 years since James White established the first Adventist one in Rochester, New York, in 1853."

The question is raised as to whether Sabbath school "has outlived its usefulness for the majority

of Adventists?" The answer is "a clear no!" But what to do?

Four options: "1. Maintain the status quo; 2. Revitalize the present program; 3. Abandon Sabbath school's present format entirely; 4. Eliminate Sabbath school." Few would choose this last drastic measure but "the majority of Seventh-day Adventists on the books in North America are effectively doing so already by their nonattendance," even though many of these do attend church. But what about church? "Sabbath morning church attendance is nothing to brag about (though it is higher than the Sabbath school attendance), as it hovers around 50 percent of membership across North America."

The corporate body must plumb its conscience for answers to these crucial questions. At the same time another serious question must be asked. What does Sabbath school and church attendance have to do with the dynamics of our "Centennial"? The answer is, much in every way.

These facts remind us that there is no way to say honestly that "in 1888 the church experienced a turning point at its General Conference," unless we say it turned the wrong way. We may speak glowingly of Harvest 90 and its implementation in all Divisions and Unions of the world. But no matter what the grand total of overseas membership may be now or in the 1990s, if half of our membership in the leading home base of North America have become merely names in books and if most of these who do attend are lukewarm, we cannot call this the fruit of "widespread acceptance" of the latter rain message. The popular saying is, "What California is today, the world will be tomorrow." The disease of apathetic lukewarmness cannot be clinically isolated in North America. Given a little time, it is inevitable that this spiritual AIDS virus must infect the Third World church unless the Holy Spirit soon brings repentance, revival, and reformation.

An indifferent attitude toward the Sabbath School and the functions of the church demonstrates a present widespread unconcern for

the final atonement and the cleansing of the sanctuary. The Adventist conscience would not dare belabor this point. This condition imparts to the call of the True Witness a meaning not yet perceived—"be zealous therefore, and repent."

In offering four "options" for saving the Sabbath school, the Review did not consider the possibility that the "school" aspect of Sabbath school might deserve the greatest attention: studying the "third angel's message in verity" could renew it so that it might recover its original impetus.

Nothing could have been more appropriate to the Centennial year than to devote its four quarters of Sabbath school lessons to a comprehensive study of the Good News concepts that pervade the 1888 message. These "big ideas" of gospel truth could have vitalized our tired Sabbath school classes, including the youth departments.

But there came no such good fortune. Instead, some ideas seeped through into the Quarterly that

directly contradict the root 1888 concept of justification by faith. It may be said that they are not important; but the truth of justification by faith builds self-sacrificing devotion to Christ, while error therein must inevitably nourish apathy and lukewarmness. Christ said that "the truth shall make you free." We don't have far to go to find the root cause of lukewarmness! Nothing can be more vital truth than what He accomplished on His cross:

At the cross, the price of sin for the whole world was paid. Eternal life was guaranteed. But the sacrifice of Jesus is meaningless and of none effect unless His gift of salvation is accepted by the individual....

This lesson deals with the experience of salvation. No matter what Christ has done to provide salvation for the world, none of us can enjoy the benefits of His salvation until we accept and experience it ourselves.

The editors were sincere. They did not mean to

demean the sacrifice of Christ. But could statements like this find their way into print in 1988 if there had been a realization of the breakthrough "big ideas" of 1888? Those "big ideas" transcended both Calvinism and the popular Arminianism of Sunday-keeping churches and much of Adventism. Similar Arminian concepts colored the Quarterly frequently with ideas that fall short of the Good News that the Lord sent this people in 1888.

These Arminian ideas are indeed "orthodox" in that the vast majority of our workers and members traditionally believe them. In that respect, the editors were on target. But the actual 1888 message dared to believe truth that went beyond the Reformers, closer to the New Testament writers.

Jones and Waggoner saw a grander truth in the cross of Christ. They perceived that "all men" already "enjoy the benefits of His salvation" whether or not they accept Him. All life on this planet is the purchase of His cross! Unless their life itself is "meaningless," the cross is already

meaningful to "all men." They await only the News that tells them so, of what it has already done for them, not merely what it might provisionally do for them if they take the initiative by doing something right first.

No way can the great sacrifice of Calvary be "of none effect" to the unbelieving world at large. For "all men" Christ "hath brought life ... to light through the gospel;" further, for those who believe He has also brought "immortality." He is "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "The judicial action, following upon the one offence, issued in a verdict of condemnation, but the act of grace, following upon so many misdeeds, issued in a verdict of ... acquittal and life for all men." He is the Lamb of God who still bears the sin of the world itself. "Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every

loaf. It is reflected in every water-spring."

Here is the mighty motivation that the gospel imparts to human hearts. This motivation alone will grip modern secular man who is obsessed with his fantastic material wealth and worldly pleasures. Only thus can he begin to sense that he is already infinitely and eternally in debt to the Son of God for every pleasure he enjoys, and that even every dollar he thinks he owns he possesses only by virtue of what happened on the cross. When they hear this News, many more than we suppose will begin to say "Thank You" and will demonstrate it by a life of devotion to Christ and His truth.

Justification by faith becomes a heart-appreciation of this grand sacrifice already legally effective for "all men." To respond, to appreciate it, is the faith "which works by love" and purifies the soul. But until we do respond, every rose, every raindrop, every ray of sunlight, every breath we draw, is by His grace.

This is not said to be critical of the Quarterly

editors in any sense, or to pick flaws because of "minutiae." It is only to recognize that the truth of the cross is the heart of the gospel. If that sacrifice is "meaningless and of none effect" until the sinner takes the initiative to be saved, then justification must "come by the law," by an egocentric motivation, and "Christ is dead in vain." Paul refuses thus to "frustrate the grace of God," for frustration here is the essence of legalism.

The New Testament idea is that if anyone is saved at last, it will be due to God's initiative. If anyone is lost at last, it will be due to his own initiative; he has thrown away what Christ has already placed in his hands. As will be noted later, the General Conference president deemed the matter so important that he devoted a major section of his Week of Prayer reading to an unprecedented synopsis of the authentic 1888 concept.

The 1888 ideas of Christ's righteousness are almost totally lacking in the popular Sunday School lessons of Evangelicals. Nevertheless, Evangelicals are sure that they are teaching

righteousness by faith. Seldom if ever during the 20th century have those unique 1888 truths succeeded in penetrating our own Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly.

Could this be a reason why the Review was forced to recognize that Sabbath school attendance and interest are falling?

In commemoration of what happened in Minneapolis in 1888 the North American Division made plans to hold its year-end meeting there from October 30 to November 5. The world church was alerted to this in the October Ministry. The plans as laid out indicate our thinking and how we look at our history and how we measure our present situation. Here are some of the concepts expressed:

- The 1888 session was a watershed conference on righteousness by faith.
- Some people call it a celebration but others say that what happened was a massive defeat.
- God certainly did something for the delegates and for the whole church in 1888.

- We want to recapture what took place.
- We need to learn what was wrong and what was right.
- Will this meeting enlighten those who attend as to what the message really was?
- Yes, we are trying to be as careful as we can to reconstruct the message and the spirit of the message.
- The transcripts of the messages presented in 1888 were not preserved.
- We believe that the time of the latter rain is here.
- The question was asked of one leader, How do you relate this commemoration to what 1888 RE-EXAMINED says?
- Answer: The message has gotten through. We are receiving it. The authors [of 1888 RE-EXAMINED] have done the church a service.
- We want the Centennial meeting to be like a General Conference session.

The same October Ministry told the church that the Harvest 90 program is enthusiastically accepted

and implemented in all the Divisions and Unions of the world. If the world church will unite in a total evangelistic thrust mobilizing all the pastors and millions of laypersons, and using various strategies of soul winning, the sure blessing of the Lord will come. As in sports, Divisions and Unions vie for first place in statistics. And after the goal is reached of 2,000,000 baptisms, what then?

Ever since 1950 large Third World baptisms have repeatedly been hailed as virtual evidence that the latter rain is falling, assuring us of Heaven's approval of our spiritual condition. In particular they have often been cited as the reason why there is no need for a denominational repentance. Why should we repent when such progress shows that the Lord is so manifestly pleased with the leadership of His church on earth?

Insistent questions keep prodding the Adventist conscience: suppose we were to baptize all 6 billions of earth's inhabitants, and all became as lukewarm as our home base church, would that hasten the coming of the Lord? And if large

membership accessions are an indication that the latter rain is already falling, are the megachurch Sunday-keeping denominations receiving that blessing? And why does our Lord call upon us to repent?

Before North America would gather at Minneapolis II, the world church was to have another "first-ever" meeting in Africa. The General Conference was to convene in Nairobi, Kenya for the Annual Council. Most African attendees had their first opportunity to see the General Conference in action. About 35,000 assembled on the Sabbath of the meeting.

The report described Africa as a land of millions—11.7 million square miles and 1,5 million Seventh-day Adventists. "The church is growing so rapidly that some missiologists predict that by the year 2000 we could have about 5 million members on the continent alone." This optimism carried over to the world membership. "The five-year Harvest 90 evangelistic campaign is right on track.... The Harvest 90 campaign is

almost 30 percent ahead of schedule."

The item that absorbed the church in council in Africa and which provoked the most discussion and debate was interscholastic sports. Even worldly media reports point out the potential harm in its continual stress on winning, excessive injuries, brutality, use of drugs, illegal recruitment, and constant competition. But our council faced the question of simply having "guidelines" now or a far-reaching church "policy" later, either plan constituting a radical departure from Spirit of Prophecy counsels for Christian education.

The problem does not stop with schools. Should local churches and other denominational organizations get involved in such competitive sports? Some delegates were perhaps startled to learn that for more than 20 years there have been organized sports leagues in some of the North American conferences. In spite of every effort to seek the Lord's guidance, with prayer (that the opponents in the game will be squashed?), with "Bible studies afterwards," with cautions to prevent

ill effects, the specter of competition still reigns supreme. Any team member worth his salt must win or he cannot be long respected. One college president stated that his college is now offering athletic scholarships.

But the message that we were commemorating in 1988 makes clear that the competition principle and heaven's principle run counter to each other.

There is another factor that is seldom if ever considered—deception. Every strategy of a team, or of every single player involved, works to make the opponent think certain tactics will be used, certain objects are in mind, when the real plan is the opposite. Every maneuver made is based on the deception principle. Team work crafted to deceive has now become integral in Christian education.

But what would the pioneers from Battle Creek have said if they could have entered into the debates of this council and made their speeches? Is this another case of defying Ellen White? The word of the Lord's messenger in condemning such sports

is beyond dispute. But now we are told that we live in a totally different world, and thus there is no danger in cutting our anchor.

