

CALVARY AT SINAI

THE LAW AND THE COVENANTS IN

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HISTORY

by

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PREFACE

I have had an interest in the law and the covenants ever since I was old enough to read books. The topic all seemed so mysterious and incomprehensible to me. I was taught like most baptismal candidates that the old covenant was done away with at the cross. The new covenant was instituted at the cross.

It came to my attention during my theological training that there had been an issue in our Seventh-day Adventist history over the law in Galatians. Ellen White had made some statements on the law as our schoolmaster. She said that the law in Galatians was the cause for much of the trouble that took place in 1888 at the Minneapolis General Conference. Understanding how that issue came about or just exactly what was involved, was something that would have to wait for another day.

A project like this is not done without others paving the way. I want to thank Elder Robert J. Wieland for sparking an interest in the covenants through his lectures on Galatians at Leoni Meadows, California, during the summer of 2000. In addition, Ron Duffield, librarian at Weimar College, deserves my thanks for his guidance and providing access to primary documents. His own excellent manuscript, "The Return of the Latter Rain," awaits publication.

Some time has been spent in the Heritage Rooms of Andrews University, Atlantic Union College, La Sierra University, and Loma Linda University. The Ellen G. White Estate at Andrews University and Loma Linda University deserve a special thanks. Also, The General Conference Archives has been of assistance. Special thanks goes to librarian, Gary Shearer, at the Heritage Room, Pacific Union College. I wish to thank my father, Elder Paul E. Penno, Sr., and my mother, Georgia Penno, who introduced me to Bible Adventism. I want to thank my

wife, Candice Penno, for providing helpful advice. Ruth West made helpful suggestions. My daughter, April, has provided technical assistance on the project. I am responsible for the contents of this manuscript.

This manuscript is dedicated to the memory of Elder Ellet Joseph Waggoner. He was one of God's messengers in 1888. His covenant theology deserves to be resurrected for the benefit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the 21st century.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of the two covenants has a rich and colorful history in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its ebb and flow has had high water marks as well as low. It reached its height in the 1888 message of the covenants as presented by E. J. Waggoner.

The new covenant and the old covenant are two parallel tracks that have run from the Garden of Eden until Christ brings in the everlasting kingdom. They are conditions of the heart. One is a ministration of righteousness. The other is a ministration of death. One is faith in the promise of God. The other is the promise of man to be obedient.

The low water mark of the covenants in Adventist history was the rejection of the 1888 message and its messengers. The traditionalists thought that Waggoner discussed justification as a “rider” in order to bring in the issue of the moral law in Galatians. Since they believed the law in Galatians was the ceremonial law, they were biased against hearing the wider message of the covenants and the gospel.

Calvary at Sinai: The Law and the Covenants in Seventh-day Adventist History, chronicles this story from the 1850's to the 21st century. The methodology employed is a historical contextual study.

History is like a puzzle with many pieces. The individual parts must interconnect perfectly in order picture to fit properly and make sense. To take one piece here and one piece there out of its setting is to distort the picture.

The approach here has been to assemble the data in such a way that the pieces connect in a coherent chronological setting. Careful attention has been paid to letting the original witnesses speak for themselves. Conclusions have been drawn based on the evidence.

The story of the law and covenants in Adventist history has been told by others, but only in brief exploratory papers. The theme of the law and covenants has received treatment in works dealing mainly with other goals in mind. But this is the first comprehensive monograph on the entire sweep of Adventist covenant theological history from the 1850's to 2000.

There were certain events leading up to the Minneapolis Conference which caused the crisis. It did not just happen in a vacuum. The Sunday-law crisis was heating up. The law-in-Galatians issue had been vigorously discussed going all the way back to 1856 when J. H. Waggoner was a key player in writing about the moral law. Some of the leading church writers decided then, that it was the ceremonial law. The reasons for that decision make for interesting reading.

The development of E. J. Waggoner as a doctor, pastor, teacher, writer, and editor is a fascinating story. How did he come about his understanding of righteousness by faith, the law, and the covenants? He had a keen interest in Bible study, especially the Apostle Paul. He had an inductive approach seeking to hear the Word speak in developing his biblical paradigms of faith.

When Waggoner wrote and taught the issues of the law and the covenants, it is interesting to know whether he was aware that these might potentially be hot-button issues for the future. He was writing about such things as early as 1884. His theology was taking a definite form several years before the eventful conference.

What happened at "that terrible conference" in 1886 at Battle Creek? Who gave it that designation? Something occurred that caused D. M. Canright to decide he had had enough of Adventism. He left the church and became one of its bitterest opponents.

Some felt there was a conspiracy on the West Coast to bring in controversial topics to Minneapolis. Was there an East-West rivalry? What suspicions developed over the church prophetess, Ellen White, in all of this?

Most are aware that 1888 was a flash point in our church history. What was the key issue that created such a vigorous discussion? How do we know what Waggoner presented at the conference since no verbatim notes were written down. Can a contextual historical study develop such an approach to know what was said?

Some have felt that the conference was all about the law issue. But others saw the key issue as the gospel and justification by faith. Where does the truth lie? How are the law and the covenants related to each other? For that matter, what do they have to do with righteousness by faith?

The aftermath of 1888 was considerable hard feelings and polarized positions on the law and the covenants. There is a plethora of documentation about events immediately following 1888 which has never been fully published. The documents tell an intriguing story of behind-the-scenes activities among church leadership in regard to the message and the messengers.

The accepted view is that after the major players made their confessions around 1890 and thereafter, that they appreciated the light of righteousness by faith. The law and the covenants continued to play a role in church discussions long after the main event.

Calvary at Sinai also ventures into the twentieth century. It explores the covenant theology from a wide perspective. The survey includes denominational publications, the mainline church papers, and missionary journals. Sources are consulted from the English speaking world of America, Australia, Great Britain, and Canada.

It is a given within the scholarly world that whenever a writer publishes his views they are subject to review and interaction by others. This is a common quest for truth. Where writers have been analyzed nothing is implied regarding their sincerity as Christian brethren. There is no personal animosity involved. The analysis has to do with the issues under discussion. Should a writer's published views on the law and the covenants be subjected to analysis it should not be concluded that what he or she has published on topics other than the law and the covenants is necessarily incorrect.

Calvary at Sinai explores the battle over the law in Galatians and the covenants after 1888 until the 21st century. Did the brethren confess and embrace the most precious message of Christ our righteousness as presented by Waggoner through the theme of the covenants? Why did one pastor say that 1890 was "Minneapolis over again"? Was the law in Galatians and the covenants, as presented by Waggoner at the 1888 conference, endorsed by Ellen White? When did she speak to these issues?

Only our history can tell the whole story.

Chapter 1

MILLERITE COVENANT THEOLOGY

Dispensationalism viewed the old covenant primarily as an Old Testament phenomenon from Mount Sinai to the cross. Consequently, the new covenant predominated the New Testament dispensation. This construct was the underlying assumption of Millerite interpretation of the prophecies of the Bible.

William Miller constructed his typology of the Old Testament relationship to the New Testament with the assumption of a dispensationalism of the two covenants. Writing of the unfulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament he said: “If you will examine your Bibles you will find every prophecy which could not be fulfilled literally, has a direct allusion to the new covenant, and cannot be fulfilled under the old. There, *Israel*, *Judah*, and *my people* are to be understood as spiritual Israel. . . .” In his view spiritual Israel of the new covenant was the church of the New Testament.

He further explained these unfulfilled prophecies:

. . . If we take into consideration the names and phrases used by the prophets under the Old Testament, we must, unless we are willingly ignorant, see that no other names would or could be used with propriety, but such as have been used. And every bible student must have discovered this, and seen that if it were not so, in vain might we look for any prophecy in the Old Testament concerning the church in the New.¹

¹ Letter William Miller to J. V. Himes, March 31, 1840, Low Hampton, New York. Quoted in Joshua V. Himes, *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology, Selected from Manuscripts of William Miller; with a Memoir of His Life*(Boston, Mass.: Moses A. Dow, 1841), pp. 229, 230. Emphasis his.

Miller's understanding of the typological structure of the literal in the Old Testament being spiritual in the New Testament was certainly correct. However, his underlying assumption for this typology of the new covenant following the old was erroneous.

Gerard Damsteegt explained Miller's prophetic hermeneutic: "In those instances where such had not been completely realized to the Jews prior to the cross, they would be fulfilled to spiritual Israel under the new covenant."² Thus the father of the Millerite movement was a dispensationalist and used this principle in the service of his prophetic interpretation.

Apollos Hale and Joseph Turner, two leading Millerite publishers, had the same dispensational framework in mind when they identified the church of Old Jerusalem with the old covenant and the church of the New Jerusalem with the new covenant.

But it must be seen at once, that while the relation between husband and wife is occasionally referred to as illustrative of the relation between Christ and believers, the "allegory," as Paul calls it, in its complete form, runs thus: under the old covenant, God is the husband, "Jerusalem," "the land" or country is the wife, and the church are the children. . . . Under the new covenant, Christ is the husband, the New Jerusalem, the wife, and believers the children. Gal iv 26-31. . .

What Old Jerusalem was to the Church under the old covenant, that the New Jerusalem is to be, to the Church under the new covenant in its perfected state. . .³

The underlying assumption of Hale and Turner was the two dispensations of the two covenants. The new covenant followed the old covenant.

One of the first writers to provide an understanding of Daniel 8:14 and its connection with the heavenly sanctuary was O. R. L. Crosier. He believed this sanctuary ought to be understood in a new covenant sense. He said:

² P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 60.

³ A. Hale and J. Turner, eds., *The Advent Mirror* 1, 1 (January, 1945), pp. 2, 1.

The Sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days is also *the Sanctuary* of the new covenant, for the vision of the treading down and cleansing, is after the crucifixion. We see that the Sanctuary of the new covenant is not on earth, but in heaven.--The true tabernacle which forms a part of the new covenant Sanctuary [*sic.*] was made and pitched by the Lord, in contradiction to that of the first covenant which was made and pitched by man. . . .⁴

Here Crosier viewed the parameters of the new covenant associated with the crucifixion. The new covenant and its sanctuary followed the crucifixion. Gerard Damsteegt observed of Crosier's principle: ". . . Old Testament prophetic symbolism ought to be interpreted in a New Testament new-covenant sense if these prophecies refer to a historical period after the Crucifixion. This principle led him to interpret the sanctuary of Dan. 8:14 as the heavenly sanctuary of the new covenant."⁵ Crosier had dispensational assumptions regarding the two covenants when he set forth his interpretation of the heavenly sanctuary from Daniel 8:14.

At the beginning of his ground-breaking article entitled, "The Law of Moses," Crosier explained that the law of Moses was the first covenant. He used Galatians 3:19 to teach that this law covenant was "added because of transgressions." "This covenant was to continue only 'till the seed (Christ) should come, then 'a new covenant' was made. . . ."⁶ Crosier had a sequential understanding of the first covenant of Moses followed by the new covenant with the coming of Christ.

He also used this dispensational assumption of the two covenants in explaining the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9.

This was also the manner of change from the Dispensation of the Law to the Gospel. Gabriel said to Daniel, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city." It is presumed that all agree that these 70 weeks reached

⁴ O. R. L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day-Star Extra* 9 (February 7, 1846), p. 38. Emphasis his.

⁵ P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, p. 126.

⁶ O. R. L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day-Star Extra* 9 (February 7, 1846), p. 37.

to the end of the legal dispensation and no further. The Messiah came at the end of the 69 weeks and began to preach the gospel. . . which Paul calls the New Covenant. And he confirmed this covenant with many for one week, the last one of the 70. Hence, the legal Dispensation ended seven years after the Gos. Dis. began; and the last symbolic week of one was the first of the other; and while one was being finished, the other was being introduced and confirmed or established.⁷

Crosier's unquestioned assumption regarding the old and new covenants was that they were dispensational. The new covenant followed the old covenant with an overlap of seven years. He had said this earlier: "Did not the legal Covenant overlap the Covenant of grace 7 years, the last week of the 70? and will not the Covenant of grace overlap the 'Dispensation of the fulness of times' a corresponding length of time?"⁸

The covenant theology of Seventh-day Adventism was rooted in the Millerite movement. Prominent Millerite leaders and writers were dispensationalists. This would have an impact and bear fruit in the emerging history of the sabbatarian adventists.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁸ Letter, Crosier to Jacobs, *The Day Star* (November 15, 1845), p. 23. Quoted in P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, p. 131.

Chapter 2

THE COVENANTS IN EARLY ADVENTIST THEOLOGY

For early Adventist writers the issue of the law in Galatians and the covenants were closely tied together. What was the “schoolmaster” law of Galatians 3:24, 25? What was the relationship between the ten commandments and the old covenant? Did the ten commandments sustain the same relationship to the new covenant as it did to the old covenant? What role did the ceremonial law play in the old covenant? Even more important, how were the old and the new covenants understood in the light of the cross?

Otis Nichols (1798-1876), one of the first Millerites to accept the Sabbath, wrote on the passage in 2 Corinthians 3. He said that both the old and the new covenants contained the ten commandments. The problem with the old covenant was its ministration on tables of stone. The new covenant was the writing of God’s laws upon the heart and mind by the Spirit. This was the better promise. Since the new covenant contained the writing of the law of God on the heart, it could not be abolished.⁹

James White evolved in his understanding of the law in Galatians 3. At first he believed it to be the moral law. According to Uriah Smith “Bro. W. [James White] took the position, (or had taken it in his book) that the law in Galatians was the moral law.”¹⁰ By 1851 he changed his view.

⁹ Otis Nichols, “Remarks on 2 Cor. 3:6-8, *The Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald* (April 7, 1851), p. 63. Hereafter *RH*.

¹⁰ Letter Uriah Smith to W. A. McCutchen, August 8, 1901, Battle Creek, Michigan. *Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988), p. 305. Hereafter *MMM*.

James White had to deal with his Advent Christian brethren who were fighting him over the seventh-day sabbath.¹¹ J. B. Cook (1804-1874), a Baptist preacher and Millerite, contended in the *Advent Harbinger*, that the Sabbath was abolished along with the ten commandments at the cross. Cook's "one law theory" combined the moral and the ceremonial law. He used it for interpreting Galatians 3; 5:4; and 2 Corinthians 3.

James White set about to prove there were two distinct laws. One law was written by the finger of God on two tables of stone and the other law was written by Moses in the book of the law. It was the latter that was done away with at the cross. He quoted E. B. Cook (not to be confused with J. B. Cook) to the effect that the law of Moses "was the schoolmaster to bring them to Christ." Elder White understood the schoolmaster of Galatians 3:24, 25 to be the ceremonial law.

But James White captured the first and second use of the law. He said God's law was given to convict of sin and lead sinners to Christ (Galatians 5:4). He realized that he was taking the position of the anti-sabbatarians. ". . . We are reasoning from the ground of the opponent that Paul refers to the ten commandments in Gal. v, and that Sabbath-keepers are fallen from grace."¹² Then he explained--

the gospel arrangement. God's law convicts of sin, and shows the sinner exposed to the wrath of God, and leads him to Christ, where justification for past offences (*sic.*) can be found alone through faith in his blood. The law of God has no power to pardon past offences (*sic.*), its attribute being justice, therefore the convicted transgressor must flee to Jesus.¹³

¹¹ James White, "The Two Laws," *RH* (August 5, 1851), p. 4.

¹² James White, "Justified by the Law," *RH* 3 (June 10, 1852), p. 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*

James White was a dispensationalist. He said: “The sanctuary is that of the new covenant, or of the Christian age, and is in Heaven.”¹⁴ By identifying the “new covenant” with the “Christian age” his dispensationalism was revealed.

Interestingly enough, J. N. Andrews (1829-1883) said that the “schoolmaster” was the moral law. “That law was the law of ten commandments, given by God from Sinai, Had the law been abolished at the death of Christ, it could not have been a schoolmaster many years afterward to bring the Galatians to Christ.”¹⁵ Andrews saw the moral law as the correct understanding of the “schoolmaster.” His argument was forceful. How could the Galatians be convicted of sin and brought to Christ if the “schoolmaster” was done away with at the cross? The “schoolmaster” must be the moral law.

J. N. Andrews discussed briefly the conversion of the apostle Paul. The law played a vital role in leading him to Christ the Saviour. Referring to Paul, Andrews said:

He was no longer under the condemnation of God’s holy law, [Rom. iii, 19,] but was under grace, the state of pardon and forgiveness, and from the heart “fulfilled the righteousness of the law.” Rom. viii, 1-7. The same school-master (not an abolished law) brought the Galatians to Christ many years after this.¹⁶

It is clear that Andrews was referring to the ten commandments.

Dealing with 2 Corinthians 3, which opponents of the ten commandments used as proof of its abolition, Elder Andrews sought to distinguish the ten commandments from their “ministration” (2 Corinthians 3:7). He emphasized that the veil was placed over Moses’ face and

¹⁴ James White, “Our Faith and Hope; Or, Reasons Why We Believe as We Do. Number Twelve.--The Time,” *RH* 35, 8-9 (February 15, 1870), p. 57.

¹⁵ J. N. Andrews, “Reply to H. E. Carver,” *RH* 2, 4 (September 16, 1851), p. 29. He makes a similar reference to it in J. N. Andrews, “Watchman, What of the Night?” *RH* 3, 2 (May 27, 1852), p. 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

not over the commandments. It was Moses and the Levitical ministration that was to fade away and be replaced by the glorious ministration of the Spirit.¹⁷

Joseph Harvey Waggoner (1820-1889) was a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist, editor, and author. He was the father of E. J. Waggoner. In 1853, Waggoner responded to a Millerite article, “The New Covenant,” published in the *Harbinger* of Nov. 16, 1849. He identified Exodus 19:5-8 as a mutual agreement between God and the people. The terms of the agreement were the ten commandments.

J. H. Waggoner viewed the two covenants as filling two consecutive time periods. “We know that the New Testament, or covenant, dates from the death of the Testator, the very point where the first covenant ceased.”¹⁸

In 1854, J. H. Waggoner published a book, *The Law of God: An Examination of the Testimony of Both Testaments*, in which he took the position that “. . . it is evident that the law spoken of in Gal. 3:19, 24, is a moral law, one that will detect and convince of sin.”¹⁹ Arthur White observed that “he took the controversial stance that ‘not a single declaration’ in Galatians ‘referred to the ceremonial or Levitical law;’ that the book ‘treats solely of the moral law’²⁰ Certainly that would be difficult to sustain.

God gave the law at Sinai because the people “had all transgressed, by entering into a covenant of works, or obedience, their weakness and sinfulness was made manifest; and thus the law brought them to a reliance on Jesus Christ for freedom from the curse which they had

¹⁷ J. N. Andrews, “2 Cor 3,” *RH* (December 12, 1854), p. 133.

¹⁸ J. H. Waggoner, “The New Covenant,” *RH* (May 26, 1853).

¹⁹ J. H. Waggoner, *The Law of God: An Examination of the Testimony of Both Testaments* (Rochester, N. Y.: Advent Review Office, 1854), p. 81. Hereafter referred to as *The Law of God*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74. Quoted in Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White Volume 3 The Lonely Years 1876-1891*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D. C.: 1984), p. 387.

incurred by disobedience.”²¹ The people made a covenant of works. They felt themselves capable of obedience. The law was given to convince them of their sin and drive them to Christ for release from their bondage.

He understood the covenant God made with Abraham to be a mutual agreement. He said there was “only one covenant as a law, or commandment, namely, that upon which the promise to Abraham was based.”²² He went on to say “. . . the law is the condition of the Abrahamic covenant, and that the faithful obedient secure the promised blessings.”²³

His model of the Abrahamic covenant was of two parties, God and Abraham, entering into an agreement whereby Abraham was obedient to the law and God promised him blessings in return.

J. H. Waggoner’s book stirred up some problems among Adventist evangelists because in their apologetics with the antinomians they had to defend the law and the sabbath. Seventh-day Adventists had taken the position that the law in Galatians 3 was the ceremonial law and not the ten commandments. The antinomians said the law in Galatians 3 was the ten commandments which was done away with at the cross (Galatians 3:26).

The Seventh-day Adventist believers in Vermont were agitated by J. H. Waggoner’s position. They sent Stephen Pierce to Battle Creek to be their point man to argue their position with the General Conference leadership.

²¹ J. H. Waggoner, *The Law of God*, p. 82.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Stephen Pierce had a position on the law question. He wrote an article in the *Review and Herald* entitled an “Answer to Bro. Merriam’s Questions Respecting the Law of Gal. iii.”

Brother Merriam asked, "Can the Law there spoken of, refer to the Ten Commandments?"²⁴

Pierce answered, “I think it cannot; but that it refers to the law-system, as a system; or, the dispensation of law, as such; or, the whole embodiment of law.”²⁵ Further on he said if the “Moral Law alone was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ we have no evidence. True, it is by this Law we have the knowledge of sin; but how it brings us to Christ we are unable to tell.”²⁶

Pierce was taking the position that the law system was the schoolmaster in Galatians 3. He agreed that the law convicted the sinner. However, he could not say how the ten commandments brought sinners to Christ. This was a direct reference to Galatians 3:24. Tim Crosby believed that Pierce’s position on the “law in Galatians meant both the moral and the ceremonial law.”²⁷ At any rate, Pierce’s position was in opposition to J. H. Waggoner’s view.

When Pierce arrived in Battle Creek, Elder J. H. Waggoner was invited to join in the discussions, but he refused and went home to Burlington, Michigan. For three days the talks took place. As Uriah Smith recalled the incident:

Bro W[aggoner] took the position (or had taken it in his book) that the law in Galatians was the moral law. Bro. Pierce argued that it was the law system, “including the ceremonial law.” I was then quite young in the truth, and as these meetings were new to me, I including both Bro. and Sr. White became convinced that Bro. Pierce had the right view, and J. H. W. was wrong. Sr. White shortly after this had a vision in which this law question was shown her, and she immediately wrote J. H. W. that his position on the law was wrong, and Bro.

²⁴ *RH* 10, 23 (October 8, 1857), S[tephen] P[ierce], “Answer to Bro. Merriam’s Questions Respecting the Law of Gal. iii.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Tim Crosby, “The Law and the Prophet,” *RH* 163, 19 (May 8, 1986), p. 492.

Pierce was right. Bro. White then took Bro. W's book out of the market, for we all then considered the matter settled.²⁸

Later on Ellen White was frustrated in seeking to recall what she had been shown. She could not remember what the vision was about which related to the incident with J. H. Waggoner:

I am troubled; for the life of me I cannot remember that which I have been shown in reference to the two laws. I cannot remember what the caution and warning referred to were that were given to Elder [J. H.] Waggoner. It may be that it was a caution not to make his ideas prominent at that time, for there was great danger of disunion.²⁹

This manuscript was never found.³⁰

J. H. Waggoner sought to have his book *The Law of God* republished by the Review and Herald Publishers, but James White responded, "not until you revise your position on the law." Waggoner refused to revise his book.

R. F. Cottrell (1814-1892), an early Seventh-day Adventist minister, also indicated he was battling with the Advent (Millerite) believers over the Sabbath/law controversy. The everlasting covenant made with Abraham joined the gospel and the moral law of God. He connected Galatians 3:8, 17 with Genesis 26:5 and Psalm 105:6 to establish his point.³¹ His conceptual model of the covenant was "a mutual agreement, or contract. It always requires two parties, at least, to make a covenant."³²

²⁸ Letter Uriah Smith to W. A. McCutchen, Aug. 8, 1901, *Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho: 1988), p. 305. Hereafter referred to as *MMM*.

²⁹ Letter E. G. White to G. I. Butler and U. Smith, April 5, 1887, Basel, Switzerland. *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (The Ellen G. White Estate: Washington, D. C.: 1987), p. 32. Hereafter *EGW 1888*.

³⁰ Tim Crosby, "Using the Law to No Profit," *RH* 163, 20 (May 15, 1986), p. 525.

³¹ R. F. Cottrell, "Letters," *RH* (September 2, 1851), p. 23.

³² R. F. Cottrell, "The Two Covenants," *RH* 63, 36, (September 7, 1886), p. 566.

By 1872, Cottrell was dealing with an antinomian by the name of Elder Marlatt from Woodhull, New York. Elder Marlatt opined that he could not see the difference between the ten commandments and “the words of the Lord which Moses had written in the book of the covenant.”³³ He obviously believed in the one law theory.

It was clear that Cottrell saw the ten commandments as the conditions of the first covenant as well as the second.³⁴ He said his opponent Elder Marlatt and other antinomians were--

ignoring the plainly revealed fact that the first covenant consisted of mutual promises--on the part of the people to keep God’s covenant, the ten commandments, and on the part of God to make them his peculiar treasure--they assert that the law is itself the old covenant. They will not have the plainly expressed testimony that the covenant was made “concerning these words,” that is, the words of the Lord which Moses had written in the book of the covenant; Ex. 24:3-8, but contend that the words of the great Jehovah, the words of his law which he uttered with his own voice, are the covenant that waxed old and vanished away, because it was faulty.³⁵

Elder Cottrell believed the first covenant was the ceremonial law written by Moses.

When the children of Israel broke this covenant, God was no longer obligated to make them a peculiar treasure unto Himself. The old covenant was abolished long before Christ came.

Cottrell said:

It vanished away; and there was no necessity that Christ should nail it to his cross. Hence, there is nothing said in the New Testament of its abolition. Christ introduces the new, in fulfillment of the promise; the first having become of no binding force by the transgressions of the people.³⁶

This approach had a sequential model to the old and new covenants. It betrayed a subtle dispensationalism. The covenants in Cottrell’s view were matters of time rather than experience.

³³ R. F. Cottrell, “The Latest and Easiest Way to Abolish God’s Law,” *RH* 40, 2 (June 25, 1872).

