

TEN

THAT MAKE THE

GREAT

1888 MESSAGE

GOSPEL

UNIQUE

TRUTHS

Good News That Lifts the Heart

SELECTIONS FROM

THE MESSAGE OF JONES & WAGGONER
WITH BIBLE & ELLEN WHITE SUPPORT

COMPILED BY

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FOREWORD

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones,” says Ellen White in one of her most enthusiastic endorsements.

That same message which brought joy and comfort to so many a century ago still revives our spirit wherever it is proclaimed. In this brief overview we hope to answer some questions:

- What was the message they brought us in the 1888 era?
- Which elements in it elicited from Ellen White her profound gratitude when she heard it?
- Have we as a church missed something special and refreshing that we need?
- Why for a decade did she endorse the message with enthusiastic expressions at least 374 times?
- Why did she say it was the clearest statement of justification by faith she had ever heard publicly presented?
- What did she see in it that caused her to label it the “beginning” of the loud cry of Revelation 18, and initial “showers from heaven of the latter rain” that must go with the loud cry?
- Did she seriously believe that the message would prepare a people for translation within her lifetime? If so, why?

Answers to these questions are evident in the 1821 pages of *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*. But the ultimate test of truth is the Bible itself. This compilation may be helpful to the busy reader in that it brings together in easily readable form ten of the essential elements of the 1888 message that make it unique, stated in the words of the 1888 “messengers” themselves, with biblical and Ellen White Support.

GOSPEL
TRUTH

1

Christ has already accomplished something for every human being. He died the second death for “every man,” and thus elected “all men” to be saved. In that sense, it is true that “He saved the world.” Appreciating what Christ accomplished by His sacrifice, lukewarm Laodiceans will learn the meaning of faith, and how to glory in the cross.

THE BIBLE TEACHING

(a) When Christ “died for all,” He tasted “death for every one” (2 Corinthians 5:14 Hebrews 2:9). It had to be the second death that He “tasted” because what we call death the Bible calls “sleep,” which everyone experiences except those who will be translated (John 11:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). Therefore there is no reason why anyone should at last have to die the second death except that he has resisted or rejected the salvation already given him “in Christ” (cf. Hebrews 2:3; the Greek word “neglect” in the King James Version means “despise,” see Matthew 22:5).

(b) At Christ’s baptism, the Father “accepted” the human race in Him (Matthew 3:17). Thus He is already “the Savior of all men” (John 4:42); no one can any longer doubt that the Lord has accepted him/her “in Christ.” But Christ is “especially” the Savior “of those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:10¹). Our salvation does not depend on our initiating a “relationship” with Him; it depends on our believing/responding to the “relationship” He has already initiated with us.

(c) Christ “has abolished death” (the second; 2 Timothy 1:10). Since no one need be lost at last unless he chooses to reject what Christ has already accomplished for him, the only reason he can be lost is his unbelief (John 3:16-19). Christ has “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). For “every one,” believers and unbelievers, He has brought “life,” and for those who believe, He has also brought “immortality.”

(d) In Romans 5:15-18 Paul sets forth what Christ accomplished on His cross. Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 illustrates that “verdict of acquittal” or “justification” for “all men.”

Lincoln granted every slave in the Confederate Territories a legal freedom; but none could experience it until he (1) heard the good news, (2) believed it, and (3) let it motivate him to walk out into liberty.

HOW JONES AND WAGGONER UNDERSTOOD THIS

“Now [Christ] has done all that freely. For how many people did He do this? Every soul? [Congregation ‘Yes, sir.’] Gave all the blessings He has to every soul in this world; He chose every soul in the world; He chose him in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinated him unto the adoption of children and made him accepted in the Beloved.²

“Whether you or I let Him have us, that is not the question just now. Before the foundation of the world He bought me. Then whose are we? [Congregation: ‘The Lord’s.’]

“How is it possible for one to get into doubt as to whether he is the Lord’s or not? ‘He that believeth not God has made him a liar.’ He may not do that in so many words, but when he gets into doubt as to whether he is the Lord’s, he has allowed unbelief to overthrow him and Satan to get the advantage and sweep everything away.

“But still the Lord will not take what He has bought without our permission. There is a line which God has set as fixing the freedom of every man and He Himself will never go over that line a hair’s breadth without our permission, whether man or angel. But when the permission is given, the He will come for all that is He is.

