

“WHY
the DELAY?”

*Integrity explains why
Christ
has not yet returned*

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Preface

This book is for Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand with the true Adventist pioneers whose ancestry go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Inherent in God's promise to crush the serpent's head was the promise of a Saviour. By faith Abraham claimed this promise. Isaiah told the world that the Saviour would be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but that eventually He would "see the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11).

Zechariah had the solemn duty to tell God's people that this Saviour would be wounded in the house of His friends. But they, by the spirit of grace, would come to their senses and say, "The Lord is my God." And as sacred history unfolded before the universe, this Son of Abraham, this Son of David, this Son of Man came, and was given the name Jesus, for He was to save His people from their sins.

But how few listened to Him when He walked among men and explained the eternal truths of His kingdom! His disciples today are as reticent to accept the cross as the Twelve who heard His voice 2000 years ago. Yet His kingdom shall be established, for He is the One who promised, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself."

Today Adventists who claim this promise are Abraham's "seed" who take their place in sacred history. They verily belong to Christ and have committed their all to the truth of His Word. He not only said He would come back again, to claim them for His own, but He gave every reason to know when that time was near.

If we as a church will read our history and believe the counsel God sent to us, and only listen to the Holy Spirit, we will be compelled to see that there has been a delay in the second advent. The Spirit of Prophecy counsel is adamant that the Lord sent to this people in 1888 a message of light that was to "fill the

whole earth with its glory” and to be “proclaimed with a loud voice and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 89-98).

The total truth of the entire Bible was to be summarized in that message that the Lord sent to us—the priceless gift of Christ’s own righteousness. The completion of the plan of salvation hinges upon the acceptance by the church of that light from heaven and its proclamation to the world.

In this book an attempt is made to give a sanctified common sense reason that our 1888 history provides, which shows us how our Seventh-day Adventist leadership failed then to understand God’s purpose. But we all may know “why the delay.”

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“Why the Delay?”

Seventh-day Adventists are compelled to talk about the Second Advent of Christ because it is part of their name. It is Bible language which they understand.

But their calling and integrity demand that they consider their history and face a serious question, “Why the delay?” To ask it is to confirm the answer. There *has* been a delay in the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. Each passing year only makes the fact more perplexing. But to acknowledge that there has been a delay confronts us with an even more serious dilemma— “*why*” has there been a delay?

The whole idea of a second coming is based on Christ’s own words, “I will come again” (John 14:3). If we believe He came in a first advent and lived out the prophecies of the Old Testament, it is reasonable to believe He understood them. He will also fulfill the New Testament prophecies. Specifically He made reference to “the law of Moses” and “the prophets” and “the psalms,” as well as “Daniel the prophet” (Luke 24:44; Matthew 24:15). Therefore Christ’s promise concerning His Second Advent is proclaimed in the context of the entire Bible.

His reference to the prophet Daniel indicates that He was acquainted with the 2300-day prophecy which sets forth clearly His first advent experience with His tribulation at Calvary and provides a time frame unique in the Scriptures. Within this prophetic authority Paul says that “when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). Likewise, the fact that Christ’s first coming was grounded in the Old Testament confirms and makes relevant these prophecies which include Christ’s New Testament mandate

to proclaim His second coming.

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The Integrity of the Word

The fact that 4000 years of human history passed before the first coming does not alter the truth of the Old Testament. Rather it confirms that when the Lord speaks, humanity may know that the fulfillment of His word is as certain as history transpired. The problem is the lack of faith and the consequent dim understanding that has plagued the race since Adam's rebellion. This disbelief of God's promises ultimately provides the reason for the delay of the second coming, and not some pending predetermined date in a Calvinistic setting.

The major prophecies dealing with final *events* have largely been fulfilled. We have reached the time in history when events are of little significance compared with the issues pending behind them. Christ defined the major issue when He declared that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," which of necessity must be a problem unique to God's people because the world has never professed any love for the Lord (Matthew 24:12).

When Daniel recorded the 2300-day prophecy it would have been a serious discouragement in his time if it had been fully understood by God's people. As it was, "Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days" and he was "astonished at the vision, but none understood it" (Daniel 8:27).

That which was not understood in Daniel's day has come to be a basic truth of Seventh-day Adventists. His prophecy sets forth a time, which when expired, would usher in an *event* unique in all history. The question before the church today is whether we

believe what he said and if so are we willing to face the issue.

His prophecy calls for a time when type meets antitype; when 4000 years of symbols in the tabernacle services and in heaven itself meet the culmination of the plan of salvation as sin is blotted out of the sanctuary and out of the human heart. In this agenda, after the year 1844, a new work is to be accomplished comparable to the ceremonial day-of-atonement in Old Testament times. No day was of greater significance to ancient Israel and in the light of Daniel's prophecy no day will be of more importance to the remnant church. In this scenario, the second coming could not take place until the 2300 "days" (years) were finished.

But at any time soon after 1844, when His people have permitted Him to prepare them, Christ could have returned.

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The Integrity of the Angels

Many Adventists are spellbound as they watch world events, and try to give each worldly political maneuver some biblical significance. For example, every move that the church of Rome makes is carefully analyzed. Many of our members are deeply concerned about the prospects of a Sunday law. These are events which are significant, but a Sunday law cannot come until there is a people willing to face such a law. The Lord must wait until they are ready.

In the meantime the four angels are fulfilling their assigned task of holding the four winds (Revelation 7:1). Even as the entire world becomes "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit," drunken and rich through corrupt practices, so the angels fail not to fulfill their assignment (Revelation 18:2).

No matter how rebellious the world may become, the integrity of these heavenly messengers must hold until they “have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Revelation 7:3).

This is not a postponement of probation’s close, but it is the ultimate outworking of the mystery of godliness, vanquishing the mystery of iniquity. These two mysteries come to fruition simultaneously, while the overcomers of the end-time will be claimed as God’s property and sealed as His for eternity. Until that sealing takes place, the depths of sin can know no bounds. The world may face a thousand whirlwinds of conflict and global confrontations, but all these, terrible as they may be cannot precipitate the second advent. This planet can only become progressively worse until there is a people who can stand in the glory of the Lord’s righteousness which is a consuming fire to sin (2 Thesalonians 2:8).

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The Integrity of God

Many Adventists suggest that the second coming has not taken place because God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). True, the Lord does want all to come to salvation. But such a premise ignores what the text actually says. If God had His way, no one would be lost. Indeed, He is *not willing* that *any* should perish yet millions will perish because of their deliberate choice to rebel against Him. In His sovereignty He cannot disdain His own integrity and force anyone to accept His righteousness. This is the magnificent truth of forensic justification which provides the free gift of justification to come upon all men, a gift they need only to receive. (Romans 5:18).