³⁴ R. F. Cottrell, “Questions on the Covenants,” *RH* (January 10, 1878), p.13.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Even more interesting was how Cottrell deviated from his brethren on when the old covenant “vanished.” Adventist writers on the old covenant said it was abolished at the cross. However, Cottrell said the old covenant had long since “passed away by default.”

When he was asked to explain Galatians 4:21-31, Cottrell said “this has no reference to their [the brethren in Galatia] desire to keep the commandments of the moral code.” Rather Paul was addressing their desire “to perform all the rites of the ceremonial law.”³⁷ Here Cottrell was in unison with his Adventist brethren who consistently interpreted the law throughout Galatians as the ceremonial law.

G. W. Holt, a former Millerite who assisted James White in the early days of the Advent movement in publishing the *Review*, approached the covenant issue as a legal relationship with God on the part of the people at Mount Sinai.³⁸ The agreement between God and the people was the covenant. The ten commandments were the obligations. The people were to obey God, but they did not. So they brought the curses upon themselves.

G. W. Holt responded to an article entitled: "Seventh-day Sabbath Abolished," which was published in the rival Millerite paper the *Harbinger and Advocate* of Dec. 6th, 1851.³⁹ Holt saw the covenant God made with the people at Sinai as a “mutual agreement.” In his words, “The blessings. . . were to be enjoyed by them on condition that they kept the ten commandments; therefore, the ten commandments were not the covenant, but the conditions of that covenant.” Thus, Holt distinguished between the covenant and the commandments. The covenant was the people’s agreement with God to be obedient. The conditions of the covenant were the ten commandments.

³⁷ R. F. Cottrell, “Paul’s Allegory,” *RH* 55, 23, June 3, 1880, p. 361.

³⁸ G. W. Holt, “The Covenant Made in Horeb,” *RH* (December 23, 1851), p. 65.

³⁹ G. W. Holt, “Covenants,” *RH*, (January 13, 1852), p. 76.

Holt had a dispensational view of the two covenants.

The first, or old covenant is the one made in Horeb. . . . These ceremonies, performed by the Jewish priesthood in the worldly sanctuary, were imposed on the Jews until the time of reformation. Then the first covenant ceased, and gave place to the second, or better covenant established on better promises, of which Christ is a minister.⁴⁰

He made his point absolutely clear in the following statement: “The new covenant commenced with the mediation of Jesus in the holy place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, and that time was signified by the Holy Spirit on the day of pentecost.”⁴¹

Accordingly, the first covenant instituted at Horeb was for the Jews until the coming of Christ. Christ then became the minister of the second covenant. This left the readers wondering how the Gentiles would be accommodated for salvation under the ministration of the first covenant.

Joseph Baker (fl. 1852) was a Millerite convert to Seventh-day Adventists through the influence of Joseph Bates. He worked in the Review office from 1852-1854. Baker was seeking a breakthrough on the issue of the two covenants, that would allow the third angels’ message to shine in all its glory. He did not achieve the desired results, but he did make a contribution.

The Abrahamic covenant was the everlasting gospel. The ten commandments were included in it. The covenant at Sinai had the same commandments in written form. “. . .The Sinai covenant. . . was . . . formed . . . to constitute Israel again, the natural seed of Abraham, according to the everlasting covenant.”⁴²

According to Baker the purpose of the ceremonial law was to bring them back to the blessings of Christ found in the everlasting covenant. “They were re-instated by the addition of

⁴⁰ G. W. Holt, “The Covenant Made in Horeb,” *RH* (December 23, 1851), p. 65.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Joseph Baker, “The Covenants,” *RH* (February 7, 1854), p. 17.

ritual services to these means . . . by which the ultimate end, or Christ, was to be obtained. After which a new covenant was to be made with them. . . .”⁴³

The “ministration of death,” in 2 Corinthians 3, was written on stone at Sinai. Others may view it as the ceremonial law, but Baker said: “Of this it is contended, that the ministration of death never was written on stone; but in a book. If so, I fail to see it. . . .” “. . .The ministration of death was written and engraven on tables of stone.”⁴⁴ Unfortunately, Baker never developed the implications of this.

Furthermore, Baker had the contract view of the covenant. A covenant, or contract, was supposed always to embrace parties. The covenant under examination, included God; the covenantee, Abraham; and his seed, as covenanters. Consequently, there were conditions to be performed by the individual parties.⁴⁵

Even though he saw Christ as the seed of Abraham, he never clearly spelled out the fact that Christ, as the Son of man, fulfilled the conditions of the covenant on behalf of mankind. Therefore, Baker had a legalists’ model of how God related to the sinner.

Uriah Smith (1832-1903) was to become a key player in the issue of the two covenants during the 1888 era. He defended the Sabbath and commandments from the onslaughts of those who would abolish them.

Referring to Hebrews 8:6-13, he said: “. . . Some will persist in reading it, as though the first covenant there mentioned, was the law of God, or ten commandments; that this is superseded by something better, and therefore has waxed old and vanished away.”⁴⁶ He dealt with this problem by excluding the moral law from the old as well as the new covenant,

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Joseph Baker, “The Covenants,” *RH* (February 14, 1854), p. 17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ U. Smith, “Hebrews 8:6-13,” *RH* (August 19, 1858), p. 108.

preferring to call it the conditions of the covenant. The new covenant was the agreement between God and the people that they will keep the law. Smith made his point. “. . .The new covenant is not a law; for under this covenant the law is written in the heart; and the covenant is a mutual arrangement. . . .”⁴⁷

He would not concede that the ten commandments were part of the old covenant.

God's act of entering into covenant with any people, granting them certain blessings and privileges, provided they would comply with certain duties, and his declaring unto them the terms or conditions of the covenant, which are of themselves sometimes called a covenant as in Deut. iv, 13, are two very different acts.⁴⁸

In his mind, if the old covenant included the law, then it would have to be done away. Elder Smith would not concede this point to the antinomians.

It was unclear whether Elder Smith received his idea about the covenants from the “Bible Student’s Assistant” or used it as a reference; nevertheless, he reprinted this source in the *Review*⁴⁹ and he urged its readers to study it thoroughly. His preferred definition of the covenant was found in Greenfield’s lexicon: “. . . A covenant, i. e., mutual promises or mutual conditions, or promises with condition annexed. . . .”⁵⁰ The article from the “Bible Student’s Assistant” went on clearly stating that the old covenant had stipulations. “Its sole condition was obedience. . . .”⁵¹ Likewise, the new covenant had the same conditions. “Its basis or condition is the law of God.”⁵² So the law was the condition to be obeyed, but the covenant itself was the mutual promises of God and the people. In this way the law was distinguished from the covenants.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ U. Smith, “The Covenants,” *RH* (April 12, 1860), p. 162.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

In Uriah Smith's effort to prove that the ceremonial law was done away with at the cross, he made reference to the old dispensation in which it was in force, and the new covenant in which it was abolished. Referring to the ten commandments, Smith said: ". . . If Christ simply teaches the perpetuity, in this dispensation, of certain laws which existed in the old, it is both anti-scriptural and absurd to talk of their abolition. . . ." ⁵³ This infiltration of dispensational language was a disturbing trend in Adventist thought.

J. M. Aldrich wrote a couple of articles for the *Review* in 1861. He held the same view that Smith did. The ten commandments were the conditions of the covenant agreement or promises that were made between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. He was responding to Brother Grant of *The World's Crisis* who used Hebrews 8:7 as proof that the ten commandments were abolished by the new covenant. Aldrich put it this way:

The primary meaning of covenant is a mutual contract, or agreement between two or more persons to do, or not do some act or thing. The ten commandments are called a covenant - God's covenant - which has not this primary signification; for it is composed wholly of commandments issued by God alone, and hence contains no mutual promises. ⁵⁴

Aldrich maintained the continuity of the law of God as the condition of both the old and the new covenants. ". . . The ten commandments were not "that first covenant," but rather the conditions thereof, as they are also the conditions of the second or new covenant." ⁵⁵

Early in 1864, T. M. Preble wrote a series of articles which appeared in *The World's Crisis*, an antinomian paper, opposing the ten commandments and the seventh-day Sabbath. Preble said, "The Lord forgive me for the error of my head which led me to fall 'from grace,' and thus go back and try for three years to be 'justified by the deeds of the law' by keeping the

⁵³ U. Smith, "What Did Christ Abolish?" *RH* (July 29, 1858), p. 84.

⁵⁴ J. M. Aldrich, "The Sabbath #1 Faulty Covenant," *RH* (June 25, 1861), p. 33.

⁵⁵ J. W. Aldrich, "The Sabbath #2," *RH* (July 2, 1861).

seventh-day Sabbath!”⁵⁶ Preble, a Free-will Baptist minister of New Hampshire, had been a sabbatarian from 1844 to 1847. His distinction as a sabbath-keeper was to be the first Adventist to go into print advocating the seventh-day with his “Tract, Showing That the Seventh Day Should Be Observed As the Sabbath” (March 1845).⁵⁷

He became a vigorous opponent of the sabbath. He characterized his former brethren as “. . . those who choose to follow the teachings of the OLD DEAD ‘SCHOOLMASTER,’ instead of following Christ and the apostles” and said that they “will probably teach the seventh-day Sabbath.”⁵⁸ Evidently, at least one reason Preble left the Advent Movement was because of his dispensational model of the covenants. He interpreted the “schoolmaster” as the ten commandments.

Uriah Smith felt so strongly about refuting Preble’s three articles that he wrote a whole book-length review. He took the position, that was firmly established among Seventh-day Adventists by the mid-1860’s, that the “schoolmaster” in Galatians 3 was the ceremonial law and not the moral law.

But to speak definitely on Gal. 3:24, Paul does not mean by the word schoolmaster, the ten commandments. What is there in the ten commandments to lead us to Christ? True, they reveal sin, and show us that we are transgressors; but they point out no way of escape, and lead us to no Saviour. What law then did lead to Christ? Answer, That law system by which the sacrifice and priestly work of the Saviour was so clearly shadowed forth. By this it was continually foreshown that a sacrifice was to be made which could take away sin, and a genuine Saviour provided for the world.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ T. M. Preble, “The Seventh Day Sabbath--The Law. The Old ‘Dead Schoolmaster’! The Living Jesus Number Two, “*The World’s Crisis and Second Advent Messenger* 18, 24 (March 1, 1864).

⁵⁷ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1966), p. 1015.]

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

⁵⁹ Uriah Smith, *Both Sides on the Sabbath and Law. Review of T. M. Preble* (Steam Press, Battle Creek, Michigan: 1864), p. 67.

He understood the law's capacity to convict the sinner, but he could not see how the law led to Christ.

Later on when discussing the old and new covenants in Galatians 4:22-31, Uriah Smith said that the old covenant was "the agreement which the people made with the Lord as recorded in Ex. 19." Furthermore, he stated, "It was a covenant of bondage, corresponding to Hagar, because its sacrifices could not take away sin."⁶⁰ The problem was that he missed the whole point that the old covenant was their agreement to keep the ten commandments which made it a covenant of bondage. The sacrifices indeed "could not take away sin." However, faith in Christ, to whom the sacrifices pointed, could take away sins. But many Israelites refused to have faith.

By 1881, Elder Smith continued to teach dispensationalism. In his view there were two phases in the work of salvation.

These two covenants are singled out from the many covenants mentioned in the Scriptures, as first and second, old and new, because they relate particularly to the great work of the redemption of a lost race, and embody the *two grand divisions* of that work.⁶¹

In another place Smith said the same thing: "The conclusion is therefore clear, that these two covenants, embody two grand divisions of the work which Heaven has undertaken for human redemption, and cover two especial dispensations devoted to the development of this work."⁶² This clearly revealed Smith's sequential understanding of the two covenants divided into two chronological dispensations.

With his focus on the typical Mosaic law as the old covenant rather than the faulty promises of the people to keep the law of God, he only saw the whole system coming to an end

⁶⁰ Uriah Smith, "The Bondwoman," *RH* 54, 11 (September 4, 1879), p. 84.

⁶¹ Uriah Smith, "The Two Covenants," *RH* 59, 19 (November 8, 1881), p. 296. Emphasis supplied.

⁶² Uriah Smith, *The Two Covenants* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald, n.d.), p. 16.

with Christ. “The time allotted to the old covenant at length expired. Over six hundred years before this, the Lord had announced by the prophet Jeremiah that a new covenant should in due time be made.”⁶³ This was a sequential view of the new covenant following the old covenant.

Uriah Smith’s understanding of typology was used in the service of his dispensationalism. He said:

The sanctuary of the old covenant must bear the *same relationship* to the sanctuary of the new covenant, which the old covenant itself bears to the new. . . . All agree that they stand as type and antitype. The first was the type and shadow; this is the antitype and substance. The sanctuary of that dispensation was the type; the sanctuary of this is the antitype.⁶⁴

The old covenant was a type of the new covenant antitype. The tabernacle in the wilderness was a type of the heavenly sanctuary antitype. The old covenant and its tabernacle were the type for that “dispensation.” The new covenant and its heavenly sanctuary were the antitype for this dispensation.

Smith believed God’s covenant emphasized faith and works:

It is important now to consider the place works have in this covenant of Grace. Are these to be left entirely out of the account, as some seem to suppose? Inasmuch as the same result is to be reached that was, under the first arrangement [with Adam] to be secured by works alone, it would seem natural to suppose that the new arrangement would have some important relation to them. And, further, as the only failure under the first arrangement was a failure on Adam’s part to maintain good works, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the new arrangement, being designed to remedy the failure of the first, should make provision for such a contingency in the future.

While. . . scriptures. . . show the essential importance of Abraham’s obedience in God’s dealings with him, we must not overlook another element which shows the relation of faith to the great transaction: and that is Abraham’s faith, which was counted to him for righteousness and without which he never would have

⁶³ Uriah Smith, “The Two Covenants,” *RH* 59, 19 (November 8, 1881), p. 296.

⁶⁴ Uriah Smith, *The Sanctuary and the Twenty-three Hundred Days of Daniel VIII, 14* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877), p. 181. Emphasis his.

received the promise, anymore than he would have received it if he had not obeyed God.⁶⁵

For Smith the Abrahamic covenant was faith and works. Adam was under a similar arrangement of works. The “new arrangement” of the “covenant of grace” was secured by works and faith.

Smith said of the Sinaitic covenant: “. . . God entered into another and special covenant with that people. . . . This was subordinate to the covenant made with Abraham, to serve a particular purpose, for a particular time.”⁶⁶ These two covenants were really one. The Sinai covenant functioned in a subordinate role to the Abrahamic.

Smith felt that there was an inherent flaw in God’s covenant at Sinai.

This covenant was not declared to be faulty because there was anything wrong about it, in itself considered, but it was imperfect, simply because its provisions were not ample enough. . . to meet a pressing emergency which arose under it. . . . The fault, then, of that which threw everything out of joint in the arrangement, existed not in the covenant, but on the part of the people.⁶⁷

Evidently God did not make ample provision for the needs of the people. “The new covenant undertakes to do the very thing which the old prefigured, and meet the emergency that it was unable to do, in providing a sacrifice which can in reality take away sin. . . .”⁶⁸ Somehow this picture of the covenants made God look like He was fumbling around trying to find the right answer to the people’s sin problem.

Moses Hull was an eloquent Seventh-day Adventist preacher following his conversion in 1857. He weighed in with his apologetics against the “one-law theory.” The antinomians said the ceremonial laws and the moral law were all one law. Hull argued that the “ministration,” in

⁶⁵ Uriah Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *RH* 64, 37 (September 13, 1887), p. 584.

⁶⁶ Uriah Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *RH* 64, 38 (September 20, 1887), p. 600.

⁶⁷ Uriah Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *RH* 64, 42 (October 25, 1887), p. 664.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

2 Corinthians 3, was the ceremonial law as represented by Moses, whose face was veiled. The law engraved on tables of stone was distinct from the “ministration” of Moses which was fading away.⁶⁹

The “added law” of Galatians 3:19 was not the ten commandments. “The ten commandments were not added because of the transgression of some other law; but the ceremonial law was added because of the transgression of the ten commandments.”⁷⁰ He understood “till the seed should come” to refer to when Christ proved He was the Messiah by His death on the cross. That was when the sacrifices of the Mosaic law ceased.

Hull said the “schoolmaster” of Galatians 3:24 was the ceremonial law which “pointed to Christ” who was the remedy for sin. The moral law could not function in this capacity. “The ten commandments did not point to Christ. It is true they would teach a man that he was a sinner, but they pointed to no remedy. . . .”⁷¹

He could not see that there was any curse in the moral law. Galatians 3:10 must be referring to the ceremonial law because it was called “the book of the law.” Moses Hull said: “There are no ‘curses’ written in the ten commandments. . . .”⁷²

Galatians 4:21, 24 spoke of a law which was a covenant “which gendereth to bondage.” Hull would not allow that this was the ten commandments. He said, “But I do not believe that there was one of the ten commandments in the old or new covenants. The ten commandments are ‘God's covenant,’ not made with any people, but obedience to which, was enjoined upon all.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Moses Hull, “The Two Laws, and Two Covenants,” *RH* (April 29, 1857).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

So if the old and new covenants did not contain the ten commandments, what were their functions? Both covenants were the remedy for the violators of God's law. "As none of the ten commandments are in the old covenant, so none of them are in the new. But the old and new are both plans through which the violators of the ten commandments can obtain mercy."⁷⁴

Consequently, the new covenant followed in time after the old covenant as a remedy for sin. Speaking of the dispensation of the old covenant Hull remarked: "This also clearly refutes the position that the new covenant is not made in this dispensation; for if Christ is the testator, the covenant comes in force immediately after his death."⁷⁵ In other words, the new covenant did not exist during the time of the old covenant. The only way sinners could obtain mercy in Old Testament times was through the provisions of the old covenant.

Moses Hull had a dispensational view of the covenants as had Thomas Preble. His defense of the ten commandments led him to this position. Other factors such as spiritualism led to his defection from the Advent Movement, but no doubt his dispensationalism contributed to it. He joined a growing list of defectors from the Advent Movement.

Dudley M. Canright (1840-1919) became an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister in 1865. He was a powerful preacher and theological debater in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. In his debates in Kansas he reported that he used with great force the argument of the two laws in scripture. "This point, well sustained, takes the heart right out of the no-law position."⁷⁶

Canright felt the keen force with which his opponents used Galatians 3.

Those who claim that the law of God has been abolished always go directly to the book of Galatians for their proof. There they get such expressions as this:

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ D. M. Canright, "Notes of the Discussion in Kansas," *RH* 49, 3,(January 25, 1877), p. 24.

“The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master,” and others of a similar nature. They claim that this means the ten commandments.⁷⁷

He agreed with his contemporary Adventist preachers that the “schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:24) and “added” law (Galatians 3:19) was the ceremonial law. In his own words Canright explained.

But verse 19 is decisive: . . . To the question, What is the object of this law? Paul answers that it was added because of transgression. Transgression is the violation of the law. . . .

Then it follows that same law existed and was transgressed before this law was given. Now would it have been given if the other law had not previously been transgressed. . . . To point to this coming Saviour it became necessary to offer sacrifices.⁷⁸

So this “typical law” was “added” “till the seed should come.” Of course, in his view the seed came at the first advent of Christ. This identified which law was the “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” The “schoolmaster” was the ceremonial law.

Canright did recognize the existence of animal sacrifices for sin before Mount Sinai. “By offering an *innocent* lamb, Abel confessed his guilt and worthiness to die, and at the same time showed his faith in the true Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, who was to come and bear the sin of the world.”⁷⁹ Evidently, Elder Canright did not see any inconsistency in saying that the typical sacrifices were “added” at Sinai, but yet existed long before at the time of Abel.

After a time of inner turmoil over his Adventist ministry, Elder Canright finally apostatized from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1887 and became a Baptist preacher. The full force of his opposition to Adventists, the ten commandments, and the Sabbath, was

⁷⁷ D. M. Canright, “The Law in Galatians.” *RH* 51, 5, (January 31, 1878).

⁷⁸ D. M. Canright, “The Law in Galatians Examined,” *RH* 45, 24, (June 10, 1875).

⁷⁹ D. M. Canright, “Sermon No. 4, Faith and Works,” *RH* 27, 21 (April 24, 1866), p. 162. Emphasis his.

expressed in his *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* published in 1889. This book was considered such a threat that Adventist leaders were responding to it decades later. It had gone through many reprints.

In this book he put his finger on a crux issue.

No other subject perplexes Adventists so much as the covenants. They dread to meet it. They have tried various ways to explain it away, but they are not satisfactory even to themselves. I have been there and know.

The abolition of the Sinatic covenant carries with it the abolition of the Jewish Sabbath so completely that no authoritative trace of it can be found this side of the grave of our risen Lord.

Elder Smith says: "If the ten commandments constituted the old covenant, then they are forever gone."

"This, therefore, becomes a test question."⁸⁰

Canright used Webster's definition of a covenant as a mutual agreement based on the consent of parties. Thus, a covenant was a contract. Then he set about to demonstrate from the Exodus 19:4-8 narrative how the ten commandments were brought in to the covenant which God made with Israel at Sinai. Then by going to 2 Corinthians 3:7, he demonstrated the decalogue to be a "ministration" of death that was removed.

Canright certainly put his finger on a problem area of Adventist theology. "No other subject perplexes Adventists so much as the covenants."⁸¹ How this issue was resolved determined one's destiny. Canright joined the list of defectors in part over his dispensational view of the law and the covenants.⁸²

⁸⁰ Dudley M. Canright, "The Two Covenants-Chapter XIX," *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 1914.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² See further in the chapter, "The Case of D. M. Canright."

L. D. Santee (1845-1919) was ordained in 1876 by James White. He found himself having to answer the antinomians near Gridley, Illinois. He employed the standard Adventist argument that the ten commandments were the conditions of both the old and the new covenant. Whereas God made an agreement with the children of Israel which they broke by disobedience to His law, the new covenant had better promises whereby God put His law into their minds and hearts. "In the old covenant Israel were required to keep God's covenant or law. Ex. 19:6."⁸³ The law which God "added" (Galatians 3:19) because of transgression was "the typical system" which pointed to Christ.

R. M. Kilgore (1839-1912), an evangelist and administrator, took a very bold stance *vis a vis* his antinomian "one law theory" opponents.

To take the ground that there is but one law spoken of in the Bible is to furnish the skeptic with a mighty weapon to wield in his warfare against the divine authority of that sacred volume. If but one system of law has existed, and is referred to where the phrase, "the law," occurs, then, certainly, the cavils of the objector cannot be disproved, and in the contest he comes off victorious. But to maintain that there are two laws, one, the transgression of which, brought death into the world, Rom. 5:12, the other, which owes its origin to sin, and which could have had no existence if man had not become a transgressor, is to wrest from the hands of the caviler his objection, and to make a beautiful harmony in the word of God respecting this question, over which so many stumble.⁸⁴

Kilgore then produced a list of twenty points contrasting the moral and ceremonial laws. Under the ceremonial law he listed the "added" law of Galatians 3:19. He said it was a "yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). It "was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24).

John Nevins Andrews, the theologian of the early Adventist Church who had produced the *History of the Sabbath*, took up his pen and wrote on the two covenants in 1875. In an effort to defend the law of God from the antinomians who identified it with the old covenant, Andrews'

⁸³ L. D. Santee, "A Few Thoughts on the Covenants," *RH* 28, 15, September 11, 1866, pp. 113, 114.

⁸⁴ R. M. Kilgore, "The Two Laws," *RH* 43, 15 (March 24, 1874), p. 115.

thesis was that the old covenant constituted a contract, by Webster's definition, between God and the people. They would obey the stipulations or conditions of the covenant. Andrews' definition of a covenant was "an agreement or covenant between two or more persons, in which each party binds himself to do or forbear some act, and each acquires a right to what the other promises; a mutual promise, upon lawful consideration or cause, which binds the parties to a performance; a bargain; a compact."⁸⁵ The conditions of the covenant were the ten commandments which Andrews wanted to distinguish from the contract made between God and the people.

J. N. Andrews clarified his position:

1. The covenant made with Israel "concerning all these words," was the agreement which the people entered into with the Almighty, as recorded in Ex. 19 and 24, that they would keep the words spoken by him. 2. The ten commandments were the words concerning which this covenant or agreement was made. . . . The covenant which was ratified or dedicated with blood by Moses was not the ten commandments.⁸⁶

Therefore, when the people broke their contract, they were not disannulling the law of God, but their agreement with God. Thus, Andrews was able to uphold the ten commandments as still binding. He said:

Our opponents claim that the giving of the law was the making of the first covenant. We say, Not so; for that covenant was the solemn contract between God and Israel which preceded and followed the "giving of the law;" and that the law of God was that which the people covenanted to obey, when it should be spoken by the voice of God.⁸⁷

There was nothing in this covenant about forgiveness of sins.

God was responsible for giving them a faulty covenant:

⁸⁵ J. N. Andrews, *Sermon on the Two Covenants* (Steam Press, Battle Creek, Michigan: 1875), p. 15. This was later run as a series in *ST* 5 (Jan. 30-Mar. 6, 1979) when James White, J. N. Andrews and Uriah Smith were co-editors.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

But Paul plainly intimates wherein the new covenant is better than the old one. It is "established upon better promises." Heb.8:6. Then it follows that the first covenant was established upon promises not so well adapted to man's case; and this very fact is, of itself, a decisive proof that the first covenant was not simply the law of God, but a contract between God and his people.⁸⁸

God told them to obey his law and they would receive the promises. It was "inevitable that man would forfeit his title to the promises of God."⁸⁹ God did not look so good because He failed to adapt His promises to the needs of sinners.

Andrews viewed the two covenants as sequential. When the old covenant failed, then God brought in the new covenant. "There can be, therefore, no dispute that the first covenant, and the new covenant, were each made with the Hebrew people; the first, at the departure out of Egypt; the second, at the time of our Lord's ministry and death."⁹⁰ This left the door open for two plans of salvation and dispensationalism.

