

# **1888 FOR ALMOST DUMMIES**

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## **Before we begin...**

“1844” is our classic icon. It marked the beginning of the special faith of Seventh-day Adventists, as Pentecost marked the beginning of the gospel going to the world. Yet another date keeps popping up, another “icon” for us, which has perplexed us.

“1888” is clothed in an aura of mystery. Why does it keep popping up, and why is it discussed almost with hushed tones as though a skeleton lurked somewhere in our closet?

There’s tremendous meaning buried in it. And the One who keeps bringing it up is the Holy Spirit: He will not let it die, even century after century (parts now of three centuries have gone by). It will take the stage more and more as time goes on.

The reason: “1888” marks the “beginning” of the world’s second Pentecost, and people everywhere are at last beginning to ferret out the

story. There is a skeleton in our closet.

## **The mystery unfolds**

Pentecost also marked the gift of the Holy Spirit. The world didn't know what was happening except as the apostles could tell them, but what was going on behind the scenes was the Son of God being inaugurated as the world's High Priest. It was in the "Holy" or First Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. He had not only died for the sin of the world and been resurrected, He was now busy working through the Holy Spirit to reconcile human hearts everywhere (including Gentiles) who would respond, and bring them into oneness with God the Father. A great work.

Not only was the High Priest changing hearts, He was preparing those who chose to believe to be "accounted worthy" to come up in the first resurrection that will come when He returns to earth personally, visibly, literally (cf. Luke 21:35; Rev. 20:5, 6). This "work" had been going forward steadily from Pentecost until the end of the 2300-

year prophecy of Daniel 8:14, which came in 1844, our “icon.” That’s the setting for that first unique Adventist icon-date.

With it began what we know as the Seventhday Adventist Church; something was happening in human hearts. No big display; a few believers had gone through the “Great Disappointment” of 1844 and had “survived” spiritually; that is, this little group had not given up their conviction that the true Holy Spirit had been present in that “Midnight Cry” movement, and they were not about to deny Him.

With that Great Disappointment came Jesus leaving His ministry in the First Apartment and closing its door, and then opening the door into the Second Apartment. Now He faced a new task: not prepare people to die and come up in the resurrection but prepare people to be translated without seeing death at His second coming.

That has been the point of His ministry since 1844 and also the burden of Ellen White’s writing

her 25 million words of testimony.

Things on earth have seemed to happen slowly, but year by year the convictions of truth have deepened among thoughtful people. The church was organized in 1863. Shortly after, its mission work began around the world, and we have all been regaled with fantastic stories of “progress.”

But the conviction has also deepened that even if we were to “baptize” billions, the number would mean nothing so far as finishing the gospel work is concerned; character transformation prepares for the coming of the Lord.

The time for the “harvest” may come, but He can’t come until the “harvest of the earth is ripe” (144,000 character transformations, literal or symbolic number is not the point). Not until then can the mighty one designated as “another angel” proclaim to the long-waiting Savior, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe” (Rev. 14:15). After that Christ can’t wait a day; He

must come to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords immediately, when the harvest is “ripe.”

**“1888” thus marks the time for “the beginning”  
of getting the harvest “ripe”**

The message that came in that year was a revelation in itself; it had “heavenly credentials.” It came straight from the throne of God. “The Lord in His great mercy” sent it, but it came in the most humble appearance as the Jews’ Messiah came from the throne of God but was born as a peasant in Bethlehem’s manger, with lowly animals. “1888” was a new “Bethlehem,” but the grand event threw some wonderful saints into a tizzy just as the original “Bethlehem” threw the Temple priests off guard in Jerusalem.

Precious few who attended the Minneapolis 1888 meeting had an inkling of what was going on. One little woman 62 years old was also caught by surprise, for she heard and saw things that astonished her. Not in 45 years, she later said, had she heard anything like this in our church, or in

fact, anywhere.

She didn't say so at the time right then, but later she said that what she had been hearing and watching in the "1888" affair was "the beginning" of that grand prophecy of Revelation 18 that tells of the whole earth being lightened with the glory of a final message. It will be the complementary gift of the same Holy Spirit who first came with power at Pentecost.

"1888" For Almost Dummies tells in a simple way, and in as few words as possible, what happened, and what the message still is today. But before we go into our thought-provoking study, let's look at a brief summary of how good is the Good News of "1888."

# What Did the 1888 Message Say?

## Ten Unique, Essential Elements

**1.** Christ's love is active, not merely passive. As the Good Shepherd, He is continually seeking the lost sheep. Salvation does not depend on our seeking Him but on our believing that He is seeking us. This is our believing response to His seeking us. He has taken the initiative. Those who are lost at last resist and despise His initiative in the drawing of His love. This is what unbelief means.

**2.** It follows that it is difficult to be lost and it is easy to be saved if one understands and believes how good the Good News is. Since Christ has already paid the penalty for everyone's sin, the only reason anyone can be condemned at last is continued unbelief, a hard-hearted refusal to appreciate the redemption achieved by Christ on His cross and ministered by Him as High Priest.

The true gospel unveils this mysterious unbelief and leads to a repentance that prepares the church for the return of Christ. Human pride, praise and flattery of human beings, is inconsistent with true faith in Christ. It's a sure sign of prevailing unbelief, even within the church.

3. In seeking lost mankind, Christ came all the way, taking upon Himself and assuming the fallen, sinful nature of man. 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” (Rom. 8:3, 4; 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 holy, sinless angels. It can only mean 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 was so happy about in 1888 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” could not make sense. The 1888

“messengers” (A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) saw that the teaching that Christ took only the sinless nature of Adam before the fall is a legacy of Romanism, the insignia of the mystery of iniquity which keeps Him “afar off” and not “nigh at hand.”

4. Thus our Saviour “condemned sin in the flesh” of fallen mankind. This means that He has outlawed sin; sin has become out of date in the light of His ministry. It is impossible to have true faith in Christ and continue in sin. We cannot excuse it by saying, “I am only human” or, “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. For the church to accept the message means a preparation for translation without seeing death.

5. It follows that the only thing God’s people need in order to prepare for Christ’s return is that genuine faith. But that is what the church lacks; she imagines herself to be doctrinally and experientially “rich and increased with goods”

when in fact our root sin ever since 1888 has been unbelief. Righteousness is by faith; it is impossible to have faith and not demonstrate it in the life, because faith always works by love. Our moral and spiritual failures are the fruit of keeping alive Israel's ancient sin of unbelief.

**6.** Righteousness by faith since 1844 is unique. It is “the third angel’s message in verity.” This means that it is greater than what the Reformers taught or what the popular churches understand today. It is a message of “much more” abounding grace. It makes sense with the unique Adventist truth of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, a work that includes the full cleansing of the hearts of God’s people on earth.

**7.** Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is not merely provisional but effective for the whole world. The only reason anybody can be lost is that he chooses to resist the saving grace of God. For those who are saved at last, it is God who has taken the initiative; for those who are lost, it is they who resist and reject God’s initiative. Salvation is by faith;

condemnation is only by non-faith, which is unbelief. But true faith is distinguished from its counterfeit.

**8.** Thus Christ's sacrifice has judicially justified "every man," and has literally saved the world from premature destruction. All men owe even their physical life to Him, whether or not they believe. Every loaf of bread is stamped with His cross. When the sinner hears and believes the pure gospel, he is justified by faith. The lost deliberately negate the justification Christ has effected for them. They throw away the salvation already given them.

**9.** Justification by faith is therefore much more than a judicial declaration of acquittal which depends on the initiative of the sinner. Faith is an appreciation of God's initiative, and it changes the heart. The sinner has now received the atonement, which is reconciliation with God. It is impossible to be truly reconciled to Him and not also be reconciled to His holy law. Therefore true justification by faith makes the believer to become

obedient to all the commandments of God. (There is a direct link between true justification by faith and Sabbath-keeping.)

**10.** This marvelous change is accomplished through the ministry of the New Covenant. The Lord actually writes His law in the heart of the believer so that obedience is loved. This provides a new motivation which transcends fear of being lost or hope of reward. (Either of those motivations is what Paul means by his phrase, being “under the law.”) The Old and New Covenants are not matters of time but of condition. Abraham had faith and lived under the New Covenant. Many today live under the Old Covenant because self-centered concern is their motivation. The Old Covenant was the people’s promise to be faithful to God; the New is God’s promise to be faithful to us. Salvation comes by believing God’s promise to us, not by our making promises to Him.

## Chapter 1

# Playing “Calvary” a Second Time

The Jewish lad sat on the floor listening as his elders talked about solemn things. Why have the Jews been disappointed about their Messiah? God promised Him, they wailed; but why has He never come?

One day, the name of Jesus of Nazareth came up. Little Joseph asked innocently, “Who was He?”

“A Jew of the greatest talent,” was the answer, “but He falsely claimed to be the Messiah, so the Jewish tribunal asked the Romans to put Him to death.”

But the boy had questions. “Why is Jerusalem destroyed, and why are we [Jews] in captivity?”

This time his father answered: “Alas! because

the Jews murdered the prophets!”

Immediately “ $2 + 2 = 4$ ” flashed through the boy’s mind: “Perhaps Jesus was also a prophet, and they killed Him when He was innocent.”

### **A child leads the way**

The boy was forbidden to go to a Christian church, but this conviction was so strong that he would linger outside just to hear the preaching through the windows. When he was only seven, he was boasting to a Christian neighbor of the future triumph of the Jews at the coming of the Messiah. The old man interrupted him: “Dear boy, the real Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth. But your ancestors rejected and crucified Him, as they did the prophets. Go home, read Isaiah 53, and you will see that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Joseph did so, young as he was. It fit perfectly. He asked his father to explain it.

But his father disliked even thinking about

Isaiah 53; he was stern. Joseph never asked again, but truth moved him when he grew up to be a Christian missionary proclaiming the second coming of Jesus.

Steeped in Jewish unbelief, father and the elders stayed behind. They kept on praying the God of Abraham to send their Messiah while they refused to see He had already done so in Jesus of Nazareth. Another thousand years of those prayers would still be unanswered.

### **Now we must come to our story as Seventhday Adventists**

If God should give us a “most precious” gift and we should sinfully refuse to accept it, does He meekly send it again and again for centuries more? He has more divine self-respect than that. The Jews will never get their Messiah until they back up and receive the One heaven already sent them. God has a very healthy self-respect; He doesn't let you walk all over Him for millennia.

We are in a similar quandary. How can we today explain to an innocent child why Jesus has not come back a second time when our pioneers proclaimed His “soon” coming nearly two centuries ago? And we’ve been doing it ever since. Does “soon” mean nothing?

Daniel and Revelation pinpoint where we are in time. Our pioneers expected to see Jesus come in their lifetime, and heaven gave Ellen White a vision in May 1856 wherein an “angel” assured them that Christ would come within the physical lifetime of some of them. Then she added, “Solemn words these, spoken by the angel.”

But we’re still here. (All of that generation, of course, have gone to their rest.)

### **God expects us to ask “Why the delay?”**

We believe what we claim, yes, we “love His appearing.” That means we will be concerned. Why this failure of the heavenly angel’s promise of 1856? Without history’s answer, the question is left

begging over parts of three centuries, one of them a complete one. Must it be so for centuries more?

Joseph Wolff's elders were praying for something that had already happened. Now, God has promised to send the "latter" rain of His Spirit before Christ can come the second time. As Joseph Wolff found in his Bible evidence that the Lord had already sent their Messiah in Jesus, so we find that heaven has already sent "us" the "beginning" of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit that we had prayed for so much: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people" that was "the beginning" both of the "loud cry" of Revelation 18 and of "showers from heaven of the latter rain." Then, adds Ellen White some hundred times, we disdained it "just like the Jews."

We have deprived the world of blessings God designed they should have had. In her understanding, there has never been a greater mistake made by the Lord's true church ("His own," John 1:11) since what the Jews did two millennia ago. Unlike any other church in these

two millennia, we have in a special way played “Calvary” a second time.

### **What is the “latter rain”?**

A special gift in the form of a message. It is to prepare God’s people for meeting Jesus, and being changed at His coming without suffering death. It’s “translation,” which Enoch experienced (Heb. 11:5). The latter rain “ripens the grain for the harvest,” that is, it woos God’s people away from their idolatry and love of the world so that they want the kingdom of Christ to come. It awakens a zeal like those had who waited for Him in the autumn of 1844. It’s not something foggy like emotionalism; it’s biblical truth that had never been so clearly understood.