Furthermore, if the premise is valid that God must wait

until “all should come to repentance,” there can never be a second advent. The reason is that with every passing year the world population increases so that the potential for more people coming to repentance never ends. There will always be another generation called from sin. This waiting indefinitely for more and more to repent sabotages God’s original plan to have children made in His image. The universe is waiting for a generation re-created by the power of the gospel, a generation that fulfills His original purpose—evidence that the gospel is the “power of God unto salvation.”

There are others who proclaim that the delay is only a misperception on our part, and we need simply to accept God’s timetable. The way they read the schedule is that “He hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world” (Acts 17:31), meaning that God has marked on His calendar a certain day for the second coming, and when that day comes He will arbitrarily return. If this is true, it is utter nonsense to talk about, “why the delay?” On this basis there has been no delay, and there never will be. The day on God’s calendar simply has not arrived. In the meantime the human race continues to wallow in sin, physical suffering, immeasurable sorrow and distress, ail because we have not arrived at the date God marked on His calendar. In reality this charges Him with the present world turmoil.

On the other hand this text has present practical significance for what it says when read in the context of the problem facing the universe—the sin problem. God “hath appointed a day,” not arbitrarily by divine fiat from some remote point in the distant past, nor yet a future day fixed on the calendar that only God knows. The appointed day is when the church, His bride, is willing to accept Christ as the heavenly Bridegroom and be married to Him for eternity. In that day He will come to “judge the world.” (See: *Adventist Review*, Oct. 12, 1993, pp. 11-13.)

For now, ignorance and impenitence in “the house of David” and among “the inhabitants of Jerusalem” prevent His

return. But His bride will yet hear His knocking at the door and learn a supreme regard for Him and for His character and dedicated to His vindication she will take up her cross in mutual love without regard for reward or concern for the reward of heavenly mansions. That is the “appointed day” when He will come. That “day” fulfills the whole plan of salvation. He cannot come before that day because otherwise His people would be destroyed by the brightness of His holy presence.

The *issue* must be settled before the event can take place. God is not responsible for the delay. Rather, He is compelled to wait until Laodicea knows how wretched she is and is willing to believe the counsel of the True Witness and repent.

No crisis in all history compares with this.

... 5 ...

The Integrity of Modern Israel?

Rational consideration of “why the delay” in the light of the Bible makes clear the real reason. The integrity of modern Israel is in question. Her profession and her life are completely at variance.

According to the True Witness she does not “know” how “wretched” she is. God cannot vindicate a lukewarm people. He says that “the angel of the church of the Laodiceans” must overcome “even as” He overcame (Revelation 3:21). This demands strict integrity. To lower God’s expectation in order to vindicate an uncaring, lukewarm people would insult divine justice. Before He can exonerate His remnant church, His people must understand their history and rectify every failure to follow the light they have been given. Only then can the marriage of the Lamb be consummated for His bride will have “made herself ready”

(Revelation 19:7).

To be “ready” involves the cleansing of the sanctuary which began at the end of the 2300 “days” (years) but which can never be complete until the 1888 incident in our history is fully understood and the underlying spiritual problems solved. Ellen White has put this into focus:

“The sin committed in what took place at Minneapolis remains on the record books of heaven, registered against the names of those who resisted light, and it will remain upon the record until full confession is made, and the transgressors stand in full humility before God.” (*Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1031, Lt. 19d, 1892; Sept. 1)

The brethren to whom this was written one hundred years ago are all in their graves. But they are “our” brethren and death does not automatically cleanse “the record books of heaven.” We dare not disown them for they with us are part of the corporate body of Christ. While they remain prisoners in their tombs the question of “our” integrity will not go away. As surely as we must recognize the reality of the sin of Adam so we must note the end-time sin of modern Israel. It is in this end-time that we are called to “give glory to [God], for the hour of His judgment is come” (Revelation 14:7). Inspired prophecy will not release us from our accountability for we are told that the 1888 Minneapolis history must be recognized eventually: “Sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it.” (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 184)

The integrity of a new generation must now be tested, and we must re-examine what happened in a past generation with its profound implications for reaching spiritual maturity. Like Calvary, 1888 is more than a mere historical event. We dare not try to bury it in the archives and forget it, for it represents the outworking of principles that apply to every generation until the final victory of truth. As surely as each one of us was at Calvary in

spiritual reality, so each one of us was in the same sense a delegate at the 1888 Conference when truth was rejected.

There are those in the church (in fact, many) who are grieved with the mention of 1888 and express dismay that we pay attention to this tragic event of the past. There was an audible sigh of relief among Borne members and leaders in the church when the 1988 Minneapolis Centennial was passed, for the hope was expressed that now we can “get on with the work.” But our history cannot be changed in all eternity, and those with sensitive feelings of resentment about 1888 evidence an attitude of heart at war with God’s Holy Spirit.

But there will be a victory for truth as the High Priestly ministry of the world’s Saviour completes His work of cleansing His sanctuary. The solemn promise in His word is that after 1844, “*then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*” This is the unique work pending which is crucial to the question, “why the delay?”

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The Integrity of the Lord’s Messenger

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was conceived in an experience of genuine love permeating the sixth church of Revelation, and was born in a travail of soul by those few who risked everything as they recognized a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. It was in this circumstance that the Lord called a messenger, Ellen White, to counsel and warn His people as they faced the final conflict.

But with the indisputable doctrinal evidence of “the truth,” this “first love” of His remnant people faded away as pride crept in and the “rich-and-increased-with-goods” attitude of the seventh church of Laodicea took over. The power of the Spirit of God

attending Ellen White's ministry was evident and constrained church leadership to recognize the divine authority, yet as a whole they were seldom in true heart-sympathy with its deep spiritual probing. This inner resentment is typical of humans and is evident all through ancient Israel's history. As a consequence the ability to discern the working of the Holy Spirit faded away.

The time would come in 1888 when the mighty Third Person of the Godhead would actually be "insulted" by the responsible leadership of the church. Had it not been for Ellen White's ministry, it is doubtful that the movement would have survived, a fact which gives evidence of our deep seated unbelief. There was a blindness to the solemn truth of "the third angel's message in verity," and the place of the cross in this message eluded our brethren. It remains today to be genuinely understood.

Ellen White recognized the problem and over the years continued to warn the church. Early on she said:

"We have been so united with the world that we have lost sight of the cross, and do not suffer for Christ's sake. ... In the acceptance of the cross we are distinguished from the world" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 525)

Much later she repeated the thought:

"There is too much bustle and stir about our religion, while Calvary and the cross are forgotten." (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 133)

"The bustle and stir about our religion" made us content with published reports of "great progress" and eventually a pattern has been set to laud numerical increases and outward institutional grandeur and prestige as proof of heaven's blessing. It was right and proper that the work spread and prosper, but this material growth has been mistaken for the true purpose of the movement which in gospel terms must be the spiritual preparation of a people for the return of Christ.