In the editorial columns of *The Signs of the Times*, editors James White, J. N. Andrews and Uriah Smith approved the publication of an article entitled "What the Gospel Abrogated."⁹¹ The law in Galatians was viewed as the ceremonial law. It was the "yoke of bondage" in Galatians 5:1. It "passed away when the seed came. Gal. 3:19." It "is superseded by the faith of Jesus. Gal. 3:19-25." In sum, "the book of Galatians. . . teaches the abrogation of the law. . . . It is the typical law. . . that was abolished."⁹² By 1879 J. N. Andrews had changed his view of the "schoolmaster" law in Galatians. He now subscribed to the view of the ceremonial law.

A. C. Spicer's writings on the Abrahamic covenant were much the same as his contemporaries. The trend among Adventist writers was to see the Abrahamic covenant as a

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹¹ "What the Gospel Abrogated," *ST* (March 20, 1979), p. 91.

⁹² *Ibid.*

legal arrangement between God and Abraham. The conditions of the covenant were the ten commandments. There was little or no attention given to the faith of Jesus or justification, much less of God's love. The presentation of the covenant question was becoming as dry as the hills of Gilboa with its emphasis on obedience to the law.

Spicer's whole series could be summarized by his statement:

So God and man may enter into a solemn covenant, the object of which may be to secure obedience to God's law, which object will appear in the mutual agreement. But then the law would not be the covenant, but the covenant would be the mutual contract or agreement of the parties in respect to the law.⁹³

Spicer even went so far as to say that the ceremonial law was excluded from the old covenant. "Thus it is apparent from every point of view that neither did the moral law form any part of the Abrahamic covenant of grace, nor did 'the book of the law' constitute any part of the temporary covenant of Horeb," ⁹⁴ This was definitely out-of-step with other Adventist writers who said that the typical law was the old covenant done away with by Christ. At least Spicer was consistent in excluding all law from the contractual agreement between God and the people.

Spicer said nothing about the inability of sinners to keep their promises. There was no promise given of God's forgiveness and divine aid. The best that Spicer could offer was God's appeal.

God, then, asked of Abraham and of his people that they should yield willing, cheerful, and implicit obedience to all his commandments and laws, and to maintain a godly walk and a holy life. It was not outward compliance alone, nor yet simply legal conformity, that God required, but heart sanctification. With

⁹³ A. C. Spicer, "The Commandments.--Part 1. The Two Covenants," *RH* 49, 1 (Jan. 4, 1877), pp. 2, 3.

⁹⁴ A. C. Spicer, "The Commandments.--Part 1. The Two Covenants.--Continued," *RH* 49, 2 (January 11, 1877), pp. 9, 10.

great anxiety, much painstaking, and frequent repetitions, God appealed to the hearts of his people to love and be obedient to him for their own good.⁹⁵

This was legalism in its purest form.

C. A. Russell (1870-1954) was an educator and administrator in Michigan. He was in agreement with his contemporary Adventist colleagues when he said

. . . that the old covenant was not the ten commandments, but an agreement between the Lord and the people respecting them. It is certain that the ten commandments are one thing, and that the covenant, which was made concerning them, is a separate and distinct instrument.⁹⁶

During this early period of covenant theology in Adventism, Ellen White made a few comments bearing on the topic of the covenants. Here was one of her early statements: “As they had broken their covenant with God, Moses, in breaking the tables, signified to them, so, also, God had broken his covenant with them. The tables, whereupon was written the law of God, were broken.”⁹⁷ God’s covenant was identified as “the law of God.” If it had been obeyed as the people had promised in “their covenant with God,” it would have brought life to them. As a consequence of their breaking His law, they would suffer the penalty.

Ellen White was in harmony with her contemporaries about the nature of a covenant.

A covenant is an agreement between parties, based upon conditions. If Israel would obey the divine law and thus fulfill the conditions of *their covenant* with God, he would verify his promises to them. But what presumption for them to expect a blessing while they were violating the conditions upon which alone it could be bestowed!⁹⁸

Ellen White clearly saw that the old covenant was “their covenant with God.” She even made the distinction between the law of God as His covenant and the agreement of the people

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ C. A. Russell, “The Law of God, as Related to Both the Old and the New Covenant,” *RH* 51, 23, June 6, 1878, p. 178.

⁹⁷ E. G. White, *RH* (July 29, 1873).

⁹⁸ E. G. White, “The Glory Departed from Israel,” *ST* (Dec. 22, 1881). Emphasis added.

with God as their covenant. “. . . The ten commandments were God's covenant, and the basis of the covenant made between God and Israel.”⁹⁹

It seemed clear from the following statement that Ellen White clearly identified “their solemn pledge” with the words “All that the Lord hath spoken will we do.” Exodus 19:8.

After Moses had received the judgments and also the promises from the Lord, and had written them for the people, he “came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.” Moses then wrote *their solemn pledge* in a book, and offered sacrifices unto God for the people.

“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.” Thus the people ratified *their solemn pledge* to the Lord to do all that he had said, and to be obedient.¹⁰⁰

Their pledge to be obedient was the old covenant. Twice she emphasized “their solemn pledge” and quoted from Exodus 19:8 and Exodus 24:7, 8. So even at this early date (1880), Ellen White saw the old covenant as the promise of the people made to God.

She had this recognition of “their covenant” associated with the promise of the people in an earlier statement going back to 1864. “The people renewed their covenant with Joshua. They said unto him, ‘The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.’ Joshua wrote the words of *their covenant* in the book containing the laws and statutes given to Moses.”¹⁰¹ “The laws and statutes given to Moses” no doubt included the moral and typical law. The people promised to obey them. This was a renewal of the old covenant which they had made with God under the leadership of Moses.

⁹⁹ E. G. White, “The Sanctuary,” *ST* (June 24, 1880).

¹⁰⁰ E. G. White, “Giving of the Law,” *ST* (May 6, 1880). Emphasis added.

¹⁰¹ E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*. Volume 4A (Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, Battle Creek, Michigan: 1864), p. 65. Emphasis added.

Addressing the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, Ellen White commented: “God did not forsake them while they were in Egypt, because of his covenant with Abraham. He suffered them to be oppressed by the Egyptians, that they might turn to him in their distress, and choose his righteous and merciful government, and obey his requirements.”¹⁰² Here it was God’s covenant with Abraham which assured them of His gracious presence. In this case their oppression in Egypt was used by the providence of God to cause them to turn in repentance toward Him. She spoke of choosing “his righteous and merciful government.” This was what Abraham did. He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. The righteousness of God would issue forth in obedience to his law. Her understanding of the Abrahamic covenant, in 1864, was one of righteousness by faith. “Their covenant” was worthless.

In 1875, Ellen White commented on the two laws in such a way that it reflected on Galatians 3:19. The text said: “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. . . .”

Her statement read:

God's people, whom he calls his peculiar treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, *given because of man's transgression* of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption.¹⁰³

¹⁰² E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3 (Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, Battle Creek, Michigan: 1864), pp. 297, 298.

¹⁰³ E. G. White, “The Law of God,” *RH* (May 6, 1875). Cf. quoted in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1094. Emphasis supplied.

This indicated that her understanding of the law in Galatians 3:19 in 1875 was the ceremonial law. In this regard she was in step with other Adventist writers regarding their understanding of the ceremonial law in Galatians.

D. T. Bourdeau made a refreshing gospel presentation of the new covenant.

The death of Christ for our sins is the great fact that the Spirit of God uses to lead us to repent, and to write the law of God in our hearts. How deeply affecting it is to see Christ, touched by pity and amazing love, suffering, bleeding, groaning, dying, and to know that it is our violations of God's holy law that have brought all this upon the meek and holy Lamb of God! This sight should break the hardest hearts; and it does powerfully affect those who will yield to the lessons it teaches. It leads them to embrace the dear Saviour, accept pardon, love God's holy law, and seek to avoid those sins that have made Christ's death necessary.¹⁰⁴

In addition, Bourdeau asserted a point about the Sabbath. The new covenant was sealed up by Christ's death. The Sabbath was included. Nothing can be added or subtracted from the covenant once the death of the testator has taken place. Thus the Sabbath was part of the new covenant.¹⁰⁵

In his next article, Bourdeau slipped into the dispensationalist trap by asserting time parameters for the old covenant. "The old Covenant was made with Israel at Sinai. . . . It then came into existence."¹⁰⁶

The problem was that Scripture did not support the view that the old covenant began at Sinai. Galatians 4:22-24 indicated it went back at least to the time of Agar and Ishmael. ". . .

Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid. . . he who was of the bondwoman was born after

¹⁰⁴ D. T. Bourdeau, "The New Covenant and the Law," *RH* 56, 17 (Oct. 2, 1880), p. 260.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ D. T. Bourdeau, "The Decalogue a Distinct and Immutable Law. (Continued.)," *RH* 58, 22 (November 29, 1881).

the flesh. . . which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.” Hagar was a type or allegory of the old covenant made at Sinai. A type must have some historical basis and correspondence with the antitype.

Abraham and Sarah doubted the promise of God to give them a son. Their unbelief manifested itself in Abraham taking Hagar and producing Ishmael. Abraham’s son was born as a result of unbelief in what God had promised to him in the covenant. Abraham’s heart of unbelief placed him under the old covenant at this time. The same unbelief existed at Mount Sinai when Israel made their pledge that they would keep all of God’s laws.

Further on Bourdeau said: “. . .The old covenant is no more. . .”¹⁰⁷ He no doubt was thinking of the ceremonial law abolished at the death of Christ. But the apostle Paul said: “. . . This Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” Galatians 4:25. Paul considered that his contemporary Jews were under the old covenant long after the cross. The same state of unbelief in Christ which existed with Abraham and the wilderness generation, continued to manifest itself in the Jerusalem of Paul’s day.

It should be noted that the old covenant was not bound by time. It was rather a condition of the heart with respect to having faith in Christ. Uriah Smith had this same time-conditioned paradigm of the old covenant. This would bear its fruit in Adventist history for years to come.

W. H. Littlejohn contributed a series of five articles on “The Two Covenants,” in *The Review and Herald* from January 3 to 31, 1882. In his opening statement he said:

In the discussion of this question, it would be superfluous to prove the correctness of propositions generally admitted to be true. We submit, therefore,

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

that orthodox scholars, almost universally agree that the old and new covenants, so styled, were in force respectively in the Jewish and Christian dispensations.¹⁰⁸

Whoever these orthodox scholars were, Adventist or non-Adventist, he was making a questionable assumption that influenced his interpretation of the covenants. As such he fell in line with a growing list of Adventist writers. This indicated that the early Adventist writers on the covenants were influenced by the dispensational theology of their time. Adventist theologians fully integrated it into their covenant theology.

The trajectory of Littlejohn's covenant theology was along the lines of legalism. In addressing himself to the covenant passage of Exodus 19:3-6 he stated:

Here it will be observed that God proposed to confer upon the people of Israel certain distinguishing honors. On certain conditions they were to become to him a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. Those conditions were that they would obey his voice and keep his covenant. The whole matter, therefore, lay in their own power.¹⁰⁹

The primary direction of Littlejohn's series was to counteract the following syllogism:

1. the ten commandments were the first covenant. 2. the first covenant was abolished; 3. therefore we are under no obligation to keep the ten commandments as a code.

The real object, of course, is to release observers of the first day of the week from the necessity of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.¹¹⁰

Elder Littlejohn made his argument in typical fashion by separating the ten commandments as conditions to be obeyed from the covenant agreement between God and the people. They would obey the commandments. The law was the basis of both old and the new covenants. The commandments stood apart from the covenant agreements or contracts. Therefore, the law was untouchable and could not be abolished.

¹⁰⁸ W. H. Littlejohn, "The Two Covenants," *RH* 59, 1 (Jan. 3, 1882), p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ W. H. Littlejohn, "The Two Covenants. (Continued.)," *RH* 59, 2 (Jan. 10, 1882), p. 21.

On July 25, 1882, Uriah Smith responded to a question put to him by “J. D. L.” through the columns of the *Review*. Again, this brought into focus the dispensationalism of Elder Smith. A tract had been circulated by Seventh-day Adventists entitled “Two Covenants.” The tract stated: “The old covenant is abolished by being superseded by the new, . . . and we affirm further that nothing has been abolished but the old covenant.”¹¹¹ The questioner was puzzled by the old covenant being the agreement between God and the people. If that was the case, then how could the typical system be abolished since its ordinances were commanded by God as were the ten commandments? Smith answered the question with the use of Hebrews 9:1, “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.” Furthermore, Smith argued, it was a “middle wall of partition” between Jew and Gentile.

The unnoticed point in all of this, however, was that the tract asserted the old covenant was abolished. In Smith’s own words he explained, “when the time came for a new covenant to be made, God brought the relationship existing between himself and that people to an end. . . .”¹¹² Elder Smith had a built-in time element with his concept of the old and the new covenants. The covenants were sequential in time rather than matters of the heart.

In 1883, J. O. Corliss wrote a series of six articles entitled “The Two Covenants” for *The Review and Herald*. He sought to defend the ten commandments and ultimately the sabbath from the antinomians by saying “the ten commandments are not the old covenant.”¹¹³ The people broke the covenant God made with them when they violated the conditions of the ten commandments which they had agreed to keep. This was all standard argument in Adventist covenant theology by this time.

¹¹¹ Uriah Smith, “The Two Covenants,” *RH* 59, 30 (July 25, 1882), p. 472.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ J. O. Corliss, “The Two Covenants. (Continued.),” *RH* 60, 14 (April 3, 1883), p. 213.

Elder Corliss continued his article: “The first we learn of the new covenant is its announcement by the prophet Jeremiah six hundred years before Christ. . . .”¹¹⁴ He did not take into account that the new covenant pre-dated Abraham to whom it was renewed. The everlasting covenant went all the way back to the inception of sin with announcement of the “seed” to Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:15.

In Elder Corliss’ third article on the subject, this statement clarified his position:

. . . The death of Christ on the cross marked the close of the old covenant and the establishment of the new. So let the *cross* in the diagram represent the *division between the two covenants*, the space on the left side of the cross representing the old covenant, and that upon the right representing the new covenant.¹¹⁵

He provided a helpful visual aid to make his thought clear. The cross was the great divide between the old and the new covenants. Elder Corliss was reflecting the prevailing dispensationalism that had taken over Adventist covenant theology.

Elder Corliss’s dispensationalism was all the more confusing because he acknowledged “that Moses had a personal knowledge of Christ. . . .”¹¹⁶ The following week he said: “Abraham had the gospel as well as we.”¹¹⁷ Corliss misunderstood the distinction between the old and the new covenants. He said that the patriarchs, such as Abraham and Moses under the old covenant, understood the gospel. And yet, the scripture said that the old covenant “gendereth to bondage.” Galatians 4:24.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ J. O. Corliss, “The Two Covenants. (Continued.),” *RH* 60, 15 (April 10, 1883), p. 227. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ J. O. Corliss, “The Two Covenants. (Continued.),” *RH* 60, 16 (April 17, 1883), p. 243.

In Corliss's opening statement of his third article he said: “. . . All must certainly agree that the two covenants are essentially alike.”¹¹⁸ He had no clear distinction between the two covenants.

Corliss made a good point by saying God never made a covenant with the Gentiles. His covenant was with the Jew. Therefore:

The gospel was not theirs [the Gentiles], but was preached to Abraham, to Moses, and the Hebrews, all through their history; and all its blessings were included in the new covenant, which, like the old, was made with that people [the Hebrews]. Gal. 3:8; Heb. 4:2.

If the new covenant, like the old, was made with the Israelites, and this contains the promises. . . then it follows that Israelites only are saved. . . .¹¹⁹

Elder Corliss had already informed his readers that the new covenant was “established” with the Jews when Jesus died on the cross. In the following paragraph he stated his thesis:

Thus we have traced the plan of salvation through both covenants, and find that God has never changed his plan of saving men. The same plan has ever been employed; but as faith in Christ changed from the prospective to the retrospective, the symbols by which man was to show his faith in the Saviour changed, so as to appropriately mark first the shadow, afterward the reality, or substance.¹²⁰

He was correct in saying God's plan of salvation did not change for either the Old Testament or the New Testament. However, the problem with Elder Corliss's statement was that the plan of salvation was to be found only in the new covenant. There was no salvation in the old covenant. Elder Corliss's dispensational model of the covenants was preventing him from seeing the plan of salvation correctly.

In summary, for early Adventist covenant theology, a few writers viewed the law in Galatians 3 as the moral law during the 1850's. James White, J. N. Andrews, J. H. Waggoner,

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ J. O. Corliss, “The Two Covenants. (Continued.),” *RH* 60, 17 (April 24, 1883), p. 258.

¹²⁰ J. O. Corliss, “The Two Covenants. (Concluded.),” *RH* 60, 18 (May 1, 1883), p. 274.

and some others held this position. That soon changed after 1854 and most held that the “schoolmaster” was the ceremonial law except for J. H. Waggoner who never relinquished the moral law view of Galatians 3.

There were three main reasons for the shift. First, Stephen Pierce convinced church leaders of the ceremonial law position in Galatians. Second, it was believed that Ellen G. White had a vision confirming the ceremonial law position in Galatians 3 and condemning J. H. Waggoner’s moral law view. And third, Galatians 3:24 was used by the antinomians to refute the Adventist position on the perpetuity of the moral law and sabbath. For Adventists to agree with the antinomians that the law was the ten commandments would be to concede their strongest argument.

There was unanimous agreement among Adventist writers that the moral law was the basis of both the old and the new covenants. The ten commandments were God’s covenant. They were as eternal as God Himself. Therefore, they could never be abolished. They stood over and above any covenant that involved the people. Ellen White agreed with this point.

The old and the new covenants were the contracts or agreements between the two parties, God and His people, about how the ten commandments were supposed to be obeyed. The ceremonial laws were ordinances in connection with the old covenant which were to point to the coming Messiah who was the true sacrifice.

The relationship between the cross and the old and the new covenants was an interesting one in early Adventist theology. It was best represented by the illustration of the cross as the great divide between the old dispensation and the new dispensation, between the old covenant and the new covenant. So there was an Adventist dispensationalism that viewed the covenants as

conditioned by time boundaries. Alberto Timm recognized this feature of early Adventist covenant theology. He said:

The Bible covenants were regarded as the basis of God's salvific relationship with His people. The *transition* from the old to the new covenant was viewed as *marked by the death* of the Son of God as "the testator" (Heb 9:15-17), which *installed* Him as "the messenger" (Mal 3:1) and "the mediator" (Heb 8:6) of the new covenant.¹²¹

Although Timm did not understand the early Adventists to be dispensationalists, his observation was certainly correct.

This was the one point at which Adventist covenant theology converged with their dispensationalist opponents. The two covenants were sequential and bound by time. For example, a contemporary Protestant Andrew Murray (1828-1917) wrote:

The first covenant had its sanction in God's appointment; the new covenant could not take its place until the first had met with full satisfaction for its claims. . . .

All the transgressions of the old covenant had been treasured up; the death of Christ gave satisfaction to all that that covenant could claim, and brought release. So the Mediator of the new covenant begins an entirely new economy, with sin put away by the sacrifice of Himself, and an open path to the beginning of a new life in the. . . power of God.¹²²

Murray's presentation of the two covenants indicated he did not see them as co-existent, but sequential.

This Adventist model created a problem for interpreting the book of Galatians. If the "schoolmaster" was the moral law, then they would have to agree with their antinomian opponents that the moral law was done away with at the cross. However, if the "schoolmaster"

¹²¹ Alberto Ronald Timm, "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages, 1844-1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines," p. 407. Emphasis added.

¹²² Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All* (Whitaker House, n.d.), pp. 312, 313. Emphasis added.

or “added law” was the ceremonial law instituted with the old covenant, then it was done away with at the cross.

The antinomians opposed Seventh-day Adventists by creating a “one-law theory.” There was only one law under the old covenant which included both the moral and the ceremonial laws. Antinomians argued that the old covenant was the moral and the ceremonial laws which were done away with at the cross.

Seventh-day Adventist writers repeatedly argued the two-law theory. There were two separate laws. One was written by God on tables of stone which was the ten commandments. This moral law was unchangeable. The ceremonial law was written by Moses in a book and placed in the side of the ark of the covenant. It was the “added law” of Galatians 3:19. It was “added” because of transgressions that took place against God’s eternal, pre-existing ten commandments. The ceremonial law was the “schoolmaster” which brought Israel to the faith of Christ at the first advent. Galatians 3:24, 25. This was the state of Seventh-day Adventist law and covenant theology by the time of the 1880’s.

Chapter 3

E. J. WAGGONER: THE EARLY YEARS

Joseph Harvey Waggoner became an Adventist in 1852. His wife was Maryetta Hall. Ellet Joseph was born, January 12, 1855, in Burlington, Michigan. He was the third son in a family of five children.¹²³ His mother was not involved in nurturing him. This void was manifested in words he expressed to Ellen White later in life.

All my life I have suffered from the lack, and worse than lack, in my early childhood. My heart has yearned as I have seen children happy with their mother, and much more as I have seen mature men prize a mother's instruction and love. Even those who have lost their mother in infancy have been more fortunate than I, because they have had a real mother, and could build up the memory of one; but my experience has only made me more keenly conscious of what I have missed. . . . God has let me see how I can, as I certainly must, honour my mother, even though I always feel that I in a peculiar sense never had one.¹²⁴

There was an incompatibility in the marriage of Joseph Harvey and Maryetta Waggoner. Later in life she lived in Burlington, Michigan. E. J. Waggoner visited her frequently and supported her financially after the death of his father in 1889.

E. J. Waggoner received a classical education at Battle Creek College and then trained to be a physician at Long Island College Hospital of Brooklyn, New York. He received a doctor's degree in 1878. He was listed in the *Medical and Surgical Register of the United States. . . Index to the Physicians of the United States*.¹²⁵

¹²³ G. C. Tenney, "Funeral Services," *The Gathering Call* 4, 5 (November, 1916), p. 5.

¹²⁴ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, November 3, 1903, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

¹²⁵ *Medical and Surgical Register of the United States. . . Index to the Physicians of the United States* (R. L. Polk and Company, 1893), p. 211.

He married Jessie Fremont Moser in 1880. She was a classmate at Battle Creek College.¹²⁶ Their daughter Bessie Isadore was born on November 26, 1882, in Oakland, California. Winnie Pearl was born on February 27, 1885, in Oakland, California. Their only son, Ernest Eugene, died in 1889 at age nine.¹²⁷ E. J. Waggoner served as a staff physician at the Battle Creek Sanitarium for a few years.¹²⁸

Waggoner's real love was evangelistic work. George I. Butler brought him to Iowa in 1879. Ellet planted churches and preached. In 1881, his father had become editor of *The Signs of the Times* published at Pacific Press in Oakland, California. James White had founded the paper. Upon White's death, J. H. Waggoner became the editor.

J. H. Waggoner brought his son to California to work in the office and teach at Healdsburg College.¹²⁹ Ellet was a regular contributor to the *Signs* beginning in 1881. By May 10, 1883, he first appeared as assistant editor of the *Signs*. The corresponding editors were J. N. Andrews and Uriah Smith.¹³⁰ Ellet wrote on various Adventist doctrinal topics such as the Sabbath, the second coming of Christ, and the state of the dead.

He told of an epiphany he had at a camp meeting held in Healdsburg, California, October, 1882. Ellen White was preaching that day.¹³¹ Waggoner recalled:

¹²⁶ James R. Nix, "Photos from the Waggoner Family Album," *Adventist Heritage* 13, 1 (Winter, 1988), p. 41.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 46, 47.

¹²⁸ David P. McMahan, *Ellet Joseph Waggoner: The Myth and the Man* (Verdict Publications, Fallbrook, California: 1979), p. 19.

¹²⁹ Emmett K. Vande Vere, *Rugged Heart: The Story of George I. Butler* (Southern Publishing Association: Nashville, Tennessee, 1979), p. 82.

¹³⁰ *ST* 9 (May 10, 1883), p. 210.

¹³¹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, November 3, 1903, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Waggoner recalled that campmeeting experience in writing to Ellen White: ". . . it was during a talk given by you twenty-one years ago that I received the light which has been the great blessing of my life, and which so far as I have kept it in view, has guided me in the study of the Bible." Cp. Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, October 22, 1900, London, England.

Many years ago, the writer sat in a tent one dismal rainy afternoon, where a servant of the Lord was presenting the Gospel of His grace; not a word of the text or texts used, nor of what was said by the speaker, has remained with me, and I have never been conscious of having heard a word; but, in the midst of the discourse an experience came to me that was the turning point in my life. Suddenly a light shone about me, and the tent seemed illumined, as though the sun were shining; I saw Christ crucified for me, and to me was revealed for the first time in my life the fact that God loved me and that Christ gave Himself for me personally. It was all for me. If I could describe my feelings, they would not be understood by those who have not had a similar experience, and to such no explanation is necessary.¹³²

In a manuscript which E. J. Waggoner wrote the day he died on May 28, 1916, he said: “I am sure that Paul’s experience on the way to Damascus was no more real than mine.”¹³³

Healdsburg College was founded April 11, 1882.¹³⁴ The college president, Sydney Brownsberger, had E. J. Waggoner teaching Bible by October 1, 1883.¹³⁵ Ellet also pastored the Oakland Seventh-day Adventist Church.

At the college his primary teaching objective was to train young professionals how to give Bible studies. His teaching had a very practical orientation. Waggoner’s published lectures were structured on a question and answer format. The Bible texts were the answer. There were five readings on the law of God.¹³⁶ In addition, he had separate readings on texts dealing specifically with the law: Romans 6:14; 10:4; Galatians 3:13; Romans 3:20.¹³⁷ He had a predominant interest in the area of the law of God. Waggoner reported:

¹³² E. J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant* (London: International Tract Society, 1900), p. v.