This means a shift in Christian experience from Old Covenant to New Covenant thinking. It was the principal issue that impacted the reception of “1888.” It demonstrated that there is “light” in the gospel that is greater than the popular Sunday-keeping churches are able to see, sincere as they

are. Justification by faith in the Day of Atonement is something beyond Luther's, Calvin's, or the Evangelicals' possible understanding.

Old Covenant thinking sees God's holy law as ten stern commandments, difficult to keep, and fear-inducing. New Covenant thinking sees them as ten divine promises to anyone who believes the Preamble—that God has already delivered you from Egyptian darkness and “bondage.”

We see this shift in Revelation 19: “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready” (vs. 7). She once was a flower girl at the wedding, delightful in her innocence. But “she” has to grow up. She becomes a bride who understands and loves her Bridegroom. Concern for Him becomes greater than her former egocentric concern for her own security and salvation.

We have learned to think of the latter rain as “a message of Christ's righteousness,” a clearer grasp of practical godliness—all by faith. The idea is in

the next verse: “And to her [the bride] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

At last when this happens the latter rain is welcomed, no longer resisted. Now it is received when God’s people have taken the step that concludes the message from the true Witness—they have “overcome even as [He] overcame” (3:21). Their faith has matured under the refreshing “showers of the latter rain” received, not rejected.

According to Ellen White’s testimony, all this should have come over a century ago, yes, within the lifetime of people living in 1856. When the latter rain is received, it prepares for a grand “harvest” of human souls who will respond to a final “lifting up” of Christ and Him crucified. It will be a revelation of the cross that the world has never seen so clearly. The “most precious message” will penetrate to every honest heart on earth:

The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep convictions of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. ... Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side.

Over a hundred times the Lord's servant was forced to declare that "our" reaction to this gift was "just like the Jews'" reaction to Jesus when He came!

### **What do we need to do?**

Recover what we lost is the simple answer. The Lord loves us too much to want to humiliate us; repentance will never do that to the repentant sinner. We will humble ourselves, yes; but our

Savior puts His arms around us warmly. The innocent child Joseph Wolff saw what his people needed to do—recover what they had lost.

To resolve our quandary is easy; just give to the world church the message which “we” “in a great degree” rejected, according to the Lord’s messenger. The problem is simple: the world needs that special Good News that God wanted to give them. How can we dare withhold it, century after century?

Give it to them!

### **A Question Naturally Arises**

“Can God do something to force the sleeping ‘bride’ of the 21st century to ‘make herself ready?’”

God’s omnipotence must be restrained: never has a bridegroom dressed his bride for the wedding. That’s her job, to “make herself ready.”

The Lord has given us an excellent church

organization, but He has wisely left this to us. Prayer is good, but not good enough; it must be augmented by a response from us—“be zealous therefore, and repent.” Praying for the latter rain could drag on for another century, and praying without recovering what we lost has to be a vain exercise that only confuses people. No bridegroom in his right mind can coerce his bride to say “I do.” Neither can Christ.

He cherishes in His heart a confidence that His people are basically honest. (We wouldn't believe our “28 doctrines” unless we were!) This conviction that Christ cherishes, requires that we “overcome” where Joseph Wolff's elders failed. Creating or joining an offshoot is not the solution. Repentance within the “body” of believers is the solution.

## Chapter 2

# **“1888” and the Loud Cry**

The loud cry has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. —Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892

The two belong together and will forever be united in our thinking. “1888” was this prominent Bible prophecy in its actual “beginning” fulfillment. Wonderful time to be alive!

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

The ancient prophets dreamed of that glory.

And here it was, at last played out before the eyes of assembled delegates to a Seventh-day Adventist world conference in 1888 (not just a tiny little group somewhere).

One's most natural question comes up: how could it be this cataclysmic event? It happened in a humble little wooden church in Minneapolis with less than a hundred delegates present! Everybody who has a Bible can read about the prophecy—a “mighty angel,” “great power,” “earth ... lightened with glory,” “strong voice from heaven,” “big ideas” penetrating every honest heart in Islam, Buddhism, Catholicism—“the world.”

True, what happened in Minneapolis was a mere whimper in the world of that day (and even ours now). Remember, however, the long-awaited Messiah Himself was born in a humble cowshed with some animals, and we are told not to “despise the day of small things” (Zech. 4:10).

A keen listener and perceptive observer was present. She saw something that apparently none of

her contemporaries recognized: “1888” was the beginning of that eschatological wonder. (It took Ellen White about four years of contemplation to come to that conclusion with enough courage to say so publicly.)

Furthermore, she seems to declare as a positive statement, through use of a double negative, that it was also “showers from heaven of the latter rain.” Her closest contemporaries in Australia said they had evidence that this was her open conviction.

And it makes sense, for there’s no way the “loud cry” of Revelation 18 can make its long-awaited world debut unless that latter rain is “sent” first and received. It must always come first or God’s people can’t give “the loud cry.”

And the evidence that “1888” is Revelation 18 fulfilled is more than merely Ellen White’s subjective evaluation; the internal objective evidence in the message itself is clear. Its unique elements of built-in biblical truth demonstrate a comprehensive evangel that meets the details of a

world-enlightening message (and the last one at that). If Ellen White was wrong in her perception here, her life testimony gets pretty well discredited en toto, because never was she so enthusiastic about anything in her long career than she was about this pinpointing of “1888” significance.

### **This brings us to serious thinking**

What was the initial, rock-bottom, foundation idea that permeates “1888”? What makes the message so unique in its claim for our attention (and the world’s) today?

Simply put, it’s something that never crossed the minds of Luther, Calvin, or the Wesleys, or the Sunday-keeping Evangelicals of the 1888 era, or the consciousness of our Sunday-keeping brethren and sisters of today.

Maybe we haven’t told it in a way that grips their interest: it’s the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the work of the world’s great High Priest in its Second or Most Holy Apartment. The

context of “1888” is the cosmic Day of Atonement which we’ve been living in since 1844—often not realizing it. At last the truth of justification by faith is to be seen as its very essence.

The problem in 1888 was that although the cosmic Day of Atonement had begun 44 years earlier (Dan. 8:14), our own people had not embraced the idea of following Christ in that closing work of His.

1. What brought the Seventh-day Adventist Church into being was what explained the mystery of the Great Disappointment of 1844. At the conclusion of the 2300-year prophecy (“then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”), Christ left the First Apartment, closed its “door” (figuratively speaking), and opened the door into a new phase of ministry—His final work of atonement in the Second or Most Holy Apartment. This is not reconciling the Father to us but reconciling us to the Father.

2. His sacrifice on the cross had been ample

and complete; but now its full fruitage must be demonstrated in a people. The world and the universe deserve to see that what has been theory has become visible fact. Christ must lead His people into a complete heart-reconciliation with Himself. The Holy Spirit must speak creatively to a corporate body of the church, “Be ye reconciled to God.” Every buried root of alienation must and will be “cleansed.”

3. Significant numbers of thoughtful and loyal Seventh-day Adventists worldwide are now constrained by conscience to acknowledge that the immense world suffering that has had to go on for many decades (centuries) has been unnecessary for the completion of the great controversy between Christ and Satan—for example, World Wars I and II, the current wars in Iraq, Darfur, etc.

4. In the early years after 1844, the little group that had gone through the Great Disappointment and wouldn't give up, eagerly accepted every ray of truth-light that God sent them:

**(a)** The sanctuary message as we understand it came first (Hiram Edson in his barn); then

**(b)** the seventh-day Sabbath truth (from Rachel Preston, the Seventh Day Baptist); and then

**(c)** the time to begin the Sabbath (the Bible said sunset); then

**(d)** the basic principle of health reform, which was Day of Atonement practical godliness; then

**(e)** the nature of man (mortal, not immortal, the defense against Spiritualism); and

**(f)** even a kind of “dress reform” that expressed the principle of modest living and appropriate selfdenial. There was no kicking, screaming, resistance.

By 1856, a finite angel (whose knowledge incidentally could not be omniscient) was happy with the obvious progress of developing faith in the hearts of this little corporate body of people. Christ

was happy, too, for here was that little “body” of believers at last bent on “following the Lamb wherever He goes.” The first such corporate group in history since Pentecost!

This special angel predicted with angelic (but finite!) judgment that some believers then living would be translated without seeing death at the coming of Jesus. The promise of the Lord descending “from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ... [when] the dead in Christ shall rise first” and “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,”—this was to be fulfilled in their lifetime!

### **Momentous**

The 1856 angel must have been excited. Now if only this people will continue the eager “at-onement” reception of truth that characterized the early Adventists, they will receive the gift of the latter rain, and the angel’s prophecy can be fulfilled and the “great controversy” can end in victory,

now.

But the “leading brethren” said no; no way. “In a great degree” they “shut it away” from the people and from the world.

### **Ellen White’s appeals in the Review**

Nearly two years after the beginning of this “most precious message” she recognized that something had gone wrong. Speaking in the capacity of “the testimony of Jesus” she wrote a series of appeals in the Review (1890) pleading with our people to realize what era of world history they were living in. She declared the message of Jones and Waggoner to be the essence of Christ’s Most Holy Apartment ministry:

We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ’s work of cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. Let no man [or woman] who desires to be found with the wedding garment on, resist our Lord in His office work (January 21).

Next week she is at it again:

Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and He is there to make an atonement for the people. ... He is cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. What is our work?—It is our work to be in harmony with the work of Christ. By faith we are to work with Him, to be in union with Him. ... A people is to be prepared for the great day of God (January 28).

Next week, she has to come back again:

The mediatorial work of Christ, the grand and holy mysteries of redemption, are not studied or comprehended by the people who claim to have light in advance of every other people on the face of the earth (February 4).

Next week, she is impressed again:

Christ is cleansing the temple in heaven from the sins of the people, and we must work in

harmony with Him upon the earth, cleansing the soul temple from its moral defilement (February 11).

Her intensity increases week by week:

The people have not entered into the holy place [most holy], where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for His children. ... But there is spiritual drought in the churches (February 25).

Something keeps her from dropping it:

Light is flashing from the throne of God, and what is this for?—It is that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God (March 4).

Finally, after twelve weeks of constant emphasis, she lays bare what's on her heart:

We have been hearing His voice more distinctly in the message that has been going for the last two years. ... We have only just begun to get a little glimmering of what faith is (March 11).

You have been having light from heaven for the past year and a half, that the Lord would have you bring into your character and weave into your experience. ... If our brethren were all laborers together with God they would not doubt but that the message He has sent us during these last two years is from heaven, ... special light for the people (March 18).

**Could it be, Heaven is trying to tell us something?**

How is this 1888 idea of justification by faith related to the Day of Atonement work of Christ? How does it go beyond the justification by faith of the 16th century Reformers and of our own Sundaykeeping Evangelicals (and yes, the view popular even among us today)?

Or does it?

1. The 1888 idea lifted the cross of Christ higher than it had been displayed since Pentecost.

It was a partial fulfillment of a later prophecy Ellen White made: “Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God’s word in their native purity.” The Sabbath and the cross finally came together. By accepting the Bible truth of the nature of man (mortal, not immortal), our people became ready to grasp a deeper truth about the cross of Christ: the death He died on His cross was the world’s “second death.” The dimensions of His love (agape) were far greater than modern Christianity had comprehended.

2. The message proclaimed that Christ had successfully accomplished the mission the Father had sent Him to do—He had actually redeemed the world, saved the world, won for “all men” an adoption into the family of His Father, granted to them all “a judicial verdict of acquittal.” By virtue of the cross the world now stood differently before God. Christ had become the “last” or second Adam who had reversed the judicial condemnation that had come on the world because of the first Adam’s sin.

3. In other words, because of the cross the Father could “make His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45). He was now free to treat “every man” as though he had not sinned! Now the truth of the Lord’s Supper could make heartfelt sense: Christ Himself is “the bread of God ... which ... gives life to the world.” “The bread that I will give,” says Jesus, “is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world. ... Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you”—equally true of “all men,” believers and unbelievers alike. But “the life of the world” that Jesus speaks of is far more than the physical life of animals! Christ gave the gift of “more abundant” life to the human race; if only “all men” would receive the gift (which is already given them) with heart-felt thankfulness (which is faith), it would be to them the beginning of eternal life.

4. But this truth articulated in the 1888 message does not mean everyone will go to heaven. It’s not

the heresy of Universalism. By His sacrifice, Christ has given every one of us the freedom to resist and reject what He has given us. And sadly, many do. The lost want their own final end; at the judgment at the end of the thousand years of Revelation 20, they will ask for destruction. Those who are saved at last are simply those who gladly received the gift. That simple.