The practical value of this truth. “Well, suppose you get up in the morning with a headache and your digestion has not worked very well and you don’t feel just right. How do you know you are the Lord’s? [Congregation: ‘Because He says so.’] Sometimes people say when we ask them, ‘Have your sins been forgiven?’ ‘Yes, I was convinced that they were, for awhile.’ ‘What convinced you?’ ‘I *felt* as though they were forgiven.’ They did not *know* anything about it. They did not, in that, have a particle of evidence that their sins were forgiven. The only evidence that we can have that these things are so is that God says so. Don’t look to feelings. Feelings are as variable as the wind.

“We need not have any more doubt as to whether we are the Lord’s. But there are some people who have not submitted themselves

to the Lord and are not practically His. He has made them His by purchase; now how can they know that they are His? By His word.

Does this Good News give license to sin? “But now we sometimes hear people talk as though that was going to sanction sin. No. It will not do that. It will save you from sinning. When a man’s choice is to be the Lord’s, then God works in him both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. The divine power is in this thing. There is no sanction of sin about it. In fact, it is the only way to keep from sanctioning sin.

“When was it that he bought us? [Congregation: ‘Before the foundation of the world.’] What kind of folks were we before the foundation of the world? Sinners, just as we are? Evil beings and willing to go into evil ways? Making no profession of religion and not particularly wanting to? Did He buy us then? [Congregation: ‘Yes.’] And He bought our sins. Isaiah describes it—wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; no soundness at all.

“Then the choice is forever with me as to whether I would rather have my sins than to have Him, isn’t it? [Congregation: ‘Yes.’] When sin is pointed out to you, say, ‘I would rather have Christ than that’” (Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, sermon No. 17, condensed).

What Christ Accomplished. “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” (Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, p. 14).

“Someone may lightly say, ‘Then we are all right; whatever we do is right so far as the law is concerned, since we are redeemed.’ It is true that all are redeemed, but not all have *accepted* redemption. Many say of Christ, ‘We will not have this Man to reign over us,’ and thrust the blessing of God from them. But redemption is for all. All have been purchased with the precious blood—the life—of Christ, and all may be, if they will, free from sin and death” (*ibid.*, p. 61).

ELLEN WHITE’S ILLUSTRATIONS

“Jesus knows the circumstance of every soul. The greater the sinner’s guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. With His own blood

He has signed the emancipation papers of the race" (*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 89, 90).

"[Christ] took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 243).

"By His obedience to all the commandments of God, Christ wrought out a redemption for men. This was not done by going out of Himself to another, but by taking humanity into Himself. Thus Christ gave to humanity an existence out of Himself. To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption" (*ibid.*, pp. 250, 251).

"The redemption price has been paid for the human race" (*Review and Herald*, June 3, 1890).

"For the world, Christ's sacrifice was made" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 301).

"Christ ... redeemed Adam's disgraceful fall, and saved the world" (*My Life Today*, p. 323).

Note: Subheadings in bold have been added by the compiler. The quotations are not exhaustive.

1 The Greek *malista* consistently has the meaning of "especially" in other New Testament passages.

2 Ellen White applies this phrase from Ephesians 1:6 to the entire human race (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 113).

GOSPEL
TRUTH
#2

By His uplifted cross and on-going priestly ministry, Christ is drawing “all men” to repentance. His gracious love is so strong and persistent that the sinner must resist it in order to be lost.

THE BIBLE TEACHING

(a) *All the life and happiness which the world enjoys is the purchase of Christ’s sacrifice. Every loaf of bread is stamped with His cross (John 6:32, 33, 35, 50-53; cf. The Desire of Ages, p.660). This truth of total indebtedness to Him is the basis for all genuine Christian experience.*

(b) *If Christ had not died for the world, we would all have perished. The Father laid the trespasses of the world on Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19; Isaiah 53:5, 6). Thus, in a very real sense, Christ’s sacrifice has justified “all men” by giving them a legal “verdict of acquittal” in place of that “judgment” of “condemnation” “in Adam” (Romans 3:23, 24; 5:15-18, NEB). When the sinner hears and believes the truth, he experiences justification by faith (Romans 4:25; Ephesians 2:8-10).*