¹³³ E. J. Waggoner, “Confession of Faith,” p. 4.

¹³⁴ Emmett K. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), p. 46.

¹³⁵ *ST* 9 (September 27, 1883), p. 426.

¹³⁶ E. J. Waggoner, *Bible Readings--No. 1. A Series of Readings Covering a Portion of the Ground Embraced in the Bible Course at Healdsburg College, 1883-84* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing House), pp. 35-44.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-51.

The special Bible class numbers thirty-eight. The law of God has been the subject of study thus far during the present term. Quite a number in this class are expecting to engage in active labor next summer. . . . We have never seen a more harmonious and happy family than the one at Healdsburg College.¹³⁸

J. H. Waggoner also had an interest in issues of the law and righteousness by faith. At his encouragement, E. J. Waggoner began publishing a ten-part series on this subject beginning June 19, 1884.¹³⁹ By September 11, he would enter the minefield of the law in Galatians for the first time in his writing career.

Waggoner said Galatians 3 addressed the issue of the law and the covenants. The covenant was--

God's promise to Abraham, and, through him, to all the faithful. He says that the inheritance was simply by promise, through faith in Christ, yet the law was also given and designed to be kept. Then he asks, "Is the law then against the promises of God?" That is a very pertinent question. It opens the whole subject. Is the law against the promises of God? If we keep the law do we thereby manifest our disbelief of or contempt for the promises of God? Do we deny Christ by keeping the law? Paul answers in the same verse: "God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Gal. 3:21. The idea is, The law is not against (in conflict with) the promises of God, because we do not expect to gain the inheritance through the keeping of the law. That this is true is proved by the simple fact that if the law could have given life, righteousness should have come by means of it, and there would have been no need of Christ's sacrifice and of the

¹³⁸ E. J. Waggoner, "Healdsburg College Items," *RH* 61, 7 (Feb. 12, 1884), p. 102. See also E. J. Waggoner, "Bible Study at Healdsburg College," *ST* 9, 46 (Dec. 6, 1883), p. 548. Cp. Clinton Wahlen, "What Did E. J. Waggoner Say at Minneapolis?" *Adventist Heritage* 13, 1 (Winter, 1988), p. 24.

¹³⁹ "An Important Question," *ST* 10, 24 (June 19, 1884), pp. 377, 378; "Nature of the Law," *ST* 10, 25 (June 26, 1884), p. 392; "Condemned and Justified," *ST* 10, 26 (July 3, 1884), p. 408, 409; "A New Creature in Christ," *ST* 10, 27 (July 17, 1884), pp. 424, 425; "Christ the End of the Law," *ST* 10, 28 (July 24, 1884), p. 442; "Christ the End of the Law. (Continued)," *ST* 10, 30 (Aug. 7, 1884), pp. 473, 474; "Under the Law," *ST* 10, 33 (Aug. 28, 1884), p. 520; "Under the Law. (Continued.)," *ST* 10, 34 (Sept. 4, 1884), p. 537; "Under the Law. (Continued.)," *ST* 10, 35 (September 11, 1884), pp. 553, 554; "Under the Law. (Concluded.)," *ST* 10, 36 (Sept. 18, 1884), pp. 569, 570.

promises. So the simple fact that promises were given, proves that the law is powerless to give life.¹⁴⁰

First, the inheritance was by promise to Abraham through faith in Christ. From this point forward Waggoner was ever to associate the covenant God made with Abraham as a promise. Abraham claimed the promise by faith. Second, the inheritance did not come by keeping the law. In giving the law, God never designed that it should give life. That was the purpose of the promise in Christ. The law was contained in God's promise through Christ.

Waggoner understood the law in Galatians 3 to be the moral law. Aside from his father, he was a lone voice in the midst of Adventism holding that position. All others explained the law as the typical ceremonial law.

Waggoner explained the function of the law: "The existence of the law, instead of being against the promises of God, is so much in harmony with them that they would amount to nothing

without it."¹⁴¹ The law convicted the sinner. It convinced him of his need of righteousness.

It is absolutely necessary that the law be in the world, in order to lead men to lay hold on the promises. The law of itself could save no one; the promises would be of no benefit to men without the law to show them their need of those promises. The law, by showing all men to be sinners, makes it possible for the promises to be extended to all the world. Whoever, therefore, claims that he is no sinner, puts himself outside the promises of God. And now, as we quote the text again, we shall have a better understanding of it: "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Gal. 3:22.¹⁴²

Then Waggoner quoted Galatians 3:24: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." He explained: "Notice that the law

¹⁴⁰ E. J. Waggoner, "Under the Law." (Continued.), *ST* 10, 35 (September 11, 1884), pp. 553, 554.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

does not point to Christ--that office is intrusted (*sic.*) to something else--but it brings us, yea, drives and forces us to him as our only hope.”¹⁴³

He commented further:

. . . The law does not bring those who do not wish relief; but when sinners want liberty, and begin to struggle for it, the law allows them no avenue of escape except Christ, who is the “end of the law.”

. . . The moment that we implicitly believe that Christ loves us individually, with a love that is able to save us, we are free. The chains that bind us to the body of death are severed. . . . We are now new creatures in Christ, and must henceforth walk in newness of life, no longer “under the law,” but “under grace.”¹⁴⁴

Waggoner conceded the point to the antinomians. The moral law “was our schoolmaster.” But the law did not drop out of history once Christ had come. It played an ongoing role of driving the needy sinner to Christ. This was Luther’s second use of the law.

Furthermore, Waggoner alluded to chains, bondage, “under the law,” condemnation; and liberty, forgiveness, “under grace.” This motif would remain constant in the years to come. The old covenant was associated with bondage. The new covenant was associated with liberty.

This was the seminal article on the law in Galatians for E. J. Waggoner. Its themes would be more fully explored with respect to the two covenants in the future. For the time being, it provoked no controversy.

But E. J. Waggoner was certainly aware that his position on the law in Galatians had the potential for controversy. Elder W. C. White reported a private conversation which he and Waggoner had about the matter. W. C. White wrote to Dan T. Jones, the secretary of the General Conference:

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

. . . As regards the controversy over the law in Gal. I have never taken the part, or occupied the position in this matter which Eld. Butler supposed, or which it appears you have thought I did from the statements in your letter. In the spring of 1885, while walking in the woods with Eld. Waggoner, he introduced two points over which he was perplexed. First was the apparent necessity of taking positions while pursuing his editorial work that would be in conflict with Eld. Canright's writings; the second was with reference to the point in controversy between Elds. Smith, Canright, and my father [James White] on the one side, and Elds. [J. H.] Waggoner and [J. N.] Andrews on the other: I expressed my opinion freely that he and the editors of the *Signs* should teach what they believed to be truth, if it did conflict with some things written by Eld. Canright and others, . . .

¹⁴⁵

E. J. Waggoner was making a conscious decision about the theological direction in which the *Signs* would go. He knew it had the potential for controversy with Elders Smith, D. M. Canright, and James White, now deceased, the former editor and founder of the *Signs*.

J. H. Waggoner, the sitting editor of the *Signs*, allowed an article in the paper by "C. C. L." entitled, "The Old and New Covenants." It said:

The Bible plainly brings to view two covenants and two dispensations. The *Old Testament* pertains chiefly to the *old covenant and dispensation*; the *New Testament*, to the *new covenant and dispensation*. The old covenant and dispensation passed away with Christ, and we are living under the new. So far all are agreed. . . .¹⁴⁶

If there was any doubt as to how Adventists viewed the two covenants "C. C. L." spelled it out clearly. His little piece was published in both leading Adventist journals--*The Review and Herald* and *The Signs*. "C. C. L." claimed there were two time-bound dispensations. The old covenant associated with the typical law was done away with at Christ's first advent. The new covenant began with Christ.

¹⁴⁵ Letter W. C. White to Dan T. Jones, April 8, 1890.

¹⁴⁶ C. C. L., "The Old and New Covenants," *ST* 10, 36 (September 18, 1884), p. 150. Reprinted in *RH* 62, 10 (March 10, 1885), p. 150. Emphasis supplied.

Meanwhile, E. J. Waggoner reported that the winter term at the college opened on Monday, January 5, 1885, with one hundred and twenty students. Fifty-six were enrolled in the special Bible course.¹⁴⁷

The Sabbath School was dear to the heart of E. J. Waggoner. He wrote notes on the Sabbath School lessons throughout 1884-85. The Pacific Coast lesson was on “The Inheritance of the Saints.” This was a popular theme among Adventist writers including J. N. Loughborough who ran a similar series in *The Gospel Sickle*.¹⁴⁸ They covered the same ground and were in agreement with what Waggoner published one year earlier.

E. J. Waggoner identified the promised inheritance of the covenant.

At that time Micah 4:8 will be fulfilled, when the “first dominion” is restored. As this dominion embraced the whole world, so the Lord, who, in spite of Satan’s usurpation, has ever remained the real owner of the universe, has promised that he will give to Christ “the uttermost parts of the earth” for a possession.¹⁴⁹

Addressing himself to the promise God made to Abraham, Waggoner stated:

. . . The promise contained in Gen. 12:2, 3, . . . was not a local affair. . . . “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” It embraces all the inhabitants of the earth. . . . Now we learn in Ps. 1:1, 2 who are blessed,--those who love and obey the law of God. Of course; if the curse came because of sin, the blessing will come only when there is obedience. Therefore, when this promise is fulfilled, every inhabitant of the earth will be delighting in the law of the Lord. . . . Such a state exists only when the kingdom of God exists on earth.¹⁵⁰

Waggoner connected God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 13:14-17 with Romans 4:13: “For the promise, that he should be the *heir of the world*, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”

¹⁴⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “The Work in Healdsburg,” *ST* 11, 3 (Jan. 15, 1885), p. 48.

¹⁴⁸ See J. N. Loughborough, “The Saints’ Inheritance,” *GS* 1, (June 15-Sept. 1, 1886). Hereafter *GS*.

¹⁴⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast--April 14. The Inheritance of the Saints. A Restoration Foretold,” *ST* 11, 11 (March 12, 1885), p. 166.

¹⁵⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast--April 5. The Inheritance of the Saints. Promises to Abraham,” *ST* 11, 13 (March 26, 1885), p. 198.

He concluded by saying:

. . . He [i.e., God] would give the land (the earth) to Abraham and his seed for an “everlasting possession.” . . . This promise was on condition that Abraham should walk perfectly before the Lord. . . . A meek person is a follower of Christ, and therefore perfect. . . .¹⁵¹

Waggoner then tied the fulfillment of the promise of the land in Genesis 13:15 with Acts 7:5 where Stephen said: “And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.”

Waggoner commented: “Abraham died without seeing their fulfillment. . . . The Lord did not intend that Abraham should receive the inheritance immediately, but that the promise should be fulfilled to him at some future time.”¹⁵²

Abraham did not die discouraged. Rather he “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13).

Then Waggoner asked an intriguing question. “Since the promise was made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in person, could the possession of the land by their descendants be a fulfillment of that promise? It evidently could not.”¹⁵³ After all, Hebrews 4:8 says, “For if Jesus [margin, that is, Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.”

After Joshua, the Lord made a promise to Israel at the time of King David in 2 Samuel 7:10: “Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may

¹⁵¹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast--May 9. The Inheritance of the Saints. Promises to Abraham.--Continued,” *ST* 11, 15 (April 9, 1885), p. 230.

¹⁵² E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast--May 16. The Inheritance of the Saints. Promises to Abraham.--Continued,” *ST* 11, 16 (April 16, 1885), p. 246.

¹⁵³ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast--July 11. The Inheritance of the Saints. (Continued.) The Promised Land,” *ST* 11, 23 (June 11, 1885), p. 358.

dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.”

How did this impact the understanding of the promise to Abraham and his descendants at Horeb? “We must conclude that those promises were not fulfilled in the possession of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. If they had been, we would not at this time find the Lord renewing the same promise, when they were already in the land that the Lord had given to them.”¹⁵⁴

The Apostle Peter testified on the day of Pentecost as to the understanding of David concerning the promise made to him.

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.¹⁵⁵

Thus the promises to the patriarchs would be fulfilled by the resurrection of the dead.

The patriarchs believed in a risen Christ. They knew the promise would not be fulfilled within their lifetime. By faith they believed the earth and the dominion of Christ would be theirs after they were resurrected from the dead. These Sabbath School lesson notes provided insight into Waggoner’s views of the covenant promise and its fulfillment.

At this early stage in E. J. Waggoner’s writing and teaching career, he had developed a law and covenant theology which was on a different track than his brethren. He came to his understanding of the covenants in the Old Testament by his study of the apostle Paul. E. J. Waggoner developed a Pauline model of the covenants, the moral law, and the ceremonial

¹⁵⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast--Aug. 8. The Inheritance of the Saints.--Continued. Promise Concerning the Kingdom of Israel,” *ST* 11, 27 (July 9, 1885), p. 422.

¹⁵⁵ Acts 2:29-31.

laws. He had an inductive approach to Bible study with regard to the laws and the covenants. In this he differed from his contemporary Adventist theologians.

It may be thought that E. J. Waggoner picked up his views of the law in Galatians from his father, J. H. Waggoner. However, his view of the relationship of the moral law to the covenants was much different from his father's view.

E. J. Waggoner agreed with his father that the "schoolmaster" in Galatians 3 was the moral law. But that was as far as the similarities went. Joseph Waggoner taught that the old covenant terminated with Christ and the new covenant was instituted by Christ. Joseph Waggoner said: "We know that the New Testament, or covenant, dates from the death of the Testator, the very point where the first covenant ceased."¹⁵⁶ This was dispensationalism.

E. J. Waggoner taught that the covenants were not matters of time, but conditions of the individual heart. Even more fundamental for Waggoner in distinguishing the covenants was the answer to this question: Who made the promises? Under the old covenant the people made the promise to obey the law. Under the new covenant God made the promise and the people had faith in God's Word.

E. J. Waggoner was fully aware of the potential for controversy that his position on the law and the covenants might have within the denomination. W. C. White's letter was evidence of this. Where would the flow of Adventist covenant theology move next?

¹⁵⁶ J. H. Waggoner, "The New Covenant," *RH* (May 26, 1853).

Chapter 4

E. J. WAGGONER AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The new year, 1886, found E. J. Waggoner's health in collapse. He wrote to W. C. White: "I was reduced very low for a time, but am now on the high road to health and strength, but not yet capable of prolonged mental or physical exertion. I had a complete and sudden collapse without any warning."¹⁵⁷ He had to spend some time at the St. Helena Sanitarium.

He reported that he had begun to write more articles on the law. He sent these along to W. C. White for his criticism. He also told Elder White that he was writing the Sabbath School lessons on the law.¹⁵⁸ These would appear later in the year in *The Youth's Instructor* and create a furor.

J. H. Waggoner had brought in his son and A. T. Jones as assistant editors of the *Signs*. There was a veritable barrage of articles on the law and the gospel written by E. J. Waggoner in the

editorial columns.¹⁵⁹ This continued after J. H. Waggoner was sent to Europe. E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones became co-editors of the *Signs* around May 13, 1886.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, January 15, 1886, St. Helena, California.

¹⁵⁸ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, February 5, 1886, Oakland, California.

¹⁵⁹ "Judged by the Law," *ST* 11, 45 (November 26, 1885), pp. 712, 713; "Principles and Precepts," *ST* 11, 48 (December 17, 1885), pp. 760, 761; "What the Gospel Teaches," *ST* 12, 1 (January 7, 1886), p. 6; "The Law and the Gospel Co-Extensive," *ST* 12, 2 (January 14, 1886), pp. 23, 24; "The Ministration of Death. 2 Cor. 3:7," *ST* 12, 3 (January 21, 1886), p. 39; "Nature of the Law," *ST* 12, 3 (January 21, 1886), pp. 39, 40; "Nature of the Law. (Concluded.)," *ST* 12, 4 (January 28, 1886), p. 55; "Jurisdiction of the Law," *ST* 12, 5 (February 4, 1886), pp. 71, 72; "Jurisdiction of the Law. (Continued.)," *ST* 12, 6 (February 11, 1886), p. 87; "Jurisdiction of the Law. (Continued.)," *ST* 12, 7 (February 18, 1886), pp. 103, 104; "Jurisdiction of the Law. Why the Law was Spoken only to the Jews (Concluded.)," *ST* 12, 8 (February 25, 1886), p. 119; "Perpetuity of the Law," *ST* 12, 9 (March 4, 1886), p. 134, 135; "Doers of the Law," *ST* 12, 11 (March 18, 1886), p. 167; "Justified by Faith," *ST* 12, 12 (March 25, 1886), p. 183; "Justification

In an article "The Ministration of Death. 2 Cor. 3:7," E. J. Waggoner asked the question: In what way is the old covenant a ministration of death? He pointed out that there was death in both covenants and especially so in the new covenant. In the new covenant the gospel preacher uplifted the cross and gloried in it.

The priests of the first covenant were ever presenting before the people reminders of their guilt, and of its desert, death, as illustrated in the death of the victims. And they had nothing beyond this to present or to promise. The blood which they shed and which they offered, took away no sin, and made no one perfect. Their covenant was based upon, "If ye will obey." Ex. 19:5-8.¹⁶¹

Why was the ministry of the Spirit called glorious?

The blood of the new covenant, the blood of Christ, cleanses from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:7, 9. It purges the conscience. Heb. 9:14. In this covenant, the Spirit of God writes the law upon the heart; and, therefore, the promises of this covenant are better--better suited to the sinner's wants--than those of the old: it promises forgiveness of sin, and everlasting life. 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:6-12. This is "the ministration of the Spirit," "the ministration of righteousness." It leads us to holiness, to life, to glory.¹⁶²

and Sanctification," *ST* 12, 13 (April 1, 1886), pp. 199, 200; "Christ the End of the Law," *ST* 12, 14 (April 8, 1886), pp. 215, 216; "Abolishing the Enmity," *ST* 12, 15 (April 15, 1886), pp. 231, 232; "The Handwriting of Ordinances," *ST* 12, 16 (April 22, 1886), pp. 247, 248; "Under the Law," *ST* 12, 17 (May 6, 1886), pp. 263, 264; "Logical Antinomianism," *ST* 12, 18 (May 13, 1886), pp. 278; "Under the Law," *ST* 12, 18 (May 13, 1886), pp. 278, 279; "Under the Law," *ST* 12, 20 (May 27, 1886), p. 310; "Under the Law. (Concluded.)," *ST* 12, 21 (June 3, 1886), pp. 326, 327; "The Law of God. Christ the End of the Law. Lesson 9.--Sabbath, June 19," *ST* 12, 21 (June 3, 1886), p. 33; "The Commentary. The Law of God. Christ the End of the Law. (Continued.) Lesson 10. Sabbath, June 26," *ST* 12, 22 (June 10, 1886), p. 347; "Brief Comments on Romans 7," *ST* 12, 23 (June 17, 1886), pp. 359, 360; "The Commentary. The Law of God. Under the Law. Lesson 11.--Sabbath, July 3," *ST* 12, 23 (June 17, 1886), p. 363; "Brief Comments on Romans 7. (Concluded.)," *ST* 12, 24 (June 24, 1886), p. 374; "The Law of God. Redeemed From Under the Law. Lesson 12.--Sabbath, July 10," *ST* 12, 24 (June 25, 1886), p. 379; "The Law of God. Redeemed From the Curse of the Law. Lesson 13. Sabbath, July 17," *ST*, 12, 25 (July 1, 1886), p. 395.

¹⁶⁰ *ST* 12, 18 (May 13, 1886), p. 278.

¹⁶¹ E. J. Waggoner, "The Ministration of Death. 2 Cor. 3:7," *ST* 12, 3 (January 21, 1886), pp. 39.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

This seminal article on the moral law in Galatians 3 demonstrated, beyond a shadow of a doubt, where Waggoner stood.¹⁶³ His conversation with W. C. White in 1885 was evidence that he was aware that he was taking a controversial position on the law question.¹⁶⁴

All of this did not go unnoticed by the ecclesiastical establishment in Battle Creek, Michigan. The first salvo, in what was to become an all-out-war over the law in Galatians and the covenants, was the emergence of a new journal from Battle Creek. The next move would be a visit from the General Conference President himself, Elder George I. Butler. He would journey to Healdsburg College, California, and find out what was happening for himself.

An editorial committee consisting of Uriah Smith, George I. Butler, W. H. Littlejohn, D. M. Canright and R. F. Cottrell was set up by the International Missionary Society. The official journal the society published was called *The Gospel Sickle* published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Its first issue appeared February 1, 1886. The editors addressed the issue of why do we need another paper. They recognized the time-honored role of *The Review and Herald*. Also, *The Signs of the Times* was called “our special pioneer paper.”¹⁶⁵ But this new journal was being issued in response to the call of conference presidents, at the last General Conference, for a small paper to distribute. It was touted as “a new pioneer paper” speaking “in no uncertain terms.”

The *Signs* was particularly singled out. Ostensibly the *Sickle* did not seek to compete with the *Signs*.

It is not designed to take the place of our old pioneer paper, the *Signs of the Times*, but will occupy a somewhat different field. . . . It is hoped that it will not decrease the large circulation already attained by that journal. The two papers

¹⁶³ E. J. Waggoner, “Under the Law. (Continued.),” *ST* 10, 35 (September 11, 1884), pp. 553, 554.

¹⁶⁴ Letter W. C. White to Dan T. Jones, April 8, 1890.

¹⁶⁵ *The Gospel Sickle* 1, 1 (February 1, 1886), p. 4. Hereafter *GS*.

will occupy essentially different fields, though advocating the same truths. . . . As its name indicates, the *Gospel Sickle* is designed for sharp work. . . . We want this journal to be blazing hot with truth.¹⁶⁶

The Gospel Sickle was a rival missionary journal.

Later in the year U. Smith wrote:

Upon the subjects of faith, repentance, conversion, free salvation, and other cardinal doctrines of Christianity, this journal is in harmony with the Protestant world generally, and believes them of great importance. But the battle upon these questions has been fought, and these doctrines are not now disputed. They have only to be stated, to be assented to. Hence there is not that necessity for time and labor to be spent upon these subjects that there is upon others equally important, that Protestants generally ignore.¹⁶⁷

Ellen White detected the competitive nature of the two journals. She wrote to Uriah Smith about it.

The “Sickle” was started in Battle Creek, but it is not designed to take the place of the “Signs”, and I cannot see that it is really needed. The “Signs of the Times” is needed and will do that which the “Sickle” cannot. I know if the “Signs” is kept full of precious articles, food for the people, that every family should have it. But a pain comes to my heart every time I see the “Sickle”. I say it is not as God would have it. If Satan can get in dissension among us as a people, he will only be too glad.¹⁶⁸

Her statement reflected the competition that existed between the two journals. She saw it as Satan getting in “dissension among us.” The *Sickle* lasted less than three years from February 1, 1886 to December, 1888.

D. M. Canright had written a book on *The Two Laws* published in 1876.¹⁶⁹ The denomination’s leaders brought out a new edition of his book in 1882 and again in 1886.¹⁷⁰ The

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ U. Smith, “Subjects Generally Ignored by Protestants,” *GS* 1, 12 (July 15, 1886), p. 96.

¹⁶⁸ Letter from E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, February 18, 1887, Basel, Switzerland. *EGW 1888*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁹ D. M. Canright, *The Two Laws as Set Forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1876).

material on Galatians had been expanded from 6 to 24 pages. Canright was qualified to write on the Epistle to the Galatians. He featured an eight-part series on “The Law to the Gentiles,” in *The Gospel Sickle*.¹⁷¹ He said:

Now what is a covenant? Webster thus defines it: “A mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons to do or forbear some act or thing, a contract; a writing containing the terms of an agreement or contract between parties.” It will be readily seen that this agreement made between God and Israel in Ex. 19, is a covenant in the fullest sense of the term. . . . Certainly, then, the law concerning which they had made the covenant, could not be the covenant itself. It was that about which they had made the covenant; hence the ten commandments were a covenant only in a secondary sense. They were, indeed, the principal thing about which the covenant was made; hence in that sense they could be called a covenant. . . . Jer. 11:1-4. This, then, settles it as to what was the old covenant; it was an agreement between God and Israel, the conditions being that Israel should keep God’s law, and that God should make them his people if they would.¹⁷²

Later Canright used terminology which revealed his underlying assumptions.

Some persons maintain that all God required under the old dispensation was simply outward obedience to his law. . . . They had the Spirit of God in the Old Dispensation. . . . The fact is that God designed his people to be just as spiritual during the old covenant age as he does now.¹⁷³

Uriah Smith was in harmony with this dispensational thinking when he said, “The new covenant superseded the old when Christ ratified it with his own blood upon the cross.”¹⁷⁴

The dispensationalism of D. M. Canright, Uriah Smith, and many Adventists writers was not the variety of their antinomian Protestant opponents who contended that God’s covenant with the Jews required obedience to the moral law for salvation. When Christ came, He did away

¹⁷⁰ D. M. Canright, *The Two Laws as Set Forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*, 2d ed. (Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1882).

D. M. Canright, *The Two Laws as Set Forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*. 2d ed. (Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1886).

¹⁷¹ D. M. Canright, “The Law to the Gentiles,” *GS* 1 (February 15-June 1, 1886).

¹⁷² D. M. Canright, “The Law to the Gentiles. 4.--Why God Made a Covenant with Israel, and How the Gentiles Were to Come into It,” *GS* 1, 5 (April 1, 1886), pp. 37, 38.

¹⁷³ D. M. Canright, “The Law to the Gentiles. 6.--God Required Spiritual Service of His People During the Jewish Age,” *GS* 1, 7 (May 1, 1886), pp. 52, 53. Emphasis his.