Our lack of discernment has been in sharp contrast to the fervent messages of counsel given to us by Ellen White, until today we are smothered with glowing reports in the church press. Our denominational pride and lukewarmness in many nations and cultures present a staggering problem which time will not remedy. Our undone condition makes the True Witness declare that He feels like throwing up (Revelation 3:16, 17). What heaven wanted to do for us a century ago was rejected and the Holy Spirit was “insulted.”

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The Integrity of the 1888 Message

The 1888 message the Lord sent was far more than a mere re-emphasis of a neglected doctrine inherited from the past. It brought the Conference delegates face-to-face with Christ as they were confronted with His message. This confrontation involved the humbling of their souls into the dust, and for this they were not prepared. Their disdain for the Lord’s entreaty proved their ignorance of true justification by faith which is defined in this way by the Lord’s messenger:

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust.”

And what will happen when this knowledge is perceived?

“When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.” (*Review and Herald*, Sept. 16, 1902)

The world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church has been taught for years through authoritative publications that the 1888 message was accepted in that generation by the predominant leadership, and has been the secure doctrinal possession of the

church ever since. This remains the perennial proclamation. But the weight of history will not support this. Had the integrity of Ellen White's counsels been accepted years ago there would have been no question about the truth, and to a degree this fact came to be recognized by the time of the 1988 Minneapolis Centennial. In 1896, Ellen White plainly told leadership the truth that we have for generations doubted:

“Satan succeeded in shutting away from God’s people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. . . . The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 234, 235)

Ellen White insists that the message the Lord sent was unique and we may therefore know that if it had not been “kept away from the world,” current history would be different than it has been. The message was to bring “before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.” Popular evangelical Christianity would have been confronted with powerful convincing truth, for the message “presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.” This “obedience” involves an understanding of the seventh-day Sabbath which is a prime factor in the final conflict that separates the Protestant world from the remnant church of prophecy.

But more than this, “The Lord in His great mercy sent [this] most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones.” It was not the work of some select committee. Straight from heaven it came to direct the human family to the merits of Christ, that they might see:

“All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto all men, imparting the priceless gift of His own

righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92)

The world is still waiting for this message in its fullness. It will yet be proclaimed and do its work to bring humanity to a decision—but not until God's people in strict integrity see their history and understand their mandate.

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The Integrity of the Message Sabotaged

The historical record is clear. In hundreds of statements Ellen White endorsed the message and the messengers which the Lord sent in 1888.

However, since the Minneapolis Centennial in 1988, there has been a concerted effort to discount the message and the messengers even though it is agreed the church went through a crisis at the time. There is a persistent endeavor to classify the Adventist message as logical only when placed in the context of the "great basic truths of evangelical Christianity." The church is told that we "have had the loud cry message since 1888" and this with our distinctive doctrines needs to fit into "the great salvation truths of evangelical Christianity." (See *Angry Saints*, George Knight, Review and Herald, 1989, chapter seven) How do these so-called "truths" conform to the plea of John in Revelation 14:6-12, and 18:1-5? Is Babylon all that John says, "fallen," "the habitation of devils," "the hold of every foul spirit," a place God calls His people to come *out of*, to not *partake* of her sins? Surely the "voice from heaven" that spoke to John was true.

Our integrity will be measured as we consider the following:

1. The Holy Spirit Was Insulted at Minneapolis.

No matter what interpretation may be placed on our 1888 history, there are specific statements from Ellen White which cannot be denied or mis-interpreted. The message the Lord sent was sabotaged and heaven was held in contempt. Specifically we have been told:

“I stated that the course that had been pursued at Minneapolis was cruelty to the Spirit of God.” (*Ellen G. White, 1888 Materials*, p. 360, Ms 30, 1889)

“[The opposing brethren] were moved at that meeting by another spirit and they knew not that God had sent these young men to bear a special message to them, which they treated with ridicule and contempt not realizing that the heavenly intelligences were looking upon them. ... I know that at the time the Spirit of God was insultedl.” (ibid., p. 1043, Lt. S24, 1892)

“Sins ... are lying at the door of many. ... The Holy Spirit has been insulted, and light has been rejected.” (ibid., p. 1494, Lt. 8, 1896 [*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 393])

These alarming indictments are almost beyond belief. Here is the beginning of an answer as to “why the delay.” Until that “insult” is made right the latter rain and the second advent will continue to be no more than conversation pieces among Adventists. The latter rain must come before the grain ripens, which means the Lord of the harvest cannot put in the sickle, cannot return, until the harvest is “ready.” To “insult” the Holy Spirit is to reject the message and the very means which the Lord would have used to bring the harvest to fruition.

It remains equally impossible to receive the message and not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, while clearly, even a hundred years cannot heal such an “insult.” Mere time can never heal such a

wound. The corporate body of the church must face the fact that *the latter rain has not come, which is clear evidence that we have not received the message which the Lord sent to us.*

2. Jesus Christ Was Spurned and Insulted.

The Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us has personal feelings even as we humans have them. Ellen White has told us clearly that the Lord had a plan in 1888 when He “in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones.” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91) As the Lord has through all history, so in our time He chose that time to bring more prominently before the world His message of the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. But God’s plans ran counter to our plans and “we” voted to accept our plans.

The Lord’s messenger was painfully frank with the church as she set forth the truth of what happened. Not only were the men whom the Lord sent despised, but He who sent them was spurned: “If you reject Christ’s delegated messengers, you reject Christ.” (*ibid.*, p. 97)

The grandest eschatological opportunity of the ages was “in a great degree” rejected in our 1888 era. What was despised was an intimate heart reconciliation with Christ such as a bride feels for her bridegroom. It was not a cold doctrine that was misunderstood, nor was it a clash of personalities, but it was a turning of the back and not the face to the Lord. Heaven was sad “over the spiritual blindness of many of our brethren” (*Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892). A most serious appraisal and perhaps the crowning indictment is found in the following:

“All the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.” (*Special Testimonies*, Series A. No. 6, p. 20; *1888 Materials*, p. 1479)

We all know how Christ was treated by the Jews—and “we” did the same thing! Could anything be more significant to explain “why the delay?” How can the Saviour of the world come back until He is sure His people want Him? His “great disappointment” was in 1888, a disappointment beyond description.