**5.** God's plan was, that once Seventh-day Adventists could learn to proclaim this truth—what Christ has accomplished for the human race—then honest hearts would respond in faith and experience what the Bible calls “justification by faith.” That's what the gospel accomplishes in hearts and lives changed forever.

**6.** Salvation is more than an “offer” made to the world. It's the “gift” Christ has “given” to the world. At last John 12:32, 33 comes into its own: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die.” The Lord has given this unworthy people a unique grasp of the significance

of Christ's cross—yet to lighten the earth with glory.

Christ's death proves God's great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.

By revealing the extent of what Christ accomplished on His cross, people are brought to where they can recognize themselves as the famous "Esau." They have been given the birthright, given "in Christ." In startling reality, the sinner sees that Christ has personally, individually died his second death. It's far more than a stirring of the emotions. Hearts are confronted with a meaningful alternative—either "despise" and "sell" what was placed in their hands (as did Esau), or treasure the gift by the same life-changing faith that Abraham

exercised. No middle ground.

As one example, the self-sacrifice needed to receive the Sabbath truth now becomes a joy. It's an encouragement to see how the Holy Spirit will do a "quick work" in all the world.

7. Justification by faith therefore in this Day of Atonement is infinitely more than a legal declaration (as is commonly supposed); it accomplishes within itself all the heart-changing miracles that we commonly assign to the word "sanctification."

### **Obedience becomes a New Covenant joy**

In summarizing the 1888 message of justification by faith, Ellen White declared that it makes the believer "obedient to all the commandments of God," which of course includes the Sabbath commandment, and the seventh one, too. (People learn to regard their body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.)

And in this New Covenant joy is revealed the truth that prepares a people for translation. It's a more mature glimpse of the grace of God that effectively "teaches" that self-denial is a joy. The Sabbath "proclaimed more fully" is what must come with the Loud Cry.

No one can know justification by faith in its end-time setting who does not render heart-felt obedience to all the commandments of God. There can be no continued subservience to the "man of sin" (who created the spurious sabbath) when justification by faith is seen in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

When received and proclaimed by the corporate body of God's people, it will be like blowing trumpets with the heavenly news, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

## Chapter 3

# Why the Old Covenant Paralyzes Us

That impresses us with the beauty of “1888” is its clear view of the New Covenant. It illustrates how the message is “most precious.”

It was better news than important people at the time wanted to grasp. The confusion became most intense in 1890, but has seeped throughout the 20th and on into our 21st century.

The Lord Jesus promised that he would “pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, ... even the Spirit of truth. ... I will not leave you comfortless [orphans, Greek]: I will come to you” (John 14:16-18). This promise has been fulfilled in the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose work is to “guide [us] into all truth” (16:13). We recognize that this prophetic “gift” has been manifested in the work of Ellen G. White. The

Lord revealed to her which side she should stand on in this conflict:

Since I made the statement last Sabbath that the view of the covenants as it had been taught by Brother Waggoner was truth, it seems that great relief has come to many minds.

Writing to Uriah Smith and others, she said:

Night before last I was shown that evidences in regard to the covenants were clear and convincing. Yourself, Dan Jones [the church Secretary, not A. T. Jones], Brother Porter and others are spending your investigative powers for naught to produce a position on the covenants to vary from the position that Brother Waggoner has presented.

She has always wanted us to rely primarily on Bible evidence in controverted subjects. Waggoner and Jones had been enabled by the Holy Spirit to break through the fog that had darkened this subject for centuries. Once they grasped the import of the theme of the great controversy between

Christ and Satan and saw the Day of Atonement and justification by faith in this light, the New Covenant emerged out of the fog bright and clear in the sunshine. Simply and briefly stated, what they saw is this:

- (a) The New Covenant is God's promise of blessings and salvation in Christ.
- (b) The Old Covenant is the promise of the people to do everything right so they can be saved.

### **Then why this massive confusion?**

Inherited from centuries of controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism, the general popular view of the two covenants has been that they are two "dispensations," the Old to last only until the cross when the New should come into being. Thus it was assumed that God had invented the Old Covenant to be in force up until the time of Christ, when a new "dispensation" should begin as the first manifestation of a "better covenant" (cf. Heb. 9:6).

Perplexities and self-contradictions grow out of this “dispensational” view wherever it comes up. Among us, at the time of the 1888 General Conference Session, it was difficult to find any two of the leaders who could agree on the details.

### **Enter the “special messengers” whom the Lord “sent” in 1888**

They forthwith declared that the “dispensation” idea is foreign to the Bible. The two covenants are not matters of time, or dispensation; they run side by side all through history since the fall of man at Eden. They are matters of heart-conviction. People living in Old Testament times could be under the New Covenant if they cherished faith in Christ: we today can be under the Old if we don’t understand and believe how good the Good News is.

Waggoner’s clearest presentations are found in his two books, *The Glad Tidings* (Pacific Press, 1900; republished 1972), and *The Everlasting Covenant* (a series of Present Truth articles

published in the 1890s and now in book form under that title by Glad Tidings Publishers).

**The salient points are:**

1. The New Covenant was what God promised in Genesis 3:15—a Savior who would trample on the head of our enemy, Satan. God made no mention that Adam and Eve were to promise anything in return.

2. God’s promise to Noah to save him and his family from the Flood was a renewal of the New Covenant. Noah preached “righteousness by faith” (Heb. 11:7). Again, no mention of any promise God exacted from Noah.

3. Paul cites God’s promises to Abraham as the clearest statement of the New Covenant (Gal. 3:8-18). There are seven in Genesis 12:2, 3 (KJV), all for Abraham and his descendants by faith:

- [1] “I will make you a great nation;
- [2] I will bless you,

[3] and make your name great;  
[4] and you shall be a blessing.  
[5] I will bless those who bless you,  
[6] and I will curse him who curses you:  
[7] and in you all families of the earth shall be  
blessed.”

**These promises are to us individually as  
Abraham’s children by faith**

Later (13:14-17; 15:5) God promised to give Abraham not only the land of Canaan, but the whole earth for his “everlasting possession,” which Waggoner early remarked must include also everlasting life or he couldn’t enjoy it; and that meant also it must include the righteousness by faith necessary to inherit it.

In other words, in Waggoner’s view the New Covenant is the essence of the “everlasting gospel,” the righteousness by faith which is the “third angel’s message in verity,” something our beloved Sunday-keeping churches (and Seventh Day Baptists) had not as yet clearly understood.

This was why in her enthusiasm the dear lady declared this message of the New Covenant to be “the beginning” of the light which should lighten the earth with glory in the final “loud cry.”

Waggoner and Jones were impressed that when the Lord made those seven promises to Abraham, He didn't ask Abraham to reciprocate with any in return. Instead, He asked the patriarch to believe His promise. The 1888 messengers insisted that when the Lord “makes a covenant,” it's one-sided on His part. There must be a response to His promise, yes, a response of gratitude and believing, but our response to His promises is not one in which we stand on equal footing, eye to eye, fulfilling a “bargain” between equals. Our faith commitment is dependence on His promises, which are all “Yes, and in Him Amen” (2 Cor. 1:20).

### **But right here is where unbelief gave birth to problems**

The same spirit that led the Galatians to insist

that they could stand on a par with God in the plan of salvation led our brethren to insist that God's promises must be mutually balanced by our own.

Waggoner observed humorously:

After the Flood, God made a "covenant" with every beast of the earth, and with every fowl, but the beasts and the birds did not promise anything in return. Genesis 9:9-16. They simply received the favor at the hand of God. That is all we can do—receive. God promises us everything that we need, and more than we can ask or think, as a gift. We give Him ourselves, that is nothing. And He gives us Himself, that is, everything. That which makes all the trouble [here he refers to the opposition he has been receiving from the brethren] is that even when men are willing to recognize the Lord at all, they want to make bargains with Him. They want it to be an equal, "mutual" affair—a transaction in which they can consider themselves on a par with God. But whoever deals with God must deal with Him on His own terms, that is, on a basis of fact—that we have nothing, and are nothing, and He has

everything and is everything and gives everything.

This aroused “our” intense opposition, because as Ellen White later explained, “it lays the glory of man in the dust.” Ministerial leadership pride in the elders was wounded; and pastoral pride is even today our immense problem.

The believer in Christ glories in nothing save the cross of Jesus Christ by which the world is crucified to him and he unto the world (cf. Gal. 6:14). Self “is crucified with Christ,” and Ellen White explained how that was why our brethren reacted against this “most precious message.” The love of self and pride is common in all people, but most painfully evident in religious leaders who profess to “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). But our brethren didn’t realize it at the time, because, as she said, they didn’t know their own hearts.

**But how does the Old Covenant fit into the picture?**

Paul emerges as the first biblical writer who clearly discerned the significance of Israel's history in the light of the two covenants. In Romans 4 he tells us some six times that Abraham is "our father," yes, "the father of all them that believe" (vss. 11-18). In Galatians 3 and 4 he tells the sad story of the Old Covenant:

1. Abraham believed the New Covenant promises, but his descendants 430 years later did not have his faith. They had come out of Egyptian slavery on their way to the Promised Land, which they could have had in a short time of travel if they hadn't gotten delayed by the Old Covenant on the way.

2. He gave them the same promises He had given to Abraham: "I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord" (Ex. 6:6-8). Note that

the Lord did not ask for them to make any promise in return. But the next verse says, “They would not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.” This unbelief set them up for the tragedy of creating a vain Old Covenant promise that would mislead people for generations.

3. At Mount Sinai God sought to renew the same New Covenant promises He had made to Abraham: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice, and keep My covenant [cherish My promise, according to Waggoner], then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people, ... and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (19:3-6).

The Hebrew word translated “obey” is *shamea*, which means to listen attentively with faith, that is, not kicking or fighting with objections or unbelief. The Hebrew word translated as “keep” is *shamar*, which means to keep in the sense of “to treasure.” It is used of Adam being “put into the Garden of

Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15). He treasured it! Anybody who treasures a garden will take care of it.

4. There is a play on words here. If Israel were to keep or “treasure” the promises made to their “father Abraham” as he believed and treasured them, then God would “treasure” them and they would become the greatest nation on earth. No cruel world empires to arise such as Assyria, Babylon, or Rome, no Stalins or Hitlers. Again, no mention of any promise the Lord asked Israel to make in return!

But that doesn’t mean that they were to lie down and do nothing. What He wanted was the faith which Abraham showed. Such faith makes a choice, a commitment, a dedication. There is no end to the “good works” that faith working by love (agape) will do! (See Gal. 5:6.)

5. But Israel took it upon themselves to promise: “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do” (Ex. 19:8). Of themselves, these were good

words, and some believe that there is nothing wrong with Israel saying those words. But these words were spoken in their “self-righteousness.” And we know God didn’t ask them to make the promises. And of course we know that all self-righteousness is essentially sin. Thus unbelieving Israel themselves formed the Old Covenant. Let’s not blame God for their troubles!

6. In a matter of weeks they had broken their promises and were worshipping a golden calf (32:1-6). Thus began a detour, says Paul in Galatians 3:22-24, that lasted for many centuries. In God’s plan it must finally lead them back to where Abraham their father had been, to be “justified by faith.”

The history of Israel was up and down, mostly down, until good King Josiah’s sons led the kingdom of Judah into total ruin in 586 B.C., to demonstrate fully the enslaving nature of the Old Covenant (Paul says that it “genders to bondage,” Gal. 4:24). It finally led Israel to reject and crucify their Messiah.

## **Righteousness does not come by works, nor by our promising to keep God's law**

It comes “through faith,” that is, a humble heart that appreciates what it cost the Savior to save us. (Humility is a vital component of faith, for we read in Habakkuk 2:4: “Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”)

The grace of God is given freely to all (Rom. 3:23, 24; Titus 2:11), and therefore “every man [is given] a measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3). Christ died for the world; He redeemed the human race; “in Him” God has promised the gift of everlasting life to all who will receive it as a gift, not as something they must earn by good works or by promises to obey.

Now here's a question. Isn't it all right to promise to obey God's law? Shouldn't we lead our children to promise God that they will always be faithful? Don't their promises help them to remain

faithful?

Vows and promises to God to help repair the church roof or in a special way help the poor are not inherently wrong, but they are different than promises to be obedient to God and to be righteous. We must be ever so careful that we are not making promises of obedience to God in a spirit of self-dependence. If we think that we can make the promise to Him and keep it, then we are no different than those selfrighteous Hebrews long ago. And whoever makes the promise is the source of the “righteousness!” (How good a “source” of righteousness are you?)