While the church contends over this matter we may well ponder if this lack of understanding and indecision is the result of accepting or rejecting the latter rain message.

The report of the Annual Council in Nairobi was lengthy and elaborate. The meeting was heralded as a showcase for the church. It "ignited indescribable joy and excitement for African church members and government leaders alike." "For Adventists worldwide, the significance of this Annual Council is that it comes as the church is celebrating its centennial of the now-famous 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session."

The question was posed about the meeting: "What Is Its True Meaning?" There were many tributes. The closing paragraph stated: "Still another dividend may materialize in the future. The colorful nightly programs, the huge worship

service in [Nairobi] Nyayo Stadium, and the open display of church business will surely boost Kenya's evangelistic success." That is very true. But the work of that other angel who "came down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory" will be a simple message of justification by faith that itself will impress hearts, not pageantry.

The closing date for the Minneapolis II meeting was the opening date for the annual Week of Prayer which the church has observed for many decades. The readings for November 5 to 12 gave the church a mixture of concepts—some glorious, some disheartening. The Centennial commemoration provided the background for the readings. The introduction said: "For more than 10 months we have been commemorating the 1888 Minneapolis experience.... We have come to better understand and to follow God's will for His people. This has been a refreshing, reviving experience.... One hundred years is far too long for the church to reflect upon what might have been our predecessors' catalyst to victory."

The opening reading prepared by the General Conference president presented refreshing truths not generally published. The question was raised: "Are we commemorating the fact that 100 years have gone by?" The answer is sobering: "Let us remember that had we fully accepted the 1888 message and been faithful to the claims of Christ on our lives, we all should have been in our heavenly home long before this." The reading set a purpose before the church: "I hope to reveal Christ as our Substitute, Example, and Enabler, and to show how justification by faith is the third angel's message 'in verity.'"

There follow ideas impregnated with hope. Indeed, the reading deserves permanent attention by the church. Some paragraphs must be noted, for this probably marks the first time in Seventh-day Adventist history that a General Conference president has clearly articulated the true 1888 concepts of justification by faith:

This message should make plain that

justification by faith is more than a legal declaration. It does not merely declare the sinner righteous, it makes a person righteous, enabling him or her to obey the law of God. This embraces the idea that Christ's sacrifice on the cross is more than provisional. It actually cancels the condemnation that came on all members of the human family through Adam's fall, and it provides legal justification for the entire world. Thus, every sinner is eternally and infinitely in debt to Christ, whether or not he or she recognizes and acknowledges it. ... Jesus' death on the cross has redeemed the entire human race from the sentence of death.... He paid the price for everyone's sins, all at once. But God will not save us against our will....

This righteousness ... is not just a status, or a condition. It is a right standing and a right living. Jesus does not just clothe us with His pure garment; in addition, through the Holy Spirit, He comes into our hearts and takes up residence there. The new creature that we become is a Christian. We take on the divine nature; our thoughts are His

thoughts, our actions are His actions. We now share His goals and use His methods.

When the sinner sees and believes this truth, he experiences justification by faith. This includes a heart experience; it is not merely an objective entry in the books of heaven. Faith must be defined as a heart appreciation for the love of God revealed on the cross. This is distinct from the popular evangelical idea that faith is an egocentric trusting in God. Genuine New Testament faith, which was revived in the 1888 message, works by agape love. It demonstrates its genuineness by producing obedience to all the commandments of God.

Thus human hearts and lives are changed by the atonement, not by fear of destruction or hope of reward.... An individual or church cannot understand, believe, and accept the pure gospel and remain lukewarm. This is why Ellen White said when she first heard the 1888 message, "Every fiber of my heart said amen."

This portrayal of grand 1888 truth should elicit

a hearty "amen" from the lips of every Adventist.

The next reading must leave the church perplexed and confused, for it openly contradicts the preceding one. Minneapolis is said to be "a step in the right direction," but although the presentations of Jones and Waggoner provided a correction to the views of the pioneers yet "their own perspective likewise had limitations." Incredibly we are told, "They apparently lacked a clear-cut understanding of the objective and forensic nature of justification. The concept that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer and to the sinner's account when the sinner accepts Him as Saviour and Lord was not sharply defined." "They thought of Christ's righteousness as being literally infused into the believer in place of sin."

Waggoner is quoted as being confused when he says: "When God remits—sends away—sin, He does it by putting righteousness in its place. Where once was sin, now appears perfect righteousness." The glorious truth expressed clearly the day before

was now represented as error!

Jones and Waggoner are indicted, their theology counted as faulty from the very beginning, because, the article says, "Throughout their entire careers ... they thought the transaction [of forgiveness] occurred subjectively—not outside the believer." In other words, they were wrong during all the time that Ellen White endorsed them; and it is wrong for us to believe that the forgiveness of sin is the taking away of the sin.

Waggoner is condemned when he says: "The righteousness of God is declared for the remission of sins of all who believe in Jesus. He cures the disease by putting health in its place. The righteousness which is brought to the believing sinner through the gospel is the same thing exactly as the righteousness of the law, for it is witnessed by the law." Yet Jones' and Waggoner's justification by faith message was precisely what rejoiced Ellen White's heart. Their view transcended both Calvinism and Arminianism, and that transcendence is what this article condemns.

None of the opponents of the message in 1888 were so bold in denying that "most precious message." "After 100 years what have we learned?"

We are told that "the pioneers' and the view offered by Waggoner and Jones had defects, and each perspective [including the unbelieving rejectors of the message] had something to offer the other." We must virtually write off the 1888 messengers, but fortunately "Ellen White ... combined the best of both systems" (a mixture of legalism and gospel?). In other words, we need some legal-ism and some gospel, but not the pure fullstrength "most precious message" as brought by those whom Ellen White designated "the Lord's messengers" with their "heavenly credentials."

But this involves a disturbing implication: the Lord must have erred in choosing and sending them; He should have had Ellen White do it all from beginning to end. That's how it ended up, and the Lord should have known that from the

beginning. Why did He ordain an exercise in futility?

Could it be that what we are witnessing is a replay of a century ago? One day we hear an 1888 truth spoken (in this instance by the General Conference president) and the people are happy; the next day we hear a denial of it, and they are confused. In the 1888 era, the common people rejoiced to hear the message but Ellen White said they "do not know whether to come and take hold of this precious truth or not" because influential brethren contradicted it.

Church members wrote to the Review "Letters" column pointing out that Jones and Waggoner had not been allowed to say anything all during the Centennial. In its very last hours, therefore, the 1888 messengers were finally allowed one brief page each. Thank God for a tiny morsel from those who had "heavenly credentials." In the year set aside for "commemoration" of the 1888 message, these brief passages were the only reproduction of the actual "message" in any of our denominational

publications, that is, two out of 1,400 pages for the year. But let the church rejoice for those two pages! When you are starved you appreciate even a little crust of bread.

These two pages cannot be read without recognizing that there is spiritual food in the message. We must taste some of the crumbs. Let Jones say a few words from his page:

The Lord does not save us because we are so good, but because He is so good.... He saves us and makes us to reflect His own image, as bad as we are.... When you are in Christ, He is perfect, He is righteous, He is holy and never errs, and His holiness is imputed to you—is given to you. His faithfulness, His perfection is mine, but I am not that.... "Here are they that keep the commandments of God," and the faith of Jesus. That is the genuine article: that is the faith, which, in Him, endured the test. That is the test which met every fiery trial that Satan knows, and all the power that Satan could rally, that faith endured the test. So then, He comes and says to us: "You buy of Me that faith that has

endured the test, 'gold tried in the fire.'" ... How shall we buy? Read Isaiah 55:1, ... "he that hath no money; come." ... It does not cost anything. ... It cost the Lord something, however. It cost Him everything. But all this He gives us, so that it costs us nothing.... Christ is to be in us, just as God was in Him, and His character is to be in us, just as God was in Him, and His character is to be woven and transformed into us through these sufferings and temptations and trials which we meet. And God is the weaver, but not without us. It is the cooperation of the divine and the human—the mystery of God in you and me—the same mystery that was in the gospel and that is the third angel's message.... We are to have the garment as complete as He is. We are to grow up into Christ, until we all come into the unity of the faith.... How tall are we to be in character before we leave this world? As tall as Christ. "What is to be our stature? That of Christ. We are to be perfect men reaching "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." ... Let us take the blessed faith that has been tried, and all that he tells us, for it is all our own. God has given it. It is mine. It is yours. Let us thank Him

and be glad.

Now a few words from E. J. Waggoner's page (originally published in the Signs of the Times, December 28, 1888):

No one can keep the commandments without faith in Jesus except as he is driven to it by the terms of the violated law, and a sincere desire to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in him. The righteousness which is "through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9), is the only righteousness that will secure one a dwelling-place in the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell.... But will there ever be a people on the earth who have attained to that perfection of character? Indeed there will be. Says the prophet: "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth" (Zeph. 3:13). When the Lord comes there will be a company who will be found "complete in Him," having not their own righteousness, but the perfect righteousness of God, which comes by faith of Jesus Christ. To

perfect this work in the heart of individuals, and to prepare such a company, is the work of the third angel's message. That message, therefore, is not a mass of dry theories, but a living, practical reality.

Happy will those persons be who form the remnant of Israel, in whose hearts the righteousness of God's law of truth is perfected.

Overcoming sin, saying no to temptation, honoring the Saviour by obedience to His holy law, is not "perfectionism," although it is frequently derided as such in our publications. This message not only calls for high standards, it reveals the grace that enables them to be lived.

There might have been hundreds of pages of such heart-gripping truth provided to the church in the year commemorating the 1888 session, but it was not to be. Is there still today an unconscious hatred of the men and their message, as there was a century ago? Perhaps even more serious, do we dread a confrontation as the light of that full, pure message itself comes face to face with the sparks of

our own kindling?

Their pure, authentic gospel brings all distortions and counterfeits into judgment. Could that be the reason why our periodicals and publishing houses all but refused to let the 1888 message find expression during the Centennial?

The excerpts from Jones and Waggoner came in the beautiful special "Commemorative Issue" of the Review dated November 3, which was given to those who attended the "celebration" in Minneapolis. Jones and Waggoner appeared over the platform in large pictures hung over the podium, with Ellen White between them. Other than this they were again allowed to make no impact on the meetings.

The Centennial Commemoration Arrives

The meetings were held in Northrop Memorial Auditorium on the campus of the University of Minnesota, November 2-5. Starting Wednesday evening, November 2, at 7:30 p.m., with a highly

advertised public evangelistic meeting, the celebration was to continue through Sabbath evening. The motto for the occasion was, "Alive in Christ."