3. Ellen White’s Ministry Was Disparaged.

The attitude of leadership toward Ellen White’s support of the 1888 messengers and the message was a severe trial to her. It is clear she felt deep pain and grief. Only a few days after the session she said:

“I have not had a very easy time since I left the Pacific Coast. Our first meeting was not like any other General Conference I ever attended. . . . such prejudice. . . . It was more after the order developed by the priests and rulers and Pharisees in the days of Christ. . . . My testimony was ignored, and never in my life experience was I treated as at that [1888] conference.” (1888 *Materials*, p. 186, 187, Lt. 7, Dec. 9, 1888)

Her appraisal of the treatment she received was explained further a few days later when she wrote a 27-page manuscript about Minneapolis. Her concern is beyond question:

“When men in high positions of trust will, when under pressure, say that Sister White is influenced by any human being, they certainly have no more use for messages that come from such a source. This was freely spoken at the Minneapolis meeting. . . . Why were not these men, . . . afraid to lift their hand against me and my work for no reason except their imagination that I was not in harmony with their spirit and their course of action” (1888 *Materials*, pp. 227, 228, Ms 24, 1888)?

On January 18, 1889, she wrote a 13-page letter to one of the leading brethren. The whole Minneapolis experience was fresh in her mind and she made plain the attitude that prevailed against her:

“There can be no harmony in our work when our brethren are so completely blinded that they cannot recognize the Spirit of God as it worked through me at Minneapolis” (1888 *Materials*, pp. 240, Lt. 22, 1889).

A week later she wrote on January 26, 1889:

“In the Conference at Minneapolis. ... Again and again did I bear my testimony to those assembled, in a clear and forcible manner, but that testimony was not received. ... Since some of my brethren hold me in the light they do, that my judgment is of no more value than that of any other, or of one who has not been called to this special work, and that I am subject to the influence of my son Willie, or of some others, why do you send for Sister White to attend your camp-meetings? I cannot come” (1888 *Materials*, pp. 251, 252, Lt. 3, 1889).

To read the record is to know that Ellen White carried a heavy burden, not unlike God’s servants in ages past. Lip service and respect for her as a speaker prevailed but her counsel was disparaged. More than a year and a half after Minneapolis, on May 14, 1890, she continued to speak the concern of her heart:

“Brethren, you are urging me to come to your camp meetings. I must tell you plainly that the course pursued toward me and my work since the Gen. Conf. at Minneapolis—your resistance of the light and warnings that God has given through me—has made my labor fifty times harder than it would otherwise have. ... It seems to me that you have cast aside the word of the Lord as unworthy of your notice. ... My experience since the conference at Minneapolis has not been very assuring. I have asked the Lord for wisdom daily, and that I may not be utterly disheartened, and go down to the grave broken-hearted as did my husband” (1888 *Materials*, pp. 659, 660, 664, Lt. 1, 1890).

Her anxiety and deep distress for the disregard shown her and the message and messengers the Lord sent to Minneapolis was not kept bottled up in her heart. She went public. At the

Ottawa, Kansas camp meeting, in May 1889, she told the people exactly what had happened and the running battle with leadership:

“God gave me meat in due season for the people, but they refused it. . . . Elders Jones and Waggoner presented precious light to the people, but prejudice and unbelief, jealousy and evil-surmising barred the door to their hearts. . . . Thus it was in the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus . . . the Satanic spirit took the control. . . . The servants whom the Lord sent were caricatured, ridiculed, and placed in a ridiculous light. The comment . . . passed upon me and the work that God had given me to do was anything but flattering” (1888 *Materials*, pp. 308-310, Lt. 14, 1889).

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The Integrity of the Brethren?

Contrary to popular opinion, the passage of time did not change the attitude of leadership. They devised a plan to get Ellen White out of Battle Creek and away from headquarters, and thus keep her from constantly seeing what the brethren were doing. With the General Conference president in the chair, the Foreign Mission Board voted for her to go to Australia. This was announced to the church through the *Review*, June 2, 1891.

What the brethren voted and what the Lord had in mind for Ellen White, were two different things. She agonized over the plan:—

“I have not special light to leave America for this *far-off* country.” “I cannot see my way clear to go.” “I am considering, Can it be my duty to go to Australia?” [Uncertainty prevailed up to one month before she actually sailed November 12, 1891.] (See chapter 1, *The Australian Years*, by Arthur L. White.)

The conviction remained with her. Five years later she wrote from Australia to the General Conference president:

“The Lord was not in our leaving America. He did not reveal that it was His will that I should leave Battle Creek. The Lord did not plan this, but He let you all move after your own imaginings. . . . We were needed at the heart of the work, and had your spiritual perception discerned the true situation, you would never have consented to the movement made. . . . It was not the Lord who devised this matter. I could not get one ray of light to leave America. . . . O how terrible it is to treat the Lord with dissimulation and neglect, to scorn His counsel with pride because man’s wisdom seems so much superior” (see *1888 Materials*, p. 1621, *et seq.*, Lt. 127, 1896).

The same committee that exiled Ellen White to Australia took a similar action a few months later in the spring of 1892, sending E. J. Waggoner to England. Thus the trio the Lord used at and following Minneapolis was broken up. History makes it plain how “Satan succeeded” and “by the action of our own brethren” “the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, . . . [and] has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” This heart alienation from Christ that caused the rejection of the 1888 message is today far more subtle, more sophisticated, and more deeply buried beyond our consciousness—but it is no less real.

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The Integrity of Our History

Not one event in our history can we change. But we can read the record and know the truth and then repent.

Our history as it has been recorded tells us that the

message was for end-time Israel and was “the message that God commanded to be given to the world” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92). It was not by human invention of any sort. Rather, the Lord “sent” it through “His servants.” But our in-house leadership rejection stands as one of the most amazing developments in the history of God’s work through 6000 years. Our brethren were sincerely unaware of a heart attitude which prompted an unholy reaction against the most glorious light which had ever shone upon this church. But we dare not accuse our brethren for they are no worse than we are by nature, for we are one body with them.

Leadership’s unknown enmity against the message more than one hundred years ago is no different than the current resentment against the message and the messengers and the entire 1888 crisis. Prevailing sentiment in published material suggests a note of joy that the Centennial as observed by the church in 1988 is past and slated to be forgotten. We can now put the matter in the archives, for after all, it is said, “enough had accepted [the 1888 message] sufficiently for the denomination to move on its primary mission—preaching the gospel to the world at large” (*Angry Saints*, pp. 152, 154).

Significantly, books and other published material dwell on the assumed non-relevance of 1888 in relation to teachings about the humanity of Christ and perfection. The church is told that the “post-Fall view of Christ’s humanity and the issue of perfection is becoming more suspect with advancing research” (*Ministry*, October, 1993, p. 6). Amazingly, we read that “one searches the 1888 comments of Ellen White in vain for statements that emphasize the humanity of Christ and perfection as major Minneapolis issues” (ibid.). Whether defined as “major” or minor issues, the fact remains that “1888 represented a theological crisis” *which cannot be solved without a clear understanding of justification by faith which is established by the truths of the incarnation.*

On the contrary, when a search is made of the *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* for insights that emphasize the human

nature of Christ and the perfection of His people, it is not “in vain.” In the context of her rehearsal of the 1888 episode her teaching is clear regarding Christ taking our fallen human nature, and there is ample reference to “clothing His divinity with humanity. ... He was found in fashion as a man. ... God humbled Himself and became a man” (pp. 28, 29).