We humans are not good at keeping our promises to be righteous. And when we break them (as we certainly will) then we sink ourselves into unnecessary discouragement. Children especially are in danger here.

After the pastor or teacher urges them to make the promise to be obedient to God and they are tempted and forget and break their promise, they

get down on themselves and think they are no good, why even try to be a Christian? Many give up. That's why the Old Covenant leads into "bondage."

God hasn't asked for us to keep promises; He has asked us to believe that He is the real Promise Keeper. Says Steps to Christ:

You are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. You can choose to serve Him (p. 47).

Sometimes (often, in fact) we sing hymns

carelessly, not realizing what the lyrics say. For example, take that lovely hymn of consecration, “O Jesus, I Have Promised” (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #331). Many sing it with an Old Covenant mind-set, not realizing that apart from God’s powerful New Covenant promises we are powerless to do what we are singing. We must have “grace to follow” (last line, third stanza)! To remind ourselves of this, perhaps we should change one word: “O Jesus, I Have Chosen.”

Many are the youth who have vainly promised in Weeks of Prayer, who have come down in front to serve the Lord faithfully. Sometimes the effects last a week or two; but then comes backsliding. And so, many then say, as Dr. Roger Dudley has documented in his scientific studies of our youth, “It’s too hard; I guess I’m not cut out to go to heaven.” Thus again the Old Covenant demonstrates its true nature as “gendering to bondage.”

**When we do make promises to God, when can we be sure that there is no “self-dependence” in them?**

Abraham’s response to God’s promises was the simple Hebrew word AMEN (Gen. 15:6), which implies a heartfelt appreciation, a heart-agreement with God, a heart-commitment to Him just as when we say “amen” to something we heartily agree with. That’s all God wants from us, for He knows that it will also produce all the obedience the holy law requires!

When by faith we are totally reliant on God’s power and on His promise of salvation, we may vow with Jacob, “then shall the LORD be my God” (Gen. 28:21). But this is not a promise like Peter made before he denied Christ; this is a choice to believe, a choice to receive, a choice to yield the heart to God. It’s a commitment. That’s what Steps to Christ, page 47, enjoins upon us!

The New Covenant was the central pillar in the “most precious message” of 1888. May its truth be

resurrected in the Church.

## Chapter 4

# A Breakthrough in Understanding the Gospel

**This is the supra-critical issue**

“1888” will again turn the world upside down as the apostles did after Pentecost. But it flew right over “our” heads when it came!

“We” supposed the truth was the same as the justification by faith held by the 16th century Reformers and the Sunday-keeping Evangelical churches of that era, but that was the most tragic misunderstanding that has come since the Great Disappointment of 1844.

“The everlasting gospel” of Revelation 14 is “the third angel’s message in verity.” And the inspired messenger also says, “The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel’s

message.” “Not one in one hundred ... understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject [justification by faith] that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare.” That’s a polite way of saying that 99 out of a 100 were asleep at the time.

Did Martin Luther and the 16th century Reformers proclaim the essence of the 1888 message? If the answer is “yes,” there is no need for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to exist other than to contribute the so-called “gospel” of legalism and law-keeping.

Ellen White seems clear in context: “Luther had a great work to do ... yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this, new light has been continually shining upon the Scriptures and new truths have been constantly unfolding.” This must include “1888.”

The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message [the third angel’s message which in essence is the 1888 view of

justification by faith] is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment had come.

### **Why is this true?**

Because since 1844 we have been living world history's cosmic equivalent of Israel's Day of Atonement. The "new light" and "new truths" she speaks of must include a clearer understanding of justification by faith. It is parallel to Christ's "new" work (since 1844) of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. What wasn't truth in Luther's day has become truth today—this is the heavenly Day of Atonement, and of judgment.

"No such message has ever been given in past ages," she continues. Hebrews says that Noah preached "righteousness which is according to faith" (11:7), but it wasn't in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Ellen White continues: "Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future

... The Reformers did not proclaim it.” That also includes Calvin and the Wesleys.

The only conclusion possible: there is an understanding of justification by faith that is “new light” for these last days, a message that must include “showers from heaven of the latter rain,” and “the beginning” of the loud cry that will yet lighten the earth with glory. That is “1888.”

### **How does it differ? How does it go beyond Luther?**

Although we as Seventh-day Adventists have made little if any effort to tell the 1888 view to the Catholic and Protestant world, it resolves the centuries-old conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism. It agrees with Calvinism in that Christ’s work of justification accomplished on His cross was effective, that is, He accomplished what He set out to do. It disagrees with Calvinism’s “limited atonement” confined only to the restricted “elect.”

It agrees with Arminianism's insistence that what Christ accomplished is available to "all men," but it disagrees with its insistence that it is only available, that there is nothing in it effective for "all men" unless they do something first. "1888" says that Christ's sacrifice has touched "every man" who has ever come into the world because mankind's very life is the purchase of His blood. The Father can make "His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust" only because of the "verdict of acquittal" that Christ has given to "all men" because of the cross (Matt. 5:45; Rom. 5:15-18, NEB).

E. J. Waggoner told it clearly:

"By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" [Rom. 5:18]. There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given Himself for all. Nay, He has given Himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence

that there is no exception. If it came only upon those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift.

It is a fact, therefore, plainly stated in the Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not the slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it.

Waggoner made plain that this 1888 view of justification is not the heresy of Universalism:

“Do you mean to teach universal salvation?” someone may ask. We mean to teach just what the Word of God teaches—that “the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men.” Titus 2:11, RV [the Greek sustains this rendering]. God has wrought out salvation for every man, and has given it to him; but the majority spurn it and throw it away. The judgment will reveal the fact that full salvation was given to every man and that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright

possession.

The gift is ours to keep. If anyone has not this blessing, it is because he has not recognized the gift, or has deliberately thrown it away.

A. T. Jones loved this truth:

All that were in the world were included in Adam; and all that are in the world are included in Christ. In other words: Adam in his sin reached all the world; Jesus Christ, the second Adam, in His righteousness touches all humanity. ... Does the second Adam's righteousness embrace as many as does the first Adam[']s sin]? Look closely. Without our consent at all, without our having anything to do with it, we were all included in the first Adam's sin; we were there. All the human race were in the first Adam. What that first Adam, what that first man, did, meant ... involved us. ...

Jesus Christ, the second man, took our sinful nature. He touched us "in all points." He became we and died the death. And so in Him, and by that,

every man that has ever lived upon the earth, and was involved with the first Adam, is involved in this, and will live again [1 Cor. 15:22]. ... Therefore, just as far as the first Adam reaches man, so far the second Adam reaches man. The first Adam brought man under the condemnation of sin, even unto death; [so] the second Adam's righteousness undoes that, and makes every man live again.

### **Why is this truth so important?**

1. By recovering the truths of both Calvinism and Arminianism while rejecting their errors, "1888" rediscovers the original truth of the cross of Christ in a way that none of the Reformers were able in their day to grasp, honest though they were.

2. Thus Christ actually saved the world, and in doing so, He saved "every man" in a real sense, but many people did not see it. As Paul says, "The judicial action, following upon the one offence [of Adam], issued in a verdict of condemnation, but the act of grace, following upon so many misdeeds,

issued in a [judicial] verdict of acquittal. ... The issue of one just act is acquittal and life for all men” (Rom. 5:16, 18, NEB).

3. “1888” grasped this truth. Christ died the second death for “every man” (Heb. 2:9). Luther almost reached this truth because he alone of the Reformers began to understand the nature of man, but as a whole the Reformation could not grasp it due to their prevailing belief in natural immortality. Their name “protestant” became “dead” (Rev. 3:1).

Likewise the Sunday-keeping Evangelicals of the 1888 era could not grasp it for the same reason. “The breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of the love (agape) of Christ was over their heads. “1888” called Seventh-day Adventists to supply what was missing.

4. The conclusion: God has entrusted to Seventhday Adventists a unique understanding of the cross that with His blessing is yet to lighten the earth with glory. This cannot be grasped except in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Long ago the importance was told us of following Christ by faith into the Second Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the tragedy of staying behind:

Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest [apartment] and pray, “Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.

I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne and pray, “Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love [agape], joy, and peace.

Thus we can be exposed to the extremely subtle

counterfeits of a false holy spirit. Justification by faith in the light of Daniel 8:14 will save us from confusion and deception.

5. When an honest heart recognizes this ultimate truth of what happened on the cross, “the love [agape] of Christ constrains” (motivates) that soul to live “henceforth” only for the One who died our second death for us. The results, in God’s plan, are phenomenal: all Old Covenant, egocentric motivation is transcended.

**The Sabbath truth, for example, comes into its own.**

In the final loud cry yet to come, for which the 1888 message was only an advance billing, “the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. ... A large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.” That glorious outcome to the gospel

commission was what the Lord intended “us” to see in the 1888 era. But rejecting (“in a great degree”) the beginning of the latter rain was a spiritual abortion.

The Old Covenant motivation of fear will not figure in this closing work. “The grace of God that brings salvation ... teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live selfcontrolled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” Why this ultimate power in soul-winning? That “grace” is “much more abundant” and points to the cross: “Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ... gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14, NIV; not perfection of the flesh but faith which produces perfection of Christlike character).

**6.** According to Ellen White’s divinely inspired prophecy in *The Great Controversy*, our denominational evangelism has yet to come fully into its own. When we are willing to embrace the

full truth of biblical justification by faith (with its concomitant blessings of the New Covenant and the nearness of our Savior) we will have a message that will startle modern Evangelical churches.

Then the thrilling Revelation 18 prophecies of The Great Controversy will be unfolded.

## Chapter 5

# How Close Has Jesus Come to Us?

Have you ever tried to eat an artificial banana? If you're hungry, it looks like the real thing, but it doesn't fool the monkeys (I tried to fool them when I lived in Africa). "1888" pinpoints not only a true Christ, but also exposes a counterfeit false christ and a false holy spirit. Truths that make up "1888" center in this double disclosure.

"1888" proclaimed how close Jesus has come to us. This makes all the difference in our personal, day-by-day Christian living (but Satan didn't like the idea!).

In the end, there will be only two great "faiths" in the world: "Babylon" and the Revelation 18 "loud cry" message that will lighten the earth with glory.

## **“1888” probed deeply**

To get ready for the second coming of Christ requires that we distinguish the nearness of Jesus from the popular idea of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Here is the first published statement from E. J. Waggoner following the Minneapolis Conference; it summarizes it nicely:

We have an exhortation which comprehends all the injunctions given to the Christian. It is this: “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” To do this as the Bible enjoins, to consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for “by beholding we become changed” (Heb. 3:1).

Here’s a triple-edged truth: (a) Seeing Jesus “just as He is” is seeing Him as taking upon His sinless nature our fallen, sinful nature, but living a sinless life therein. (b) Receiving Him in this way

transforms His people into being “perfect,” ready for Christ’s appearing. (c) This is accomplished not by a works program, but simply by His people “beholding” Him “just as He is,” but not as Babylon portrays Him.

Thus in these few words was encapsulated what the church had been waiting for ever since the Midnight Cry of 1844 because in “1888” lay the beginning of what we had been praying God to send—the initial outpouring of the “latter rain.”

### **Simple, but also profound**

The popular dogma of the Immaculate Conception teaches that when the Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother, God worked a miracle to break the genetic DNA that all other humans have inherited from the fallen Adam. She was virtually therefore a new creation, as was mother Eve at creation. But this one was “unfallen.” She was not a true human being.

This privately invented “Mary” was so “pure”

that she could not be tempted as all other humans are—particularly with sexual temptation. We might say, okay; at last we have a perfectly sinless woman; so what?

But the problem is her Son: is He also not a true human being?

In this teaching, the Virgin Mary gave to her Son Jesus a nature different from ours, which means that Jesus in His incarnation took only the sinless nature of Adam before his fall and could not have been tempted in all points like we are.

In other words, Mary and Jesus were not descendants of the fallen Adam as are all humans. And of course this meant that Jesus could not have been “in all points tempted like as we are,” as Hebrews 4:15 says. He had to be “exempt” from having the flesh where our temptations arise and thus He would be tempted differently (if at all). This teaching removed Jesus from humanity. This present-day widely prevalent view has its source in Romanism.

Many see Him only in the cathedral windows and assume they know Him; but the true Christ has been hidden from them.