¹⁷⁴ U. Smith, “The Sanctuary,” *GS* 1, 8 (May 15, 1886), p. 66.

with the old covenant and the law. Christ made the new covenant with the Gentiles. New covenant Christians were “not under law” but “under grace.” Here the covenants had boundaries of time demarcating them. In effect, they had two methods of salvation.

Canright insisted:

The new covenant, or the gospel, then, began to be preached by Jesus Christ. . . . The mediator of the *new covenant* had now come to *supersede the old covenant*; but Jesus was careful to have the new covenant offered only to the Jews; because the Lord had promised that this new covenant was to be made with the house of Israel.”¹⁷⁵

The antinomians asserted that the new covenant was made with the Gentiles while the old was made with the Jews. Canright established that both the old and the new covenants were made with the Jews. The Gentiles came in by faith in Christ thus becoming spiritual Jews.

Adventist writers agreed with their opponents on one thing. The covenants were conditioned by time. They were thoroughgoing dispensationalists. The old covenant was superseded by Christ’s introduction of the new covenant, but that is where the similarities ended. In theory, Adventists preserved the unity of the Old and New Testaments by asserting the unity of the plan of salvation. Indeed, a law was done away with by Christ, but it certainly was not the moral law. It was the ceremonial law. In this they were correct. Their defense of the ten commandments, however, left them open to the charge of legalism and dispensationism.

With their premise established, Adventist traditionalist writers used a deductive approach with Scripture in order to support their conclusions. If they had studied Scripture inductively, perhaps they would have arrived at a more solid platform.

¹⁷⁵ D. M. Canright, “The New Covenant,” *GS* 1, 10 (June 15, 1886), pp. 76, 77. Cf. Anonymous, “The New Covenant Made with the Jews,” *GS* 1, (July 1, 1886), p. 81. Emphasis supplied.

During this period of time Ellen White used the term “dispensation” numerous times, but never in the sense of different plans of salvation. She said:

There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by him to-day. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ.¹⁷⁶

She preserved the unity of the testaments in relationship to salvation. Again she said: “In the life and death of Christ, a light flashes back upon the past, giving significance to the whole Jewish economy, and making of the old and the new dispensations a complete whole.”¹⁷⁷ Ellen White never associated the old and the new covenants as progressing sequentially from the other.

George I. Butler, president of the General Conference, was in Healdsburg by mid-April. He wrote to Ellen White, who was in Europe: “Well, here I am in California, and do you believe it? Pitt and I are in your nice square room sitting by your fire place, doing our writing, enjoying your hospitable home while you are far away.”¹⁷⁸

Butler wasn’t above revealing his innermost thoughts about fellow workers. In commenting on J. H. Waggoner’s attitude, Butler noted a hard, legal, critical spirit which has “I believe its influence on his son and A. T. Jones and others tend to give a wrong cast to them and the work. Pardon me for expressing myself so freely of the Pacific Coast laborers.”¹⁷⁹

Six days later he wrote to Ellen White:

¹⁷⁶ E. G. White, “Obedience Better Than Sacrifice,” *ST* (September 14, 1882).

¹⁷⁷ E. G. White, “The Two Dispensations,” *RH* (March 2, 1886), p. 129.

¹⁷⁸ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, April 13, 1886, Healdsburg, California. Pitt was Elder Butler’s son.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

You will pardon me my sister if I say to you in confidence that I think that most of the laborers on the Pacific Coast at the time were any thing but spiritual. They are excellent persons and have the love of the cause at heart I think and would be glad to do all they can to help it forward but there is a spiritual experience that they must gain. They could not appreciate this work and several of them tried very hard to stop it. There is a kind of legal, critical, machinery spirit that seems to characterize some of their labors that does not suit me. I expect that likely you will think that Eld. Butler needs a real reproof for thus criticizing your Pacific laborers but I do not ask any thing for this and only give my frank opinion as things look to me. I love all these brethren and believe that they begin to see some things a little differently.¹⁸⁰

What he discovered on the west coast was anything but reassuring. Elder Butler gave a full report of his visit to California to Ellen White:

One other matter I will speak of, which makes me feel badly. I learned when upon the Coast by the inquiries of those who had attended the College at Healdsburg, of me (*sic.*), that there had been quite strenuous efforts made by E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones to impress upon the minds of the theological students that the “added law” of Galatians 3 and the law which is “our Schoolmaster” to bring us to Christ is the moral law of the commandments. The same arguments are passing more or less occasionally through the *Signs*. Some of these students come to me to enquire(*sic.*) about this and wanted my opinion. You cannot fail to remember that this question has been agitated largely in the past.

I am positive that by far the largest number of our people and of our ministers hold the view that the “added law” added because of the transgression of the moral law is the typical remedial system pointing to Christ and that law which is the main subject of discussion by the apostle in Galatians is the ceremonial law.

Elder J. H. Waggoner was always much opposed to this view, and I judge the young brethren in the office share his sentiments. Your husband, Elder Smith, Canright, myself and many others have held this view. But some of us have felt we ought to keep rather quiet on this subject, seeing there was not unanimity of opinion on it by all our leading brethren. But when we learn that the opposite view held by the minority is being vigorously pushed in one of our colleges among our Bible students and published to the world in the *Signs*, I confess it does not please me very well. I have written Brother Jones about it and talked with Brother Brownsberger and E. J. Jones about it. They know this to be true and Professor

Brownsberger regretted it much. I heard it intimated years ago that you had light concerning the added law, to the effect that it related to the remedial system rather than the moral law. I think this question ought in some way to be set at

¹⁸⁰ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, April 19, 1886, Healdsburg, California.

rest. It would be a most bitter pill to many of our leading brethren to be compelled to see the idea taught generally, that the law which was added because of transgression was the moral law itself.

We believe that law to have always existed but that its transgression required another law to be added because of sin, viz., a remedy for sin. This brings in the law of types and shadows, leading to Christ.¹⁸¹

Reflecting back on his visit to California and the time he spent getting acquainted with Waggoner and Jones, Butler expressed his opinion of their personal traits to Ellen White.

I love Dr. Waggoner and Brother A. T. Jones. I formed a very pleasant acquaintance with them last year. . . . The Doctor inherits some of his father's qualities which he will need to guard greatly, or they will hurt him. Elder Waggoner's methods and ways have been taught them too much I think, to their mutual injury. The Waggoner stamp appears in all their editorials, and hurts them a good deal for me. That mixture of egotism, criticism and sharpness is not so sweet to me as to some I suppose, even when mingled with much ability. I do not see much of Christ in it. If Christ was the embodiment of the real sentiment of the law of God as we all believe, I must think Elder Waggoner's views of the law somewhat warped, or I fail to see the Christ Spirit in them.¹⁸²

The stage was set for an ominous clash in the near future. Church headquarters had issued a new missionary journal sponsoring covenant theology more suited to their tastes. It was a rival paper in competition with the *Signs* which sponsored the new theology of the law and the covenants. Elder George Butler made a visit to California to determine first-hand what was going on at Healdsburg College and Pacific Press. What he found was not to his liking. He wrote to Ellen White, who was in Europe, about the problems he was having over the law question. In so doing, he had appealed to Ellen White to do something. What would her response be in view of an impending crisis in the church?

¹⁸¹ Letter G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, June 20, 1886, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹⁸² Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, March 31, 1887, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Chapter 5

E. J. WAGGONER: EDITOR OF THE *SIGNS*

On May 13, 1886, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones became co-editors of the *Signs*. Now editorial policy would be fully under their control. The journal became the primary vehicle for Waggoner's views of the law and the covenants in Galatians.

The paper war was heating up between the *Review* and the *Signs*. In mid-April about the time Butler was in California, the *Review* published an article by O. A. Johnson which took the position that the law in Galatians was the ceremonial law.

Now while the decalogue is called the law of God, it is never called the law of Moses. Neither is there anything in this law relating to ordinances or sacrifice. See Jer. 7:22, 23. Besides this law another law was added "because of transgression" and it was given through the mediator Moses. Gal. 3:19. This law was written in a book and kept by the side of the ark. Deut. 31:24, 25.¹⁸³

Johnson and the *Review* certainly were not the only ones taking that position. *The Gospel Sickle* promoted it too.

With "Cer." short for "ceremonial law," the *Sickle* provided a Bible study for its readers. It stated, "Cer.--Passed away when the seed came. Gal. 3:19. . . . Cer.--Is a "yoke of bondage." Gal. 5:1. . . .Cer.--Is superseded by the faith of Jesus. Gal. 3:29-35. . . ."¹⁸⁴

Elder Butler made the same point, too, about this time in a letter he wrote to Ellen White.

. . . The largest number of our people and of our ministers hold the view that the "added law" added because of the transgression of the moral law is the typical remedial system pointing to Christ and that law which is the main subject of discussion by the apostle in Galatians is the ceremonial law.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ O. A. Johnson, "The Two Laws." *RH* 63, 15, (April 13, 1886).

¹⁸⁴ *GS* 1, 20 (November 15, 1886), Anonymous, "The Two Laws Compared," p. 158.

¹⁸⁵ Letter G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, June 20, 1886, Madison, Wisconsin.

So even before E. J. Waggoner published his primary nine-part series on Galatians in the *Signs* beginning July 8, 1886, he was being opposed both publicly in the church's official paper and in private correspondence by the General Conference President.

It has already been documented that he had gone into print about his views on the law in Galatians. In addition, he had been teaching the subject at Healdsburg College.

In those days the Sabbath School lessons were published in *The Youth's Instructor*. From April-July, 1886, the topic was on the law. These lessons were authored by E. J. Waggoner. Elder Butler wrote to E. G. White about them:

. . . . Elder Underwood and others have told me about the effect of the articles in the SIGNS and Sabbath School lessons, in various localities, and the Law in Galatians. The positions taken are causing great debate, and stirring up a spirit of discussion and controversy and making trouble.¹⁸⁶

The Sabbath School lessons were set up on a question and Bible text answer format. Waggoner asked:

1. From what has Christ redeemed us? Gal. 3:13, first part.
2. What is the keeping of the commandments? 1 John 5:3.
3. If keeping the commandments is love, can it be also the curse of which Paul speaks?
4. Upon whom does the curse of the law fall? Gal. 3:10. . . .¹⁸⁷

Through this line of questioning, Waggoner identified the law in Galatians 3 as the ten commandments. Because these lessons were studied by the whole church it received a wider audience beyond the readership of the *Signs*. Thus, it provoked a lot of discussion. It put Elder Butler in a position where he had to do something.

¹⁸⁶ Letter G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, August 23, 1886, Mount Vernon, Ohio. Emphasis his.

¹⁸⁷ E. J. Waggoner, "The Sabbath-School. Third Sabbath in July. Lesson 13.--Redeemed from the Curse of the Law," *The Youth's Instructor* 34, 26 (June 30, 1886), p. 103. Hereafter *YI*.

But if anything cemented Waggoner's fate, it was the nine-part series he wrote for the *Signs* on the law in Galatians 3.¹⁸⁸ This was the first comprehensive exposition he had published on Galatians 3. He conceded the dispensationalist's argument that the law in Galatians 3 was the moral law. "There is probably no portion of Scripture which is more commonly supposed to give "aid and comfort" to the enemies of the law of God, than the third chapter of Galatians."¹⁸⁹ But he reassured his readers if they would hear him out, they would discover it to be a strong bulwark in defense of God's law.

Abraham was the father of all faithful believers in Christ. The apostle Paul wrote:

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.¹⁹⁰

In his own words Waggoner explained:

Having shown that even Abraham was not justified before God by his own works, Paul shows that the promise is to none but the children of Abraham; and since the children of Abraham are those only who have the same faith that he had, only those that are of faith can receive the promise.¹⁹¹

Then taking a text which all others applied to the ceremonial law he quoted verse 10: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). He put his finger on biblical support for identifying the law here in this verse.

¹⁸⁸ This series ran from July 8-September 2, 1886.

¹⁸⁹ E. J. Waggoner, "Comments on Galatians 3. No. 1." *ST* (July 8, 1886), p. 406.

¹⁹⁰ Galatians 3:7-9.

¹⁹¹ E. J. Waggoner, "Comments on Galatians 3. No. 1." *ST* (July 8, 1886), p. 406.

Waggoner explained: “These words are quoted from Deut. 27:26, and Jer. 11:2-4, in both of which places they have unmistakable reference to the ten commandments.”¹⁹²

The apostle Paul introduced the curse of the law: “For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith’” (Galatians 3:13, 14). The curse of the law was disobedience and death. Christ was made a curse for us so that through faith we might receive the blessing of Abraham.

Waggoner was fully conscious of the controversial position he was taking on the law in Galatians 3. He observed: “Since some. . . have supposed that the third of Galatians refers principally to the ceremonial law, it may not be amiss to show briefly why it is impossible that the ceremonial law should be the subject of discourse in that chapter.”¹⁹³

First, the ordinances never condemned anyone. They taught the gospel in the “Jewish age.” Second, neither we today nor the Gentile Galatians could be said to have been redeemed from the ceremonial law. But we Gentiles are under the condemnation of the moral law and locked up by it. It revealed all mankind to be sinners.¹⁹⁴

The apostle Paul explained the relationship between the law and the promise: “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect” (Galatians 3:17).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9,” *ST* 12, 34 (September 2, 1886), p. 534.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Waggoner pointed out that the law “was the basis” or “foundation of the promise” or “one of the terms of the covenant.” On this point he was in agreement with other Adventist writers. A little further on he said: “As the commandments were the condition of the Abrahamic covenant, so they are of what is known as ‘the second covenant,’ which is in every respect the same as that made with Abraham. See Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10.”¹⁹⁵

From these comments we can see that Waggoner did not understand the new covenant as beginning with the first advent of Christ. The new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ. But “the covenant was confirmed in Christ to Abraham. . . in anticipation.”¹⁹⁶

The commandments were the condition of the Abrahamic covenant. Christ taught obedience to the law. Matthew 5:17-19; 19:17; Luke 16:17. Waggoner emphasized: “. . . after the death of Christ, no change in the covenant was possible.”¹⁹⁷ On this point Waggoner was in agreement with other Adventist writers on the new covenant.

His further exposition dealt with verse 15: “. . . Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto” (Galatians 3:15). He said: “It is admitted, even by antinomians, that the law of God was in full force until the death of Christ, and therefore Gal. 3:15 should convince them that it is in full force now.”¹⁹⁸ So on both counts Waggoner was no dispensationalist and no antinomian, though he believed along with the antinomians that the law in Galatians 3 was the ten commandments. The antinomians did away with the law and they were dispensationalists .

¹⁹⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 2.,” *ST* 12, 27 (July 15, 1886), pp. 422, 423.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Where Waggoner really distinguished himself from his contemporary Adventist theologians was seeing the covenant with Abraham as the new covenant. The old covenant was made by Israel with God at Sinai.

Picking up the phraseology of Galatians 3:17 Waggoner asked:

What covenant was it that “was confirmed before of God in Christ”?

The promise was that Abraham should be “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:11), and that in his seed all nations should be blessed. The condition was that he should walk before God and be perfect. Gen. 17:1-8. But this was not such a covenant as was made with the Israelites at Horeb. That one contained no reference to Christ, and no provision for the forgiveness of sins; the one with Abraham was confirmed “in Christ” (Gal. 3:17) and was made not on condition that he should be righteous by his own unaided efforts, but was made on condition of his having the righteousness of faith. Compare Rom. 4:11 with 3:22-25. This of course involved the forgiveness of his sins; and so we see that the covenant with Abraham (which is the one referred to in this chapter) was exactly the same as “the second covenant,” which is made with us. The covenant made at Horeb, and called “the first covenant,” although it was after that made with Abraham, was, as we have before learned, only for the purpose of showing the people the need of the help promised in the Abrahamic or second covenant.¹⁹⁹

Waggoner continued with the exposition of verse 18. “For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Galatians 3:18).

Waggoner commented:

. . .if the inheritance be given to those who depend upon their own deeds for justification, then it is not by promise. If it be bestowed because of works, then faith in Christ is ruled out. But this, he says, cannot be; for God gave the inheritance in Abraham by promise, contingent on his faith.²⁰⁰

For Waggoner the condition of the new covenant given to Abraham was the law of God. The condition was fulfilled by Christ who gave “the promise of the Spirit through faith”

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

(Galatians 3:14). There was only one condition for salvation. Waggoner said: “Faith in Christ is the only condition of salvation.”²⁰¹

Why then the law? Waggoner contemporized the question. “If we are saved by grace, what need have we of the law?”²⁰² The apostle Paul answered: “It was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19).

George Butler had already gone on record with Ellen White about the “added” law. He said: “It would be a most bitter pill to many of our leading brethren to be compelled to see the idea taught generally, that the law which was added because of transgression was the moral law itself.”²⁰³ He believed the whole church would be sold over to antinomianism if the ceremonial law interpretation of Galatians 3 was surrendered.

The idea of the law being added sounded like it just came into existence at Mount Sinai. No law-abiding Seventh-day Adventist would hear of such a thing. They believed the law was co-extensive with God. It was no wonder then, that Butler and others viewed the “added” law as the typical remedial system given to Moses. But the words “spoken” or “emphasized” were more precise than the King James Version translation “added” (Galatians 3:19). “It was *spoken* because of transgression.” Waggoner affirmed: “. . . the law was already in existence, and known to man, although only by tradition; but now the Lord added it in written form.”²⁰⁴

A parallel passage which Waggoner referred to was Romans 5:20: “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.” Explained Waggoner: “The ‘entering’ of the law was at

²⁰¹ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 3,” *ST* 12, 18 (July 22, 1886), p. 438.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Letter G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, June 20, 1886, Madison, Wisconsin.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Sinai. Why did it enter?--That the offense (sin) which previously existed might abound.”²⁰⁵ This was Luther’s first use of the law. The law was emblazoned at Sinai so that they would recognize their utter sinfulness. “. . . It was necessary for men to see the real nature of sin, in order that they might seek the grace that is in Christ, which alone can take away sin.”²⁰⁶

Dudley Canright represented the brethren in the east when he wrote about “the added law.”

. . . The second law was added to point to the promised seed till he should come. . . . Why was this law given? “It was added because of transgressions, *till the seed should come.*” Then it was not the moral law; for that does not point to Christ, nor say anything about the coming of the seed, while the law of sacrifices, types, and shadows, related wholly to that promised seed.²⁰⁷

So Canright viewed the law in Galatians 3 as the ceremonial law. In addition, he interpreted the coming of the Seed to be Christ’s first advent anticipated by the sacrifices and types.

Waggoner kept in view the full scope of God’s promise to Abraham. The cross was of strategic importance in ratifying the covenant, but its ultimate fulfillment would not be complete “. . . till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. . . .” (Galatians 3:19b). What is the coming of the Seed? Certainly not the first advent of Christ, Waggoner replied. God promised Abraham, “And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Genesis 22:17). Christ’s enemies as well as Satan would not be removed until the second coming (Revelation 19:11-21).

In summary, Waggoner said:

It was willful forgetfulness of this fact that caused the Jews to reject Christ. They read the promises to the seed,--promises of glorious triumph,--and applied them to the coming of the Messiah; and when they saw none of those promises fulfilled in him, they rejected him. Let us not, like them, fall into grievous error

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ D. M. Canright, *The Two Laws* (Review and Herald, Battle Creek, Michigan: 1886), pp. 9, 10. Emphasis his.

by referring to his first advent those promises to be fulfilled only at his second glorious coming.²⁰⁸

The natural conclusion would be the elimination of sin and bringing to perfection all those who participated in the fulfillment new covenant.

The writing of the law in the heart meant “that righteousness can be obtained only through Christ, but sins must be confessed before they can be pardoned, and that cannot be done till sin is known.”²⁰⁹ The law brought the knowledge of sin in order that it may bring the sinner to Christ. “The law will have done its work in bringing men to Christ, and thus to perfect obedience to it, and then ‘They shall all know the Lord,’ for his law shall be in their hearts, and his name shall be in their foreheads.”²¹⁰

The “perfect obedience” comprehended by the new covenant was perfection of character or mind. “They will then be as pure as was Adam when he was first created, with this advantage, that their characters will have been fully tested.”²¹¹ They will not choose to sin because they will be possessed by the righteousness of Christ. That righteousness is God’s law in the believer’s life.

The apostle Paul asked: “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” (Galatians 3:21). Waggoner explained: “It [i.e., the law] is directly in harmony with the promise, because by it men are enabled to see and forsake their sins, so that they may receive the promise.”²¹²

²⁰⁸ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 4,” *ST* 12, 29 (July 29, 1886), p. 454.

²⁰⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 6,” *ST* 12, 31 (August 12, 1886), p. 486.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 7,” *ST* 12, 32 (August 19, 1886), p. 502.

The inspired apostle Paul continued: “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” (Galatians 3:23). Waggoner observed: “The idea of bondage is everywhere connected with sin. It is a cruel master.”²¹³ The law “shuts up” its violator. He was kept “in ward.” The only way of escape was “the faith” of Jesus which brought sweet release from certain death.

Waggoner asserted that the law here did not refer to the ceremonies because they never preceded faith in Christ. The sinner believed in Christ first, and then availed himself of the sacrifices. But it was possible to be locked up by the moral law before it drove one to the faith of Christ.²¹⁴

Next, Waggoner gave attention to verse 24. “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). David McMahon said: “Waggoner did not exclude the ritual law from Galatians 3.”²¹⁵ This would be hard to justify especially since Waggoner stated categorically of Galatians 3:24, “By no possibility can this refer to the ceremonial law.”²¹⁶

However, Waggoner recognized that the law of circumcision played a role in the overall argument of the Epistle to the Galatians. Circumcision was being used by the Judaizers as a means of justification rather than believing in Christ alone. In this manner it became a means of rejecting Christ and was a human work to achieve salvation.

²¹³ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 8,” *ST* 12, 33 (August 26, 1886), p. 518.

²¹⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9,” *ST* 12, 34 (September 2, 1886), p. 534.

²¹⁵ David P. McMahon *Ellet Joseph Waggoner*, p. 48.

²¹⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9,” *ST* 12, 34 (September 2, 1886), p. 534.

Galatians 3:24 was a crucial text for interpretation in the 1880's for Seventh-day Adventists. G. I. Butler had drawn the battle lines with Ellen White when he said:

. . . Strenuous efforts [were being] made by E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones to impress upon the minds of the theological students [at Healdsburg College] that the "added law" of Galatians 3 and the law which is "our Schoolmaster" to bring us to Christ is the moral law of the commandments.²¹⁷

Waggoner explained Galatians 3:24. The law served as a correctional officer in prison. It locked up its violator. Plus the law, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, literally drove the sinner to Christ. The law hemmed the sinner in through personal guilt. It provided no recourse for freedom. The sinner only learned from Christ, who was the perfect embodiment of the law, how to walk in righteousness and consequent liberty.

The apostle Paul spoke of the coming of "faith." "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:25). Christ was the perfect law of liberty. The forgiven sinner walked free in Him. Therefore, the believer was no longer under law, but under grace. He walked in perfect harmony with the law because of Christ.

Referring to the "law was our schoolmaster," Waggoner commented.

The past tense can be used here only by those who have come to Christ and have been justified by faith, as Paul shows in the next verse. Since the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, it must still be the schoolmaster (pedagogue) to those who are not in Christ, and must retain that office until every one who will accept Christ is brought to him. Therefore the law will be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, as long as probation lasts. But the Levitical law passed away hundreds of years ago; therefore it cannot be the law referred to here.²¹⁸

In Waggoner's view, Galatians 3:24 was not a dispensational text. It did not say the law was abolished at the cross.

²¹⁷ Letter G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, June 20, 1886, Madison, Wisconsin.

²¹⁸ E. J. Waggoner, "Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9," *ST* 12, 34 (September 2, 1886), p. 534.

It did say that for the Christian, the law's function as a correctional officer ended when he was released by Christ the Saviour from sin. So the "schoolmaster" had a role in every sinner's life no matter whether they had lived in Old or New Testament times.

In his ninth article on Galatians 3, E. J. Waggoner quoted from John Wesley on the three uses of the law. This may have been his source for understanding the function of the law in Romans and Galatians. Waggoner explained:

. . . all have not so clear an understanding of the law and the gospel as Wesley had.

To slay the sinner is then the first use of the law. . . . The second use of it is to bring him unto life, unto Christ that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices, it acts the part of a severe schoolmaster. . . . The third use of the law is to keep us alive. . . . Indeed, each is continually sending me to the other--the law to Christ, and Christ to the law.²¹⁹

Ellen White had a similar concept of the law.

The gospel of Christ is the good news of grace, or favor, by which man may be released from the condemnation of sin, and enabled to render obedience to the law of God. The gospel points to the moral code as a rule of life. That law, by its demands for undeviating obedience, is continually pointing the sinner to the gospel for pardon and peace. . . . The law sends men to Christ, and Christ points them back to the law.²²⁰

Rather than undermining the foundation of the law Waggoner sought to strengthen its perpetuity by his expositions of Galatians. He said his whole aim in this series of nine studies on Galatians was to "show that it gives no comfort to the enemies of the law of God."²²¹

Waggoner reprinted an article by J. N. Andrews several weeks later. When Andrews wrote these words he understood the "schoolmaster" to be the moral law.

The idea that the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith is often urged as proof that the law is abolished. How is the law

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ E. G. White, "The Exalted Position of the Law of God," *RH* (September 27, 1881).

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 535.

our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? We answer, it shows our guilt and just condemnation, and that we are lost without a Saviour.²²²

This supported Waggoner's view.

Uriah Smith, the editor of the *Review*, refused to concede the law and covenant question. He printed an article from the first General Conference president, John Byington--a man of some stature in the denomination. Elder Byington quoted Galatians 3:23 with an interpolation betraying his dispensationalism.

“But before faith came [that is, the new covenant, or gospel dispensation], we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.”