In her Minneapolis sermon, Sabbath, October 20, 1888, she used 2 Peter 1:1-12 as her text which sets up the glorious promise that we through the “exceeding great and precious promises ... might be partakers of the divine nature.” She asks the congregation:

“Do you mean ... that there is not sufficient grace and power granted us that we may work away from our own natural defects and tendencies, that it was not a whole Saviour that was given us?”

She responds with God’s answer:

“I sent My Son Jesus Christ to your world to reveal to you My power, My mightiness; to reveal to you that I am God, and that I will give you help in order to lift you from the power of the enemy, and give you a chance that you might win back the moral image of God.”

To make her point abundantly clear she continues:

“His long human arm encircles the race, while with His divine He grasps the throne of the Infinite. ... He took human nature upon Himself and fought the battles that human nature is engaged in. ... Up to the time when Christ died, though He was human, He was without sin, and He must bear His trials as a human being. ... Jesus Christ ... imparts His righteousness to us. ... We can be filled with the fullness of God. Our lives may measure with the life of God” (ibid., pp. 121, 122, 124-126, 128).

To read the record is to be impressed that Christ took human nature with all its liabilities and that He imparts His

righteousness to us in order that our lives may measure with the life of God—could any truth be more profound than this? Ellen White presented such thoughts at Minneapolis and it requires no vain search to see this in the 1888 record.

The next day she asked the delegates:

“Did the Saviour take upon Himself the guilt of the human race and impute to them His righteousness in order that they might continue to violate the precepts of Jehovah? No, no! Christ came because there was no possibility of man’s keeping the law in his own strength. He came to bring him strength to obey the precepts of the law” (ibid., p. 130).

The *1888 Materials* bring to the church the fact that Ellen White many times joins the human nature of Christ with the calling of God’s people to perfection of character and although these truths may not be “major Minneapolis issues,” yet they permeate her presentations like yeast permeates bread.

In volume one of these *1888 Materials*, a cursory check indicates that these truths of Christ taking our fallen nature are mentioned at least nine times. The question is, why is there a concerted effort to cast aspersions on this part of the 1888 message which the Lord “sent”? In these two truths, the human nature of Christ and the perfection of the saints, is found the power and the glory of the gospel.

Let us stand in awe as she proclaims:

“Christ could have done nothing during His earthly ministry in saving fallen man if the divine had not been blended with the human. ... Man is privileged to be partaker of the divine nature. ... Divinity took the nature of humanity, and for what purpose?—That through the righteousness of Christ humanity might partake of the divine nature. ... Man must be a partaker of the divine nature in order to stand in this evil time, when the mysteries of satanic agencies are at work” (ibid., p. 332).

The Integrity of Christ's Human Nature Confirmed

In the 1888 context, a correct understanding of the nature of Christ was basic to the contention that led up to the Minneapolis crisis. In 1886 the Review and Herald Publishing House produced Elder George I. Butler's book, *The Law in the Book of Galatians*, which had the avowed purpose to support "The Moral Law" in this epistle of Paul.

Elder Butler was sure that Christ was "exempt" from our true inheritance in His entry into this world. He proclaims:

"It is not true that our Saviour was born under the condemnation of the law of God. This would be manifestly absurd. That he did voluntarily take the sins of the world upon him in his great sacrifice upon the cross, we admit; but he was not born under its condemnation. Of him that was pure, and that had never committed a sin in his life, it would be an astonishing perversion of all proper theology to say that he was born under the condemnation of God's law" (p. 58).

Dr. E. J. Waggoner, on February 10, 1887, wrote a 71-page reply to Elder Butler's 85-page treatise. But he delayed for nearly two years from going public, waiting until the Minneapolis session to distribute his pamphlet into the hands of those who had received Elder Butler's work. His stated purpose was "to correct some erroneous views." His booklet in contrast to Butler's, was entitled, "*The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*." He protested against Butler's dependence upon the opinions of commentators to try and support his view of the law.

Dr. Waggoner forthrightly stated:

"If we are to quote the opinions of men as authority, on points of doctrine, we might as well turn Papists at once; for to pin one's faith on the opinions of man is the very essence of the

Papacy. It matters not whether we adhere to the opinions of one man, or to the opinions of forty; whether we have one Pope or forty. ... Seventh-day Adventists, of all people in the world, ought to be free from dependence upon the mere opinion of men” (p. 59).

This lay at the heart of the dialogue, rather confrontation, at Minneapolis. No amount of purported “advancing research” can change these facts. The human nature of Christ and the fruit of this true doctrine in perfecting the saints was crucial at that time, and remains so. After denying the authority of men in contrast to the validity of the Bible, Waggoner goes on and for four pages in his pamphlet quoting Scripture that shows the importance of the Word becoming flesh. It was not commentators he quoted, but the Bible was his foundation as he arrayed texts before the delegates: John 1:1, 14; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-7; Hebrews 2:9; Romans 1:3; Psalm 51:5; Hebrews 2:16, 17.

His presentation leaves no doubt as he assures the church:

“One of the most encouraging things in the Bible is the knowledge that Christ took on him the nature of man; to know that his ancestors according to the flesh were sinners. ... If Christ had not been made *in all things* like unto his brethren, then his sinless life would be no encouragement to us. ... You [Butler] are shocked at the idea that Jesus was born under the condemnation of the law, because he never committed a sin in his life. But you admit that on the cross he was under the condemnation of the law. What! had he then committed sin? Not by any means. Well then, if Jesus could be under the condemnation of the law at one time in his life, and be sinless, I see no reason why he could not be under the condemnation of the law at another time, and still be sinless. ... I simply accept the Scripture statement ... because ... he was made sin, I may be made the righteousness of God in him. ... He was made sin in order that we might be partakers of his righteousness” (pp. 60-63).

The prevailing current attempt to discount the importance of the teaching of the post-Fall human nature of Christ and the spiritual maturity of the remnant in the 1888 message is an attempt to re-write history. Those who claim there is “contrary evidence on Christ’s nature from the writings of Ellen White” as well as the Bible are duty bound to tabulate such supposed evidence. To postulate there is “contrary evidence” and then try to build on this assumption is to ignore honest research.