**It was simple Bible truth that the 1888  
messengers proclaimed**

“The [true] gospel of God ... concern[s] His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:1-3). The heavenly angel told Joseph before Jesus’ birth that His name shall be “‘Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us,’” not God far away.

We see Him revealed in this Bible picture: “What the law [the ten commandments] could not do in that it was weak through the flesh [that is, our fallen, sinful], God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh [ours, fallen, sinful]” (Rom. 8:3).

The origin of our world’s problem with sin was

the claim of Satan when he was “Lucifer” that God is unfair to maintain His law, for nobody can keep it— especially humans who are already sinful by nature (as we all are). The prime exhibit seemed convincing: after some 4000 years of human history when Jesus came, not one human had ever been able to avoid falling into sin. Satan crowed: “See! I’m right! God is unfair!” If Jesus had sidestepped the contest by taking the sinless nature of the unfallen Adam, Satan would forever after have trumpeted, “Foul! Unfair!” A soldier with a bulletproof vest is braver than one without.

### **But the Father gave Jesus a job description**

1. Defeat Satan in humanity.
2. Enter the fray where the problem is.
3. Take on Your sinless nature (brought from heaven), the same fallen, sinful flesh and nature that all humans have.
4. Then condemn or defeat sin there, in its last lair in the universe.
5. Deliver the human race from this captivity of sin.

## 6. Triumph in the “great controversy” over Satan.

And Jesus did!

With no “exemption,” no “bullet-proof vest,” Jesus entered into the same arena where we have all lost the battle. And right here in our human flesh and human nature He “condemned,” defeated, outlawed, conquered, crushed, trampled on, annihilated, excommunicated, destroyed ... sin. He came to where it had taken root—in human flesh.

In our same flesh He won the great controversy with Satan, opened the gates of heaven for believing, repenting sinners, and the hearts of heaven rejoiced.

The next verse tells what will now happen: “That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

That phrase “righteous requirement” is one word in the original, *dikaioma*, which means the

righteousness that has its origin in Christ but has been imparted to the believing human being.

Here again is the cardinal truth of “1888”: human beings by the faith of Jesus will overcome sin, “condemn” it in our fallen flesh, and will become ready in one generation for the second coming of Jesus—something no other corporate group has realized in all past history. God had intended that Christ should return in that 1888-era generation!

But this is not the heresy of “perfectionism.” This overcoming victory will not be motivated by fear or pride, nor by a selfish hope of reward. It will be the work of grace which abounds much more than all the sin the devil can invent for these last days.

### **Hebrews describes how this works**

Inasmuch then as the children [that’s we] have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might

destroy [Greek, paralyze] him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels [who have a sinless nature], but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham (2:14, 15).

Hebrews never suggests that Christ HAD a sinful nature. He HAD a sinless one; but He “took” our sinful nature.

### **Why?**

Therefore, in all things He had to be made LIKE His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, ... for in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (vss. 17-18).

This is the glorious gospel of hope that many have been hindered from seeing. But the Lord gave it to Seventh-day Adventists, and Ellen White said that “God commanded [it] to be given to the

world.”

It presented a Christ who knows how the sinner is tempted, and can save Him from the lowest hell. “We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (4:15).

It has been generally assumed that getting serious about overcoming sin means only hard, boring work. But “1888” had only joyful Good News. Here’s a sample:

Grace is not simply more powerful than is sin. ... This, good as it would be, is not all. ... There is much more power in grace than there is in sin. For “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” ... Let no one ever attempt to serve God with anything but the present, living power of God, that makes him a new creature; with nothing but the much more abundant grace that condemns sin in the flesh, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Then the service of God will indeed be “in newness of life”;

then it will be found that His yoke is indeed “easy” and His burden “light”; then His service will be found indeed to be with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Jesus came to the world, and put Himself in the flesh, just where men are; and met that flesh, just as it is, with all its tendencies and desires; and by the divine power which He brought by faith, He “condemned sin in the flesh,” and thus brought to all mankind that divine faith which brings the divine power to man to deliver him from the power of the flesh and the law of sin, just where he is, and to give him assured dominion over the flesh, just as it is.

He who takes God for the portion of his inheritance, has a power working in him for righteousness, as much stronger than the power of inherited tendencies to evil, as our heavenly Father is greater than our earthly parents.

When people receive such a message wholeheartedly, will it not prepare them for the

coming of Jesus when they will be caught up to meet Jesus without dying (that's the meaning of the word "translation")? (See 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. Enoch and Elijah were "translated" without dying; Heb. 11:5, 2 Kings 2:11.) There will also be an innumerable corporate crowd who have learned to follow wherever the Lamb leads (Rev. 14:1-6).

## Chapter 6

# The “Good Shepherd” Idea

Before “1888” “we” had “preached the law, the law, until we [were] as dry as the hills of Gilboa, that had neither dew nor rain.” No one overtly denied the “Good Shepherd” idea—that Christ actively seeks and saves the lost rather than waiting for us to seek and find Him; but during those pre-1888 years we lacked what later came as “a most precious message.” The gospel was far better Good News than “we” had thought it could be.

No one among us today will deny the parable of the Good Shepherd. But the idea seldom gets through clearly.

For example, consider the basic theme that permeates so much of what we hear in pulpits, and at camp meetings: in order to be saved there are three things we must do: (1) read the Bible, (2) pray, and (3) witness. The theme is played almost endlessly. “Maintain your relationship with the

Lord,” which means get up in the morning, read something devotional, and pray. And the cure for spiritual maladies is “work for others.”

True, 100%. Can’t be said too often. But a few weeks after camp meeting, we get busy again, and we’re back in the same old problem of lukewarmness.

### **“Maintaining that relationship” with the Lord is the problem**

Once we get far enough along that we have what we think is a “relationship,” it’s commonly understood that maintaining it is the believer’s job. And that seems to make good sense, for hasn’t the Lord done His part of the job, so now it’s only fair that we do ours. There have to be some “good works.” We must make our contribution, is the idea.

And here’s where we often fall down. We forget or we get too busy, and then it seems the Lord is far away. And of course it’s all our fault,

isn't it? So, ... enter Old Covenant guilt.

The pre-1888 Church was a working church. “Our” activity was almost frenetic. The Review and Herald and the Pacific Press were churning out literature, our evangelists were pitching tents and holding evangelistic “efforts,” stirring up the Sunday-church pastors and frequently raising up a little new church at the close of the campaign. We almost invariably won each debate that we got into over “the law and the Sabbath.” A great spirit of triumphalism seemed to indicate that the Lord was pleased with our progress.

The Review was one of the finest, if not the finest of religious publishing houses in the nation. The Battle Creek Sanitarium was world-famous; kings came across the Atlantic to go to it. We were finding a place on the map and our people rejoiced in “the blessed hope” of Christ coming soon.

But still our message was “dry,” confessed Ellen White. Ever since Early Writings was written (1850) we had been praying for the Lord to send

the “latter rain.” And now at last in 1888 He did so with refreshing advance “showers” in a message that startled and even alarmed “us.” It was surprising because it majored in revealing Christ as a Savior who does not wait for us either to initiate or to maintain a “relationship” with Him. The spotlight shone on a divine love that takes both initiatives. And there is where we became scared: this is going to upset our devotion to the Sabbath.

### **What is Christ doing?**

God is not hiding in a celestial office where we must seek Him out. He’s not like a doctor in his sanctum sanctorum where the nurse keeps you out until you have an appointment. Rather, the message is shocking, even to us today: your salvation does not depend on your perseverance or hard work in seeking the Lord. The Savior takes the initiative in seeking you. This has been hard for us to humble ourselves and grasp. Paul quoted Moses:

“The man who does those things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this

way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach).

Christ in His earthly life was human as we are, dependant on His Father, and it’s amazing but true that the Father took the initiative in seeking His Son day by day to maintain a closeness with Himself.

Jesus speaks of Himself in Isaiah: “The Lord God ... awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God has opened My ear” (50:4, 5). Jesus didn’t need an alarm clock. Does the Father love us as much as He loved His Son?

The Holy Spirit does for us all that the Father did for Jesus. Shocking as it seems to many, He seeks to maintain our closeness with Christ. He

prompts us continually. Our problem is revealed in the next part of Isaiah's verse: "And I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away." In contrast, that is what we often do. We repulse the initiative that the Holy Spirit takes in our behalf. (Peterson represents Jesus as saying, "The Master, God, opened My ears, and I didn't go back to sleep, didn't pull the covers over My head," vs. 5.)

As we look back, something special seems to have been developing when "1888" came along. Jesus Christ the Savior was progressing in His closeness with His church. He was wanting to pursue His church as a lover pursues a bride-to-be. Seldom in society does the man wait for the woman he loves to take the initiative. Probably unknown to the corporate body or to the church, something was moving down the verses of Revelation 19 and had come as far as the time for verses 7 and 8. It was now time to "rejoice," for something must happen that had never before happened in history: "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready."

After centuries and millennia of human history we had come to Daniel's "time of the end;" but something was involved we weren't prepared for. Living in "the time of the end" meant that verses 7 and 8 of Revelation 19 had to be fulfilled in the progressive Christian experience of the church as a body. We can't continue static in "the time of the end" forever; Revelation 19 has to move on to fulfillment. We can't stall the progress of sacred history. "The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready." But she hadn't done it, yet.

### **What can happen that will effect this grand paradigm development?**

In all past ages "the Lamb's wife" has never "made herself ready." She has always been the flower girl at the wedding, never the bride. But she has to grow up; you can't stay a child forever.

How can the heavenly Bridegroom get His church's attention? By burning down the Review offices and the grand Battle Creek Sanitarium?

(This all happened after the 1901 General Conference Session.) Can He bring His people to attention by an unprecedented fear-motivated demand for holy living? The answer has to be in the text: “To her [His bride-to-be] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (vs. 8).

No, the means the Lord will employ will not be a thunderclap from heaven or an earthquake, but a tender, quiet, heart-warming message of “the righteousness of saints.” A message that woos the heart—“righteousness by faith,” the Bridegroom coming close in an appeal, a gentle touch of truth.

The Jews in Christ’s day expected the Messiah to come with a thunderclap and earthquake, for many Old Testament prophecies seemed to say so. The Jews were not prepared that He came gently, a Babe born in Bethlehem, a questioning Lad in the temple when He was only 12, a modest healing ministry in Galilee, a message of Good News beatitudes preached on a grassy hillside. Many

leaders were so shocked, they never recovered their spiritual equilibrium until they rejected and crucified Him. Ellen White often said (over 100 times) that our reaction to “1888” was “just like the Jews.” It was Jesus taking us by the hand and saying, Come, let’s go to the wedding!

As a divine Bridegroom, His initiating love was so strong that Ellen White for the first time in her writing career said that He would lead us all the way to consummation of the wedding if we didn’t “resist” Him. Listening herself to the 1888 message prompted her to formulate this astounding thought.

It was the essence of the message of Jones and Waggoner regarding righteousness by faith. In brief:

1. The motivation was the cross and the love revealed there—not a theological exercise, but a wooing message. When it was allowed to get through to the youth and the church members, the results were spectacular. Ellen White had seen nothing like it since the Midnight Cry of 1844. For

example, the messengers didn't harp on tithing, but huge tithes flowed in, unasked for. Human hearts were beginning to respond in a phenomenal way.

2. "1888" presented what Christ has already accomplished for us. Again, it was a wooing message: emphasis was on the Good Shepherd's infinite dangers He went through "where He found His sheep that was lost." As Christ was lifted up as the Lamb of God, true to His promise He was "drawing all persons" to Himself. His death for us was the equivalent of the second death. He had "poured out His soul unto death," even the second.

In the meetings held after Minneapolis, there was something different from many of our Weeks of Prayer or evangelistic meetings today: "There was no urging or inviting. The people were not called forward, but there was a solemn realization that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." It was something new in Adventism—yes, in modern Christianity.

3. Christ was presented as carrying the world on His heart. The message said nothing about Arminianism or Calvinism, yet it transcended and solved the anomalies in both. It was designed by Heaven to grip the attention of sincere people in the popular churches who sensed that the time had come for something new. Startling as it might be, the atonement was effected for the world; Christ had died the second death for every man's sin, had "tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). The Savior had become the "last Adam." He had reversed what the first Adam did in bringing a "judicial verdict of condemnation" on "all men," and had effected for the same "all men" a judicial verdict of "acquittal" (Rom. 5:15-18, NEB). Now was revealed the way to grip hearts and bring conviction of the Sabbath truth. Now the predictions of Early Writings and The Great Controversy regarding the final inflow of souls were to meet fulfillment. It was exciting to be alive, and Ellen White was overjoyed.