(c) *The lost deliberately negate this justification Christ has effected for them, and take the “condemnation” back upon themselves (Hebrews 10:29; 2 Corinthians 6:1; cf. Steps to Christ, p. 27).*

(d) *Believers in Christ can say that “He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.” But it is “not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2). “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish” (John 3:16). Since He paid the price for all our sins, the only reason anyone can be lost is refusal to believe, to appreciate, the gift already given “in Him” (verse 18). God does not put us in double jeopardy, for “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). How then can He lay that iniquity on us again? Paul asks (Romans 8:33-39). The lost take it back on themselves.*

(e) *All this adds up to a judicial “verdict of acquittal... and life for all men,” just as surely as Adam’s sin brought “a verdict... of condemnation for all men” (Romans 5:16-18, NEB). The one who believes this Good News is motivated to total consecration of his all to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).*

HOW WAGGONER GRASPED THIS CONCEPT

“By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.’ There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given Himself for all. Nay, He has given Himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift.

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

“The text says that ‘by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.’ Some may ask, ‘Why are not all made righteous by the obedience of One?’ The reason is that they do not wish to be. ... The free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it. ... Death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned, and the gift of righteousness has come to all men in the life of Christ” (*Waggoner on Romans*, pp. 101, 102; 1896).

JONE’S MESSAGE WAS IN FULL HARMONY

“Who is it that the Lord justifies? [Congregation: ‘The ungodly.’] If it were otherwise there would be no hope for me. If He justified people who had only a little good about them, that would leave me out. But thank the Lord, He is so good. Because He justifies the ungodly, therefore, I have the perfect security of His everlasting salvation. Can you imagine anything that is going to keep me from being glad?

“ ‘To Him that worketh not.’ If it required works I could not do enough. But oh, as we read the other night, ye have ‘sold yourself for naught’ and ‘ye are redeemed without money.’ But not without a price. But lo, He has paid the price. I have heard brethren say, ‘I thank the Lord I have the confidence in Him.’ *I thank the Lord He has confidence in me.* It is little enough for a man to have confidence in the Lord, but

His confidence in me I cannot grasp. And I am thankful that the Lord had that much confidence in His risk upon me.

“‘Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.’ Are there some in this house who know only the distressedness of that man, who tries to get it by works?

“‘That blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.’ When we as a people, as a church, have received the blessing of Abraham, what then? [Congregation: ‘The latter rain.’] What is to hinder, then, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? [Voice: ‘Unbelief.’] Our lack of the righteousness of God, which is by faith—that is what holds it back” (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, sermon No. 16, condensed).

Christ did His work, long ago. “‘He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.’ When did He do that? [Congregation: ‘Before the foundation of the world.’] He did it all before we had any chance to do anything—long before we were born—long before the world was made. Don’t you see that the Lord is the one that does things, in order that we may be saved and that we may have Him?

“Then we can be sure that He has chosen us. He says He has.

“We can be sure that He has predestinated us unto the adoption of children.

“We can be sure that He had made us accepted in the Beloved.

“We can be sure of all these things, for God says so and it is so. Then isn’t that a continual feast itself?” (*ibid.*, No. 17, condensed).

“... 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. ...

“Here is another Adam. Does he touch as many as the first Adam did? That is the question. ... It is certainly true that what the second Adam did, embraces all that were embraced in what the first Adam did. ...

“The question is, 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; we were there. ... 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 in the first Adam, is involved in this,

and will live again. There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. Every soul shall live again by the second Adam, from the death that came by the first Adam. ...

“When Jesus Christ has set us all free from the sin and the death which came upon us from the first Adam, that freedom is for every man; and every man can have it for the choosing.

“The Lord will not compel any one to take it. ... No man will die the second death who has not chosen sin rather than righteousness, death rather than life” (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, pp. 268, 269).

ELLEN WHITE'S VIEW

“[Christ] took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 343). “He redeemed Adam’s disgraceful fall, and saved the world” (*My Life Today*, p.323).

“Every member of the human family is given wholly into the hands of Christ. ... Every gift is stamped with the cross and bears the image and superscription of Jesus Christ” (MS. 36, 1890).

“Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, stands between Satan and every soul. ... The sins of everyone who has lived upon the earth were laid upon Christ, testifying to the fact that no one need be a loser in the conflict with Satan” (*Review and Herald*, May 23, 1899).