The Adventist ministry of the world church is being immersed in the pre-Fall theory, and even more subtly is being asked to accept this view because the post-Fall teaching is not “absolutely essential orthodoxy.” The theory urged upon the world field is explicit:

“In the light of contrary evidence, from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White, that appears problematic to the post-Fall position, would it be possible for one to hold a post-Fall view as a matter of processive opinion and not absolutely essential orthodoxy?” (*Ministry*, October, 1993, p. 8).

This artful insinuation that the Bible and Ellen White present “contrary evidence” is an affront to the Adventist conscience. It infers that perhaps such “contrary evidence” does not begin nor end with the human nature of Christ and perfection of the remnant people—maybe there are other teachings in this same limbo of uncertainty. What are we to believe constitutes “essential orthodoxy” in the end-time when the three angels are to give their final warning? If this theology is simply a matter of “opinion,” “a cherished view”—what will enable the elect to distinguish between the true Christ and a false christ of which we have been warned by Jesus Himself? Mere opinion and assumptions will not suffice in the end-time.

The Integrity of the Gospel Validated

Seventh-day Adventists need not fear if they disagree with so-called “basic orthodoxy of the Christian tradition,” for in the end it is this so-called “orthodoxy” of Babylon that proves to be counterfeit and eventually presumes to war against heaven.

The human race does not need a Saviour who conforms to the popular opinion of “basic orthodoxy,” having a nature unlike those whom He came to save. It is a *fallen* race that needs to be saved by a Saviour who “was in all points tempted like as we are.” Ultimately this subject becomes a theology of the most profound character which delineates truth from error, and determines the final verdict in the judgment. *Until the theology of the remnant church is absolutely clear and devoid of pluralism, we will continue to ponder—“why the delay?”*

The acceptance of the pre-Fall theory and the rejection of the need for spiritual character maturity/perfection in the end-time will not bear careful theological analysis. Here are three reasons:

(1) If Christ came in the nature of Adam before the Fall, He could not have died to redeem us. Adam was not subject to death until after sin was a fact. The pre-Fall theory logically makes the cross of Calvary an impossibility, hence the atonement is implicitly aborted.

(2) Christ suffered our second death. The atonement is always referred to as “the sacrifice of Christ.” What was this sacrifice? Was it six hours on the cross—terrible, yes, and no one would want it for one minute—but was this the sacrifice? Was it the other ill treatment He received—scourging, spit upon, denial, rejection, all-possible inhuman assault smothered in envy, hate and malice—was this His sacrifice? Can any physical suffering, moral abuse, even 33 years of constant human rebuffs, constitute the sacrifice of Christ?

As terrible and unjust as were His whole life’s experiences,

none of this temporary agony and abuse in the light of eternity can begin to compare with His real sacrifice which is outside of time.

The supreme sacrifice for the Son of God was to become the Son of man, for the Word to become flesh, to be made lower than the angels, to empty Himself and “be made like his brethren,” to condemn sin in the flesh, to relinquish forever His equality with God, to die the death of the lost, to endure the curse of God. God humbled Himself and became a man. Rejoined His divinity to our humanity for all eternity. Thus the record is manifest—unreservedly God “gave.” Adam in his innocent pre-Fall nature could know nothing of this condescension, and a christ with such a pre-Fall nature could never reach a fallen race. When the “bride” of Christ understands the significance of the atonement and truly appreciates *this* sacrifice she will be ready to stand at His side for the marriage.

(3) The spiritual maturity, or the character perfection of the final generation, is inseparably joined to Christ taking the human nature of Adam after the Fall. As the Divine Bridegroom, He has a right to be married to a “bride” that is spiritually mature, grown up—perfect in the wedding garment that He has provided for “her.” No previous generation has been faced with such eschatological opportunity.

Only a people confronted with the final events in the history of mankind, who see the simultaneous outworking of the mystery of godliness in contrast to the mystery of iniquity, only this “remnant” can with mature understanding appreciate the culmination of the plan of salvation. Christ’s people will stand with Him in perfect union for He was chastened for our profit, “that we might be partakers of his holiness.”

Never before in all history has a people been called to be translated without seeing death—to stand face to face in the presence of the living God. Except three individuals, all the

worthies of past sacred history remain in the grave waiting on the final generation and the marriage of the Lamb, for “they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:40). Therefore, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). Abraham looked forward to this day, but only the remnant can bring his faith to fruition.

• • • 13 • • •

Integrity Confirms There Has Been a Delay

There is no way to read the counsels of Ellen White without knowing that she has stated hundreds of times that the Lord intended the second advent to be very near. But the last words from her pen were written more than three-quarters of a century ago. We must honestly confess that *there has been a delay*.

With this acknowledged delay, we must also confess that the latter rain is a pending blessing which we have only talked about so far but have not yet received. The “former rain” in the days of the apostles became a fact only after there was a blessed fusion between prophecy and understanding. This accounts for the piercing words of Christ as He talked with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They had seen the events that startled all Jerusalem, but they did not understand the issues. Very frankly Jesus told them:

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).

It was after this basic teaching that discernment anointed

their eyes. The account makes clear that “then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (verse 45).

Understanding came before the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the disciples’ experience is to be found the destiny of Seventh-day Adventists. What they passed through may be accepted as merely a shadow of the real blessing that awaits an end-time fulfillment in the outpouring of the latter rain. Christ’s diagnosis of the apostles’ need demanded the death of pre-conceptions and misconceptions, and such a demand is infinitely greater for the end-time church. This church was raised up by God to burst the old wine skins of tradition by revolutionary insight that would lighten the earth with glory. But until the truth of our situation is fully realized, the delay will be a continuing sorrow, and the continued knowledge that the latter rain has not come will confirm our plight.

• • • 14 • • •

Integrity Demands We Acknowledge our History

The Lord cannot force nor conquer by fear what He would win only by love. This provides the supreme reason for His continued patience during the long delay.

What else can He do but await our disillusionment? This is the wisdom of His love, a truly divine strategy. Our sin of rejecting the light of the loud cry can never be overcome truly until our motives in all our hearts are laid bare to our consciousness. This searching work certainly must be included in the cleansing of the sanctuary. What we failed to *believe* a century ago we must *learn* through traversing a devious detour of our own devising. Our history is the outworking of principles divinely ordained to lead us to reconciliation with Christ our Saviour.

A detour is always an inconvenience, even a trial, but in the end the destination is always reached. In the meantime, impatience and spiritual immaturity in our midst has produced an array of mini-organizations, distributing thousands of books and periodicals, tapes and videos, and promoting various theologies. In some cases the confusion is so great that it has even been suggested that Israel can become Babylon, indeed has become Babylon and therefore “home churches” should be established. But such a course is a denial of faith and an abortion of God’s plan for His church. The record is clear:

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. ... Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. ... And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:7, 16, 29)

The body of Christ is one and therefore cannot be fragmented. God’s promise to Abraham will never be disannulled or made of none effect. The long delay may seem to be an insufferable trial but the “detour” will end and no amount of apostasy will nullify the power of the gospel to accomplish God’s purposes. The many promises to this end that have been given to the remnant church dare not be ignored. Here is one such assurance of deep significance:

“Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility, ... she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives. ... When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer, and will banish from the church the spirit of

discord and strife ...: There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. ... God's servants will speak the same things" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 250, 251).