To set the tone the North American Division met at the same place for its annual yearend meeting. To pursue the four-page report of this session as given in the Review of November 24 is to be reminded of increasing problems facing the church. There were discussions of salary increases for church employees; financial needs of local congregations for church growth; and appeals to reduce the General Conference staff. Interscholastic sports among Adventist schools occupied many hours of the session. Frank observations and pointed statements were made. The constituency needed to know that less will be spent on internal operations and more on outreach programs. Failing this "will result in the drying up of some sources of income." It was plainly stated "this church faces critical challenges sufficient to tear this church apart.... We have economic challenges, fierce cultural currents, feelings of

power from numerical strength.... We can't come to the next GC session without some solutions." These are healthy, candid observations.

Membership for the North America Division now stands at around 720,000. Harvest 90 was appraised as "going forward." In contrast to the membership, the final report of the year for the church paper indicated a paid circulation of less than 43,000. There is no way to know how this might compare with Adventist subscriptions to other periodicals but a church membership that is not sufficiently interested in the affairs of the corporate body to monitor its proceedings and keep in touch with its health is a lukewarm membership in need of spiritual help.

The Celebration Day

As the NAD year-end meeting closed on Wednesday, it blended into the first Centennial meeting at 7:00 p.m. as the auditorium filled with church members from across the continent as well as some visitors from the local general public. Two

years of planning were about to go on stage.

There was good reason to hold public meetings in the evening. Extensive advertising invited the public from the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. But for Adventists with an interest in their church history and having come to Minneapolis in order to learn more about the 1888 message, the opening meeting had no relevance, no connection with the "centennial commemoration." For many it was a disappointment. The three remaining evening meetings for the general public were of the same style, spectacular, theatrical, with dramatic stories. The speaker spoke mainly to Adventists Friday night, claiming that he was delivering the authentic 1888 message.

Study of the printed program indicates there were fourteen periods listed for the entire celebration, plus Sabbath school, the worship service and the closing meeting. These fourteen sessions included:

(1) Four evening meetings which were given over

- to the general public;
- (2) three panel discussions of the overall topic, "Fundamentals of Faith;"
 - (3) two forty-five minute morning devotions, and
 - (4) three study hours.

For some reason the two meetings listed for Friday afternoon were cancelled. This reduced the total sessions to twelve in all. The Friday afternoon cancellation of two meetings that promised enlightenment about the message disappointed many who had traveled long distances to attend.

Of the three study hours presented, two were taken up with a presentation of the thesis of the book FROM 1888 TO APOSTASY, The Case of A. T. Jones. As already mentioned, the avowed purpose of this book is to "demonstrate that Jones was aberrant from beginning to end." Consequently the total menu for the "celebration" brought little to the audience with reference to the actual "precious message" of 100 years before, and less genuine appreciation for it.

Perhaps the best that can be done is to quote a few portions from the actual presentations, since all were tape recorded. On Thursday the audience was told: "Our centennial challenge is not to debate who was right and who was wrong in 1888 or to quibble about the detailed nuances of the nature of Christ. It is to lift Him up so we must raise it high, a rich-red-blood-stained-banner, we must hold it up a banner etched with the cross. We must lift it up and advertise the victories He has won."

The question that looms behind all others is this: Is He the Bible Christ or the Roman Catholic, ecumenical "Christ"? The scriptures are clear that there is a true Christ and a false christ and to know the difference is to know the Spirit of God as distinct from the counterfeit (1 John 4:1-3).

Again, words of truth were spoken: "In 1888, [a] crisis for the church, we saw again the leadership of God in this movement. Just imagine Ellen White ... taking her position with these upstarts, Jones and Waggoner, bucking powerful men like Butler and Uriah Smith. My dear friends,

if a divine hand was not guiding that lady she would not have done it. We thank God for what she did."

Amen.

At least three times speakers made reference to the nature of Christ, denigrating it as unimportant. One speaker said we should not quibble about it. This translates into saying we should not present the 1888 view at all. Note carefully how another speaker distorted and therefore ridiculed essential key elements of that 1888 message of Christ's righteousness, creating a straw man by manufacturing concepts that no responsible Adventist has ever advocated:

He [Christ] could not have come exactly like us because we are all born in sin and iniquity. Each one of us needs a Saviour, and if He had come exactly like us, 100 percent, He Himself would have been crippled as a Saviour.. Do you see that? Is it not clear? So He gives us His righteousness. We do not become "little Christs," we do not

become little Saviours. We trust in Him. And as I see it today, I thank God for a stable leadership in this church that has not let it get away into these tangents so we become a theological laughing stock of the Protestant world.

Astounding! From Jones' and Waggoner's wooden pulpit a speaker distorts the heart of their message to make it the "theological laughing stock of the Protestant world" (however, a number of keen modern Protestant theologians agree essentially with their 1888 concept of the nature of Christ, so that we have no reason to be embarrassed).

To point up the confusion, the next day another speaker courageously presented that which had been defined as laughingstock-theology. He was bold enough to proclaim emphatically the real humanity and righteousness of Christ:

He assumed the liabilities of the human family.... "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son

in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). The message came in our own sinful flesh. ... He had to enter into the human situation fully, and identify with us fully. He had to be tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He had to be acquainted with every detail, every function of the apparatus. He came into humanity at ground zero, born of a woman, born under the law. He began immediately to work out a perfect righteousness so He could repair the apparatus in every respect, and now when the law is turned on the apparatus is working perfectly. So the righteousness of God is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Thank God for this clear statement! Nevertheless, leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist church differ and are in contradiction about a basic gospel truth.

There is no way to put into print the many musical numbers that were presented. Choirs bused and flown in from far and near, large and small,

singers young and old, musical classics and music less than classics—all were presented as a part of the celebration. There was probably far too much music if any comparison is to be made with Minneapolis I. The hope that Minneapolis II would make our members aware of the truth presented in 1888 could not be realized through musical renditions. Increasingly, hours of musical entertainment mask our soul-hunger for the gospel.

As the meetings drew to a close speakers began to make serious comments. Perhaps some were the result of circumstances, a spur-of-the-moment motivation producing words which would not have been spoken with more reflection. But the history has been written and it cannot be altered. Here are some unedited thoughts expressed on the tape recordings:

Why celebration '88, what does it mean? Are we going to continue to repeat some of those acts of rebellion or apostasy that we have been guilty of these last 100 years? We can't do much about 1888. That is a matter of historical record. But ... we can

do something about it from here on. God forgive us if we don't learn the lesson. People have said, ... "Can't we get finished with the 1888 business? Why do we have so many books this year, so many articles, what's the need for all this? We've got a great job to do. Let's put that behind us." ... There is only one way to put it behind us and that is to learn the lessons of 1888. Unless and until that happens—Lord You had better keep 1888 before us, and this message.... This church needs a victory.... It's about to happen. ... [At the Mt. Carmel experience it was agreed that] the "god" that brings down fire will be really the true God.... [The people shouted] "The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God."... That's what happened here at this celebration '88. We have acknowledged that the Lord, He is God. The Lord is our righteousness.... The Lord wants to send down fire. It is going to be in response to trust, faith and prayer.

This dramatic rehearsal of ancient Israel's experience brought tears of embarrassment to some who were present, but others expressed high

elation in the final moments of the celebration.

The symbolism at the close left many perplexed. Every segment of church leadership was called to the platform in re-dedication, General Conference officers, vice-presidents, departmental directors, lay members and pastors on the General Conference committee, union presidents, conference presidents, publishing house managers, health care institution administrators, university and college presidents, and pastors, each to receive an embellished brass torch. This was to betoken commitment "to the proclamation of the great truth of righteousness by faith," a dedication to "bear the torch of truth aloft, to declare Christ our righteousness."

The fire department of Minneapolis would never allow actual fire in brass torches in a public auditorium, but nonetheless many felt an uneasy concern, remarking how the symbolism seemed appropriate—fancy torches, but no fire.

Minneapolis II Is Now History

Minneapolis I had a life span of 100 years and continues to hold the interest of those who know what happened. There may be a question as to the place Minneapolis II will hold in the Adventist church. It is certain that the results did not "send down fire." Another hope expressed awaits fulfillment: "As the mighty Mississippi broadens and deepens as it leaves Minneapolis, so may the message we have heard this week flow out from here throughout North America in broader and deeper streams."

Further comment in the same Review makes a comparison with the past:

At the conclusion of the Minneapolis session 100 years ago, evaluations of the meeting varied greatly. Ellen White, however, saw it as an opportunity largely lost because of the unchristian attitude of most of the delegates. The spirit of Celebration '88 was vastly different. Perhaps it will mark another milestone in the history of the SDA

Church.

Ellen White was right in seeing Minneapolis I as "an opportunity largely lost," otherwise there would not have been another 100 years. It can be truthfully stated also that "evaluations of the [1988] meeting varied greatly." Aside from the few who were in attendance, it seems that hardly a ripple has been made in the church consciousness. Indeed more Adventists do not know about this "celebration" than do know. Apparently the Lord has ordained that the truth of the original Minneapolis meeting must yet impress the church until the end of time.

Before the year was out another author felt constrained to surround with more confusion the glory of the incarnation when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." That which was clear in the 1888 era was now made nebulous. An article in the December 15 Review advised the church "How to Spot Error, a Checklist to Aid in Detecting False Teachings." Whatever merit there is in the list as a whole, one item plays havoc with and produces

uncertainty about the role of our Saviour. The error to be shunned seems to be a truth of the 1888 message, stated thus:

Sometimes arguments are presented with only two options, although it may not be essential to agree with either position. The truth may lie somewhere in between or may be a blend of both views. For example, did the incarnate Christ possess the nature of Adam before the Fall or after the Fall? As both human and divine, Jesus' nature was unique. There has never been another like Him. Some things that tempt us did not tempt Him, for His nature recoiled against sin. Yet He was tempted in ways we cannot be tempted (e.g., to use His divine power to save Himself).

"Jesus' nature was unique"? That is precisely what Roman Catholicism says. The truth is, His character was "unique," but the inspired word is that He "took on His sinless nature our sinful nature." This article boldly contradicts what Scripture clearly says:

He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.... For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. ... In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.... For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Can the remnant church go through to the end perpetuating confusion about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? Is the nature of the true Christ so elusive that the "seed of Abraham" can not know their relation to Him? When the Word says He was "made like unto His brethren," it cannot mean unlike His brethren. Back in the theological shadows looms the specter of Augustinian-

Calvinist-Lutheran original sin.