4. The message revealed that the Savior had answered thousands of questions when He declared

that His “yoke is easy and [His] burden is light,” and that it’s “hard” to resist and oppose such love. Can you imagine the shock that ideas like this could have had on ministers and people who heard these things but had assumed that this little sect of Seventh-day Adventists were legalists? Here was forming in minds and hearts a deep conviction that Jesus is a Shepherd seeking us, striding past all the barriers that human prejudice has erected. Here is a Divine Suitor who is taking bold steps to His Beloved’s heart.

5. The message portrayed Jesus as intimately near, “Emmanuel, God with us.” Never since Paul had anyone presented so forcefully the reality of a Savior who “took” on His sinless nature our fallen, sinful nature, and had therein “condemned sin in the flesh.” The Bridegroom has come fresh from the battle where He has been proclaimed Victor! The gargantuan Conflict of the Ages has been won! In human flesh! Now the Bride can enter into His feelings, can share with Him His triumph, as a bride enters into her husband’s heroic career. In the promised intimacy, all fear is “cast out” (agape

does that! 1 John 4:18). Hearts would be won to want to “overcome even as [He] overcame” (Rev. 3:20). The stage was re-set.

6. Now at last, after years of being as “dry as the hills of Gilboa,” Adventism was thrilled with the New Covenant succeeding the Old. No other identification is so apt for describing the impact of “1888.” It was like a black and white photo suddenly shining in radiant color. At last here is a message of Christ’s righteousness that’s big time, one with stature that can lighten the earth with glory. The millions immersed in the darkness of “Babylon” will “see a great light” (cf. Matt. 4:16).

Ellen White sat over on one side in front at the Minneapolis Church as she listened, her face beaming. Never had she heard such truth come publicly from human lips, for 45 years.

**The lost lamb is wedged in the thorn bush on a**

## **dangerous cliff that wild stormy night**

Will it rejoice when it is rescued by the selfsacrificing Good Shepherd? Or will it squirm and resist and fight its Rescuer? The parable didn't say. It's for us to complete the story, for the lost little lamb has resisted its Shepherd now for many, many years.

## Chapter 7

# “1888” and Obedience

Some earnest people ask, does “1888” weaken obedience? A wise woman had said that “we have preached the law, the law, until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa.” “We” thought we were doing great, fulfilling Revelation 12:17 and 14:12; we were the wonderful “remnant” distinguished by “keeping the commandments of God.”

Then came “1888.”

Now the question arises, How does that relate to God’s law? Is “1888’s” grace cheap grace? Does it encourage disobedience to the law of God? Lower church standards? Fixate on the grace of Christ and what happened at the cross to the neglect of our “works”?

**We know Ellen White was overjoyed to hear it**

She said it was the clearest presentation of the

gospel she had heard publicly “for the past forty-five years.” She also said that if those two young messengers had not brought the message, we just wouldn’t have had it, meaning that the Lord had laid a burden on them He had not laid on her. If in any way their message weakens obedience to God’s law, it cannot be “precious,” let alone “most precious.”

What made her so happy was that at last it set the law before the people in its true light. The young messengers’ understanding was fresh, unique, dynamic. She was painfully aware that the Sundaykeeping Evangelical churches denigrated God’s law, declaring either that it had been abolished at the cross or was impossible for us humans to obey. Either way, the popular view of justification by faith was employed to refute the Sabbath truth. She rejoiced that “1888” finally portrayed the ten commandments as ten promises upholding heart-obedience.

**“1888” was clear in this understanding**

**1. Justification by faith is far more than a legal declaration.** The “judicial verdict” of “acquittal for all men” was made at the cross (John 12:32, 33; Rom. 3:23, 24; 5:15-18). Anything accomplished there cannot be restricted or denied to anyone because Christ’s sacrifice was universal. “1888” took a giant step further: faith in Jesus makes the believer become “obedient to all the commandments of God.” (This cut through the Gordian knot of thousands of anti-Sabbath harangues.)

**2. Justification by faith now becomes a purely personal experience.** The heart of the one who believes is reconciled at-one with God. And furthermore: since no one can be reconciled to God and at the same time not be reconciled to God’s holy law, it follows that genuine justification by faith makes the believer demonstrate “obedience to all the commandments of God.”

That of course includes the Sabbath

commandment (but it also includes obedience to the troublesome seventh!). Fornication and adultery are not to be “named” among those who prepare for Christ’s second coming (Eph. 5:3). Ellen White was especially concerned: a minister who breaks the seventh commandment “is a traitor of the worst type. From one such tainted, polluted mind the youth often receive their first impure thoughts. ... A second trial would be of no avail ...”

**3. Thus “1888” was the first powerful message in Adventism that joined “the faith of Jesus” to God’s law.** It produces the kind of non-egocentric obedience that will enable “His people to stand in the day of God.” That’s why it was the initial “showers from heaven of the latter rain” and “the beginning” of Revelation 18:1-4 that will close the great gospel commission.

**4. All “obedience” which is motivated by fear of punishment or by a hope of reward comes far short of the genuine.** It’s the “righteousness” of the Pharisees. Outward

compliance with the law when the heart is unreconciled is the lukewarmness-plague of the world “church of the Laodiceans.” This was the problem which “the Lord in His great mercy” sought to heal by sending “1888.” That’s why the New Covenant was its focal point of controversy with the elders.

**5. Thus Jones and Waggoner caught a vision of the cross in the third angel’s message.** They glimpsed a bit of the light that will lighten the earth at last.

**6. But we must beware of counterfeits.** Some years ago a great movie reveled in the violence of Calvary, but those tears it evoked were human emotion, easily aroused; the crying audiences went out of the theaters as world-loving as they entered. The movie could not portray “Jesus” in reality as dying the second death for the sins of the world. Since the movie, we still have a work to do. That blessed truth is still left for flesh-and-blood people to tell!

**7. But can we emphasize too much what**

**happened on the cross and lull people to neglect obedience to the law?** We have this answer (Ellen White is speaking of “1888”):

The theme that attracts the heart of the sinner is Christ, and Him crucified. ... Present Him thus to the hungry multitudes, and the light of His love will win [people] from darkness to light, from transgression to obedience and true holiness. Beholding Jesus upon the cross of Calvary arouses the conscience to the heinous character of sin as nothing else can do.

That phrase “as nothing else can do” must include our famous preaching “the law, the law, until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa.” “We” learned a better way in “1888.” But the future still awaits lighting the earth with glory.

**8. Never in history has a message more powerfully demonstrated obedience to God’s holy law.** A century-plus ago many were afraid that too much “grace” would undermine the law. But Paul says that nothing but proclaiming that

“grace of God” can teach us to “say No to ungodliness, and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age” (Titus 2:11, NIV). Fear won’t do it; hope for heavenly real estate won’t do it; only Christ’s grace can do it.

**9. This generation must decide: shall we proclaim the New Covenant, or the Old?** The former proclaims “liberty to the captives,” the latter, “bondage” (cf. Gal. 4:24). One proclaims the ten commandments as ten promises, the other as ten fear-laden negative burdens.

**10. “Godly fear” is appropriate for any truehearted Christian.** But the love that is agape casts out craven fear (1 John 4:18). Jesus describes a group who will appear before Him in judgment at last who think they have “kept the commandments,” but Jesus must tell them sorrowfully, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:21, 22). What could have gone wrong? Their good “works” were “wonderful.”

Paul helps us understand what went wrong: these dear people had misunderstood what true commandment-keeping is. It does include Sabbathkeeping, health reform, tithe-paying, all the good works we can think of; but it fails to be true obedience unless it is motivated by agape: “Love [agape] does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love [agape in the original] is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:10; the Greek construction could be understood as implying that agape alone is the fulfillment of the law). Only proclaiming Christ and Him crucified can motivate that fulfillment.

Again, popular Christianity, which teaches salvation in sin rather than from it, fails to grasp agape because of their natural immortality of the soul belief. We have something wonderful to tell, a mission most exciting.

When I stated before my brethren that I had heard for the first time the views of Elder E. J. Waggoner, some did not believe me. I stated that I had heard precious truths uttered that I could respond to with all my heart, for had not these great

and glorious truths, the righteousness of Christ and the entire sacrifice made in behalf of man, been imprinted indelibly on my mind by the Spirit of God? Has not this subject been presented in the testimonies again and again? When the Lord had given to my brethren the burden to proclaim this message I felt inexpressibly grateful to God, for I knew it was the message for this time. The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness.—Selected Messages, book 3, p. 172 (emphasis supplied).

## Chapter 8

# **Why “1888” Differs From Sunday-Keeping “Righteousness by Faith”**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church didn't just “happen” as an accident of history. The Lord raised it up to proclaim a message most vital since Pentecost: to prepare people for the close of probation and the second coming of Christ. This meant translation without seeing death!

A monumental task! Never been done before in history.

Modern Protestantism is confused with twin enthusiasms, one for Pentecostalism, and the other for Roman Catholicism. Is it possible that an apparently obscure message “sent” to us 120 years ago can be meaningful to this generation?

## **Ellen White says yes, and it's Bible**

Often “we” have assumed officially that “1888” was only a re-emphasis of popular Sunday-keeping ideas of the gospel, and our job is to hammer away on the law, the law, and let them proclaim the gospel; or at least, let us borrow it from them.

Even today, here is what is commonly believed among us (from a foremost official voice about “1888”):

The importance of the 1888 message was not some special Adventist doctrine of justification by faith developed by Jones and Waggoner. Rather, it was the reuniting of Adventism with basic Christian beliefs on salvation.

Is it true, as some have claimed, that the 1888 message of righteousness by faith is a unique Adventist message? [The answer implied is no.] Whatever the message was, Paul, Luther, and Wesley shared and preached it.

If that is true, the message of course was not special; consequently many have assumed that “1888” should be forgotten.

In fact, that’s precisely what’s happening. And because of the Evangelicals’ missing link in understanding “1888,” it’s far beyond what they can grasp, sincere as they were then and are today. But when we Seventh-day Adventists deny that “1888” is special, we expose our own people to a grave danger. The current Dale Ratzlaff movement is an example, for he could never have gone the way he has, if he had known “1888.” All through his extensive Seventh-day Adventist education from the cradle roll to the Seminary heights, he was deprived of knowing “1888.” It’s hungry animals that fight, and it’s hungry people who create offshoots. (Even to this day the Theological Seminary offers no “101” in the 1888 message.)

Luther and the other Reformers were not able in their day to grasp the message, and likewise the Evangelicals of today. They were and are good

people, but there is something they simply cannot see. The Reformers couldn't see it, as it was before their day; and Protestants in general today haven't seen it because of their absorption in the doctrine of natural immortality. (And we haven't made it clear to them; our Questions on Doctrine that was supposed to do that job fifty years ago failed.)

The reason is, says Ellen White in a brilliant statement about Evangelicalism:

They have no knowledge of the way into the most holy [apartment of the heavenly sanctuary]. ... Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices [after Calvary], they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left.

### **How does the 1888 message go beyond Luther, Calvin, the Reformers, and modern Evangelicals?**

Arminianism was a protest or "Remonstrance" against Calvinism (and Lutheranism), in 1610.

Take Calvinism as an example. It summarizes its popular doctrines with the acronym TULIP:

**T, “Total Depravity.”** Sounds true but it’s a distortion of human sinfulness. In contrast, “1888” recognizes the total involvement of all of us in the sin of crucifying Christ, but this is not “total depravity,” it’s total corporate guilt.

We see this laid bare in “our” own enmity against the “most precious message” when “we” “in a great degree” rejected it as the Jews rejected Christ. That was our corporate sin, and Calvin was trying to express it but couldn’t quite understand.

**U, “Unconditional Election.”** This is the idea that if God has decreed you to be one of the few He has planned to save, you can never be lost for any reason. In effect it revises the Lord’s prayer to say, not “Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,” but Thy will must and will be done ... .” This again is a subtle distortion of a “most precious” truth. God has “elected all men” to be saved and they will be, unless they interpose a rebellious will to

contradict His election. But this greater truth does not encourage disobedience. Faith in the Lord's "election" motivates to total harmony with Him in obedience.