“As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer, yet He became man’s substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race, with just as much power to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty as when He died upon the cross of Calvary” (*ibid.*, March 12, 1901).

“You may say you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent understanding faith that His death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ’s blood” (*ibid.*, July 24, 1888).

GOSPEL
TRUTH
#3

It follows that it is actually easy to be saved and hard to be lost if one understands and believes how good the Good News is. The only difficult thing is learning how to believe the gospel. Jesus taught this truth.

THE BIBLE TEACHING

(a) *God does the loving and the giving; our part is to do the believing (John 3:16, 17). "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). But the word "believe" must be understood as the Bible teaches it (Romans 10:10).*

(b) *"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light," and to resist, to "kick against the goads," is "hard" (Matthew 11:28; Acts 9:5; 26:14).*

(c) *The reason why this is true is that "the love [agape] of Christ constraineth us." Christ's love is active, not passive. The one who believes the gospel cannot continue living for self (Romans 6:1, 2, 14, 15; 2 Corinthians 5:14, KJV).*

(d) *Christ's love for each individual person is infinitely greater than that of a parent for a child (Psalm 27:10; 103:13).*

(e) *To "kick against the goads" is to resist the Holy Spirit's conviction of Good News (John 16:7-11).*

(f) *Light is stronger than darkness, grace is stronger than sin, and the Holy Spirit is stronger than the flesh (John 1:5, 9; Romans 5:20; Galatians 5:16, 17).*

(g) *God is leading every person to repentance, but many refuse His leading (Romans 2:4).*

HOW JONES UNDERSTOOD THIS

"When grace reigns, it is easier to do right than it is to do wrong. That is the comparison. Notice: As sin reigned, even so grace reigns. When sin reigned, it reigned against grace; it beat back all the power of grace that God had given; but when the power of sin is broken, and grace reigns, then grace reigns against sin, and beats back all the power of sin. So it is as literally true that under the reign of grace is easier to do

right than to do wrong, as it is true that under the reign of sin it is easier to do wrong than it is to do right" (*Review and Herald*, July 25, 1899).

"It can never be repeated too often that under the reign of grace it is just as easy to do right as under the reign of sin it is easy to do wrong. This must be so, for if there is not more power in grace than there is sin, then there can be no salvation from sin. ...

"Salvation from sin certainly depends upon there being more power in grace than there is in sin. ... [Man's] great difficulty has always been to do right. But this is because man naturally is enslaved to a power—the power of sin—that is absolute in its reign. And so long as that power has sway, it is not only difficult, but impossible to do the good that he knows and that he would. But let a mightier power than that have sway, then is it not plain enough that it will be just as easy to serve the will of the mightier power, when it reigns, as it was to serve the will of the other power when it reigned?

Do we understand the power of grace? "But grace is not simply more powerful than is sin. ... This, good as it would be, is not all. ... There is much more power in grace than there is in sin. 'For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'... 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'" (*ibid.*, September 1, 1896).

"Take the man who does not believe in Jesus at all tonight. ... If this man wants to have Christ for his Saviour, if he wants provision made for all his sins, and salvation from all of them, does Christ have to do anything now, in order to provide for this man's sins, or to save him from them?—No, that is all done; He made all that provision for every man when he was in the flesh, and every man who believes in Him receives this without there being any need of any part of it being done over again. He 'made one sacrifice for sins for ever,'" (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 268).

WAGGONER AGREED

"The new birth completely supersedes the old. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.' He who takes God for the portion of his inheritance, has a power working in him for righteousness, as much stronger than the power of inherited tendencies

to evil, as our heavenly Father is greater than our earthly parents” (*The Everlasting Covenant*, p.66).

“We need not try to improve on the Scriptures, and say that the goodness of God tends to lead men to repentance. The Bible says that it *does* lead them to repentance, and we may be sure that it is so. Every man is being led toward repentance as surely as God is good. But not all repent. Why? Because they despise the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, and break away from the merciful leading of the Lord. But whoever does not resist the Lord, will surely be brought to repentance and salvation” (*Waggoner on Romans*, p. 42).

“Abiding in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, the flesh with its lusts has no more power over us than if we were actually dead and in our graves. ... The flesh is still corruptible, still full of lusts, still ready to rebel against the Spirit; but as long as we yield our wills to God, the Spirit holds the flesh in check. ... This Spirit of life in Christ—the life of Christ—is given freely to all. ‘Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely’” (*The Glad Tidings*, p. 123).