As time goes on into our second century since the "beginning" of the latter rain, this issue will become increasingly important. The enemy of Christ is determined that His people shall not know the true Christ, for to know Him is to know God, and that is life eternal. Increasingly, the published uncertainty and even antagonism about the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness make clear that it has either not yet been comprehended, or is in process of a second major rejection.

The last issue of the Review for 1988 brought some serious frank appraisals. Two stand out in relation to the 1888 issues:

The North American Division had the lowest level of baptisms in nine years during 1987, the last full-year report available. Church leaders are so concerned that for the first time they will pour \$3 million into local churches for soul-winning endeavors beginning January 1, 1989. Surely the lowest number of baptisms in nine years cannot be

attributed to "the loud cry."

The second appraisal is found in one of the clearest all-embracing editorials of the year concerning our history and our future. It was a humble, honest statement:

After squandering a perfect opportunity in 1888 to fully accept and proclaim the message of righteousness by faith in Christ, the church hoped this centennial year would be different, that it would mark the beginning of a renewed emphasis upon preaching and living the heaven-sent message.

Throughout the year, Adventist magazines, books sermons, camp meetings, Week of Prayer readings, Nairobi Annual Council, and the Minneapolis 1888 Celebration heralded the message of salvation by faith in Christ's righteousness. Only time will tell whether or not we as a church embraced this truth, or if we, like our counterparts, passed by this opportunity, too-rejecting the message that Ellen White said is "the

loud cry" to revitalize the church and help spread the gospel.

If we can sense "whether or not we as a church embraced this truth, or if we, like our counterparts, passed by this opportunity," if this can be understood, there is immediate hope for a new day.

If we understood and proclaimed that message in all its high-fidelity realism, the majority of people in North America could not say that they have never understood what Seventh-day Adventists are trying to say. Reality should mute our vaunted boasting of progress.

Serious reflection proclaims that what we have is the same problem that ancient Israel had—confusion with Baal-worship. No fire has come! We are the children of our forefathers, and the message of the Lord to them was clear:

The prejudices and opinions that prevailed at Minneapolis [I] are not dead by any means; the seeds sown there in some hearts are ready to spring

into life and bear a like harvest. The tops have been cut down, but the roots have never been eradicated, and they still bear their unholy fruit to poison the judgment, pervert the perceptions, and blind the understanding of those with whom you connect, in regard to the message and the messengers. When, by thorough confession, you destroy the root of bitterness, you will see light in God's light.... Baal, Baal, is the choice. The religion of many among us will be the religion of apostate Israel.... The true religion, the only religion of the Bible, that teaches forgiveness only through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, that advocates righteousness by the faith of the Son of God, has been slighted, spoken against, ridiculed, and rejected.

What besides the lingering "prejudices and opinions that prevailed at Minneapolis" 100 years ago could account for this almost complete embargo on the writings of Jones and Waggoner throughout the Centennial year? Why should a book set the tone of the Centennial that a writer in Spectrum recognized is so loaded with "prejudicial terms as apostasy, anarchy, extremist, and

pantheism" attributed to "the Lord's delegated messengers" that "Jones is painted as such an extremist that the reader may recoil from anything that bears his name or shows even the slightest resemblance to his teachings"?

Yet the book does not explain how such an "extremist" or "anarchist" could become for a decade one of the most powerful leaders in Adventism.

The 1888 message makes its greatest impact on youth. And among our youth lies our greatest spiritual challenge.

Our youth literature editors are very skillful journalists; Insight rejoices to have won many first-place awards in the Associated Church Press/Evangelical Press Association competitions. There is no question about the ability, the devotion, and sincerity of all our editors and writers. And many excellent, well-written articles appeared in Insight during 1988.

Did any of those articles or editorials let the unique 1888 Good News concepts of Christ's righteousness get through?

The answer has to be almost totally negative. It is not the editors' fault. There is such widespread confusion among us as to just what was that 1888 message that every unique truth therein is questioned or denied somewhere. This is the natural consequence of its being withheld so long from contemporary publication. And editors will naturally feel defensive, none wishing to admit that his or her magazine failed to present what Ellen White enthusiastically called "a most precious message."

An objective analysis of all our 1988 youth publications demonstrates that the authentic 1888 concepts almost never found expression. As is the case with the Sabbath school lessons, our youth were often subjected to less than Good News concepts.

Pre-marital sex is very rightly a prominent

topic in Insight, for sexual temptation is a terrific problem to American youth, of whom some 70% are said to be into fornication (according to former Surgeon General Everett Koop). Non-Adventist Evangelical leaders such as Josh McDowell are devoting valiant all-out efforts to try to stem the torrential tide of sexual immorality among Christian youth (he says that 60% of them are into fornication). It is proper that Insight also be concerned.

It is not fair to accuse Insight of favoring immorality. Neither is perfection to be expected of any editor's judgment. But Insight seems content to publish much Good Advice with a minimum of Good News. This is certainly not because of any conscious editorial purpose to "frustrate the grace of God," but is the natural result of a vacuum created by the absence of the 1888 truths.

Consider the issue of November 12, 1988. To the best of her ability a very capable author handles the fornication topic, "Why I Wouldn't." She follows Lawrence Kohlberg's "stages of moral

reasoning," distilling them into six, the last being "Trust in God's Direction." Stages 1-5 of course are all egocentric motivations of one kind or another; number 6 goes beyond Kohlberg and introduces the Christian one, God's "counsel that it's best for everyone if I wait until marriage."

It is here that the author seems to feel sincerely that she must inject some genuinely Bad News into all this Good Advice. This is not her fault; she is only perpetuating the longheld traditions of non-1888 Adventism, which have frequently impregnated Insight and our other publications.

She must warn that there is a problem with this last option of God's "counsel." It's difficult to do what He says: "It isn't easy or convenient to maintain.... It's easy to do the expedient thing [that is, give in to temptation to pre-marital sex]." For decades Insight has sincerely reiterated the idea that the real meaning of the Good News is that there's Bad News in it, it's hard to be a genuine Christian because of abounding sin. This conviction is deeply rooted throughout the church

and is often widely defended with zealous vigor. Much more abounding grace has gotten little attention, and is even said to be the "teaching of the devil".

In stark contrast to Insight's thesis the 1888 message clearly discloses the "much more abounding grace" of a Saviour whose "yoke is easy," whose "burden is light," and whose Good News is so good that knowing and believing it actually makes it "hard" to commit fornication or adultery. There is no way under heaven that Insight could tell our youth that Christ's "yoke" or "burden" "isn't easy" unless that much more abounding grace of the gospel somehow has been eclipsed. Youth desperately need Good News like Paul proclaimed in Galatians 5:17. But our standard way of reading the text is backwards from the 1888 way:

The flesh lusteth [strives! against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other-, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

What Paul actually says is this: the much more abounding grace of God through the Holy Spirit is stronger than the lust of the flesh that prompts to abounding sin. The one who understands and believes the Good News as it is in Christ" cannot do the [evil] things" that the flesh prompts him to do. "Walk in the Spirit," says Paul in the previous verse, and the apostle guarantees that you "shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The flesh will strive to tempt, but the Holy Spirit's striving turns out to be stronger.

In the 1888 concepts, the ten commandments cease to be stern prohibitions of "Thou shalt not" do this or that on pain of being zapped by God's hot-tempered wrath, and they become ten marvelous promises of victory over temptations to self-destructive sin.

The great controversy between Christ and Satan is distilled into a drop of Good News so good that many of our writers and editors seem unable to believe it: It is impossible for a believer in Christ to

give in to temptations to immorality if he or she appreciates the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ. This is not because he or she has become a "goody-goody" or a blasphemous "little Christ" (as those among us say who deride obedience), but simply because "the agape of Christ constraineth us" to the extent that we cannot "henceforth live unto" self, but are motivated to live "unto Him" who died for us and rose again. This is the 1888 idea of justification by faith. It works, especially with youth!

We have made the mistake of the ages if we imagine that youth are too young to appreciate that love! Or that abounding sin is too strong for much more abounding grace to break through into modern youth consciousness.

An analysis of our periodicals and lessons for younger children reveals the predominant anti-1888 motif of "obey and live." God is primarily concerned about the child doing this or that, and seldom is Good News proclaimed that motivates the child to believe, a heart-reconciliation that

underlies true obedient behavior.

What Will History Say Tomorrow?

As a part of the Centennial commemoration another new book came from the church presses, unique in 100 years, defiantly contradictory of over one thousand previously published pages. The membership had been told for decades that 1888 was really a "victory." But this new publication, *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888*, gives a sharply different view and, puts our history into another focus.

Here are new and startling concepts, in words that are beyond dispute:

It staggers the imagination that delegates to the General Conference session [of 1888] could treat the Holy Spirit shamefully, insult and injure Him, and even figuratively crucify Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit.... Many of the delegates to the Minneapolis conference became accomplices in the sin of rejecting the message of righteousness by

faith, through action according to the laws of group dynamics. ... It is not a pleasant thought, but nevertheless it is true that at the Minneapolis conference leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church reenacted the role of the Jewish leaders in the day of Jesus. ... At the Minneapolis conference in 1888 it was the leading brethren who spearheaded the opposition against the message of righteousness by faith. They corralled the majority of the ministers around them and through these men influenced even many of the laypeople.

This understanding of Adventist history parallels the thesis of the original manuscript 1888 RE-EXAMINED as presented in 1950 to the General Conference Committee. But in the decades following, as the contents of this document became known, growing official opposition to it permeated our publications. Thus in 1962 the General Conference president told the world church: "It has ... been suggested by a few—entirely erroneously—that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has gone astray in failing to grasp this great fundamental teaching [the 1888 message]."

This was followed in 1966 by another volume devoted to the same acceptance-thesis. The author, a General Conference vice-president, declared: "I have never heard a worker or a lay member ... express opposition to the message of righteousness by faith. Neither have I known of any such opposition having been expressed by Seventh-day Adventist publications." "No action whatever was taken by vote of the delegates [at Minneapolis I] to accept or reject it."