The change from the old to the new covenant, . . . is a great one. As the twilight is to the bright morning, so was the light of John between the two covenants.²²³

Interestingly enough, Byington picked up on the question of Galatians 3:19, “Wherefore, then, serveth the law?” He answered it by saying that the law “was added till the seed, Christ, should come [i.e., the first advent]; its moral principles were to show what sin is; but its sacrificial service was to be a remedy for sin, only as it pointed to the sacrifice of Christ.”²²⁴ If by “moral principles” Byington designated the ten commandments then he would understand the law in Galatians 3 as both. He called the old covenant “the law system,” which was reminiscent of Stephen Pierce's approach. At any rate, whether Uriah Smith picked up on this or not, Byington buttressed Elder Smith's Adventist-styled dispensationalism.

In a sense, Waggoner was challenging the church to a deeper study of the word of God. The church was pursuing an interpretation of the law that was potentially devastating. Its effects

²²² J. N. Andrews, “Christ and the Law,” *ST* 12, 37 (September 23, 1886), p. 582.

²²³ John Byington, “The Change from the Old to the New Covenant,” *RH* 63, 39 (Oct. 5, 1886), p. 611.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

would soon be apparent, but not before much grief would come upon the messenger as well as the leading brethren.

Chapter 6

“THAT TERRIBLE CONFERENCE”

E. J. Waggoner must have had some inkling of the tempest that was beginning to build as a result of his maverick positions on Galatians. He had heard from W. C. White in Basel, Switzerland, who wrote:

. . . I have not been able to read all your law articles. I hope to do so sometime. I see that Bro. Butler is considerably surprised that you have taught so vigorously in the Healdsburg College views about the law which are accepted by the largest part of our ministers. I wish our brethren might give this matter a thorough, candid examination, and agree on some common ground.²²⁵

A few days later W. C. White wrote to A. T. Jones:

I am sorry that we are so unsettled on this law question. It is unfortunate to have our school teaching opposite views. I hope that a candid comparison of ideas will materially lessen the points of difference. Some points in Bro. Canright's book do not look reasonable to me, and many of Dr. W.'s [E. J. Waggoner] arguments have seemed to me to be reasonable; but there are many points on which I am not clear. I have tried to avoid taking any responsibility in the matter because I realized that I did not understand it. I do not remember of giving Dr. Waggoner any advice about publishing such a series of articles as are now going through the *Signs*.

There is something about the added law on which mother has received light, but it has now passed from her mind. There was something in Eld. [J. H.] Waggoner's position on this which she saw was incorrect our brethren may have used this fact to condemn much more than it really referred to. Mother has sent for her old manuscript in the hope of finding, or recalling what she had seen on this subject, . . .

I am rather sorry for the Dr., for though it seems to me that he is right in the main, I can see that he is getting into a tight spot. . . . If he goes to the conference [1886 General Conference] with the right spirit, he will both do good and get good. . . . If he goes to fight a battle of his own, no good will follow.²²⁶

²²⁵ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, August 15, 1886, Basel, Switzerland.

²²⁶ W. C. White to A. T. Jones, August 24, 1886, Basel, Switzerland. Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis, (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho: 1988), p. 20. Hereafter *MMM*.

W. C. White wrote a similar letter to C. H. Jones, the manager of the Pacific Press.²²⁷

George Knight was correct in stating that George I. Butler first attempted to deal with E. J. Waggoner through writing to Ellen White. Why was it that Elder Butler did not follow the counsel of Matthew 18 and talk to Waggoner one-on-one to try and resolve the difficulties? Instead, Elder Butler wrote to Ellen White: “The *Signs* has brought it out in the most public manner possible, with a series of articles. I cannot see but it must be considered. I want to take a reasonable, judicious course.”²²⁸

This matter was creating a big problem for the president. He was concerned about “. . . the effect of the articles in the *Signs* and Sabbath School lessons, in various localities, and the Law in Galatians. The positions taken are causing great debate, and stirring up a spirit of discussion and controversy and making trouble.”²²⁹

He definitely wanted a testimony from her based on a vision in order to settle the matter. As Elder Butler expressed the matter to her, he took into account that she might decide against him:

Of course it would be quite a shock to me, after studying the question so long and having it seem so clear to me, if it should be shown to you the position I hold was wrong. But I feel sure I would accept it and at least keep quiet if I could not clearly understand it. . . .

May God guide you, my dear Sister, and if you have light to help me to move carefully, I shall be very glad.²³⁰

So this was the state of theological and interpersonal tensions that existed between east and west just prior to the 1886 General Conference session at Battle Creek.

²²⁷ Letter W. C. White to C. H. Jones, August 24, 1886, Basel, Switzerland. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²²⁸ Letter G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, August 23, 1886, Mount Vernon, Ohio, *Ibid.*, p. 21-23.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

That fall, E. J. Waggoner participated in the California camp meeting held at Woodland, October 5-18, 1886. He reported one hundred and eighty-five tents pitched. Thirty-four were baptized.²³¹ Said the editor, “California has never before had so good a camp-meeting.”²³²

Shortly thereafter, E. J. Waggoner and company were traveling eastbound on the train for Battle Creek and the General Conference session to be held November 16. They had a couple of days to spend in Salt Lake City, Utah. So they visited the Mormon tabernacle on a Sunday afternoon for a service.²³³

Just two days before the opening of the session (November 16, 1886), Elder Butler wrote to Ellen White that Elders S. N. Haskell and E. J. Waggoner had arrived from California. His tone was definitely ominous.

We expect to call our good *Signs* brethren to an account for the way they have done in reference to some of the disputed points of our faith, the law in Galatians. They have been publishing a lot of articles in the *Signs* about their position, setting that forth in our pioneer paper as the opinion of this denomination.²³⁴

He had written to Ellen White on June 20, and August 23, 1886, and nothing had come of it. He later complained to Ellen White: “But when Dr. Waggoner came out in our pioneer paper with nine long articles directly presenting the subject, I felt that this course could not go on. So I wrote to you several times, but got no reply.”²³⁵

So Elder Butler decided to write his own 85-page booklet which was an open letter to E. J. Waggoner, although his name was never mentioned in it. It was a response to his recent series

²³¹ E. J. Waggoner, “California Camp-Meeting,” *ST* 12, 41 (October 28, 1886), p. 646.

²³² E. J. Waggoner, “From the Woodland Camp-Meeting,” *ST* 12, 40 (October 21, 1886), p. 640.

²³³ E. J. Waggoner, “At the Seat of Mormondom,” *ST* 12, 44 (November 18, 1886), p. 694.

²³⁴ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, Nov. 16, 1886, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 30.

²³⁵ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, March 31, 1887, Battle Creek, Michigan.

on Galatians 3 in the *Signs*.²³⁶ It was published on the opening day of the General Conference session, November 18, 1886. He said: "I furnished it to our delegates and leading ministers. I thought it proper to do this . . . after four long articles on the other side had been published to the world with the exception of a few copies of the little pamphlet sent to a very few prominent ministers it has had no further circulation."²³⁷

George Butler felt that controversial positions had been foisted upon the church and the general readership of the *Signs* unfairly. He believed, in light of the fact that Waggoner had published conflicting doctrines to the world, that his course of circulating a rebuttal to a few church leaders was reasonable and judicious.

He wrote to Ellen White:

Believing strongly, as we do, that the law principally considered in Galatians is the typical remedial system, which passed away at the cross, and is *not* the moral law, and feeling that an unfair advantage has been taken in urgently teaching the contrary opinion to our young people preparing to labor in the cause, and in making our *Instructor* lessons and pioneer paper mediums for teaching an opposite view, . . . we have felt it not only proper but a duty to bring the subject before the General Conference of our people, the only tribunal in our body where such controverted questions can be properly considered and passed upon.²³⁸

Then Butler expressed about how Waggoner conducted himself at the 1886 conference.

. . . When Dr. Waggoner came on to the Conference fully armed for the fray, and was sustained so fully by Brother [S. N.] Haskell, B. L. Whitney, [W. C.] Wilcox and others so that he and Brother Whitney got little companies of our brethren together to indoctrinate as much as possible in quiet and so the Dr. went home feeling that he was sustained and that he had really carried his point. Of course I felt very badly.²³⁹

²³⁶ George I. Butler, *The Law in the Book of Galatians: Is It the Moral Law, or Does It Refer to that System of Laws Peculiarly Jewish?* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review & Herald Publishing House, 1886).

²³⁷ Letter George I. Butler to E. G. White, December 16, 1886, Plainfield, Wisconsin.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6. Emphasis his.

²³⁹ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, March 31, 1887, Battle Creek, Michigan.

So Elder Butler's next move was to bring the matter before a theological committee during the General Conference session of 1886. He wanted to bring ecclesiastical pressure on Waggoner and have a vote taken. The session could settle the issue of the law in Galatians.

The members of this committee were George I. Butler, President, General Conference; S. N. Haskell, California; D. M. Canright; E. J. Waggoner; J. H. Morrison, Iowa Conference; Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review*; M. C. Wilcox; B. L. Whitney; and William Covert.

In his own words, Butler explained what happened inside the theological committee:

Brother E. J. Waggoner came on, . . . loaded for the conflict. The Theological Committee was ordered. I was to act as chairman but declined as I, being a party in the matter might be supposed to favor one side. Elder Haskell was chosen as Chairman and appointed the Committee. It stood four--Haskell, Whitney, Wilcox and Waggoner in favor of the *Signs* position. Five--Smith, Canright, Covert, J. H. Morrison and self opposed. We had an argument of several hours but neither side was convinced. The question was whether we should take this into the Conference and have a big public fight over it or not. I could not advise it and all thought it would be most unhappy and result only in heat and debate. I did advise and draw up preambles and resolutions bearing upon our public course in such matters.²⁴⁰

Butler felt betrayed by those with whom he had extended hospitality in his own home during the conference session.

He wrote to Ellen White:

I felt that some of my leading brethren did not walk uprightly in their course though I was powerless to prevent it. Brethren Haskell and Whitney were my guests and Dr. Waggoner I invited several times to my house for meals and treated him kindly. But I kept as cheerful and kind as I could, though my heart ached with anguish.²⁴¹

Elder Butler was really frustrated by the behavior of his colleagues on the theological committee.

He wrote to Ellen White:

²⁴⁰ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, December 16, 1886, Plainfield, Wisconsin.

²⁴¹ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, March 31, 1887, Battle Creek, Michigan.

But Brother Haskell comes on and comes into my private family, enjoying my hospitality throughout the meeting, with Brother B. L. Whitney also both filled with this spirit of opposition. They knew well my feelings. They knew well what perplexity and trouble of mind I had over these things and yet their influence sustained Dr. Waggoner every way they knew how during the whole meeting. Their great effort was to keep Dr. Waggoner from being censured and help him all they could.

Eld. Whitney, at least, took occasion to go out and collect little knots of brethren of those whom they supposed were not so well posted on the subject and spend hours of time in having Dr. Waggoner endoctrinate (*sic.*) them in their view of this subject. This I knew was going on. Some of my friends happened to catch them at it several times, How many I have never known. Such a course was taken that no censure could be placed where it really belonged. Here was a course pursued though violating one of the plainest principles of our organization, stirring up strife throughout the whole body in violation to the decisions of the Testimonies, but anything against it must be kept quiet. Dr. Waggoner must not have his feelings hurt, while Eld. Haskell and Whitney were the men, eating at my own table. . . .²⁴²

When the General Conference resolution was finally voted, it was much less than Elder Butler had hoped for when he went into committee. He had wanted the issue of the law in Galatians settled by the session. He wanted Waggoner censured. He may have even wanted him unseated from the *Signs* editorial chair.

What he got was a compromise. The session passed a resolution which was obviously aimed at Jones and Waggoner. It was directed to editors and teachers in the Adventist school system. The resolution was a slap on their hands. It said, that boards, Sabbath School leaders, and editors of publications should “not. . . permit doctrinal views not held by a fair majority of our people, to be made part of the public instruction of said schools, or to be published in our denominational papers. . . before they are examined and approved by the leading brethren of experience.”²⁴³

²⁴² Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, October 1, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan.

²⁴³ *RH*, (Dec. 14, 1886), p. 779.

E. J. Waggoner, in his open letter to Elder Butler dated February 10, 1887, said of the closed door discussions on the law in Galatians:

I very much regretted that every moment of time was so occupied that we could have no conversation upon the subject. It is true the matter was discussed to a very limited extent in the meetings of the Theological Committee, but of course the little that could be said under the circumstances was not sufficient to give any satisfaction to any party concerned.²⁴⁴

So neither side was satisfied with the process or the outcome of the theological committee.

Elder Butler looked back upon the 1886 Conference as one of the worst in his life. It literally made him sick. He wrote to Ellen White:

My mind has been much exercised over these things, and I cannot keep them from agitating me much, because the whole matter seemed to me so unjust and inconsistent, but I rallied after two months of sickness, and was finally able to go through *that terrible conference* [1886] we had here the last held in Battle Creek.²⁴⁵

Ellen White agreed with him on one thing. She replied:

You speak, dear brother, of *that terrible conference*, the last held in Battle Creek, while I was in Switzerland. That conference was presented to me in the night season. My guide said, "Follow me; I have some things to show you." He led me where I was a spectator of the scenes that transpired at that meeting. I was shown the attitude of some of the ministers, yourself in particular, at that meeting, and I can say with you, my brother, it was a *terrible conference*.

. . . A time of trial was before us, and great evils would be the result of the Phariseism (*sic.*) which has in a large degree taken possession of those who occupy important positions in the work of God.

. . . The spirit which has prevailed at this meeting is not of Christ. There is not love, there is not sympathy or tender compassion one toward another. Dark suspicions have been suggested by Satan to cause dissension. Roots of bitterness

²⁴⁴ E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians: A Review* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press, 1888).

²⁴⁵ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, October 1, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. Emphasis supplied.

have sprung up whereby many will be defiled. Christians should harbor no jealousies or evil surmisings (*sic.*), for this spirit is of Satan.²⁴⁶

Ellen White expressed God's viewpoint of what took place at that meeting:

I wrote in the anguish of my soul in regard to the course you pursued in the [1886] General Conference [Session] two years since. The Lord was not pleased with that meeting. Your spirit, my brother, was not right. The manner in which you treated the case of Dr. Waggoner was perhaps after your own order, but not after God's order. The course you took was not excusable, even if his views were

questionable. We must not crowd and push one another because others do not see just as we see.²⁴⁷

Ellen White was shown what took place off the record during the 1886 session. "During the Conference at Battle Creek, when the question of the law in Galatians was being examined, I was taken to a number of houses, and heard the unchristian remarks and criticisms made by the delegates."²⁴⁸

The assessment of the conference from W. C. White was: "I guess the controversy [over the law in Galatians] did not add much to the union and good feeling of the session that is just closed."²⁴⁹

At this "terrible conference" a spirit of Pharisaism was manifested. Leadership sought to control the flow of information. The spirit of Christ's love was suppressed. The spirit of Satan was enhanced through jealousy and bitterness. Unfortunately, this would not be the last "terrible conference."

²⁴⁶ Letter E. G. White to George I. Butler, October 14, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, p. 92. Emphasis supplied.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 97.

²⁴⁸ Letter E. G. White to G. I. Butler, October 15, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, pp. 113, 114.

²⁴⁹ Letter W. C. White to A. T. Jones, January 6, 1887. *MMM*, p. 48.

CHAPTER 7

THE GREAT DEBATE

There were two principle documents in the debate between Elder George I. Butler and E. J. Waggoner. George Butler prepared an open letter to the delegates of the 1886 General Conference session entitled *The Law in the Book of Galatians*. E. J. Waggoner's response was entitled, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*.²⁵⁰ The two titles in themselves revealed much about what each author considered to be the theme of the Epistle to the Galatians. Butler emphasized the law in Galatians. Waggoner focused on the gospel in the new covenant.

As Robert van Ornam has pointed out, "The issues involved the proper relationship of law to the covenants."²⁵¹ Tim Crosby framed the issues this way: "Butler was convinced that the ceremonial law was connected with the old covenant and the ten commandments were connected with the new covenant, which was the common Adventist position at the time."²⁵²

In Galatians 3 Elder Butler said:

The law "added because of transgressions" unmistakably points to a remedial system, temporary in duration, "till the seed should come." The moral law is referred to as the one transgressed. But the "added" law, of which Paul is speaking, made provision for the forgiveness of these transgressions in figure, till the real Sacrifice should be offered.²⁵³

Waggoner replied:

²⁵⁰ Waggoner's letter to G. I. Butler was dated February 10, 1887, but he held off publishing it until after the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session. R. Dewitt Hottell was reading *The Gospel in Galatians* and *The Law in the Book of Galatians* after the Minneapolis Conference on November 10, 1888. Clinton L. Wahlen, "Selected Aspects of Ellet J. Waggoner's Eschatology," p. 70.

²⁵¹ Robert van Ornam, "The Doctrine of the Everlasting Covenant in the Writings of Ellet J. Waggoner," p. 17.

²⁵² Tim Crosby, "Ellen G. White and the Law in Galatians: A Study in the Dynamics of Present Truth" (paper presented for graduate class, Andrews University, 1980), p. 22.

²⁵³ G. I. Butler, *The Law in the Book of Galatians*, p. 44. Hereafter *The Law in Galatians*.

Although the law existed in all its force before the exode (*sic.*), yet it “came in,” “entered,” was spoken or given, or “added” at that time. And why? That the offense might abound, i.e., “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful;” that what was sin before might the more plainly be seen to be sin. Thus it entered, or was added, “because of transgressions.” If it had not been for transgressions there would have been no necessity for the law to enter at Sinai. Why did it enter because of transgression? “That the offense might abound;” in order to make sin seem greater than ever before, so that men might be driven to the super-abounding grace of God as manifested in Christ. And so it became a school-master, pedagogue, to bring men to Christ, in order that they might be justified by faith, and be made the righteousness of God in Him. And so it is stated later that the law is not against the promises of God. It works in harmony with the promise, for without it the promise would be of no effect. And this most emphatically attests the perpetuity of the law.²⁵⁴

As for the schoolmaster law, Butler applied --

. . . it to that provisional temporary system of law in which the Jew and proselyte were “shut up,” “in ward,” till the “middle wall of partition” was “broken down.” It was a “severe” system, “yoke of bondage” which they could not bear, “against” them, and “contrary to” them.²⁵⁵

Several statements which Elder Butler made indicated a latent Adventist-styled dispensationalism.

There was no propriety, therefore, in still keeping up the wall of separation between them and others. They all stood now upon the same level in the sight of God. All must approach Him through the Messiah who had come into the world; through Him alone man could be saved.²⁵⁶

Waggoner detected two methods of salvation in Elder Butler’s scheme; one through Christ and the other through the remedial system. Waggoner responded directly to Butler:

Your words seem to imply that before the first advent men approached God by means of the ceremonial law, and that after that they approached Him through the Messiah; but we shall have to go outside the Bible to find any support for the idea that anybody could ever approach God except through Christ. Amos 5:22;

²⁵⁴ E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians*, p. 19.

²⁵⁵ G. I. Butler, *The Law in Galatians*, p. 53.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Micah 6:6-8, and many other texts show conclusively that the ceremonial law alone could never enable people to come to God.²⁵⁷

Elder Butler spoke of a figurative forgiveness of sins before the first advent. “The moral law is referred to as the one transgressed. But the ‘added’ law, of which Paul is speaking, made provision for the forgiveness of these transgressions *in figure*, till the real Sacrifice should be offered.”²⁵⁸

Waggoner expressed his dismay at this statement of Butler’s:

. . . there is an idea expressed in the quotation just made which I am sorry to see has of late been taught to some extent. And that is that in the so-called Jewish dispensation forgiveness of sins was only *figurative*. Your words plainly indicate that there was no real forgiveness of sins until Christ, the real Sacrifice, was offered. . . .²⁵⁹

Waggoner stated that Elder Butler’s theology restricted salvation only to the generation living during the first advent.

But you say that the apostle is reasoning of dispensations, and not of individual experiences, and that bringing them to Christ means bringing them to His first advent, and “to the system of faith there inaugurated.” But that is the weakest position you could take, for if that were the meaning, then it would follow that the law accomplished its purpose only for the generation that lived at Christ’s first advent. No other people ever came to Christ, in the sense in which you use the term. In order for the law to bring men to Christ, in the sense in which you apply it, that is, to His first advent, it would have had to lengthen their lives. Adam would have had to live at least 4,000 years. For, let me again repeat: The text does not say that the law was a school-master to point men to Christ, but to bring them to Him.²⁶⁰

Thus, Waggoner saw the work of the law to lock up men in their sin and drive them to Christ the Saviour. The moral law functioned in this capacity in both Old and New Testament times until the second advent.

²⁵⁷ E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians*, p. 8.

²⁵⁸ G. I. Butler, *The Law in Galatians*, p. 44. Emphasis supplied.

²⁵⁹ E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians*, p. 29. Emphasis supplied.

²⁶⁰ E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians*, pp. 32, 33.

Elder Butler acknowledged righteousness by faith, but keeping the law and the Sabbath were the most important things on his agenda. God gave Israel the ceremonial law under the old covenant in order to mark them off from the rest of the world as His specially chosen people. If they obeyed these ordinances they would live.

The two covenants were almost two methods of salvation in Butler's theory. The old covenant was for Israel before Christ and the new covenant was for spiritual Israelites after the coming of Christ. It was as if salvation by works was only for the Jews under the old dispensation. They were elected over all others.

E. J. Waggoner saw the moral law as ordained for life. When man sinned, he came under its condemnation and penalty. The ten commandments were "added" or "spoken" at Sinai because the children of Israel did not recognize their sinfulness as had their father Abraham. God emphasized the moral law in order to bring Israel to Christ their righteousness. The law did not have a dispensational function. The ten commandments always served the purpose of driving guilty sinners to the foot of the cross so that by the faith of Jesus they might be saved.

The ancient remedial system of sacrifices was the means by which faith was expressed in Christ. It had existed before Sinai for Abel, Noah, and Abraham. All availed themselves of it. The sacrifices were not the means by which forgiveness of sins was obtained. Only Christ forgave sins. Those who by faith in Christ participated in the ordinances demonstrated that their faith was genuine in the anticipated sacrifice of their Saviour. This system retained no more significance once Christ died on the cross.

Waggoner arrived at his understanding of justification by faith through his understanding of the covenants. The old covenant was essentially, "Obey and live." It was the people's promise, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Such a boastful claim did not reckon with

the sinfulness of human nature. It placed the promise-keeper under a terrible yoke of bondage for he could not obey the law. The old covenant mentality was a condition of the heart. Therefore, the old covenant could not be time-bound. All who had a similar view of themselves in relationship to God were under the old covenant yoke.

On the other hand, the new covenant was all God's promise. God gave His salvation to all who believe in Christ. The condition for salvation was perfect obedience to the law of God. This condition was met by Christ. This was the promise which God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God renewed it to Israel at Sinai, but they, by and large, rejected it through their unbelief.

The new covenant was just as much in existence during Old Testament times as it was following Christ's first advent and death on the cross. The ratification of the new covenant by the blood of Christ was in *anticipation* before the cross. However, the effectiveness of salvation before the cross was not any less real. Following the cross, believers enjoyed the reality of the new covenant's confirmation and they could look back to Calvary in faith.

The two open letters on Galatians written by George I Butler and E. J. Waggoner were a primary source for determining the issues discussed at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference. In short, the issue involved righteousness by faith in its proper relationship to the law of God. Waggoner viewed justification through the motif of the old and the new covenants. The Epistle to the Galatians was the key document for discussion at the historic Minneapolis conference.

There was an ominous crisis looming over the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Before the major confrontation, however, a precursor event took place. It was a warning of what was to come on an even larger scale.

Chapter 8

THE CASE OF D. M. CANRIGHT

In the days following the 1886 General Conference there was a considerable amount of correspondence written by Elder Butler to Ellen White, but she did not respond to him. He wrote impatiently:

We have been waiting for years to hear from you on the subject, knowing that its agitation would end only in debate. I am perfectly willing our brethren should change their views on the subject and claim the same privilege myself, till God shall speak, then I propose to listen and if my views are condemned I can at least close my mouth.²⁶¹

Elder Butler bitterly complained about how the law in Galatians had been brought out so publicly in the *Signs*. Details about what happened in the theological committee of 1886 were divulged to Ellen White. Butler told her that S. N. Haskell played a significant role in preventing the *Signs* editors from being publicly censured at the 1886 conference. Butler felt Haskell was playing politics.

After going on for several pages writing about the situation he said to her: “Do not think me stirred or excited, dear Sister White. I never was cooler in my life. Sadness is the only thing I struggle against. I am utterly sick and tired of authority and responsibility for its own sake.”²⁶² It may well be that just the opposite was the case. Elder Butler had never been more agitated about an issue in his life. He was making himself sick over it. He wanted control of the situation and was frustrated that he could not gain the upper hand. He wanted the backing of her authority.

²⁶¹ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, Dec. 16, 1886, Plainfield, Wisconsin.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

Elder Butler had always tried to stand by an old friend, Dudley Canright. Canright was one of those who had participated in the discussion of the theological committee during the 1886 conference. Butler tried to get him on the General Conference committee without success.

Elder Butler wrote to Ellen White about his friend Canright:

You see he is left out of most everything. I pity him, not that he wants office for I think he don't (*sic.*). But he feels very sad. Says it don't (*sic.*) seem to him that his labors amount to anything, that he accomplishes very little, that it would be as well to return to his farm. I feared that he would be tried on his old weakness.²⁶³

But there was a foreboding in Butler's words, "I fear for him, that he will be discouraged."²⁶⁴

Two weeks later Elder Butler wrote her again. This time he expressed his view of the rivalries existing between Battle Creek and Oakland. ". . . There is twice as much sectional feeling in regard to their own publications on the Pacific Coast as there is in this part of the country."²⁶⁵

He offered the reason for this sectional feeling. "The course that the SIGNS has taken in regard to publishing things that were opposed to the principles of our faith, disputed points, etc. has injured its influence, and it will be very hard to ever get our brethren, many of them to feel that interest in it that they have in the past."²⁶⁶ No doubt Elder Butler would find it hard to support the distribution and enlargement of the *Signs*. He had already thrown his support into a new missionary journal, *The Gospel Sickle*, whose editorial policy was more to his liking.