She *will* be healed! A positive promise. The truth will make her free! All of God's people will be in harmony with the mind of the Holy Spirit. God's servants will not be fragmented by an array of sun-dry teachings. Pluralism will die. All this will happen when she "shall repent and be converted." To repent means to look back and understand the present in the light of our past experiences. There can never be any repentance without that enlightened looking back.

No Hebrew in all the world can be an heir of the promise except by looking back to the true history of Calvary, and with repentance understanding what happened there. Just so surely the call for repentance which the True Witness makes to the seventh church demands that we look back and appreciate the honest truth of our own history. Thirteen years after Minneapolis Ellen White sensed that we failed to recognize what the Lord wanted to do in that era. In 1901 she wrote:

"The people who had great light did not have corresponding piety, sanctification, and zeal in working out God's specified plans. ... Man cannot possibly stretch over that gulf that has been made by the workers who have not been following the divine Leader. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action" (Letter 184, 1901, see *Evangelism*, p. 696).

And now more than ninety years later, it is apparent that those "many more years" because of insubordination have been fulfilled. Integrity demands that we review and appreciate our history.

Integrity Points to Specifics ...

1. Denominational detour. The message which the Lord sent to His people in 1888 was rejected by responsible leadership, to the extent that Satan “succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the power of the Holy Spirit” and “light” was “kept away” from the world in a “great degree” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 234, 235). We took the wrong road and the cause of God suffered a serious set-back. Fourteen years after 1888, Ellen White continued to appraise our history in words unmistakable:

“I have been instructed that the terrible experience at the Minneapolis Conference is one of the saddest chapters in the history of the believers in present truth” (*1888 Materials*, p. 1796, Lt. 179, 1902).

2. Leadership Actually Insulted the Holy Spirit. This sad chapter of defection was far more than superficial theological differences among “ministering brethren.” It was resistance to the Holy Spirit. This fact has been reiterated to the church in statements beyond dispute; the counsel is crystal-clear:

“I told them plainly [that] the position and work God gave me at that conference was disregarded by nearly all. Rebellion was popular. Their course was an insult to the spirit of God” (*1888 Materials*, p. 314).

“They were moved at that meeting by another spirit, and they knew not that God had sent these young men, Elders Jones and Waggoner, to bear a special message to them, which they treated with ridicule and contempt. ... I know that at that time the Spirit of God was insulted” (*ibid.*, 1043).

“Those who opened the door of their hearts to temptation at Minneapolis ... will realize, if not now, in the future, that they

resisted the Holy Spirit of God, and did despite to the spirit of grace” (ibid., 1481).

Is it not time now to realize what was then “future” and recognize the “despite”? The extent of the resistance against the Spirit of the Lord, His messengers, and against precious light, was immense.

“The Spirit of the Lord has been upon His messengers whom He hath sent with light, precious light; but there were so many who had turned their face away from the Son of Righteousness that they saw not its bright beams” (ibid., 1485).

3. The Crucifixion Was Repeated. As our history is reviewed the tragedy of Minneapolis is increasingly highlighted. That Satan succeeded “in a great measure” there is no question. That the Holy Spirit was insulted is painfully affirmed by the Lord’s messenger. And along with that affront, the record states plainly that “had Christ been before them, they would have treated him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ” (ibid., 1479).

Without a trace of euphemism this says that had Jesus been in our midst physically, we would have crucified Him as verily as the Jews did 2000 years ago. What can make end-time Israel understand what “we” have done? They (*we*) chose *Barabas* instead of the Saviour, and thus rejected the Word that became flesh and who tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

4. Spirit of Prophecy Disregarded. Having traveled this road of insubordination, rejection of light, insult to the Holy Spirit, crucifixion of the Saviour, our next transgression was to disregard the calls to repentance especially ministered to this people through Ellen White. The barricade of prejudice that was set up in 1888 has never been torn down. Increasingly, voices are proclaiming that she was influenced by “attitudes commonly held by Protestant churches of the 19th century” (*Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 56). Her interpretations of some portions of

Scripture are called in question. It has even been suggested that the “interpretation of 1888” is subject to the results of “advancing research,” as if scholastic acumen could in any way revise our history (see *Ministry*, Oct. 1993, p. 5). This is the fulfillment of what she said less than two months after Minneapolis, as she wrote a 13-page letter to a conference president who was a member of the General Conference Committee:

“There can be no harmony in our work when our brethren are so completely blinded that they cannot recognize the Spirit of God as it worked through me at Minneapolis” (ibid., 240, Lt. 22, Jan. 18, 1889).

She had a continuing concern for the disregard of her counsels, a disregard that permeated leadership. On December 31, 1890, she wrote a 12-page letter to a prominent worker which sets forth the contempt church administration held for the testimonies:

“There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded. ... My brethren have trifled and caviled and criticised and commented and demerited, and picked and chosen a little and refused much until the testimonies mean nothing to them. They put whatever interpretation upon them that they choose in their own finite judgement and are satisfied” (ibid., 790-801).

Seldom does the Lord’s messenger put together such a chain of powerful verbs portraying our transgression and Satan’s delusions.

The heart-felt scorn and indifference heaped upon her and her counsel at that time caused her to predict what would happen in the future. Satan would work to nullify God’s leading

of His people by instruction given through the Spirit of Prophecy. Current history in the church make it clear her forecast has come to pass. She said in 1890:

“Satan is ... constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the church. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision the people perish’ (Prov. 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 48; Lt. 12, 1890).

• • • 16 • • •

Integrity Denied Explains Why the Long Delay

In one word, the answer for the delay in the second advent is: the *sinful unbelief* of the remnant church!

Following Minneapolis Ellen White portrayed emphatically to the leadership what had happened. The thrust of this counsel was published in 1923 when the first edition of *Testimonies to Ministers* was issued. If the world church had no other publication than this one book, we could clearly understand that we experienced a tragic crisis a century ago. But mysteriously when the second edition of this important book was republished in 1944 a drastically revised “Preface” muted the prominence of 1888 as revealed in the first edition.

Next, the third edition published in 1962 embarks upon an unprecedented course and gives to the church 22-pages of “Historical Foreword” and 44-pages of “Appendix Notes” not found in either of the previous two editions. These extra pages are heavily biased toward an interpretation of our 1888 history in defiance of the true facts as stated by Ellen White. Irrespective of

the attitude one may assume towards our history, here is published evidence beyond dispute.