Time did not ameliorate the crisis. Church members continued to have questions about our history while official objection hardened, insisting against all evidence that 1888 was a "victory." Thus in 1971 a book of 700 pages was released which stated it had been approved by five General Conference presidents and other "unprecedented endorsements" and contained "hundreds of priceless source documents, ... affidavits of actual participants in the 1888 Minneapolis Conference, and rare documents from descendants of pioneers." The thesis of the book was to give "special

emphasis upon the developments of '1888, ' and its sequel" Thus Movement of Destiny firmly rejected the idea of a corporate and denominational repentance: "The crucial episode of 1888 may be likened to crossing the Continental Divide. It was a decisive division point in our history. It was not, however, a point of defeat and retreat. Rather, it was the beginning of ultimate victory and advance." "The denomination as a whole, and its leadership in particular, did not reject the message and provisions of Righteousness by Faith in and following 1888.... The new president ... wholeheartedly accepted and maintained the teaching of righteousness by faith.... The responsible leaders of the movement from 1888 to 1897, definitely did not reject [it]." "Denominational repentance"? The same language was used in rejecting it as the Jews used with reference to Christ and His apostles: "Away then with" such an idea!

A further endeavor to buttress the official viewpoint was published in 1984. The 1888 message was long ago accepted and is our secure

possession today:

The concept that the General Conference, and thus the denomination, rejected the message of righteousness by faith in 1888 is without foundation.... Contemporary records yield no suggestion of denominational rejection. There is no E. G. White statement anywhere that says this was so.... The historical record of the reception in the field following the session supports the concept that favorable attitudes were quite general. ... It would seem that disproportionate emphasis has come to be given to the experience of the Minneapolis General Conference session."

These statements are cited in order to demonstrate what a complete historical aboutface has been achieved in the 1988 publication of *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888*. (The same author in 1988 published his *What Every Christian Should Know About Justification*. This is probably the first time in 80 years that a prominent officially endorsed author has expressed through the denominational press the authentic 1888 idea of

justification). The unprecedented 1987 publication of The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials doubtless set the stage for this total reversal of viewpoint. This is phenomenal—a unique dramatic turn-around in our 150 years of history.

What Are We Telling Ourselves Today?

It has often been said in the past that it would be virtually impossible ever to achieve denominational unity on these 1888 issues. But the speed with which this history issue has been turned on its head and resolved with virtual unanimity gives encouragement to believe that the remaining issues still in disagreement about the objective message itself may also be resolved much sooner than we think. We have good reason to take heart. But there are problems. It would not be fair to say that the Minneapolis wrong has as yet been made right.

Neither can we say, as the church was told in the middle of the Centennial year, that "the war is over." The real war is only now getting ready to

begin. The "wrath of the dragon" has to date been only a conversation piece.

To acknowledge a historical fact does not require the courage or understanding required to sense a spiritual poverty. To give lip service to overwhelming historical evidence is only to show prudence. Church administrators are reticent to employ a young worker who is suspected of too much enthusiasm for the message of Christ's righteousness. There are conferences that place an embargo on ministers and workers who promote it. Those who are least informed of the actual content of the message are most satisfied with the rich-and-increased-with-goods syndrome.

Nearly forty years ago a plea was made to the General Conference to make the writings of Jones and Waggoner available to the ministry and laity by publishing an anthology of their works from 1888 through about 1893. The church has been told: that is impossible because the transcripts of the messages presented in 1888 were not preserved (despite clear evidence that the message itself is

preserved in hundreds of pages published in the eight-year 1888 era); we don't need the message because our modern theologians can do better; and "Jones and Waggoner posed a formidable threat to Adventist doctrine and leadership."

Even a child can see that in Ellen White's phrase, "doubt, suspicion, mistrust of the message and the messengers," continue to this day.

However, it may be possible that a new factor is now being introduced. Various private efforts have been made to publish the 1888 message books, articles, and General Conference Session sermons of 1891, 1893, and 1895- In contrast to the continuing scornful attitude of some scholars and leaders is the testimony of a growing number of church members around the world who have caught a glimpse of the dynamics of the message itself. They recognize the authentic, Biblical gospel.

They are discovering that the message is not a revival of "historic Adventism," mere

Evangelicalism, nor is it a new legalism. (The legalists who rejected the message of Minneapolis I a century ago were all "historic Adventists"). It has been anti-1888-message "historic Adventism" which has prepared the way for our present state of confused pluralism and reactionism. The actual realities of the 1888 message have largely escaped the comprehension of both liberals and conservatives because it has been suppressed.

Our general concepts of the gospel have been conditioned by a mixture of pre-1888 legalism and popular evangelical ideas that have infiltrated Adventism. The problem continues today; we are often attracted by "another gospel," to borrow Paul's phrase.

The need remains for the authentic message of 1888 to be made available to the church with the full endorsement and promotion of the church leadership. Such precious truth must not be left to the care of so-called "independent ministries." This might humble our Adventist ego, but it would make clear whether the Centennial was a hollow

ceremony or a genuine recognition of a wrong committed 100 years ago with a corresponding need for sanctified restitution today.

Those who insist that we have Ellen White and therefore don't need the 1888 message fail to appreciate her testimony. She is the one who supported the message. For many years she continued to make reference to the loss sustained at Minneapolis and affirmed that the Jones and Waggoner message was what she had been "trying to present," "the matchless charms of Christ." She never claimed that the Lord had laid on her the burden which He laid on them—proclaiming the loud cry message.

She never claimed or even hinted that the publication of her books by the denomination rendered unnecessary a restitution of the mistake made at Minneapolis and thereafter. The publication now of many of the messages of the 1888 era would tell the church that we are willing to accept that which "the Lord in His great mercy sent."

It must also be remembered that the message was only the beginning of the work of the loud cry. The real issue now, as in 1888, is whether our denominational pride leaves room for a genuine faith in an unseen, living God who veils His nearness as He confronts His people to see whether they will follow truth at any cost.

In the meantime confusion and perplexity increase. The concern of church members is on the rise, as expressed in the church press. Conflicting voices and publications and theologies and ministries proliferate. Financial income does not keep pace with our ever larger statistics. Our health systems threaten unique problems for us. Sabbath observance, proper diet, tolerance of addictive habits, financial responsibility, are in perplexity. Says the Review. "Church administration has gradually weakened its emphasis on health and temperance.... Church activities not leading directly to baptisms have been de-emphasized in our push toward increased membership."

And the list goes on as recited in our church publications—canned music for worship services, divorce rates in competition with the world, movies at school and/or in the home with video to suit the most sordid taste, unbridled extravagance at all levels. Consider our buildings, their appointments, the hotel accommodations for administration, the multimedia presentations, with "magnificent booths and displays" in "plush settings" to round out a General Conference session, all in the style of "gigantic multinational companies."

It is "old covenant" concepts that assume that if we can impress the world with our buildings and expertise they will listen to what we have to say. Consequently we search frantically for strategies which public relations corporations supply, professional moneyraising programs, surveys, and "in depth" studies as to what is wrong with us. This was vividly revealed to the church in a Review article published in the fall of the Centennial year.

It disclosed that surveys show that 51 percent of the people of North America, our historic home

base, know virtually nothing of Seventh-day Adventists. What to do? "We need to take urgent remedial action. 'More of the same' will never satisfy the demands of the hour. We desperately need the Holy Spirit to work through new, bold, innovative, and faith-stretching methods of communication.... Here are ... suggestions:

1. We need to accept the actual situation (very true, indeed painfully so)....
2. We need to start a new television approach. ...
3. We need to use TV spot commercials to reach the unchurched. ...
4. We need to revive large public evangelistic meetings ... but ... there is no money.... Why try when most leaders only pretend to be interested? ... Evangelism has a bad name among us. ... Methods are being used that belong to a past era. ...
5. We need to establish large centers of influence.... Large churches with congregations of thousands that are able to make a profound impact in the community. ... At present, a Seventh-day Adventist church finds it almost

impossible to grow into a megachurch. ...

6. We need to create television documentaries that present a definite point of view. ...
7. We need to experiment with new forms of worship."

Will worldly techniques fit into the cry of that angel who comes "down from heaven having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory"? What will hasten the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, or is that idea passé? Is any community in all the world waiting on a "profound impact" made by a megachurch with its PR finely tuned?

The "dragon" will never be "wroth" with a "woman" who depends on her own beauty to influence the world. A simple message of gospel truth is the Lord's method, as simple as David's five smooth stones picked from the creek as he strode forward to meet Goliath.

But there is hope:

Light is stronger than darkness.

Love is stronger than hatred.

Grace is stronger than sin.

The Holy Spirit is stronger than the flesh.

The gospel is stronger than legalism.

Truth is stronger than all the lies, distortions, errors, and counterfeits that hell can invent.

The True Witness' knocking at our door is louder in the ears of God's true people than all the enticing calls of this modern world.

The Delay Need Not Continue Indefinitely

Could it be that the truths inherent in the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness await our comprehension? Here is a brief summary of the essential truths that make the 1888 message of justification by faith unique and distinctly Seventh-day Adventist:

1. Christ's sacrifice is not merely provisional but effective for the whole world, so that the only reason anybody can be lost is because he has chosen to resist the saving grace of God. For those who are saved at last, it is God who has taken the initiative; in the case of those who are lost, it is

they who have taken the initiative. Salvation is by faith; condemnation is by unbelief.

2. Christ's sacrifice has legally justified "every man," and has literally saved the world from premature destruction. Everyone owes even his physical life to Him, whether or not he believes. Every loaf of bread is stamped with the Christ's cross. When the sinner hears and believes the pure gospel, such a one is justified by faith. The lost deliberately negate the justification Christ has already effected for them.

3. Justification by faith is therefore much more than a legal declaration of acquittal; it changes the heart. The sinner has now received the atonement, which is reconciliation with God. Since it is impossible to be truly reconciled to Him and not be reconciled to His holy law, it follows that true justification by faith makes the believer to become obedient to all the commandments of God. (Immediately the popular Sunday-keeping churches' concept of justification by faith is called into question).

4. This marvelous work is accomplished through the ministry of the new covenant wherein the Lord actually writes His law in the heart of the believer. Obedience is loved, and the new motivation transcends fear of being lost or hope of reward in being saved (either of those motivations is what Paul means by his phrase, "under the law"). The old and new covenants are not matters of time but of condition. Abraham's faith enabled him to live under the new covenant, while multitudes of Christians today live under the old covenant because self-centered concern is their motivation. The old covenant was the promise of the people to be faithful; under the new covenant salvation comes by believing God's promises to us, not by our making promises to Him.

5. God's love is active, not merely passive. As Good Shepherd, Christ is actively seeking the lost sheep. Our salvation does not depend on our seeking the Saviour but on our believing that He is seeking us. Those who are lost at last continue to resist and despise the drawing of His love. This is

the essence of unbelief.