“Thank God for the blessed hope! The blessing has come upon *all* men. For ‘as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life’ (Romans 5:18). God, who is no respecter of persons, ‘has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places’ (Ephesians 1:3). 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” (*ibid.*, p. 66).

ELLEN WHITE SUPPORTS THE GOOD NEWS

“Yet do not therefore conclude that the upward path is the hard and the downward road is the easy way. All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on. God’s love [agape] has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves. ... And all the way up the steep road leading to eternal life are wellsprings of joy to refresh the weary” (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 139, 140).

GOSPEL
TRUTH
#4

Christ is a Good Shepherd who is seeking His lost sheep even though we have not sought Him. A misunderstanding of God's character causes us to think He is trying to hide from us. There is no parable of a lost sheep that must seek and find its Shepherd.

THE BIBLE TEACHING

(a) *This truth flows naturally and logically from the gospel as Good News (Luke 15:1-10). The false idea is that like a shopkeeper, the Lord regards us indifferently until we take the initiative to ferret Him out from His hiding place. The truth is that He seeks us (Psalm 119:176; Ezekiel 34:16).¹*

(b) *If anyone is saved at last it will be due to God's initiative; if anyone is lost at last, it will be due to his own initiative (Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16-19).*

(c) *Our salvation does not depend on our maintaining a relationship with God; it depends on our believing that He stands at the door and knocks—seeking to maintain that relationship with us unless we break it off (Revelation 3:20).*

HOW WAGGONER UNDERSTOOD THIS CONCEPT

“Not only does He call us, but He draws us. No man can come to Him without being drawn, and so Christ is lifted up to draw all to God. He tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9), and through Him all men have access to God. He has destroyed in His own body the enmity,—the wall that separates men from God,—so that nothing can keep any man from God unless man builds up again the barrier.

“The Lord draws us, but does not employ force. He calls, but does not drive. ... God has purposed salvation for every soul that has ever come into the world” (Waggoner on Romans, pp. 140, 143).

“Christ is given to every man. Therefore each person gets the whole

of Him. The love of God embraces the whole world, but it also singles out each individual. A mother's love is not divided among her children, so that each one receives only a third, a fourth, or a fifth of it; each child is the object of all her affection. How much more so with the God whose love is more perfect than any mother's! (Isaiah 49:15). Christ is the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness. But light is not divided among a crowd of people. If a room full of people be brilliantly lighted, each individual gets the benefit of all the light, just as much as though he were alone in the room. So the light of Christ lights every man that comes into the world. ...

"How often we hear someone say, 'I am so sinful that I am afraid the Lord will not accept me!' Even some who have long professed to be Christians often mournfully wish that they could be sure of their acceptance with God. But the Lord has given no reason for any such doubt. Our acceptance is for ever settled. Christ has bought us and has paid the price.

"Why does a man go to the shop and buy an article? He wants it. If he has paid the price for it, having examined it so he knows what he is buying, does the merchant worry that he will not accept it? ... It is not a matter of indifference to Jesus whether we yield ourselves to Him or not. He longs with an infinite yearning for the souls He has purchased with His own blood. 'The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19:10)" (*The Glad Tidings*, pp. 11, 12).

JONES HAD THE SAME IDEA

"O, it has always been Satan's deception to get people to think that Christ is as far away as it is possible to put Him. The farther away men put Christ, even those who profess to believe in Him, the better the devil is satisfied; and then he will stir up the enmity that is in the natural heart, and set it to work in building up ceremonialism, and putting this in the place of Christ" (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 478, condensed).

"God's mind concerning human nature is never fulfilled until He finds us at His own right hand, glorified. There is reviving power in that blessed truth. We have been content to have our minds too far from what God has for us. But now, as He comes and calls us into this, let us go where He will lead us. It is faith that does it; it is not presumption; it is the only right thing to do. Here the heavenly Shepherd is leading us; He is leading us into green pastures and by the still waters that flow from the throne of God. Let us drink deep and live. ...

“Whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified,’ —He glorified. He cannot glorify them until He has justified them. What means then this special message of justification that God has been sending these [seven] years to the church and to the world? It means that God is preparing to glorify His people. But we are glorified only at the coming of the Lord; therefore this special [1888] message of justification which God has been sending us is to prepare us for glorification at the coming of the Lord. In this, God is giving to us the strongest sign that it is possible for Him to give, that the next thing is the coming of the Lord.

The Good Shepherd takes the initiative. “He will prepare us; we cannot prepare ourselves. We tried a long while to justify ourselves, to make ourselves just right, and thus get ready for the coming of the Lord. But we were never satisfied; it is not done that way. No master workman looks at a piece of work he is doing as it is half finished, and begins to find fault with that. It is not finished yet. It would be an awful thing if the wondrous Master Workman were to look at us as we are half finished, and say, That is good for nothing. He goes on with His wondrous work. You and I may say, ‘I don’t see how the Lord is ever going to make a Christian out of me, and make me fit for heaven.’ Although we may appear all rough, marred, and scarred now, He sees us as we are *yonder* in Christ.

“As we have confidence in Him, we will let Him carry on the work. Now He says to us, ‘Let Me work, and you watch and see what I am going to do.’ It is not our task at all. You can go outside of this Tabernacle and look up at that window. It looks like only a mess of melted glass thrown together, black and unsightly. But come inside and look from within, and you will see it as a beautiful piece of workmanship. Likewise you and I can look at ourselves and all looks awry, dark, and ungainly, only a tangled mass. God looks at it as it is in Jesus. When we look from the inside as we are in Jesus, we shall also see written in clear texts by the Spirit of God: ‘Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ We shall see the whole law of God written in the heart and shining in the life. That light is reflected and shines in Jesus Christ.

“In Him God has perfected His plan concerning us. Let us take it, brethren. Let us receive it in the fullness of that self-abandoned faith that Jesus Christ has brought to us. Let the power of it work in us, raise us from the dead, and set us at God’s right hand in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ, where He sits” (*ibid.*, pp. 366-368, condensed).

ELLEN WHITE'S IDEA

“As Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, ... they begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ. ... The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God’s dear Son” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 27).

¹ There are two Hebrew verbs that are translated “seek” in our English Bibles. One means searching for something that is lost or hard to find; but that verb is never used as God commanding us to “seek” Him as though He is hard to find or hiding from us. The other verb means “pay attention to” or “inquire of.” (See 1 Samuel 28:7, KJV, where both verbs are used in one sentence. It is the verb “inquire of” in that verse that is translated in Isaiah 55:6 as “seek ye the Lord.” What the Lord actually said is, “Inquire of Me while I may be found,” “pay attention to Me.”)

GOSPEL
TRUTH
#5

In seeking us, Christ came all the way to where we are, taking upon Himself “the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Thus He is a Savior “nigh at hand, not afar off.” He “is the Savior of all men,” even “the chief of sinners.” But sinners have the freedom to refuse Him and reject Him.

THE BIBLE TEACHING

(a) His name is “Immanuel, ... God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

(b) Though He was “in the form of God,” He was “made a little lower than the angels,” “made of woman, made under the law,” “in all things ... made like unto His brethren,” “made to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (Philippians 2:5; Hebrews 2:9, 14; Galatians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

(c) “As the children are partakers of flesh [sarx, Greek] and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Hebrews 2:17).

(d) He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

(e) To deny this reality that He “is come in the flesh [sarx]” is “that spirit of antichrist,” the essence of the Roman Catholic counterfeit of the gospel. (1 John 4:1-3).

WAGGONER SEES CHRIST AS “NIGH AT HAND”

“Christ took upon Himself man’s nature, and as a consequence He was subject to death. He came into the world on purpose to die; and so from the beginning of His earthly life He was in the same condition that the men are in, whom He died to save.

“Don’t start in horrified astonishment; I am not implying that Christ was a sinner. One of the most encouraging things in the Bible is the knowledge that Christ took on Him the nature of man, to know that His ancestors according to the flesh were sinners. They had all the weaknesses and passions that we have. No man has any right to excuse his sinful acts on the ground of heredity. If Christ had not been made *in all things* like unto His brethren, then His sinless life would be no

encouragement to us. We might look at it with admiration, but it would be the admiration that would cause hopeless despair.

“From the earliest childhood the cross was ever before Him” (*The Gospel in Galatians*, pp. 60-62, condensed).