In 1980, the church was provided with volume three of *Selected Messages* which contains 34 pages in Section 21, entitled, “Ellen G. White Reports on the Minneapolis Conference” (pp. 156-163). Seven pages of this section are extra comments written by the White Estate about the 1888 Conference to condition the reader not to take too seriously what the actual text by Ellen White says. We are told, the 1888 “session was quite routine” yet was “different from any other General Conference in Adventist history” and presaged “the gradual change for the better that ensued in the five or six years after Minneapolis.”

This “Historical Background” declares that although Ellen White recognized a “tragic setback in the advancement of the cause of God,” yet this was only relatively minor. She mentions this “usually in incidental statements” and she did not “intimate or declare that there was an official rejection by church leaders to the precious message.” Such is the conflicting and bewildering appraisal of our history added to one of Ellen White’s most solemn books.

But the Lord has a regard for truth that cannot be quenched. The church has written a record that cannot be ignored, rationalized, or denied and it will stand in the day of judgment. Until this history is recognized, the long delay must continue.

Providentially, in 1987 the church was given nearly 2000 pages of evidence printed in the *1888 Materials*, all from the pen of Ellen White, almost without any human comment. This is a blessing for those privileged to have access to this material. But unfortunately the record is known only to a small segment of the church membership. But the “beginning” of the loud cry that came a century ago must continue to fruition.

The call for corporate repentance made by the Bridegroom will yet be heard by His bride-to-be. The church belongs to the

Lord Jesus.

In the meantime we are immersed in a subtle legalism that sees statistical records as a world goal while we fail to see that Ellen White declared the gospel commission could have been completed within a few years following 1888—if the message had been believed (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 419). Therefore, the “most precious message” which the Lord sent was to accomplish His final evangelistic purposes and prepare a people for translation.

Consequently:—“It is not the opposition of the world that we have to fear; but it is the elements that work among ourselves that have hindered the message” (ibid.).

How can we explain the persistent official efforts since 1950 to contradict the inspired Ellen White evidence about 1888? Integrity has been cast aside. If our enemies were to research this history, we would be acutely ashamed and embarrassed.

Our mishandling of the evidence is more serious than financial fiascoes or moral lapses which effect isolated areas in the church. Our disdain for the truth of our own history impacts the world church. The Enemy of the plan of salvation knows the truth which the church has been told. As long as he can prevent this truth from reaching the hearts of God’s people, by default he will continue to reign. This in substance was the warning that was given at the camp-meeting in Rome, New York in the 1888 era and published in the *Review*, Sept. 3, 1889:

“The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness. ... There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare. ... The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken.”

This is an appalling estimate of our spiritual condition—

less than one percent of our membership “understands for himself” justification by faith. This is in contradiction to our own opinions. And then note that last sentence—“if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken”—a statement virtually unknown and unpublished since it first appeared over 100 years ago (see *Gospel Workers*, p. 161). The seriousness of this diagnosis remains to be comprehended and accepted by the corporate body.

Meanwhile, what can heaven do so long as we insist that “within the last several decades” the church “has experienced a revival in its understanding of righteousness by faith”? We are assured that this “renewed understanding has spread” among classrooms, pulpits, and publications while it “has been accepted and proclaimed by church administrators, theologians, pastors, and lay people. It has brought assurance of salvation and revival of meaning to many lives” (see *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Autumn 1995, p. 1). Yet the church remains lukewarm!

To the extent that some of the unique elements of the 1888 message are being recovered by a small minority in the church, this assessment of progress may be true. But there is no way to reconcile a self-congratulatory appraisal with the full truth of our history and current events in the church in general. The revelation of Christ’s righteousness and the light of the angel whose glory will fill the whole earth, will go together. That glorious future will confirm that God’s people will have demonstrated integrity.

••• 17 •••

Good News: Integrity Will Be Vindicated

Integrity will take its rightful place for the redeemed from among men will have “no guile” in their mouth—“they are without fault before the throne of God.”

This remnant will understand that their Adventist history is as much a part of the sacred record in the war between truth and error as is the story of the crossing of the Red Sea by Israel and their descendants of many centuries later stoning Stephen. How long before the truth of our history will filter through to church leadership and be known clearly by the world-wide corporate body? We cannot escape the question, Will we accept the truth of our history, or will we again “stone” Stephen?

Our unbelief is as persistent and deep-seated in our hearts as that which plagued ancient Israel. Today modern Israel is as loth to face its history as the Hebrew people generally are loth to face the history of Calvary. They abhor and deny it.

But something must happen in the end-time that has never happened before. Millenniums of defeat must be reversed. Daniel’s prophecy must be fulfilled and the sanctuary must be cleansed as it states—it “shall” be done (8:14).

God’s work can be finished in an incredibly short time. But it will require the repentance of the ages, an understanding of the truth which shall make us free from old covenant bondage. God’s people will truly hear the call of the True Witness to “be zealous therefore, and repent.” Our imagined prosperity and success will be seen in its true light as a snare; and in its place there will be a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness. Every vestige of theological confusion will vanish. Worldly policy and man-made strategies will be abandoned, to be replaced by a spirit-filled unity among leadership and laity that knows no defeat.

The church will be ready and willing to have by faith the ultimate experience which Christ went through at Gethsemane and she will take her place beside Him. He has staked the honor of His throne on winning the heart of His bride. When she accepts all the truth He has for her, she will “partake of Christ’s sufferings” when He was on earth. That “short period of three years was as long as the world could endure the presence of the

Redeemer” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 541).

The power of Satan will be broken among God’s people as they see and believe their history and appreciate true justification by faith. In this message is the power of the latter rain which, for over a century, we have been seeking. It is this message which establishes righteousness and consigns sin to annihilation. The unbelieving world will not be able to endure the presence of a people who overcome every temptation and who live in harmony with the mind of Christ.

There has been a delay *but it need not continue*. By the faith of Jesus the bride can know the full dimensions of her rebellion. There will be a separation and a unity:

“The Lord is coming; but those who venture to resist the light that God gave in rich measure at Minneapolis, who have not humbled their hearts before God, will follow on in the path of resistance, saying, ‘Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?’ The banner all will bear who voice the message of the third angel, is being covered with another color that virtually kills it. This is being done. Will our people now hold fast to the truth.” (*1888 Materials*, pp. 1485, 1486, Series A, No. 6, p. 215, Jan. 16, 1896).

When “the house of David” and the “inhabitants of Jerusalem” come to understand this history, by the grace of the Lord there will be a repentance of soul that fulfills the call of the True Witness as “his wife hath made herself ready.” (Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 3:19; 19:7).

This has to be true, for it is a divine prophecy—the word of the Lord to His people cannot fail!