6. Thus it is difficult to be lost and it is easy to be saved if one understands and believes how good the Good News is. Sin is a constant resisting of His grace, which brings transgression of the law. Since Christ has already paid the penalty for everyone's sin, the only reason anyone can be condemned at last is continued unbelief, a refusal to appreciate the redemption achieved by Christ on His cross and ministered by Him as High Priest. The true gospel unveils this unbelief and leads to an effective repentance that prepares the believer for the return of Christ. Human pride and praise and flattery of human beings are inconsistent with true faith in Christ but are a sure sign of prevailing unbelief, even within the church.

7. In seeking lost mankind, Christ came all the way, taking upon Himself and assuming the fallen, sinful nature of man after the fall. This He did that He might be tempted in all points like as we are, yet demonstrate perfect righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh." The 1888 message accepts

"likeness" to mean what it says, not unlikeness. Righteousness is a word never applied to Adam in his unfallen state, nor to sinless angels. It can only connote a holiness that has come into conflict with sin in fallen human flesh, and triumphed over it. Thus "the message of Christ's righteousness" that Ellen White endorsed so enthusiastically in the 1888 era is rooted in this unique view of the nature of Christ. If He had taken the sinless nature of Adam before the fall, the term "Christ's righteousness" would be a meaningless abstraction. The 1888 messengers recognized the teaching that Christ took only the sinless nature of Adam before the fall to be a legacy of Romanism, the insignia of the mystery of iniquity which keeps Him "afar off and not "nigh at hand."

8. Thus our Saviour "condemned sin in the flesh" of fallen mankind. This means that He has outlawed sin; sin has become unnecessary in the light of His ministry. It is impossible to have New Testament faith in Christ and continue in sin. We cannot excuse continued sinning by saying that we are "only human" or that the "devil made me do it."

In the light of the cross, the devil cannot force anyone to sin. To be truly "human" is to be Christlike in character, for He was and is fully human as well as divine.

9. It follows that the only element God's people need in order to prepare for Christ's return is that genuine New Testament faith which works by love. But that is precisely what the church lacks. She imagines herself to be doctrinally and experientially "rich and increased with goods" when in fact her root sin is a pathetic unbelief. Righteousness is by faith; it is impossible to have faith and not demonstrate righteousness in the life, because true faith works by love. Moral and spiritual failures are the fruit of perpetuating Israel's sin of unbelief today through the confusion of a false righteousness by faith which is the essence of Baal worship.

10. Righteousness by faith since 1844 is "the third angel's message in verity." Thus it is greater than what the Reformers taught and the popular churches understand today. It is a message of

abounding grace consistent with the unique Adventist truth of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, a work contingent on the full cleansing of the hearts of God's people on earth.

The 1888 truths will give discernment in our publishing houses to print only the pure message which will produce the revival and reformation that the church and its youth have needed for so long. In the 1888 truths there is a key that will open the door and bring reconciliation with the Lord Jesus. The great "final atonement" will become a reality.

Some who are perplexed fail to find encouragement in the 1988 Centennial. But it is a sin to be despondent and unbelieving. Because ancient Israel failed repeatedly as has the church in modern times does not mean necessarily that the pattern of backsliding and apostasy will continue forever. The failures of God's corporate people have always involved the heavenly sanctuary in defilement. Satan has had occasion to taunt God with responsibility for the failure of His people. But something must happen in the end of time that

has never happened before. Millenniums of defeat must be reversed. This is the only way the cleansing of the sanctuary can be accomplished. The prophecy of Daniel declares the sanctuary "shall" be cleansed. The infidelity of Laodicea must and will be cured by repentance, both individual and denominational.

Sacred history tells us that a nation can repent. If so, a denomination can do so also. Ninevah stands as proof that a corporate body as a whole can repent—"from the greatest ... to the least" (Jonah 3:5). The Holy Spirit will make effective the message the Lord sent 100 years ago, once the "angel," which is the leadership, is willing to listen to Him.

Like old Jerusalem the remnant church is unaware of her actual condition as she appears before the universe. We are a pathetic sight to heaven. We shall look back someday to our era as the twentieth century "dark ages." While human knowledge explodes and human endeavor has reached staggering proportions, God's people exist

in what is largely an illiterate spiritual vacuum. The inner depths of our psychic enmity against Christ are not yet understood, but must be revealed in order for the sanctuary to be cleansed.

Our Minneapolis II came in November 1988. Will we hold a Bicentennial Minneapolis III in 2088 A.D.? The very thought seems preposterous to us, but the thought of a Centennial would have been the same to our forebears at Minneapolis I. If the answer is no, something must happen that has not happened during that first century.

The prophet Zechariah tells of an amazing day when "the burden of the word of the Lord for Israel" would take on new dimensions. Jerusalem (the people of God) will fulfill a new glorious place under the Lord's care. At last they will understand that they were the ones who wounded His hands and pierced His side. Their sense of remorse and repentance will be profound. From the king and all his counselors to the lowliest servant in Jerusalem there will be a "spirit of grace and of supplications" because at last they see their sin for what it is

(Zech. 12:9-11; 13:6). When this truth dawns upon God's people the work can be finished in an incredibly short time. Repentance has always been God's way of granting power.

The ultimate experience awaiting the church is a taste of that which Jesus went through in Gethsemane. Only His very own will be willing to accept it, but His faith and confidence are staked on a people who will take up His cross and follow after Him. As Christ forsook heaven with no assurance that He would ever return so that sin and death would be eradicated from the universe, so His Bride out of faith and true love will stand at His side without concern for receiving her reward.

When His people gladly accept all the truth He has for them, they will fulfill the same role that Christ filled when He was on the earth. That "short period of three years was as long as the world could endure the presence of the Redeemer."

When the power of Satan is broken among the Lord's people, the finally unrepentant and

unbelieving world will not wish longer to endure their presence. A revival of primitive godliness will demonstrate true righteousness by faith, that closer intimacy with the world's Saviour that He still longs for as He continues knocking at our door.

Postlogue

But the End Is Not Yet ... Angry Saints Now Comes on the Scene

Early in 1989, yet another book appeared about "the 1888 General Conference session [declaring it to be] a milestone in their history, a foremost turning point in their theological development.... [and which] changed the shape of Adventism."

Angry Saints should be read carefully by all church members. It is significant that the second Minneapolis century should start off with another major work dealing with our 1888 history. This one is unique in one respect: after nearly 40 years this is the first from denominational presses that deals specifically with 1888 RE-EXAMINED, and in particular condemns it. The authors are mentioned numerous times in the text and footnotes as having a wrong understanding of the 1888 history and message. This can only arouse increased interest in the subject, although the book concludes with the wistful hope that it will now be the last word

anyone will speak on the subject of 1888.

We do not know how the Holy Spirit will keep 1888 fresh in the memory of this church. Perhaps the stones will have to cry out, telling how He was at that time treated shamefully, insulted and "injured," and that figuratively Jesus was crucified in the person of the Holy Spirit. For sure, He will give the gift of repentance, somehow.

This new treatise considers that Minneapolis I "was a mixed blessing—largely tragedy, but containing the seeds of unending possibility." The author considers his "book is essentially a study of Adventist history. It is not primarily a theological work." However, he hopes it "will be a blessing to its readers as they wrestle with the great themes of Christian life and thought." It turns out to be very definitely theological. There is no way to separate Adventist history from Adventist theology. There would be no Adventist church or history if it were not for unique Adventist theology.

Repeatedly Angry Saints denies that the

objective 1888 message as brought by Jones and Waggoner is what the church needs. What we need instead is a return to a nebulous concept labelled "basic Christianity." Early in the book the statement is made in italics: "The core of the 1888 message was not some special Adventist contribution to theology. It was a call to return to basic Christianity." This is repeated some sixteen times, enough to get the point across. The author also frequently defines what he means by "basic Christianity." It is popular "evangelical Christianity."

Now the church must begin our second century since 1888 wrestling with the important question, Is the "third angel's message in verity" no "special Adventist contribution to theology"? This issue zeroes in on the fundamental question of our theological identity: do we have a mission in this world, or not? Who are we? Should we exist as a denominated people, separate, unique, distinct; or should we melt into "evangelical Christianity"?

It is increasingly apparent to Seventh-day

Adventists that the 1888 view of justification by faith differs radically from that of the Reformationist "new theology" which has inundated the church since the 1970s. The proponents of the latter fully realize this dichotomy, and thus make every effort to discredit the theology of the authentic 1888 message.

Ellen White was not unaware of the distinction. During the decade following Minneapolis she never advocated adopting the message of contemporary evangelicalism. On the contrary, as late as 1896 she expressed appreciation for the unique theology of Jones and Waggoner because it was a truth that motivates to "obedience to all the commandments of God," including that of the seventh-day Sabbath. Yet that is precisely what "evangelical Christianity" has conspicuously failed to do for hundreds of years, particularly so during the century plus that Seventh-day Adventists have been proclaiming the truth of the Sabbath.

Therefore the repeated urging of Angry Saints raises disturbing questions in the Adventist

conscience: (a) Can the Sunday-keeping churches have the correct view of justification by faith? (b) Does the third angel's message in verity consist of a mixture of our distinctive "doctrines" with their "gospel"? (c) In particular, how can the "holiness groups" of Evangelicalism properly appreciate "the faith of Jesus" when they hold to the paganpapal doctrine of natural immortality? How can they appreciate what happened on the cross if they do not believe there is such a thing as death, as the Bible teaches it?

The issue is now joined in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and not far down the road looms the specter of our final confrontation on the same issue with the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. That final conflict over the Sabbath will involve true righteousness by faith versus its counterfeit.

An attempt is made to make Waggoner support this "evangelical" idea by quoting a phrase from one sentence of his book, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*. Waggoner's context cannot support a

non-Adventist, evangelical righteousness by faith. On the contrary he deplores Butler's calling upon evangelical theologians to support his premise. Waggoner did not scour evangelical authors as a source for his message. He got it from the Bible. On page 59 he declares:

I must protest once more against your dependence upon the opinion of commentators.... Must we accept Greenfield's opinions as of final authority in matters of faith? I am not prepared to do this. ... If we are to quote the opinions of men as authority, on points of doctrine, we might as well turn Papists at once; for to pin one's faith to the opinions of man is of the very essence of the Papacy. It matters not whether we adhere to the opinions of one man, or to the opinions of forty; whether we have one Pope or forty.... Seventh-day Adventists, of all people in the world, ought to be free from dependence upon the opinions of men.

Waggoner is amazed that Butler does not use scripture to support the point on which his "theory must stand or fall," except there is no scripture to

help him (p. 65). So when Butler quotes "Dr. Schaff, Dr. Clarke and Dr. Scott," Waggoner replies with dismay: "Three very good men, no doubt, but three men who are responsible for a vast amount of doctrinal error and false theology.... Has it come to this among Seventh-day Adventists, that the mere opinion of a doctor of divinity must be accepted as final in any discussion?" He is emphatic that what he is saying is distinctly Adventist, based on the Bible, "in harmony with the fundamental principles of truth." Waggoner's entire presentation is in the context of the "third angel's message" which is unique, distinctly Adventist, going far beyond popular ideas of "evangelical Christianity."