E. J. Waggoner had reported to Elder Butler that Ellen White's son, W. C. White, had advised him to go into print on these subjects. Now Elder White wanted to set the record straight about that matter with E. J. Waggoner. Elder White wrote to him--

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, December 28, 1886, Ithaca, Michigan.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

I am now told by Eld. Butler that I am largely responsible for their publication. I think there must be a little misunderstanding somewhere. I do not remember of advising you to publish through the *Signs*, articles on the subjects you had presented at the college. But I do not think, and I do not believe that you contemplated at that time, that these articles were to dwell upon these points which have been the subject of so much controversy in the past, and of so much anxiety and perplexity at the present time. I have written Eld. Butler that I had no doubt that you thought that you had ample ground for the statement that I advised the publication of these articles, but that I could not remember having done so, and if I did it was with a misunderstanding as to the ground they were to cover.²⁶⁷

Waggoner corrected this misunderstanding at the time of the theological committee.

Elder Butler recalled it in these words. “Brother E. J. Waggoner stated publicly before the Committee that the course taken in publishing as they had was unadvised by Brother W. C. White.”²⁶⁸

Then, Elder Butler received a devastating blow on February 17, 1887. It was to be the first fallout from “that terrible conference.” Butler listened as his old friend and colleague, Dudley Canright, asked to be disfellowshipped from the Otsego, Michigan, church. Butler reported the reason for Canright’s decision to Ellen White.

He talked perhaps three-fourths of an hour or more. He said in substance that he could go no longer with Seventh-day Adventists, he had ceased to believe that the law was binding, and did not expect to keep another sabbath, he had no faith in the messages, the sanctuary, the two horned beast, the Testimonies, health reform, etc. He said that he had been passing through a constant struggle for twenty years to believe these things but now it was over he could not do it any longer,²⁶⁹

The Otsego church disfellowshipped both Canright and his wife. The effect on Butler was disheartening. He wrote: “I have no hope whatever that he will ever return to go with us. . . . It has made me about sick.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, January 9, 1887. *MMM*, p. 49, 50.

²⁶⁸ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, December 16, 1886. *MMM*, p. 42.

²⁶⁹ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, February 17, 1887, Otsego, Michigan.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The last straw for Canright was evidently the 1886 conference and the experience he had on the theological committee. As Butler reported it--

He was very much disgusted at the turn some things took at the time of our last General Conference, some of the theological questions that came up and the way that some of our brethren acted toward them made him feel badly and set him to thinking so he said he went to studying this law question and came to the conclusions that he has.²⁷¹

Canright had been on the theological committee of nine, at the time of the 1886 conference, that discussed the law in Galatians. He had written *The Two Laws* holding the ceremonial law view of Galatians. It had originally been published in 1876, but was reissued in 1882 and 1886, with additional material on Galatians. It was used in the offensive against Waggoner.

That discussion with Waggoner on the theological committee caused Canright to think that his views were incorrect. Galatians was talking about the moral law. Then he reasoned, if it was the ten commandments that were the “schoolmaster,” they were truly done away with at the cross and that included the Sabbath.

Before the 1886 conference, Canright had had a debate in Des Moines, Iowa, with the president of Drake University, Professor D. R. Dungan. Canright explained:

That preparation did much to convince me of the unsoundness of some of our positions on the covenants, the two laws, etc. In our General Conference [1886] that fall, a sharp division occurred between our leading men over the law in Galatians. One party held it was the ceremonial law, the other the moral law--a square contradiction. After a long and warm discussion the conference closed, each party more confident than before. . . . This. . . brought up my old feelings of doubt, and decided me that it was time for me now to examine and think for myself, and not be led nor intimidated by men who could not agree among themselves.²⁷²

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² D. M. Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1889), pp. 50, 51.

Canright had a dispensational view of the old and new covenants just like Butler and all his contemporaries. That framework of the covenants caused a misunderstanding in Canright's views of the relationship between the law and the covenants. He was compelled to abandon the law as far as the new dispensation was concerned.

The full force of his opposition to Seventh-day Adventists, the ten commandments, and the Sabbath, was expressed in his book, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, which was published in 1889. That book was considered such a threat that Seventh-day Adventist leaders were responding to it decades later. It has gone through many reprints.

In that book Canright put his finger on a crux issue.

No other subject perplexes Adventists so much as the covenants. They dread to meet it. They have tried various ways to explain it away, but they are not satisfactory even to themselves. I have been there and know. The abolition of the Sinatic covenant carries with it the abolition of the Jewish Sabbath so completely that no authoritative trace of it can be found this side of the grave of our risen Lord.

Elder Smith says: "If the ten commandments constituted the old covenant, then they are forever gone." This, therefore, becomes a test question.²⁷³

This was not the only issue which caused Canright's disaffection from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but it certainly contributed to it.

Now Elder Butler's argument against Waggoner would take on all the more force. He could say, Look what happened to Canright when he took the moral law view of Galatians. It led him right out of the church. Our opponents will use this to their advantage and disaffect countless others within our ranks.

Indeed, this had been a problem down through the years for Seventh-day Adventists. The issue of the law and the covenants had never been satisfactorily resolved. T. M. Preble, Moses

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

Hull, and now Dudley Canright had apostatized from the church. Dispensationalism was a contributory factor in their disaffection with church doctrine. Would this be a wake-up call for church leadership to re-examine its teachings on this point? God was certainly offering a viable biblical alternative at the time of 1886-88.

Chapter 9

ELDER BUTLER'S VINDICATION

Elder Butler had written numerous letters to Ellen White in Europe about the problems back home regarding the law in Galatians. He had received no response from her throughout the year 1886. Finally on February 18, 1887, her long awaited letter arrived. It chastened the men on the West Coast. The letter was entitled, "Cautions about Making Doctrinal Differences Prominent; Contemplating the Marvels and Mysteries of the Incarnation."²⁷⁴

Ellen White recounted to Waggoner and Jones, about how in the 1850's when there were discussions about the "added law" with J. H. Waggoner, that she "had been shown [that] his position in regard to the law was incorrect."²⁷⁵ She had requested her staff in Healdsburg to send such a manuscript, but it was not forthcoming. To that day it had never been recovered. She went on to say, "I have not been in the habit of reading any doctrinal articles in the paper, that my mind should not have any understanding of anyone's ideas and views. . . ."²⁷⁶ It appeared that she had not acquainted herself with Waggoner's views on the law or the covenants in Galatians.

At any rate, she had been receiving complaints "from some attending Healdsburg College in regard to Brother E. J. W.'s [Waggoner's] teachings in regard to the two laws. I wrote immediately protesting against their doing contrary to the light which God had given us in regard to all differences of opinion. . . ."²⁷⁷ The urgency of the moment was for unity to

²⁷⁴ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, February 18, 1887, Basel, Switzerland. *EGW 1888*, pp. 21-31.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

prevail in the church. The impending Sunday-law crisis made it imperative that the public see a united doctrinal front from the church. Opponents were looking for any little split in the ranks upon which they could hang doubt regarding the law, the Sabbath, and the teachings of Seventh-day Adventists.

Ellen White urged Waggoner and Jones to be careful about--

these known differences being published in articles in our papers, you would never have pursued the course you have, either in your ideas advanced before our students at the college, neither would it have appeared in the *Signs*. . . .

I have no hesitancy in saying you have made a mistake here. . . . This is not in God's order.

. . . God has plainly revealed that such things should not be done. . . .²⁷⁸

Furthermore, she made it clear that "these questions are not vital points."²⁷⁹ In short, her counsel was that differences of opinion on doctrine should not be made known to the public through the church's teaching or in its official papers.

She was not so clear on another point. ". . . I did see years ago that Elder [J. H.] Waggoner's views were not correct. . . ." But as to what his views were and what the immediate issues at hand then were, she frankly confessed "the matter does not lie clear and distinct in my mind yet. I cannot grasp the matter. . . ."²⁸⁰

Ellen White remembered that J. H. Waggoner "loved discussions and contention" and she expressed concern that the younger Waggoner "has cultivated a love for the same." It

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

brought her great pain “to see our two leading papers in contention.”²⁸¹ And she warned, “if these things come into our conference, I would refuse to attend one of them. . . .”²⁸²

Copies of her letter were sent to G. I. Butler, E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones. The letter took some time to arrive all the way from Switzerland to A. T. Jones who was teaching at Healdsburg, California that winter. He received her letter on March 10, 1887. He responded in writing to her. He said that he received the testimony “earnestly” seeking to “profit” by it. He thanked the Lord for pointing out to him “where I have done wrong.” He expressed sincere ignorance about any communication Ellen White may have had with J. H. Waggoner about where he was wrong on his positions regarding the law. He felt certain “if E. J. W. had known of it he would not have gone contrary to it.”²⁸³

As for his policy in the classroom, Jones pointed out that he was not in the habit of bringing up the law in Galatians for discussion. He rather pointed people to Jesus and the gospel in Galatians. But he did admit, “I think however that I have told them that I thought they would find both laws there, and the gospel--justification by faith--underlying the whole of it.”²⁸⁴

Waggoner’s letter to Ellen White in response to her chastening was even more compliant than Jones’s response to her. He expressed his “gratitude to God that His spirit still strives with me, pointing out the errors to which I am so subject. . . .”²⁸⁵

Waggoner practiced what he preached. When the spirit convicted him of unknown sin, he confessed it. When he received her testimony he responded in writing to her by saying: “I have been able to see some things in my heart of which I was unconscious. I thought that I was

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁸³ Letter A. T. Jones to E. G. White, March 13, 1887, Healdsburg, California. *MMM*, p. 66.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, April 1, 1887, Oakland, California. *MMM*, p. 71.

actuated by nothing but pure motives and love for the truth, in what I have said and written, but I can see plainly that there has been very much love of self mixed in. . . .”²⁸⁶ Only the Holy Spirit could have known Waggoner’s heart and Ellen White’s testimony brought, “the strongest proof to me of their genuineness . . . that they have revealed to me my heart to an extent that it could not possibly be known by any one beside God.”²⁸⁷

Waggoner did have an underlying motive of reforming the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He desired to bring about doctrinal unity in its ranks.

I do desire most earnestly that the time may soon come when all our people shall see eye to eye. In my unconscious self-sufficient (*sic.*), I supposed that I could do much toward accomplishing this. I have learned that God will accomplish His work in His own way, and that the strongest efforts in the best cause are powerless when not prompted solely by love to God. . . .²⁸⁸

There was, indeed, a sectional rivalry going on between the Review and Herald Publishing House and the Pacific Press. Waggoner could see it. “I am truly sorry for the feeling that has existed and does exist between the two offices.” Waggoner believed there was a “misunderstanding on their part” at the Review office. However, Waggoner accepted the blame too, for “I know full well that a feeling of criticism has been allowed to creep in here, as I think in no one more than me.”²⁸⁹

As for the lost counsel to his father, J. H. Waggoner, regarding the law in Galatians, if he had known about it “the case would have been different.” But he insisted that “the view which I have taught is quite materially different from that which father held.”²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

When Elder Butler received her letter of February 18, 1887, he considered it a full vindication from Ellen White regarding his course of action. He gently chided her for not responding sooner. He was fully aware that Waggoner and Jones were teaching the moral law view in Galatians at Healdsburg for about “two or three years.” However, to his recollection things had been going on even “six or eight years” ago. He decided not to do anything about it because he did not want to stir things up.²⁹¹

Then he brought up matters from the past General Conference. What really aggravated Elder Butler at the 1886 General Conference was “when Dr. W. came on to the Conference, fully armed for the fray, and was sustained so fully by Bro. Haskell, B. L. Whitney, Wilcox and others so that he and Bro. Whitney got little companies of our brethren together to indoctrinate as much as possible in quiet. . . .”²⁹²

Elder Butler explained his actions to Ellen White: “I did not pursue this course myself, . . . and I did not favor the matter being brought into public discussion, fearing we should have a scene which would be very bad in its effect.”²⁹³ But further on he conceded that he published a pamphlet for the leading brethren which was circulated among the delegates at the conference.

He was not straightforward about an article which he had just published in the *Review*.²⁹⁴ The title of his article identified the “yoke of bondage” (taken from Galatians 5:1) as the ceremonial law--laws which are “Contrary to us”.

Elder Butler was jubilant that Ellen White had vindicated his position.

I greatly rejoice. . . after this long time, to see that you do not endorse the course the young men have pursued. . . . They will be surprised at your letter. . . .

²⁹¹ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, March 31, 1887, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 69.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *RH* (March 22, 1887), G. I. Butler, “Laws which are ‘Contrary to us,’ a ‘Yoke of Bondage,’ and ‘Not Good,’” pp. 183, 184.

I am sorry for them, for I always pity those who suffer keen disappointment.”²⁹⁵

She had come out saying that J. H. Waggoner’s position on the law in Galatians was incorrect. That was “very satisfactory” to Butler.

However, what he was really waiting for was a statement from her to the effect that--

the added Law is either the moral or the ceremonial Law systems. You say in substance that Elder Waggoner’s position was not correct, his position was that the moral Law was the added law, hence it must be the other. If our people knew that you had light that the Moral Law was not the added Law, the question would be settled in short order. That is precisely what our people are waiting with much anxiety to know. I am not urging you to say anything, but I feel certain that after all the stir over this question it will make constant trouble, till your opinion is known. You see if it don’t (*sic.*).²⁹⁶

Butler felt that he had only received half a loaf from Ellen White. But even half a loaf was better than no loaf at all.

He made the best use possible of it by forwarding it on to S. N. Haskell at South Lancaster, Massachusetts. He had been irritated that Haskell sustained E. J. Waggoner by voting on the theological committee against censuring the *Signs* editors, especially after he had extended the hospitality of his own home to him.

For his part, Haskell expressed a neutrality on the whole issue of the law. “I do not know as I agree with either Waggoner or Brother Butler but had rather sided in with Waggoner on some points but not on others. And it was the same with Brother Butler.”²⁹⁷

For that matter, Haskell did not even know what Ellen White’s position was on the law from what she had written on February 18, 1887. “The good derived was not so much because it

²⁹⁵ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, March 31, 1887, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 69.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁹⁷ Letter S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, April 11, 1887, South Lancaster, Massachusetts. *MMM*, p. 73.

agreed with my views on the law question for I do not know whether your light is in harmony with my views or not.”²⁹⁸

By the spring of 1887, nothing was settled as far as the question on the law in Galatians was concerned. Each party got what they wanted out of the Ellen White’s communication. That, however, would be short-lived.

Ellen White sent another letter to Elders Butler and Uriah Smith. She was not pleased with Butler’s article in the *Review* of March 1, 1887, on “Elder Canright’s Change of Faith,” and with his open letter reply to E. J. Waggoner on *The Law in Galatians*. She took him to task for violating the very principles he expected others to observe about bringing doctrinal matters of controversy out into the open for public view.

She counseled him: “Had you avoided the question, which you state has been done, it would have been more in accordance with the light God has seen fit to give to me.”²⁹⁹ She had received word that Butler had used her letter to Waggoner and Jones [February 18, 1887] against them. But she said:

I sent this not that you should make them weapons to use against the brethren mentioned, but that the very same cautions and carefulness be exercised by you to preserve harmony as you would have these brethren exercise. . . .

. . . I do not wish the letters that I have sent to you should be used in a way that you will take it for granted that your ideas are all correct and Dr. Waggoner’s and Elder Jones’s are all wrong.³⁰⁰

She again expressed dismay at not having access to what she had written to J. H. Waggoner on the law question. But now that she has had time to reflect on it she thought “it

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Letter E. G. White to G. I. Butler and U. Smith, April 5, 1887, Basle, Switzerland entitled “Giving Exposure to Differing Doctrinal Viewpoints; Disapproval of D. M. Canright’s Actions. *MMM*, pp. 32-37.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

may be that it was a caution not to make his ideas prominent at that time, for there was great danger of disunion.”³⁰¹ This left the door open for understanding that the issue of the law-in-Galatians issue during the 1850’s was not present truth and would have led to disunity at the time.

Ellen White went on to chastise Butler for his polemics in the open letter, *The Law in Galatians*. “The principles that you refer to are right. . . . I think you are too sharp,” when it came to dealing with Dr. Waggoner.

Then she told him about “some impressive dreams” she had been receiving about Butler and the disaffected Canright being in the same boat. “. . . You are not altogether in the light. Elder [D. M.] Canright was presenting his ideas upon the law, and such a mixed up concern I never heard. Neither of you seemed to see or understand where his arguments would lead to.”³⁰² Canright was in the dark shadows sitting in a “worm-eaten” boat with “decaying timbers” and Butler was right there with him. “. . . It is the work of Satan.”³⁰³ She expressed her outright contempt for “the course of Elder Canright.”

She “advised his books to be suppressed, especially the one on the law. . . . If that work is what I believe it to be, I would burn every copy in the fire before one should be given out to our people.”³⁰⁴ That book had been republished just before the 1886 General Conference obviously to be used as support for Butler’s position on the ceremonial law in Galatians. At that time, Elder Butler had no idea where such views would lead, but he soon found out with the disfellowshipping of his friend and colleague, D. M. Canright.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Elder Butler did not want to see an open discussion of the law in Galatians. He wanted control of the flow of information. But Ellen White counseled: “I want to see no Pharisaism among us. The matter now has been brought so fully before the people by yourself as well as Dr. Waggoner, that it must be met fairly and squarely in open discussion.”³⁰⁵

Instead of shutting off all discussion, Ellen White believed that the church must be open to the Word of God. Christ would lead the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the teaching of Scripture.

For his part, Elder Butler had a bad reaction to Ellen White’s correspondence. He replied: “I have not, Sister White, been able to see the justice of your letter of April 5, 1887, and never expect to. . . . I had thought I would never answer that letter, but bear in silence and patience that which seemed to me to be unjust.”³⁰⁶

He went on to say:

In your letter of April 5, 1887 you seem to be quite anxious lest I should take advantage of the letter of reproof you had written to Eld. Waggoner and Jones concerning their course in pushing their views on Galatians, and lest I should draw conclusions that perhaps I was right in my views of that subject. Let me say in regard to this that I had never used your article up to that time you had written, in any such way as your letter intimates, and had no thought of doing so.³⁰⁷

He agreed with what she had to say about the moral principles of self dying and becoming as little children. But he took exception when it came to how he was dealing with these young men.

. . . With the attitude in which you place my efforts in this matter I cannot see the justice. I think that I have not been too sharp with Dr. Waggoner, and that every word that I have said is true and much of the truth has not been told. I think that every word that I said was more than backed up by what you said to him and to A. T. Jones in your letter to them of Feb. 18, [1887]. . . . I am willing to

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁰⁶ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, October 1, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 82.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

compare statement with statement, and if your words are not sharper and more condemnatory toward their course than what I have said, then I am unable to understand language.³⁰⁸

Then Elder Butler gave her a little history lesson in the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the law in Galatians. He said, Elders James White, J. N. Andrews, Joseph Bates and others in “the very early period” held the “added law” to be the ten commandments. When Father Stephen Pierce came to Battle Creek from Vermont and presented his case why the “added law” of Galatians 3:19 could not be the moral law, it was accepted by Elders James White and Uriah Smith. There was some continued controversy. J. N. Andrews was undecided on the issue. However, J. H. Waggoner never would change his mind. For him the law in Galatians was the moral law.

Then Elder Butler reminded her--

But the time came when your testimony was brought in, and it weighed heavily in favor of the view held by us, that the added law was not the ten commandments, but referred to those laws peculiarly Jewish. . . . The public attitude of your husband, Brother Smith, the Publishing house, etc. have been unmistakably since the point where your testimony came in, settled on this question.³⁰⁹

Then Elder Butler quoted from Ellen White’s letter of February 18, 1887, to E. J. Waggoner: “. . . in reference to the added law. I read this to Elder [J. H.] Waggoner. I stated then to him that I had been shown his position in regard to the law was incorrect, But I did see years ago that Eld. Waggoner’s views were not correct. . . .”³¹⁰

Elder Butler drew his own conclusions from this.

These words I believe to be the exact truth. And if they do not show beyond all question that Eld. [J. H.] Waggoner’s position on the added law was incorrect and untrue, I should fail to know how human language could make a point clear. .

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 87.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

. . . When you condemned in the testimony, . . . Eld. [J. H.] Waggoner's position on the added law, you unmistakably condemned the principle that the 10 commandments are the added law. There can be no escape from this conclusion.³¹¹

So Elder Butler was smarting at Ellen White's rebuke that he had come out so publicly against E. J. Waggoner's position on the law in Galatians.

Elder Butler complained--

. . . in regard to my own attitude. I am blamed in the above extracts. . . . One would hardly suppose. . . that a person holding the position of president of the General Conference was obliged to keep his mouth shut while persistent efforts were being made to bring up a silent controverted point before the public. . . .

And now you censure me for having written a little pamphlet on the subject of the law in Galatians. . . . You say I have circulated my pamphlet and it is only fair that Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had. My dear sister, you will pardon me if I say that that language seems to me passing strange.³¹²

Elder Butler had one regret:

. . . That when these arguments of Waggoner on the other side of the question appeared in the *Instructor* lessons and *Signs of the Times*, . . . that Eld. Smith and I did not just wade into them and show them up in the widest channels possible.³¹³

Then he used his ultimate argument with Ellen White:

I fancy a few days of Elder James White's administration when such a move as this would come up, if those young men would not have heard thunder around their ears, if he had been on earth, that would have made them tingle, then I have forgotten the nature of this procedure. I have not forgotten the way he handled things of this kind if he would not go for them in public and private and make them regret such boldness then I misjudge.³¹⁴

This was making Elder Butler sick. He was having doubts about the testimonies. It was time to square off with these "young fledglings" who had just gotten into the "editorial chair"

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 89.

³¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 98.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

and show them up.³¹⁵ Those were fighting words. Surely more serious times would lie in the future.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 99.

Chapter 10

THE OAKLAND GENERAL CONFERENCE

For a while E. J. Waggoner took the advice of Ellen White and published no more articles on the law question. However questions about 2 Corinthians 3:7-11 came into the editor's office. Adventists were facing antinomian opponents who believed the "ministration of death" written in stone was the ten commandments. The law which was glorious was done away.³¹⁶

E. J. Waggoner provided an exposition of 2 Corinthians 3. The common misconception, according to Waggoner, was that Paul abolished the ten commandments with the old covenant. A little thought, however, would show that the law was the basis of both the old and the new covenants (Hebrews 8:8-12). The law was the condition of both covenants. ". . . The people are to obey the law of God."³¹⁷

Under the old covenant the people promised to obey (Exodus 19:8; 24:3, 7). The new covenant was founded on "better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). The better promises included the forgiveness of sins and the law written in the heart. Christ accomplished this through his sacrifice and ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:10-12, 1, 2). This was why the ministry of the second covenant was more glorious than the first.

The old covenant was a "ministration of death." It was a ministration of human priests offering animal sacrifices which could never forgive sins and change the heart. There was

³¹⁶ Alvin Marsh, *Review Of Gitchell : A Reply To His Reasonings Concerning The Sabbath, The Covenants, And The Law*. (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald Publishing Co., 1888), pp. 36, 37.

³¹⁷ E. J. Waggoner, "Exposition of 2 Cor. 3:7-11," *ST* 13, 21 (June 2, 1887), p. 328. Cp. "D. H. Oberholtzer, "Second Corinthians 3:6," *RH* 64, 23 (June 7, 1887). There was agreement on the point of the law as the basis for both the old and the new covenants.

forgiveness and cleansing but only “by virtue of faith in the promised sacrifice of Christ, and not

because of anything in the old covenant.”³¹⁸ The apostle had pointed this out: “. . . He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15).

Waggoner explained: “. . . When sins committed under the first covenant were forgiven, they were forgiven by virtue of the second covenant.”³¹⁹

The apostle Paul said: “But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious. . . .” (2 Corinthians 3:7). Are the ten commandments death? For anyone who promised to keep them they were. A sinner was incapable of doing righteousness. The apostle Paul said, “And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death” (Romans 7:10). Under the old covenant, the commandments meant death for the violator.

Likewise, under the new covenant the commandments were death. The apostle said: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the *new testament*; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the *letter*, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Corinthians 7:6). Waggoner pointed out that participation in communion, baptism and other rites of the church, without Christ in the life was a repudiation of Him. It was serving the letter or outward demonstration. The ministration of the Spirit was more glorious in that Christ was brought into the heart. By faith in Christ one participated in the ordinances of the gospel.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Waggoner concluded, “. . . the ministration of the old covenant as well as the covenant itself was done away. . . .”³²⁰ “For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious” (2 Corinthians 3:11).

What was done away? “For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory” (2 Corinthians 3:9). It was the temple service which was done away. What remained was the more glorious ministry of Christ from the heavenly sanctuary who sent forth the Holy Spirit fulfilling the new covenant promise to believers.

In the days to come, Uriah Smith was to press his form of accepted dispensationalism through the pages of the *Review*. He explained: “That covenant with Israel was called ‘the first covenant,’ and extended to the first advent of Christ. The time having then come for the greater blessings to be conferred which were promised through the seed of the woman, a new covenant was made by God with Israel and Judah.”³²¹ This was the same kind of thinking which contributed toward Thomas Preble, Moses Hull, and Dudley M. Canright scuttling their faith in the ten commandments and the Sabbath.