“His humanity only veiled His Divine nature, by which He was inseparably connected with the invisible God, and which was more than able successfully to resist the weaknesses of the flesh. There was in His whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet His Divine nature never for a moment harbored an evil desire, nor did His Divine power for a moment waver” (*Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 28, 29).

JONES SEES THE LOVE OF GOD IN THE INCARNATION AS A POWERFUL TRUTH TO MOTIVATE THE HEART

“The choice to glorify God is the choice that self shall be emptied and lost, and God alone shall be seen, through Jesus Christ. It is that the whole universe and everything in it shall reflect God. That is the privilege that God has set before every human being. What did it cost to bring that privilege to you and me? It cost the infinite price of the Son of God.

“Did Jesus come to this world and then go back as He was before, and thus His sacrifice be for only 33 years? The answer is that it was for all eternity. The Father gave up His Son to us, and Christ gave up Himself for all eternity. Never again will He be in all respects as He was before.

“He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken.’ Wherein did He link Himself with us?—In our flesh; in our nature. That is the sacrifice that wins the hearts of men. Many look upon it, that the sacrifice of Christ was for only 33 years, then He died the death on the cross and went back as He was before. In view of eternity before and after, 33 years is not an infinite sacrifice at all. But when we consider that He sank his nature in our human nature to all eternity,—that is a sacrifice. That is the love of God. And no heart can reason against it. Whether the man believes it or not, there is a subduing power in it, and the heart must stand in silence in the presence of that awful truth. I will say it over: ever since that blessed fact came to me that the sacrifice of the Son of God is an eternal sacrifice, and *all for me*, the word has been upon my mind

almost hourly: 'I will go softly before the Lord all my days'" (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, pp. 381, 382, condensed).

WAGGONER SEES PRACTICAL GODLINESS IN THIS TRUTH

"There were two questions handed me, and I might read them now. One is this: 'Was that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary born in sinful flesh, and did that flesh have the same evil tendencies to contend with that ours does?' I do not know anything about this except what I read in the Bible. I have had my time of discouragement and despondency. That which for years had me discouraged was the knowledge to some extent of the weakness of my own self, and the thought that those who in my estimation were doing right and those holy men of old in the Bible, were differently constituted from me. I found that I could not do anything but evil. ...

"If Jesus, who came here to show me the way of salvation, in whom alone there is hope—if His life here on earth was a sham, then where is the hope? 'But,' you say, 'this question presupposes the opposite, that He was perfectly holy, so holy that He never had any evil to contend with.'

"That's what I am referring to. I read, He 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' I read of His praying all night, in such agony the drops of sweat like blood fell from his face. But if that were all make-believe, if He were not really tempted, of what use is it all to me? I am left worse off than I was before.

"But O, if there is One—and I do not use this "if" with any thought of doubt; I will say *since* there is One who went through all that I ever can be called upon to go through, who resisted more than I can ever be called upon to resist, who was constituted in every respect as I am, only in even worse circumstances than I have been, who met all the power that the devil could exercise through human flesh and yet who knew no sin—then I can rejoice. That which He did 1900 years ago He is still able to do to all who believe in Him.

The Immaculate Conception denies the Bible view of the nature of Christ. "We need to settle, every one of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not. Many have the marks yet. Do you not see that the idea that the flesh of Jesus was not like ours (because we know ours is sinful) necessarily involves the idea of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary?

“Suppose we start with the idea that Jesus was so separate from us, so different that He did not have in His flesh anything to contend with—sinless flesh. Then you see how the Roman Catholic dogma of the immaculate conception necessarily follows. But why stop there? You must go back to her mother, and so back to Adam; and the result?—There never was a fall. Thus you see the essential identity of Roman Catholicism and Spiritualism.

“Christ was tempted in the flesh. He suffered in the flesh, but He had a mind which never consented to sin. He established the will of God in the flesh, and established that God’s will may be done in any human, sinful flesh” (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, pp. 403-405, condensed).

JONES AGREES

“In these days of the general acceptance of Catholicism on the part of ‘Protestants,’ we should know for ourselves the doctrine of Christ and the consequences in those who accept the dogma [of the Immaculate Conception].