To quote a portion of one sentence from Waggoner's book to squeeze him into evangelical "basic Christianity" forces him into a mold foreign to his message. He was concerned that the church move forward in spiritual understanding beyond popular evangelical concepts, not backward to the Sunday-keeping churches' views. In context, here are some of his thoughts from his page 70:

The law of God is the groundwork of all our faith. It may be said to be the backbone of the Third Angel's Message....

If our people should today, as a body (as they will sometime), change their view on this point, it would simply be an acknowledgment that they were better informed to-day than they were yesterday. It would simply be taking an advance step, which is never humiliating except to those whose pride of opinion will not allow them to admit that they can be wrong. It would simply be a step nearer the faith of the great Reformers from the days of Paul to the days of Luther and Wesley. It would be a step closer to the heart of the Third Angel's Message. I do not regard this view which I hold as a new idea at all. It is not a new theory or doctrine. Everything that I have taught is perfectly in harmony with the fundamental principles of truth which have been held not only by our people, but by all the eminent reformers. And so I do not take any credit to myself for advancing it. All I claim for the theory is, that it is consistent, because

it sticks to the fundamental principles of the gospel (italics original).

Waggoner modestly disclaims originality or inventing something novel. But Ellen White's inspired appraisal of his message takes precedence over Waggoner's modesty: it was the "beginning" of the loud cry. He claimed that his message was "in harmony with" the truths taught by the Reformers, but he did not claim that it went no further. Rather, he saw the truth of righteousness by faith as a developing entity progressing from what the Reformers saw in their day toward the ultimate revelation in "the third angel's message" and its fruition in the loud cry of Revelation 18:1-4. And even then he did not claim to present the ultimate—only "an advance ... step closer" toward it. He saw righteousness by faith as a truth that would prepare a people for translation at the coming of Christ.

On page 53 *Angry Saints* states: "Ellen White came to the same viewpoint as Waggoner[,] writing that some had 'expressed fears that we shall

dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith.'" The author repeatedly implies that Waggoner's idea of justification by faith was the standard Calvinism or Arminianism of his day, and therefore we should now be content to disregard his actual message and adopt instead the popular views of that subject as held by Sunday-keeping churches ("evangelical Christianity").

In context there is no connection between what is attributed to Waggoner and Ellen White's article in the Review from which these few words are taken.

In the article of April 1, 1890, she actually said:

Some of our brethren have expressed fears that we shall dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith, but I hope and pray that none will be needlessly alarmed; for there is no danger in presenting this doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures.... Some of our brethren are not receiving the message of God upon this subject.

This is not "evangelical Christianity." Never did Ellen White advocate that our ministers borrow "this doctrine" from Moody or Spurgeon or the Keswick speakers of their day. True, some individuals among Sunday-keeping churches had flashes of insight from time to time, but none had the full truth that would prepare a people for the coming of the Lord.

On page 57 another attempt is made to have Ellen White support the idea that the 1888 message was merely the gospel of the Evangelicals, who in turn sense that their ultimate destiny lies in a "reuniting" under the leadership of Rome.

To try to make Ellen White say this, reference is made to a Review article of August 13, 1889. When this article is researched, it will be found that she is not in any way allying herself with the churches of the world, with "evangelical Christianity." She is proclaiming to Adventists that in the face of discouragement and apostasy, "as the precious message of present truth was spoken to the people [in Pennsylvania] by Brn. Jones and

Waggoner, the people saw new beauty in the third angel's message, and they were greatly encouraged. They testified to the fact that they had never before attended meetings where they had received so much instruction and such precious light." In 1890 she said that the "message that has been going for the last two years" is specifically given "that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God."

Thus, as we begin our second century, every effort being made to deflect attention away from the unique message of justification by faith which Ellen White endorsed to that of "evangelical Christianity."

A sample of further confusion is presented on page 112:

The combining of the basic Christian truths—which they [Jones and Waggoner] had rescued from companionship with error in the holiness movement—with the distinctive Adventist truths had provided, she [Ellen White] implied,

completion of the Adventist message. Merging the Adventist distinctives with basic Christianity meant that Adventists now had the loud cry message....

This concept is the foundation of the book, which turns out to be far more than a study of Adventist history; it proposes massive tectonic shifts in Adventist theology. Its thesis surfaces again and again with phrases such as: "Adventist distinctives contexed within the great truths of evangelical Christianity" (p. 128); "Adventist distinctive truths are beautiful, fulfilling, and logical when placed within the context of the great basic truths of evangelical Christianity" (p. 144); "many at Minneapolis and in the post-1888 period spurned the loud cry that subordinated the distinctive Adventist doctrines to the great truths of evangelical Christianity" (p. 147); "Adventists need to realize more fully that they have had the loud cry message since 1888, ... they have had both their distinctive doctrines and the 'proper framework' for those distinctives in the great salvational truths of evangelical Christianity" (p. 150). ("Salvational truths" is a synonym for

justification by faith.)

This is also the burden of such Evangelical leaders as the late Walter Martin of The Kingdom of the Cults, Kenneth Samples of the Christian Research Journal, and Desmond Ford of Good News Unlimited. Evangelicals don't mind our holding some peculiar doctrines such as the seventh-day Sabbath provided we abandon the 1888 truths of righteousness by faith and hold their "salvational truths" instead. Louis R. Conradi, our prominent leader in Europe, left the church because he came to believe that Luther, the Reformers, and the Evangelicals had already proclaimed the verity of the third angel's message in their day. Conradi's basic idea was that there was nothing unique in the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness.

Now we are again being told that the reason why there is nothing distinctive about the righteousness by faith message of 1888 is because it was borrowed from the popular churches.

This is not new. It builds upon previous

officially endorsed books which asserted that the message of Jones and Waggoner "was the same doctrine that Luther, Wesley, and many other servants of God had been teaching." Froom added that it was the same doctrine that some fifty of the nineteenth century Evangelicals had been preaching.

When Ellen White declared the 1888 message to be "the third angel's message in verity," she saw that it was distinctly different from the popular "holiness" doctrines which she specifically warned against. And she frequently recognized that the 16th century Reformers and the other Evangelicals of her day fell far short in understanding the righteousness by faith truth that would prepare a people for the coming of the Lord.

If we are merely a church among churches that has joined some distinctive "doctrines" onto "evangelical Christianity" we will never be able to cry "mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." If we are

but a segment of "evangelical Christianity" we will never with conviction be able to sound the call, "Come out of her, My people."

"Evangelical Christianity" is certain that the law of God was nailed to the cross. It has no regard for the Sabbath, "no idea" when the second coming of Christ might take place, is certain that the nature of man is immortal (which means Jesus did not really die, hence Calvary was not for real); by and large teaches that God will torture the lost more sadistically than the Nazis tortured their victims; it claims the Saviour was "exempt" from facing temptation as must the rest of humanity; and it abhors the truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary which is fundamental to justification by faith in relation to a preparation for Christ's second coming.

This is the essence of the general confusion that Scripture says is "Babylon." The total package represents the "gospel" as impotent. It can "save" in sin but not from sin. These concepts of "righteousness by faith" have a basic affinity with

Romanism along with Sunday as the Lord's day, and pave the way for a more subtle perversion of truth.

Because "evangelical Christianity" rejects the unique ministry of our great High Priest in the Most Holy Place, it considers that "substitution" must continue to function until the second coming of Christ when the saints are raptured. This makes the cleansing of the sanctuary meaningless. It accomodates continual sinning, whereas sin was "condemned" by Christ in the flesh. It does not recognize that the High Priest's ministry must enter a new phase on the anti-typical Day of Atonement. He cannot forever minister His blood in substitution to cover the perpetual sinning of His people. He must accomplish something on the Day of Atonement that was never accomplished previously. He must have a people who overcome "even as" He overcame, a people who "condemn sin in the flesh" through His faith. His High Priestly ministry cannot continue throughout eternity but must end at the close of human probation.

"Evangelical Christianity" has no use for these basics of Ad-ventist justification by faith. Evangelicals scoff at them and hence warn that if we do not abandon them, they will classify us as a cult.

Much has been published in the Centennial (and before) to the effect that it is hopeless to take any special interest in the actual 1888 message because it was "lost." No stenographers recorded it at Minneapolis. Early in the book, page 40, Angry Saints makes a point which is crucial to this question of having or not having a record of what the actual message was at Minneapolis. Waggoner's book, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*, which he had "distributed to the delegates at the Minneapolis meetings, ... must have been fairly close to what he presented there on the relationship of law and gospel that so impressed Ellen White."

If this is true (there is no reason to doubt it), the fact can be settled forever that: (1) we do have a

very good idea of what he presented at the 1888 meetings; and (2) his view of the nature of Christ was definitely a vital part of that message. It is highly improbable that Waggoner's Minneapolis presentations were an isolated theological island inconsistent with what he published immediately before and after. How could Ellen White exclude the essential nature of Christ when she pulled out all the stops in endorsing Jones and Waggoner with superlative enthusiasm for nearly a decade?

Waggoner's book placed in the hands of the 1888 delegates rivets with solid logic the view that the sinless Christ took upon Himself man's fallen nature, and that as a consequence He was subject to death. Waggoner uses nearly four pages to drive home his points based on text after text (pp. 60-63). Here is a little taste:

[In] Gal. 4:4 "born under the law," [and] John 1:1, 14: "Word was made flesh," Rom. 8:3, . . . you will learn the nature of the flesh which the Word was made:—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his

own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ was born in the likeness of sinful flesh.... Phil. 2:5-7: "... being made in the likeness of men ... in fashion as a man" ... Heb. 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels" ... He came into the world on purpose to die; and so from the beginning of his earthly life he was in the same condition that the men are in whom he died to save.... Rom. 1:3: "Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." What was the nature of David, "according to the flesh"? Sinful, was it not? ... Don't start in horrified astonishment; I am not implying that Christ was a sinner.... One of the most encouraging things in the Bible is the knowledge that Christ took on him the nature of man; to know that his ancestors according to the flesh were sinners. ... If Christ had not been made in all things like unto his brethren, then his sinless life would be no encouragement to us.