If we let the Lord have His way, He will lead us all the way into His eternal kingdom. All the devils in hell cannot keep one out unless he chooses to reject His "election." In restoring to us our freedom of choice, Christ permits us to nullify and defeat God's purpose of love for us if we choose. "The sinner may resist this love, he may refuse to be drawn to Christ, but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus" (Steps to Christ, p. 27; Ellen White wrote this astounding statement for the first time shortly after 1888). Thousands of Seventh-day Adventists who worry about their personal salvation need to understand this reasonable and common-sense truth of biblical "election." Everybody needs it also.

**L, "Limited Atonement."** This again is a subtle denial of a "most precious" truth. It really ends up meaning that Christ did not die for every

one of us, but only for those few who are the “elect.” In contrast, “1888” sees that Christ has purchased the gift of salvation for “all men” and has given the gift to them “in Himself.” Romans 5 describes it as a “judicial ... verdict of acquittal ... for all men” (vss. 15-18). God wants all to be saved and before the foundation of the world He predestined all to be saved (Eph. 1:3-6).

But some will allow only that the Savior has “offered” the gift to “all men,” but has not given it, until they do something first to believe and accept it. In other words, with this Calvinist idea, our salvation is ultimately due to our own initiative. But “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”—all this done at the cross before you and I came along (2 Cor. 5:19).

Christ has “tasted death [the second] for every man” (Heb. 2:9), which can only mean that He has paid the full price to save “every man.” This went beyond popular Adventism of its day and of ours, declaring that Christ has not only offered salvation

to all, but has actually given the gift, placing it in every man's hand, as it were. He became "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42), "the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe" (2 Tim. 4:10). Not merely would-like-to-be.

It's a breath-taking idea, and shocking, but it's Bible. Those who are lost at last have made their true name to be "Esau." He had the "birthright;" he didn't need to do anything to obtain it, but he "despised" and "sold" what God had placed in his hands (Gen. 25:34; Heb. 12:16). What Christ did is a free, full atonement given in a legal sense to "all men."

The only alternative is a "limited atonement." If Christ didn't truly save you when He "saved the world," then you have been short-changed by a "limited atonement"! Move on into unlimited grace!

**I, "Irresistible Grace."** Again, we are face to face with a subtle distortion of "most precious" truth. Grace is far greater than "the carnal mind"

has been willing to recognize. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). We’ve been quick to see how powerful are temptations to sin, but slow to see that the grace of Christ is far stronger than they are. When prayer meeting time comes, the temptation to stay home and watch TV seems strong; but the problem is not the strength of the temptation. It’s that we don’t see how much stronger is that grace.

Calvinism came close—grace is almost irresistible if one understands the “width and length and depth and height ... [of] the agape of Christ which passes knowledge” (Eph. 3:17-19). But it can still be resisted. When we preach “the law, the law, until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa” that grace is “frustrated” (Gal. 2:21, KJV). The result? Frustrated grace produces “lukewarmness” that everywhere permeates the worldwide church. But the agape of Christ, understood, “constrains” or motivates to endless devotion.

Our lukewarmness is a consequence of keeping back from our people (“in a great degree”) this

“most precious message.”

**P, “Perseverance of the Saints.”** The idea is that once you are saved, you can or will never fall. “1888” tells us not to look at the “perseverance of the saints,” but look at the perseverance of Christ. And here is another “most precious” truth often clouded by a remnant of Babylonian confusion. It has been preached for decades that the Lord gets us started in a “relationship,” but then it’s up to us to “maintain it” by three duties: “(1) prayer, (2) Bible study, and (3) witnessing,” all excellent things to do. But not as works-righteousness.

A doctor brings a baby into the world, but then does not back off and leave it to survive on its own, but he places it in the arms of a mother. The truth in the Bible is that Christ not only initiates this saving “relationship,” He seeks to maintain it as well. That’s what seems difficult to grasp: does He love us that much? Is His grace so great that you can be lost only if you resist Him and beat Him off? But that’s what Ellen White has just said a moment ago.

His love is far greater than is usually comprehended because it is agape, which “never fails” (1 Cor. 13:8). The idea is entwined with what Jesus means in Matthew 11:30, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” The idea many serious youth have is that it’s “hard” to be saved and “easy” to be lost—the result of neglecting the grand dimensions of that agape which “passes knowledge.”

Again, this is the result of not recognizing that the “most precious” truths of 1888 were a giant step beyond what 16th century Reformers and contemporary Sunday-keeping Evangelicals have believed.

If we could grasp how the gospel is better Good News than we have been content to know, it would be impossible for us to lose so many of our youth. All too often they have the vague idea that their salvation is up to themselves, and we have regarded it as dangerous to emphasize too much the agape of Christ and His perseverance, His

“much more abounding” grace, lest we weaken the fear motivation to keep the commandments. (All which of course is Old Covenant inspired.) But another question remains.

### **Does Arminianism embrace “1888”?**

It was indeed a giant step closer to the true gospel, and the Wesleys grasped it. But again Arminianism comes short of the light the Lord wanted us to see in 1888.

Jacobus Arminius was a wonderful man, but the Lord had not given him the final outpouring of the latter rain. Arminius wasn't ready for it. But God's time was ready in 1888, because He wanted the gospel commission completed in that generation, and the heavenly Bridegroom longed for “the marriage of the Lamb” to come then.

The famous Arminian Remonstrance of 1610 failed to grasp the full extent of what Christ accomplished by His sacrifice. It declared that “God from all eternity past determined to save all

who believe in Jesus and to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath.” It sounds perfect, but think again: “God so loved the world ... ” “God our Savior ... will have all men to be saved.” He “is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” He never “determined to leave anyone under wrath.” Those who are “left” there are only those who leave Him, on their own and choose it. Arminianism came short.

Let’s not marvel that the brethren in the 17th century couldn’t yet grasp how good the Good News is. The world needed “the third angel’s message in verity” to come.

Further, the Remonstrance declared that although “Christ died for and obtained redemption and forgiveness of sins for all, ... those benefits are effective only for those who believe on Christ.” Again, it sounds perfect, until we grasp the grander truth that every “benefit” that any one anywhere has ever enjoyed has already been the purchase of the cross of Christ. “Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and

the blood of Christ. The cross of Christ is stamped on every loaf. ... Every meal [becomes] a sacrament” (The Desire of Ages, p. 660). This truth is the essence of the final loud cry message that will lighten the earth with glory. The sacrifice of Christ has already given every human being all the “benefit” he has ever enjoyed!

Arminianism further cemented their limited view of the grace of God in “the [later] Opinion of the Remonstrants.” It declared again that “no one becomes an actual partaker of the benefits of the death of Christ except by faith.” They just couldn’t yet see that Desire of Ages page-660-idea of everybody eating his daily food because of the sacrifice of Christ.

### **Fear is not to be the final motivation**

“The last message of mercy to be given to the world [‘the third angel’s message in verity’] is a revelation of His character of love” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 415). Modern man immersed in wild selfseeking will at last be shown clearly that

all his “fun,” his wealth, even his next breath, has been purchased and given to him. He has already enjoyed it all because Christ has died his second death. He will then either believe humbly and thankfully with a total dedication of his all to the Savior and will receive “the seal of God,” or he will choose to disbelieve and then enforce the mark of the beast.

Whatever may be the spiritual condition of the remnant church, it is safe to say that the twin current popular phenomena in Evangelicalism of (a) Pentecostalism and (b) Roman Catholicism shouts to us that the final outcome must be near.

In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin, ... He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of

abundant help. Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. ... But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt. ...

Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. ... By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.—The Desire of Ages, pp. 752, 753; 756

## Chapter 9

# Cleansing the Sanctuary: Our Job, or Christ's?

He promises that if there is an ounce of honesty in our souls “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32). Telling it is His specialty: “I will pour out My spirit on you; I will make My words known to you” (Prov. 1:23). Especially true in this Day of Atonement is this: “When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

### **Good news!**

He will put His feeding trough down so low that lambs can reach it. If He “sent a most precious message” that was the start of the latter rain, wouldn't He make it possible for any sincere person to understand?

“1844” tells what God is doing in this cosmic

Day of Atonement. An angel told Daniel, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (8:14, KJV). That was 2300 literal years which ended in 1844 when Christ began His final Day of Atonement work. While this happens in heaven, on earth three angels preach (Rev. 14:6-12).

But after all these years spanning three centuries, “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” still wait to be gripped by the message. These three “fly in the midst of heaven” like a helicopter over the treetops. But they’re not the end: “Another angel,” a fourth, “comes down from heaven, having great power” like a spaceship so “the earth [can be] lightened with his glory” (Rev. 18:1-4). That’s where “1888” comes into its own.

It figures with “1844” in this scenario because it marked the “beginning” of that fourth angel’s message, as William Miller’s preaching in 1831 marked the beginning of that first angel’s message.

Common sense would say that there must be

some special spiritual nutriments in the fourth message.

**1. The gospel has built-in truth that prepares a believer for Christ's coming as it is understood in Day of Atonement context.**

Not one soul has been “translated” (going to heaven without dying, like Enoch and Elijah) under Christ's ministry in the First Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. Spiritual nutriments or “medicine” from the tree of life in the final ministry of Christ are needed. They accomplish what has never yet been done in the last 2000 years. That's what Ellen White claimed was God's intention in sending “1888.” It had to be “new light,” which had never been clearly perceived in the past.

**2. “1888” was a break-through that all the world, including Protestants and Catholics, would have been amazed to see if “we” had let it get to them.**

Just as the Jews of Christ's day (yes, even His disciples) could not foresee the grand dimensions of their calling, so we Seventh-day Adventists have been slow to see the burst of light to come with that "other angel" of Revelation 18. It was "sent" to us but "we" blocked it.

**3. In imagination let's join a congregation gathered in 1893 to listen to a sobering sermon on the living message:**

"Some of the brethren ... came here free; but the Spirit of God brought up something they never saw before, ... and revealed things they never saw before; and then, instead of thanking the Lord that that was so, and letting the whole wicked business go, and thanking the Lord that they had ever so much more of Him than they ever had before, they began to get discouraged. They said, 'Oh what am I going to do? My sins are so great.' There they let Satan cast a cloud over them, and throw them into discouragement, and they get no good out of the meetings day after day. ...

“If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that He is going down to the depths, and He will reach the bottom at last; and when He finds the last thing that is unclean or impure that is out of harmony with His will, and brings that up, and shows that to us, and we say, ‘I would rather have the Lord than that’—then the work is complete, and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character. [Congregation: ‘Amen.’]. ...

“Which would you rather, have the completeness, the perfect fullness, of Jesus Christ, or have less than that, with some of your sins covered up that you never know of? ... And so He has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our own hearts. ... He will cleanse the heart, and bring up the last vestige of wickedness. Let Him go on, brethren; let Him keep on His searching work. ...

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

not propose to do that; consequently, He wants you and me to know when our sins go, that we may know when His righteousness comes.”

### **Do you get the point?**

Cleansing the sanctuary is the work the High Priest does, it's not what we do. We let Him do it. And He will do it if we don't “resist Him.”

The only reason it has not been done long before this is that we have been “resisting” Him all this long while.

And didn't know what we were doing.

Now all the angels in heaven are crying out to us, it's time that “1888” be understood.

## Chapter 10

# Adventists and the “Marriage of the Lamb”

Is Jesus in love with a “woman”? Yes, He is!

It was He who invented sexual love and marriage. The story has been in the Bible from the beginning. When Adam was in desperate loneliness in Eden, the Lord brought Eve to him; He also foresaw the time when He would comfort His own loneliness with the “marriage” of a “bride” taken from His beloved world. Jesus is alone, lonely Man in heaven; He wants to be with His people.

No woman on earth could be so tall, so beautiful, so wise, that she could be the bride of the divine Son of God; the “woman” with whom He is in such desperate love is a “corporate” woman—a “body” of humans composed of redeemed sinners from “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6, 7). “She” has grown up from her

infancy “in Christ” through all the stages from childhood in which a woman grows up; she has come at last to a place of maturity where she will be ready to stand by His side as His “help-meet.”

In Revelation’s picture, she will share with Him the administration of His new kingdom of which He has just been crowned “King of kings and Lord of lords,” for He invites her to sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). He can’t rule there alone! He has to have someone “sit” with Him whom He can love and trust and respect as a king regards his queen who shares his reign.

### **The story through history**

When God’s people had wandered away from Him, Isaiah assured them that God stands toward Israel as a “husband” (54:5). When Israel rebelled against Him, he described their infidelity as “harlotry” (1:21). Jeremiah likens Israel’s infidelity to a “wife” treacherously departing from her husband” (3:20). The husband’s brokenheartedness is implied.