“We have the following statements of Catholic fathers and saints; ‘Because [Mary] being very different from the rest of mankind, human nature, but not sin, communicated itself to her.’ ‘She was created in a condition more sublime and glorious than that of all natures.’ This puts the nature of Mary infinitely beyond any real likeness or relationship to mankind. In the words of Cardinal Gibbons: ‘We affirm that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, was begotten of the virgin, thus taking to Himself from her maternal womb, a human nature of the same substance as hers.’

“It follows, as two and two make four, that in His human nature the Lord Jesus is ‘very different’ from mankind, infinitely beyond any real likeness or relationship to us as we are in this world. The truth is that the Lord Jesus in His human nature took our flesh and blood just as it is, with all its infirmities. It will be well to know how *near* He really is.

“Jesus, that He might bring man back to the glory of God, in His love followed him down even here, partakes of his nature as it is, suffers with him and even dies *with* him as well as *for* him in his sinful human nature. For ‘He was numbered with the transgressors.’ This is love. He comes to us where we are, that He may lift us up from ourselves unto God. ‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same’ (Hebrews 2:14).

“All the words that could be used to make this plain and positive are here put together in a single sentence. Instead of its being true that Jesus in His human nature is so far away that He has no real likeness nor relationship to us, it is true that He is in very deed our kin in flesh and blood relation. This great truth of the blood-relationship between our Redeemer and ourselves is clearly taught in the gospel in Leviticus. When any one had lost his inheritance, the right of redemption fell to his nearest of kin in blood-relationship. It fell not merely to *one* who was *near* of kin, but to *the* one who was *nearest* (Leviticus 25:24-28; Ruth 2:20; 3:12, 13: 4; 1-12). Therefore Christ took our very flesh and blood, and so became our nearest of kin. He is the nearest to us of all persons in the universe.

“This is Christianity. To deny that Jesus Christ came not simply in *flesh*, but in *the* flesh, the only flesh that there is in this world, *sinful* flesh,—to deny this is to deny Christ. For ‘every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in *the* flesh, is not of God.’ Confess to Him your sins; He will never take advantage of you. Tell Him your griefs. He has felt the same and can relieve you. Pour out to Him your sorrows: ‘He hath carried our sorrows,’ He was ‘a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ He will comfort you with the comfort of God” (*The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary*, 1894, condensed).

“If He were not of the same flesh as are those whom He came to redeem, then there is no sort of use of His being made flesh at all. More than this: Since the only flesh that that there is in this world which He came to redeem, is just the poor, sinful, lost, human flesh that all mankind have; if this is not the flesh that He was made, then He never really came to the world which needs to be redeemed. For if He came in a human nature different from that which human nature in this world actually is, then, even though He were in the world, yet for any practical purpose in reaching man and helping him, He was as far from him as if He never had come. ...

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

“The true faith—the faith of Jesus, is that He has come to us where we are; that, infinitely pure and holy as He is, and sinful, degraded and lost as we are, by His Holy Spirit [He] will willingly dwell with us and in us, to save us, to purify us, and to make us holy.

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

“The faith of Jesus is that God must dwell with us, and in us, in order that we shall be holy or pure at all” (*The Consecrated Way*, pp. 35, 39, condensed).

ELLEN WHITE WAS NOT ONLY SUPPORTIVE, BUT ENTHUSIASTIC

“On Sabbath afternoon [at South Lancaster] many hearts were touched, and many souls were fed on the bread that cometh down from heaven. ... We [Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White] felt the necessity of presenting Christ as a Saviour who was not afar off, but nigh at hand. ... There were many, even among the ministers, who saw the truth as it is in Jesus in a light in which they had never before viewed it” (*Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889).

“Many say that Jesus was not like us, that He was not as we are in the world, that He was divine, and therefore we cannot overcome as He overcame. But this is not true; ‘for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. ... For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.’ Christ knows the sinner’s trials; He knows his temptations. He took upon Himself our nature. ... The Christian’s ... strongest temptations will come from within; for he must battle against the inclinations of the natural heart. The Lord knows our weaknesses. ... Every struggle against sin, every effort to conform to the law of God, is Christ working through His appointed agencies upon the human heart. Oh, if we could comprehend what Jesus is to us!” (*Christ Tempted As We Are*, pp. 3, 4, 11; 1894).

“It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam he accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49).

“[Christ] took on His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succour them that are tempted” (*Medical Ministry*, p. 189).