Angry Saints is unique in its purpose. In a very pleasing style it sets out to contradict and make void 1888 RE-EXAMINED. Over 20 times the

authors are referred to by name in the text or in footnotes, plus inferences such as: "some interpreters," "certain contemporary Adventist writers," "some modern writers," "two recent authors," "one recently published book," and "even as recently as 1987 an influential book." Any reader who knows anything about the 1888 history and the past 40 years will understand the thrust of these references.

In several places specific comments are made to contest the thesis of 1888 REEXAMINED. For instance on page 40, this objection is made: "Contrary to the view of many sincere Seventh-day Adventists, both Waggoner and Ellen White declared that this message was not unique or something new in Christian theology."

On the surface, she appears to contradict herself. Sometimes she did say it was not "new light," and at other times she said specifically that it was indeed "new light." If we let her define her terms, the contradiction disappears:

(a) At Minneapolis she speaks of Christ saying, "A new commandment I give you, That ye love one another," but it was "really an old commandment ... given in the Old Testament." This is her context for defining "new." If there was nothing new in the 1888 message, then there was nothing "new" in Jesus' commandment of love—but no Christian will agree with that, for indeed His words fell "as something strange and new ... upon the ears of the wondering multitude."

In one sense there is "no new thing under the sun," but the Jews were wrong when they rejected Christ because they found nothing "new" in His message, and so are we if we disparage the 1888 message for that assumed reason. Ellen White says that Jones and Waggoner "discovered the precious ore in the rich veins of truth ... that have been hidden for ages." By all standards of human communication, something "discovered" that the world has never seen before is "new."

(b) Because of widespread prejudice "laborers in the cause of truth" should employ a wise

methodology and not present the 1888 message as something novel or as a new invention.

(c) In Selected Messages, Book Three, p. 174 she specifically calls it "new and increased light for us as a people, ... precious light to be unfolded to us if we are the people that are to stand in the day of God's preparation." That "if is the key word; rejection of the "new light" made necessary another generation a hundred years or more later to be that "people." In speaking of the 1888 message, she variously referred to it as "new light," "light from heaven for the past year and a half," "light flashing from the throne of God," "new settings," "truths that are entirely new," "new forms," "a new framework," "more light," "increasing light," "things new and old from the treasure-house of His word," "old yet new truths," "more light for us," "light that is new to us," "light that is yet to come to us, ... new ideas," "much light yet to shine forth," "precious old truths in a new light."

(d) Whatever the message was, for sure she had not heard it spoken publicly from other "human

lips" for 45 years, even though occasional flashes of partial insight may have appeared in such authors as William Penn, McCloud Campbell, or Thomas Erskine. But they were not concepts generally held by the Evangelicals, and there is no evidence that Jones and Waggoner scoured the books of Evangelicals to find their "gems of truth." No links have come to light tying them to Evangelical sources; they claimed only Bible support.

One problem is whether the 1888 message marked "the beginning" of the latter rain, or only that of the loud cry. Angry Saints declares that "Ellen White did not say that the latter rain had begun with the preaching of Christ's righteousness at Minneapolis." Jones, Starr, Prescott, and the 1893 session "congregation" at Battle Creek, were all simply wrong.

By rebuking those who opposed it, she specifically says that the 1888 message and ministry "outpouring" "at Minneapolis" constituted "showers of the latter rain from heaven." That

statement underlies all her numerous references to the 1888 message as the beginning of the work of the fourth angel of Revelation 18. The loud cry and the latter rain must come together, and when Angry Saints agrees that they must come "simultaneously" it has to contradict and invalidate its own thesis.

Even Ellen White's 1892 "loud cry" statement is disparaged in Angry Saints as "a small (and almost isolated) passage," and the authors of 1888 RE-EXAMINED are faulted for reading too much "into it." To the contrary, it appears that she often "referred to that statement again" by repeating the idea. She was virtually obsessed with the thought that a magnificent, unprecedented fulfillment of Revelation 18:1-4 was occurring right before the eyes of the unbelieving brethren. Never had this happened since John wrote Revelation. Impregnating all of her post-1888 writings about the subject is the tragic truth that "the light" which was opposed, denied, and rejected, was that of this fourth "angel" of Revelation 18. It was his message that was "in a great degree" kept away from the

church and from the world. Astounding! This is her retrospective view. Yet Angry Saints wants us to soft-pedal that.

About the same time that she wrote the "famous" November 15, 1892 statement in the Review, we find her corroborating it in a letter to her nephew, Frank Belden. Speaking of General Conference and other leadership "who have stood as a granite wall against" the "light [which] has been shining in Battle Creek in clear, bright rays," she says:

God meant that the watchmen should arise, and with united voices send forth a decided message, giving the trumpet a certain sound, that the people might all spring to their post of duty, and act their part in the great work. Then the strong, clear light of that other angel who comes down from heaven having great power, would have filled the earth with his glory. We are years behind; and those who stood in blindness and hindered the advancement of the very message that God meant should go forth from the Minneapolis meeting as a lamp that

burneth, have need to humble their hearts before God, and see and understand how the work has been hindered by their blindness of mind and hardness of heart.

Numerous other statements exist linking the 1888 message to the loud cry of Revelation 18. In 1890 she says "several have written to me" asking what is the 1888 message, and "I have answered." Her answer: the angel's message of Revelation 18. Later that year she again identifies it in the same way. Even at Minneapolis there was a strong hint that the message was that of Revelation 18. In a letter to I. D. Van Horn, January 20, 1893, she again deploras Uriah Smith's present, continuing opposition to the 1888 message as opposition to "the angel of Rev. 18, who is to lighten the earth with his glory."

Opposing 1888 RE-EXAMINED is good if it stimulates church members to study out the facts. Even though Angry Saints darkly hints that its authors may be the modern equivalent of the "Smith and Butler" "old guard," and are

"theological gladiators," they welcome the closest scrutiny and refutation of their work provided it is based on "the word of the Lord." Their prayer for 40 years has been that only truth may prevail.

Finally at the end of the book we learn who are the "angry saints" roasting in red flames on the cover. They are present-day "Madventists" who ever so sincerely and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." Their fault is that they believe and promote the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness which reveals Him as sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [who] condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Evidently they also think and say ever so tenuously it might be possible that our pioneers and Ellen White were right about the "daily," and they insist that it is possible by the grace of the Saviour to say No to temptation and to honor Him until the end by true heart-obedience to His commandments.

Several questions must engage the attention of the world church:

(1) What actually is the 1888 message? Is it "basic Evangelical" concepts or is it a clearer understanding of righteousness by faith than what the Reformers and the Sundaykeeping churches believed a century ago and still hold today? Is it an understanding of the gospel itself that is parallel to and consistent with the work of the great High Priest on the antitypical Day of Atonement?

1888 RE-EXAMINED says it is. Angry Saints insists that it is not; the Day of Atonement requires no unique Adventist understanding of the gospel of justification by faith.

(2) Did the leadership accept the message nearly a century ago and have we understood and proclaimed it to the church and to the world ever since?

1888 RE-EXAMINED maintains that "in a great degree" they did not and we have not; therefore we need to repent. Angry Saints maintains that by 1895 the leadership did largely

accept the message, and that we do not need to re-examine what the 1888 message actually was to see if we are proclaiming it to the church and the world today. Leave it buried.

Angry Saints frankly recognizes that 1888 "was a mixed blessing—largely tragedy, but containing the seeds of unending possibility." Yet there is a mysterious self-contradiction within the book. After opening with this thought of "mixed blessing—largely tragedy," the book closes with the opposite idea.

The author in his final word tells the church that by 1895 Ellen White believed that things had changed and "indicated that the 1888 message had been 'presented and accepted.'" This is dependent on a statement made by her son W. C. White in a letter to Dores A. Robinson, September 10, 1895.

This is not, however, the word of Ellen White. What we do have is W. C. White's November 25, 1905 personal confession that in 1895 he came to realize humbly that his judgment was contrary to

the discernment of the gift of prophecy. It was in the context of judging the 1888 aftermath that he acknowledges his seriously erroneous judgment.

Further, we have Ellen White's direct testimony that she was appalled by her son's lack of spiritual discernment in this incident and became so sick that "I was like a broken reed. ... I did not expect to recover."

That same year she wrote from Australia to Uriah Smith, June 6, 1896, making the most emphatic statement of her whole career regarding the failures at Minneapolis and since. This appraisal, made more than seven years after the session, tells us that "Satan succeeded." The power of the Holy Spirit was "shut away from our people" and the light for the whole earth was in a great degree kept away "by the action of our own brethren."

Is the assumption true on page 154 of *Angry Saints* that "enough had accepted it sufficiently for the denomination to move on to its primary

mission—preaching the gospel to the world at large"? The very opposite has been the case and this is the reason we have had a "Centennial" and why we are still in this world.

(3) Did Ellen White find fault with the righteousness by faith message or theology of Jones and Waggoner? Frequently Angry Saints tells us yes, based on two statements in MS. 15, 1888 which read as follows:

[1] 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....

[2] Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct.

The import of (1) can be completely twisted by leaving out the key phrase, "if I fully understand his position," and this is done in Angry Saints, p.

43.

The import of (2) on the same page can also be twisted out of its context to contradict another statement Ellen White made barely five minutes later: "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." Her context is an impassioned plea to the brethren to listen and to investigate. About the same time she said, "I had not one doubt or question in regard to the matter. I knew the light had been presented to us in clear and distinct lines." "Every fiber of my heart said amen." Similar endorsements were made by her hundreds of times.

If in (2), the word "I" is italicized with other first person pronouns, all contradiction evaporates immediately. And this may well have been her emphasis at the time. The context indicates clearly that she is trying to help the brethren by putting herself in their company. She does not consider herself or her personal judgment to be infallible.

She is willing to listen, to investigate new light, to learn something; why shouldn't they be willing also? Note:

Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct. But ... the fact that he honestly holds some views of Scripture differing from yours or mine is no reason why we should raise a voice of censure against him or his teachings unless we can present weighty reasons for so doing and show him that he is in error.

On the flimsy, untenable foundation of these two wrested statements stands the entire edifice of the 1988 Centennial condemnations of the Jones-Waggoner message, misread statements which have apparently persuaded church leadership to withhold it from the world church.

But our conferences, churches, institutions, "independent ministries," self-supporting work, and missions, all need a more heart-felt appreciation of that "much more abounding grace"

revealed in that message. The Lord "sent" it! The spiritual famine which has ensued is not realized, for all seem to feel "rich and increased with goods" without it, but the resultant malnourishment creates spiritual weakness and disease.

The author of *Angry Saints* is "glad 1988 is now gone and past." The truth will not be gone or past until it is faced for what it is—a confrontation with Christ that cannot forever be evaded.