Ezekiel spends an entire long chapter discoursing on Israel's youth being a time when she was so charming and beautiful and innocent that He, wanting to be her husband-to-be, fell in love with her (16:8; that's quite a chapter!). Paul likens Christ's relationship to His church as that of a Lover being betrothed (2 Cor. 11:2).

Like a surrealist painting, these vivid scenes portray the whole of human history and especially that of God's people, as a divine-human love affair, a husband wooing a wife. It's the back-in-the-shadows reality that informs Scripture, Old and New Testaments. In Ephesians Paul shocks Christians of all ages with the declaration that agape-love is sexual love: "Husbands, love your wives [with agape] even as Christ also loved the church" (5:25); so Christ's love for the church is a conjugal love, that of a Lover for the girl who arouses Him!

This is so shocking that Charles Wesley's famous hymn "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" has

extracted criticism through the years. “Bishop Wordsworth in the nineteenth century once said it was ‘inexpressibly shocking,’ and should not be sung in Westminster Abbey.” Even his brother John excluded it from his 1780 Large Hymnbook, “and in other hymnbooks ‘lover’ has been altered to ‘refuge’ or ‘Saviour.’”

This fear of the humanity of the Savior is probably due to the widely popular Dogma of the Immaculate Conception which deprives the Virgin Mary of a genetic link to the fallen Adam and thus separates her Son from true identity with humanity. The reticence even in Seventh-day Adventist churches to sing Charles Wesley’s hymn probably derives unconsciously from the same.

### **Hosea’s painful frustrated love**

The prophet dramatically represented a man’s love for a woman as an example of the love of Christ for the nation of Israel (2:1-5; 3:1-5). The tortured prophet stands in history as the preeminent example of the disappointed but steadfast love of

man for a woman, because he still loved Gomer after she played the harlot on him. Hosea could not forget his love for her, notwithstanding. There must have been something in her personality, in her eyes, her soul, that won his devotion throughout that stormy relationship.

What kept him in love? We say, love, that is, something in her. But the New Testament word for such love, agape, is by nature a love that is not dependent on the goodness, value, or beauty of its object; how then could Hosea “love” a woman for any reason but such a “spiritual” non-emotional reason? But he did; Paul insists that agape is sexual as well as “spiritual.” Hosea’s love for her was conjugal, man for woman; it had to be.

He illustrates Christ’s love for His church that keeps His commandments in the last days. Why does He single her out to love her, like a man singles out one from all the world of women to love?

There must be something about that “body” of

believers that Revelation designates as “the remnant,” which “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” that has called forth or has released the conjugal love of Christ. He wants to marry “her”; and that desire is a burning one, not to be turned aside. The disappointment of that love in “1888” was to Him “beyond description.”

### **Ezekiel vis-à-vis “1844”**

Following Ezekiel’s pattern story of the lifelong love of Christ for “young” Israel, we could say that the little group who went through the Great Disappointment of 1844 were deeply beloved of Him in this special sense. The “remnant” refused to give up their faith, confident that the true Holy Spirit was working in the Midnight Cry. They were especially dear to His heart (Jesus describes them in His message to “the angel of the church of the Philadelphians,” Rev. 3:9, 10).

When new truth came to them such as the closing of the First Apartment of the heavenly

sanctuary and the opening of the Second and they believed, there was an endearing loyalty in His eyes; then when Rachel Preston brought them the seventh-day Sabbath truth, they welcomed it instead of resisting and fighting it (as they did precious truth forty years later). Then when the first principles of health reform came, again they eagerly accepted. On down through the early history of this people, a special heavenly love affair was developing. Not since Pentecost has Jesus found such a group of believers loyal to Him.

Then comes our sad history of “1888.”

**And here the Song of Solomon 5:2-8 comes on stage**

The Lover (Christ) has come “home” to His beloved after a safari; He is tired, lonely, hungry, wet from the rain. He longs to be with her intimately. He “knocks” (the Hebrew speaks of it as banging on the door), and knocks some more. The woman who is the object of His love disdains Him, thinks she is too relaxed, having gone to bed

for the night; why does He bother her now? (The world is too comfy a place as it is, says the Bride-to-be of the Lamb.)

Finally, she forgets about her own selfish comfort and begins to think about Him out there in the darkness and in the rain, hungry and alone; it is true, He loves her!

She belatedly gets up and goes to let Him in, but when she opens the door, He is “gone.”

I slept, but my heart lay waking:  
I dreamed—ah! There is my darling knocking!  
“Open to me, my own,” he calls,  
“my dear, my dove, my paragon [my perfect  
one].

My head is drenched with dew [rain],  
My hair, with drops of the night.”  
But I have doffed my robe; why should I don  
it?

My feet are bathed; why should I soil them?  
Then my darling put his hand in,  
his right hand at the door,

And my heart yearned for him.  
How my heart fainted when I heard him!  
So I rose to let my darling in,  
my hands all moist with myrrh,  
my fingers wet with liquid myrrh,  
that dropped on the catch of the bolt.  
I opened to my darling,  
But my darling, he had gone.  
I sought him, but I could not find him,  
I called, he never answered.  
—Moffatt

Increasingly, thoughtful people are coming to see here the story of “our” disdaining the Lord Jesus in the most precious message of the beginning of the latter rain. In rejecting it, says the Lord’s servant, we disdained Christ, just as “the woman” did her Lover in Song of Solomon 5:3.

Christ’s pathetic appeal in His message to “the angel of the church of the Laodiceans” (“be zealous therefore and repent,” Rev. 3:19) is connected with the Song of Solomon, for His parting appeal is a direct quotation from it, not

from the Hebrew text but from the ancient Greek text, the LXX: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If a certain one [tis, Greek] hears My voice and opens the door,” ... then comes the intimacy.

A yearning Bridegroom longs for the marriage to come.

# Appendix

## Ellen White Answers Questions About the Message and the “Messengers”

### 1. What do you say about “1888”?

“The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer” (The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p. 1073; 1892).

“God meant that the watchmen [church leadership] should arise and with united voices send forth a decided message. ... Then the strong, clear light of the other angel who comes down from heaven having great power [Revelation 18:1-4] would have filled the earth with his glory ... the very message that God meant should go forth from the Minneapolis meeting, . . . the message of truth which angels of heaven were seeking to communicate through human agencies—justification by faith, the righteousness of Christ” (pp. 1070, 1071).

“Some felt annoyed at this outpouring [of the Holy Spirit]. ... They said: This is only excitement; it is not the Holy Spirit, not showers from heaven of the latter rain, ... [they] resisted the Spirit of God at Minneapolis” (pp. 1478, 1479).

**2. When you spoke of “1888” as “the message of Christ’s righteousness,” what unique concepts did you have in mind?**

“We are to show that God’s chosen people will keep His commandments, refusing to swerve to the right or to the left in disobedience. ... Did the Saviour take upon Himself the guilt of human beings and impute to them His righteousness in order that they might continue to violate the precepts of Jehovah? No, no! Christ came ... to bring [man] strength to obey the precepts of the law” (p. 130).

“Divinity took the nature of humanity, and for what purpose?—that through the righteousness of Christ humanity might partake of the divine

nature” (p. 332).

### **3. What grand purpose do you understand was in God’s mind when He “sent” us “1888”?**

“... obtaining that efficiency which might have been [ours] 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 ...” (p. 1575).

“Light is flashing from the throne of God, and what is this for?—It is that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God” (Review and Herald, March 4, 1890).

### **4. Why didn’t God by-pass Jones and Waggoner and give the message directly to you? You had already been acknowledged as “the Lord’s messenger”!**

“The question is, has God sent the truth? Has God raised up these men to proclaim the truth? I say, yes, God has sent men to bring us the truth that

we should not have had unless God had sent somebody to bring it to us. God has let me have a light of what His Spirit is, and therefore I accept it, and I no more dare to lift my hand against these persons, because it would be against Jesus Christ, who is to be recognized in His messengers” (p. 608).

### **5. Could you yourself learn anything from Jones or Waggoner?**

“Dr. Waggoner has spoken to us in a straightforward manner. There is precious light in what he has said. ... I would have humility of mind, and be willing to be instructed as a child. The Lord has been pleased to give me great light, yet I know that He leads other minds, and opens to them the mysteries of His Word, and I want to receive every ray of light that God shall send me, though it should come through the humblest of His servants” (p. 162).

### **6. Did you regard them as perfect in their understanding? How did you regard their**

**work?**

“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. ... Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct” (pp. 163, 164; this was stated on November 1, 1888. A few years later she did “fully understand,” and said: “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law” (Selected Messages, book 1, p. 234; 1896; emphasis added).

“I believe without a doubt that God has given precious truth at the right time to Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner. Do I place them as infallible? Do I say that they will not make a statement or have an idea that cannot be questioned or that cannot be in error? Do I say so? No, I do not say any such thing. Nor do I say of any man in the world. But I do say God has sent light, and do be

careful how you treat it ... Who says they [Jones and Waggoner] are perfect? Who claims it? We claim God has given us light in the right time. And now we should receive the truth of God—receive it as of heavenly origin” (pp. 566, 567).

## **7. How did you regard the message which Jones and Waggoner were bringing to the church?**

“The Lord has raised up men and given them a solemn message to bear to His people” (p. 210). “God has made these men messengers to give light and truth to the people” (p. 279). “The plan of salvation ... has been made so clear that a child may understand” (p. 281). “A Christ-like spirit manifested, such as Elder E. J. Waggoner had shown all through the presentation of his views” (p. 219).

“When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in Minneapolis, it was the first clear [public] teaching of this subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the conversations between myself

and my husband. ... And when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said, Amen” (p. 349). “The Lord is speaking through His delegated messengers” (p. 398).

“You reject Christ in rejecting the message He sends” (p. 399). “Elder Jones ... presented the subject of justification by faith in a plain, direct manner, in such marked simplicity that no one need to be in darkness, unless he has in him a decided heart of unbelief, to resist the workings of the Spirit of God” (p. 465), “... light which God has sent you for the last year and a half—or nearly that” (p. 538; 1890), “... that I might stand side by side with the messengers of God that I knew were His messengers, that I knew had a message for His people. I gave my message with them right in harmony with the very message they were bearing” (p. 542).

“God has set His hand to do this work. ... Suppose you blot out the testimony that has been going during these last two years [1890] proclaiming the righteousness of Christ, who can

you point to as bringing out special light for the people? The message as it has been presented should go to every church ... the heavenly credentials” (p. 545). “God has shown me that He raised up men here to carry the truth to His people, and that this is the truth” (p. 614).

“The message given us by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church” (p. 1052-1141; 1893). “The Lord has raised up Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner to proclaim a message to the world to prepare a people to stand in the day of God” (p. 1208).

**8. What encouragement do you give us that denominational repentance will yet prepare the way so that the latter rain can come?**

“There are glorious truths to come before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before the followers of Christ. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing God’s will, they will know more and more of the oracles of

God, and be established in right doctrines. The baptism of the Holy Spirit will dispel human imaginings, will break down self-erected barriers, and will cause to cease the feeling that ‘I am holier than thou.’ There will be an humble spirit with all, more faith and love; self will not be exalted. ‘Look and live.’ Christ’s spirit, Christ’s example, will be exemplified in His people. We shall follow more closely the ways and works of Jesus. The pulpit, the press, and the church will be more humble, more forbearing, more patient and kind, and the love of Jesus will pervade our hearts. It is impossible for me to picture before you the result of this influence” (p. 333; 1889).

“The fear of God, the sense of His goodness, His holiness, will circulate through every [Seventh-day Adventist] institution. An atmosphere of love and peace will pervade every department. Every word spoken, every work performed, will have an influence that corresponds to the influence of heaven. Christ will abide in humanity, and humanity will abide in Christ. In all the work will appear not the character of finite men, but the

character of the infinite God. The divine influence imparted by holy angels will impress the minds brought in contact with the workers; and from these workers a fragrant influence will go forth to all who choose to inhale it. The goodly fabric of character wrought through divine power will receive light and glory from heaven, and will stand out before the world as a witness, pointing to the throne of living God.

“Then the work will move forward with solidity and double strength. A new efficiency will be imparted to the workers in every line. Men will learn of the reconciliation from iniquity which the Messiah has brought in through His sacrifice. The last message of warning and salvation will be given with mighty power. The earth will be lightened with the glory of God, and it will be ours to witness the soon coming in power and glory, of our Lord and Saviour” (Medical Ministry, pp. 184, 185; 1902).