Elder Smith was even more explicit: “The conclusion is therefore clear, that these two covenants embody *two grand divisions* of the work which Heaven has undertaken for human redemption, and cover *two especial dispensations* devoted to the development of the work.”³²²

During the fall of 1887, Smith ran an eight-part series in the *Review* on “God’s Covenants with Men.” Substantially the same series was published in the Australian *Bible Echo*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

³²¹ U. Smith, “What Does God Write?” *RH* 64, 31 (August 2, 1887), p. 488.

³²² Uriah Smith, “The Two Covenants,” *Bible Echo, and Signs of the Times* 2, 11 (November, 1887), p. 162. Hereafter *BE*. Emphasis supplied.

later that year.³²³ He spent considerable time establishing that the ten commandments were the basis of the old covenant. The point was that they were not the old covenant, but the conditions upon which the old covenant agreement was made between God and the people.

His primary interest, of course, was to uphold the commandments and in particular the Sabbath in the new dispensation. On this point, there was harmony between Elders Butler and Waggoner. However, Waggoner disagreed on the concept of the covenant as a contract or agreement.

Elder Smith, like so many others, took his definition of a biblical covenant from Webster's dictionary. There was an agreement of parties to obey certain conditions. Smith concluded, ". . . every covenant which God enters into with men must be based on the condition on his part of obedience to his law. The theological definition . . . from Webster is therefore correct when it placed obedience as the first of the terms upon which the promises are to be secured."³²⁴ God even made a covenant of works with Adam.

E. J. Waggoner agreed that the condition of God's covenant was the ten commandments. However, the sinner was incapable of rendering such obedience. So God promised that Christ would be the sinner's actual substitute and surety. God's covenant, then, was His promise in Christ. Waggoner observed:

The Lord made a promise to him [Abraham], that would have staggered most men, it was so great, so incomprehensible. . . . Abraham said, I believe; and the Lord, in return for that simple faith, declared his sins forgiven. . . .

³²³ Uriah Smith, "God's Covenants with Men" *RH* (September 13 to November 1, 1887); "The Two Covenants," *BE* (November 1887 to March, 1888); Uriah Smith, *The Two Covenants*, (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald, n.d.).

³²⁴ U. Smith, "God's Covenants with Men," *RH* 64, 37 (September 13, 1887), p. 584.

In what did Abraham have faith? . . . In the death and resurrection of Christ.³²⁵

The sinner believed God's Word. Abraham said, "Amen," to what God promised Him and he was accounted righteous.

At Sinai God renewed that same promise to Israel (Exodus 19:2-5). The same promise had been given to the first sinner. Adam lived by faith in God His Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

Genuine faith did not manifest itself in loose living or "presumption." "The possession of such faith as Abraham had, indicated humility, and submission to the will of God. . . ." ³²⁶ It "always leads to obedience" being demonstrated by its "works."

Waggoner clarified the relationship of Abraham's faith and works. First, "he was justified by simple faith, without any works. Works could not have entered into that justification."³²⁷ Afterward, when his faith was tested to offer up Isaac "he was justified by works." ". . . The work or the outcome of his faith. . . was the evidence of perfected faith. Faith made use of works, to show that it was not dead, but was in active existence."³²⁸

When Elder Smith explained Exodus 19:3-6, he said: "God entered into another and special covenant with that people. . . This was subordinate to the covenant made with Abraham to carry on a particular purpose for a particular time."³²⁹ This same series ran in *The Gospel Sickle*.³³⁰

³²⁵ E. J. Waggoner, "The Commentary. Call of Abraham. Lesson 8.--Sabbath, February 25," *ST* 14, 7 (February 17, 1888), p. 106.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ E. J. Waggoner, "The Commentary. The Test of Faith. Lesson 14.--Sabbath, April 7," *ST* 14, 12 (March 23, 1888), p. 186.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 187.

³²⁹ U. Smith, "God's Covenants with Men," *RH* 64, 38 (September 20, 1887), p. 600.

³³⁰ U. Smith, "God's Covenants with Men," *GS* 2 (October 15, 1887-January 15, 1888).

Elder Smith had reference to the sacrificial system which he characterized as “complicated.” God’s purpose was “to hedge them in from all other nations, and keep them a separate and distinct people.”³³¹ After the first advent of Christ, “the necessity no longer existed for the work to be confined to a single nation, and that nation kept distinct and separate from all other people. . . .”³³²

Elder Smith did allow that “wicked and unconverted” people could enter the covenants of God. They had to give up their loyalties to Satan and “declare” their loyalty to God. Then they could enjoy the “benefits” of God’s covenant.

The ten commandments were the “basis” for both covenants. There was agreement with Waggoner on this point. However, there was disagreement with this statement: “The two great covenants that God has made--one for each dispensation. . . . the covenant of the old dispensation, and another [basis] for the covenant of the new.”³³³ This type of dispensationalism subtly penetrated everything Elder Smith wrote on the covenants.

He asked, “When was the new covenant made?” He answered, when Christ died on the cross. “At the cross the Jewish system ended and the Christian dispensation began. There was the dividing line between them. . . . From that moment the new covenant was in force.”³³⁴ The unspoken idea was that salvation was confined to the Jews until Christ died on the cross.

Along these lines, Elder Smith agreed with Elder Butler’s interpretation of Galatians 3:17 which he quoted with his own interpolations:

. . . the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ [the Abrahamic covenant], the law [the Horeb covenant with Israel], which was four hundred and

³³¹ U. Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *RH* 64, 39 (September 27, 1887), p. 617.

³³² U. Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *RH* 64, 41 (October 18, 1887), p. 648.

³³³ Anonymous, *GS* 2, 21 (November 1, 1887), p. 161.

³³⁴ U. Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *RH* 64, 42 (October 25, 1887), p. 664. Cp. U. Smith, “God’s Covenants with Men,” *GS* 3, 1 (January 1, 1888).

thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect.

For if the inheritance [the world promised to Abraham, Rom. 4:13] be of the law [is to be secured by a performance of the ceremonies and services of the Mosaic system], it is no more of promise [it does not rest simply on the promise of God], but God gave it to Abraham by promise.³³⁵

The ceremonial law was “added” because of transgression of the ten commandments.

In addition to the Abrahamic covenant, God “added; a subordinate arrangement. . . a new covenant was formed. . . .” with Israel.³³⁶ “. . . Till Christ, as the promised Seed, should come. . . .” If the Jews “followed the leadings (*sic.*) of this ‘pedagogue,’ this ‘schoolmaster,’ they would not have have rejected the Messiah. . . .”³³⁷ The law in Galatians 3 was the Mosaic law.

Elder Smith believed that the defense of the Sabbath hinged on the distinction between the two laws.³³⁸ He was not about to concede that the law in Galatians 3 was the moral law. His point was forcefully made, “. . . our opponents labor to show that in the days of Moses, all the law. . . ‘was a burdensome system,’ a ‘yoke of bondage,’ a ‘schoolmaster designed only to lead us to Christ;’ . . . and was therefore ‘nailed to the cross.’”³³⁹ The schoolmaster was the ceremonial law.

This, in addition to the two covenants, was shaping up to be the major battle ground. There was disunity between the *Review*, *The Gospel Sickle*, and the *Signs*. The conflict had not been resolved by the 1887 General Conference in Oakland, California.

³³⁵ *Ibid.* Interpolations his.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 618. Cp. “. . . The ‘law of Moses,’ . . . [was] ‘added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made,’ and, which was a ‘school-master,’ simply to teach the rudiments of faith till Christ should come. . . .” Anonymous, *GS* 2, 16 (August 15, 1887), p. 1.

³³⁸ “The best point of attack upon the Sabbath question, our opponents are coming to think, is the position we hold in reference to the distinction between ‘laws which are called moral,’ and those which are of a ceremonial and remedial nature.” U. Smith, “The Two Laws and the Sabbath,” *GS* 3, 10 (May 15, 1888), p. 75.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

When the General Conference session convened in Oakland, on Sunday, November 13, 1887, Elder Butler knew what he was facing. He later wrote to Ellen White:

. . . I have the best evidence that only at the Oakland Gen. Conf. last year he [E. J. Waggoner] took some of our ministers in private conference over this subject and

read them a long review he had prepared of my pamphlet [*The Law in Galatians*], and did every way his ingenuity could invent to impress his view of this subject. I have this from the mouth of men who knew for themselves what they were talking of. . . . So I have no evidence that Eld. E. J. Waggoner or those backing him ever have any idea of letting up, but think they still propose to fight this to the bitter end.³⁴⁰

By the spring of 1888, E. J. Waggoner was publishing editorials in the *Signs* on Abraham.³⁴¹ These were similar in nature as his earlier studies on “The Inheritance of the Saints.” They dealt with the promise given to Abraham and followed its course through his descendants and the history of ancient Israel.

Then in June Waggoner wrote notes for the Sabbath School lesson on “God’s Covenant with Israel.”³⁴² There were points in common with Butler and Smith. The old covenant was “a mutual agreement between God and the people.” This agreement was “concerning” the ten commandments--God’s covenant. The people would obey it. Unfortunately, they “violated their agreement.”³⁴³ The new covenant had always been available. God in his mercy made it with Abraham and it was in place for any believing Israelite or Gentile.

³⁴⁰ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, October 1, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 100.

³⁴¹ *ST* 14, 14 (Apr. 6, 1888); “The Call of Abraham,” pp. 215, 216; *ST* 14, 15 (Apr. 13, 1888); “The Hope of the Promise,” p. 231; “The Throne of David,” *ST* 14, 19 (May 18, 1888), pp. 294, 295; “The Throne of David. (Concluded.),” *ST* 14, 20 (May 25, 1888), pp. 310, 311; “The True Israel,” *ST* 14, 21 (June 1, 1888), pp. 327, 328.

³⁴² E. J. Waggoner, “The Commentary. Notes on the International Lesson. God’s Covenant with Israel. (July 1.--Ex. 24:1-12.),” *ST* 14, 24 (June 22, 1888), pp. 377-379.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

The first covenant had no promises of forgiveness for sins or provision for writing the law upon the heart. The antinomians may claim that God made the new covenant with the Gentiles, but Waggoner was in complete agreement with Smith and Butler on this point, it was made with believing Israel.

Where Waggoner was far in advance of his contemporaries was to see the new covenant in complete effect at the time the old covenant was made. He asked if God did not know that Israel would fail in “their covenant.” Yes, He certainly did. God knew they could not keep the commandments.

Well, then, why did God enter into that covenant with them? “For the purpose of showing them their own weakness, and of directing their minds to the second covenant, which already existed, in effect, in the covenant made with Abraham.”³⁴⁴ This was God’s covenant which had “better promises.” They included forgiveness of sins in Christ and the Holy Spirit writing the law on the hearts of believers.

The war over the law in Galatians was being fought in the papers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The *Review* and *The Gospel Sickle* were the vehicles for church leadership to express their views on the ceremonial law in the Epistle to the Galatians. The *Signs of the Times* was the channel through which E. J. Waggoner expressed his views on the moral law in the Epistle to the Galatians.

If things were not bad enough, they could get worse. When theological tensions were heightened it provided an opportunity for paranoia to take over. The California conspiracy theory was afloat among church leaders.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 378, 379.

Chapter 11

THE CALIFORNIA CONSPIRACY³⁴⁵

As the 1888 General Conference approached, the California Conference delegation felt it wise to caucus. They anticipated certain subjects would arise at the conference. Chief among them would be the law in Galatians.

The delegates met at “Camp Necessity,” near Oakland, on June 25 and 26. Those present were E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, C. H. Jones, manager of the Pacific Press; W. C. White, son of E. G. White and member of the General Conference Executive Committee; and some others.

W. C. White took notes on the discussions. On June 26, 1888, they discussed Galatians 3:23 and 4:21. Specifically the “added law” of Galatians 3:19 was determined to mean “spoken” comparing Deuteronomy 5:22 and Hebrews 12:19. They were “both referring to Moral Law in the same in original of Gal. 3:19. No instance where this applies to the moral law.”³⁴⁶ It was brought out that J. N. Andrews had taken the same position on the moral law in Galatians in his early writings in the *Review*. Support was also derived from Wesley’s sermons.³⁴⁷

Elder White recalled the “Camp Necessity” meeting to Dan Jones, secretary of the General Conference:

. . . It was proposed that the editors of the *Signs*, C. H. Jones, and myself, and as many of the California ministers as we could get to join us should go out into the mountains and spend a few days in Bible study. . . . Eld. McClure was with us

³⁴⁵ This is Dan T. Jones description. See Letter Dan T. Jones to J. H. Morrison, March 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. “Some had come into it thinking there was a *conspiracy* on the part of the *Californians* to push their doctrines on the church through the pre-session at Minneapolis. . . .” Emphasis added.

³⁴⁶ W. C. White, “Notes Made at ‘Camp Necessity,’ June 25 and 26, 1888,” *MMM*, p. 419.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 418.

part of the time. We spent . . . one day in the examination of Eld. Butler's law in Galatians, and other topics bearing on that question, at the close of which Eld. Waggoner read some MS which he had prepared in answer to Eld. Butler's pamphlet. . . . At the close of our study, Eld. Waggoner asked us if it would be right for him to publish his MSS and at the next Gen. Conf. place them in the hands of the delegates, as Eld. Butler had his. We thought this would be right, and encouraged him to have five hundred copies printed. We made no secret of this, nor did we take any pains to make it public.³⁴⁸

E. J. Waggoner did prepare *The Gospel in Galatians* for the 1888 General Conference, but held off on its distribution until December 1888.

Elder A. T. Jones later gave his recollections of the retreat.

Some time before starting to that institute, C. H. Jones, general manager of the Pacific Press, W. C. White and some others asked Bro. Waggoner and me to go with them for a few days outing and we all study together the Scriptures on these "heretical" questions that were certain to come up in the institute and conference. Wind of this little innocent thing wafted to the brethren in Battle Creek as further confirmation of their settled view that Bro. Waggoner and I in furtherance of our scheme to revolutionize the doctrine of the denomination were working other brethren into our scheme so as to come to the institute and General Conference at Minneapolis so strongly fortified as to carry our scheme. We did not know till after the institute and conference were all over that the General Conference men in Battle Creek held these things concerning us, and we never in our lives having thought of any such thing came to the institute and conference as unknowing of what the other men were thinking as we were ourselves of what they thought that we were thinking. And so in all innocence we came to the meeting expecting just nothing but plain Bible study to know the truth.³⁴⁹

Early in 1888, Elder White had been in correspondence with Elder Butler about plans for an institute to precede the General Conference. Elder Butler had even written to Elder White about topics of discussion including the law in Galatians. Unfortunately, Elder Butler, for reasons of illness or business, forgot about his communication to Elder White and did not even

³⁴⁸ Letter W. C. White to Dan T. Jones, April 8, 1890, Boulder, Colorado. *MMM*, pp. 167, 168.

³⁴⁹ Letter A. T. Jones to C. H. Holmes, May 12, 1921, Washington D. C. *MMM*, p. 328.

admit to writing such a thing.³⁵⁰ “We took it for granted that Eld. [Butler] had talked up these matters with the Brn. [Brethren] in B. C. [Battle Creek] & that all understood his plans.”³⁵¹

Elder White continued making preparations for the institute at Minneapolis. He thought the institute had Elder Butler’s approval. Elder White arranged for Elders Waggoner and Jones to speak. Then something unexpected happened at the California camp meeting in September 1888. According to Elder White:

. . . A very bitter spirit was manifested by some toward Elds. Waggoner and Jones, instigated partly, I presume, by the personalities in Eld. Butler’s pamphlet, and arising partly from an old family grudge against Eld. Waggoner, Senior. We had a ministers Council in which almost every utterance of these brethren bearing directly or remotely on the Gal. question was criticised (*sic.*), but the brethren who opposed their teachings would neither consent to a fair examination of the subject nor would they let it alone. They preferred the piecemeal picking process,
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. . . .

The “wind” that “wafted” the report of this “minister’s council” to the General Conference men in Battle Creek was later revealed by W. C. White and Ellen White.

W. M. Healey was a minister and evangelist in the California Conference. Elder White: “What Eld. Healy [*sic.*] wrote to Eld. Butler, I do not know, but it seems to have given the impression that we were secretly working up a scheme, whereas, as we supposed, we were working in perfect harmony with Eld. Butler’s plans.”³⁵³

Ellen White wrote to Elder W. M. Healey:

Your suppositions regarding the position and work of Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner were incorrect. Your letters to Elder Butler, to warn him against something, were entirely misleading. He burned these letters, so that no one should learn the source of his light. These letters resulted in retarding the work of God for years, and brought severe and taxing labor upon me.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ Letter W. C. White to Dan T. Jones, March 18, 1890, Boulder, Colorado. *MMM*, p. 170.

One such experience as that we had in Minneapolis, as a result of your unwise letters, is sufficient. This experience has left its impress for time and for eternity. O my brother, I beg of you for Christ's sake to be careful how you plant in other minds the seeds of unbelief, to bring forth results as sad as those we have seen in the past.³⁵⁴

Healey tried to set the record straight with her from his perspective. He wrote to Ellen White:

There certainly has been a misconception in the matter of what I wrote to Brother Butler. Brethren Jones and Waggoner presented their views on the law in Galatians, at our Worker's meeting in Oakland. I was brought in unexpectedly to the brethren. It greatly agitated the camp, little companies all over the grounds warmly debated the question thus driving the spirit of the Lord from the camp. I learned that it was the intention of Brethren Jones and Waggoner to present the

matter in the same manner at the General Conference. Knowing the feeling that existed over that subject, and seeing the havoc on the camp ground I thought it would be a mistake to introduce it in that manner to the General Conference. . . . I corresponded . . . with Brother Butler. . . over the "law of Galatians." . . . I only wrote this one letter, nothing was said in argument for or against the teaching of the brethren. . . .³⁵⁵

Healey felt his letter to Butler was fairly innocuous and justified. He seemed almost oblivious as to its consequences. Ellen White viewed it in a different light.

There was no evidence that E. G. White was present at "Camp Necessity." But she told Healey on an earlier occasion: "Because I came from the Pacific Coast they would have it that I had been influenced by W. C. White, Dr. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones. She explained that as a result of Healey writing to the General Conference president she was suspected of being influenced by the trio.

She explained to Healey the consequences of his letter:

Brother Butler wrote me a letter of a most singular purpose. . . .

³⁵⁴ Letter E. G. White to W. M. Healey, August 21, 1901, Los Angeles, California. *EGW* 1888, pp. 1759, 1760.

³⁵⁵ Letter W. M. Healey to E. G. White, September, 1901. *MMM*, p. 309.

[He] said that he had received letters from Northern and Central California, saying that they would not send their children to the college if the views of E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones were brought in. . . . I learned that you were one who wrote letters of warning to Elder Butler. I asked him if I might see the letter, but he said that he had destroyed it. Strange proceedings! My brother, Is the Lord leading you? or is the enemy working upon your mind as upon the minds of others? I have come to the conclusion that this is the case. . . .

You wrote that plans were all laid, and that A. T. Jones, Dr. Waggoner, and W. C. White, had things all prepared to make a drive at the General Conference. And you warned Elder Butler--a poor sick man, broken in body and in mind,--to prepare for the emergency; and in that conference Elder Butler felt called upon to send in telegrams and long letters, "Stand by the old landmarks."

My testimony was ignored, and never in my life experience was I treated as at that conference; and I give you, my brother, with some others of our brethren, the credit of doing what you could to bring this state of affairs about. You may have thought that you were verily doing God service; but it served the cause of the enemy rather than the cause of God.³⁵⁶

This led to the belief among Butler and Smith that Ellen White was being influenced by E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, and her son. Thus, doubt was cast upon the source of her counsel for the church. By this means, the brethren in Battle Creek were led to believe there was a California conspiracy.

Ellen White confirmed that this feeling existed at the time of the Minneapolis conference and prior to it.

I was represented as telling things untrue, when I made the statement that not a word of conversation had passed between me and Brethren Jones and Waggoner nor my son Willie upon the Law in Galatians. If they had been as frank with me as they were in talking with one another against me, I could have made everything plain to them in this matter. I repeated this several times, because I saw they were determined not to take my testimony. They thought we all came to the conference with a perfect understanding and an agreement to make a stand on the Law in Galatians.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ Letter E. G. White to E. M. Healey, December 9, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 186, 187.

³⁵⁷ Letter E. G. White to "Dear Children of the Household," May 12, 1889. *EGW 1888*, pp. 310, 311.

On August 5, 1888, Ellen White sent a letter to the “Dear Brethren Who Shall Assemble in General Conference.”³⁵⁸ This was a powerful appeal for them to search the Scriptures. She asked them to set aside all party spirit, jealousy, envy, sarcasm, jesting and jeers towards each other. The Bible was not to be interpreted by coming to it with preconceived notions. “We are not to set our stakes, and then interpret everything to reach this set point.”³⁵⁹ The Scriptures are the final arbiter of all doctrine.

She left no doubt as to what she was talking about. “. . . It is nothing but the decided work of the devil to create suspicion and jealousies between the two branches of the work in our publishing houses.”³⁶⁰ She could sense this East-West conflict that was building between the Review and Herald office and the Pacific Press. This was nothing less than the principle of Satan taking control of God’s work seeking to divide and conquer. “The greatest curse among our ministers to-day is, seeking for the highest place full of self importance (*sic.*) and self-esteem,”³⁶¹

She ended her circular letter by appealing for “an investigation of truth in the spirit of Christ. All Phariseeism (*sic.*) is to be put aside.”³⁶² Pharisaism was nothing more than good old self and pride. Once self and pride was identified with the argument over truth there would be no submission to God’s Word.

Her appeals, for investigation of Scripture and open discussion at the future General Conference, fell on deaf ears at headquarters. From the information they were getting they assumed she was being influenced by the Pacific Coast bunch. The General Conference was

³⁵⁸ *EGW 1888*, pp. 38ff.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

trying to exclude discussion of the law from the session. It seemed to them that her calls for openness were playing right into the hands of Waggoner, Jones, and W. C. White. The latter had been writing Elder Butler about having an institute in which doctrinal matters would be discussed. Now everything seemed to be falling into place. The church leadership was convinced that a concerted effort would be made to doctrinally sabotage the conference.

In the face of Ellen White's call for open discussion and Bible study the reluctant Elder Butler announced in the pages of the *Review*, "An Institute Preceding the General Conference."

Leading brethren have suggested the holding of an Institute to precede the General Conference the present year, and have presented many forcible reasons in its favor. Should it be held. . . . Bible classes would also be held, in which various points might be considered, which are not well understood by all, and where possibly, some difference of opinion may exist. Such a move would undoubtedly tend to union, if taken in the right spirit.³⁶³

The tentativeness of Elder Butler toward the institute could be read between the lines.

Elders Butler and Smith had already made up their minds. They had already attached the issue of the moral law in Galatians to J. H. Waggoner and they had little respect for the man.

Elder Butler wrote of their feelings toward him to Ellen White:

I have heard J. H. Waggoner's arguments, and E. J. Waggoner's best efforts I think, and I have no expectation that my mind will be changed by anything that he can produce after the efforts of such a man as his father, Do you suppose that such a man as Eld. Uriah Smith, who once held that view and gave it up because he saw the weakness of it, and has heard all that J. H. Waggoner can produce on the subject, will ever be changed by anything that such a man as Dr. Waggoner could produce?³⁶⁴

He added: ". . . I look with the deepest alarm at the boldness and self-conceit manifested by our young men."³⁶⁵

³⁶³ G. I. Butler, "An Institute Preceding the General Conference," *RH* 65, 35 (August 28, 1888), p. 560.

³⁶⁴ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, October 1, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 101.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Minds were made up. They believed the conspiracy theory. Said Ellen White of the Battle Creek hierarchy, “they thought the law in Galatians would come up and they would go armed and equipped to resist everything coming from those men from the Pacific Coast, new and old.”³⁶⁶

Uriah Smith confirmed this was his state of mind going into the 1888 Conference.

The next unfortunate move, I think, was when the brethren in California met, just before the Minnesota Conference, and laid their plans to post up, and bring their views on the ten horns and the law in Galatians into that Conference. We were only informed of this by letter from California, a few days before it was time to start for Conference. I could hardly believe that it was so, but the report was soon confirmed after reaching that place. Brother Haskell came to me and asked how I thought those questions had better be introduced. I told him I thought they had better not be introduced at all; that they would only bring confusion into the Conference, and do only harm and not good. But he said the California brethren were decided on having them presented; and so they were introduced, and nearly ruined the Conference, as I feared they would. Had these disturbing questions not been introduced, I can see no reason why we could not have had as pleasant and blessed a conference there as we have ever enjoyed.³⁶⁷

During the California camp meeting in Oakland, some time after September 21,³⁶⁸ Ellen White arrived. She was extremely ill and at death’s door. But she was instructed to go and things would improve. Satan had been working both in the east and in the west to make of none effect the testimonies of the Spirit.

I was urged by the spirit of God to make strong appeals to my brethren who were to cross the Rocky Mountains to attend the general conference at Minneapolis. I urged them to humble themselves before God, and receive the assurance of his grace, to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, that they might be in a condition to impart light, and strength, and courage to those who should assemble in the conference, that there might be a union between the east and the west. . . .

³⁶⁶ Letter E. G. White to "Dear Children of the Household," May 12, 1889. *EGW 1888*, pp. 310, 311.

³⁶⁷ Letter Uriah Smith to E. G. White, February 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 154.

³⁶⁸ See E. G. White, Ms. 2, September 7, 1888, “Engaging in Worldly Speculation.” *EGW 1888*, p. 47.

The Lord had food whereby his servants might become energized and grow to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.³⁶⁹

For their part the West coast brethren had no inkling what was waiting for them at Minneapolis. They were prepared for discussions on the law, righteousness by faith, and Bible

prophecy. But as far as the mind set that was brewing among church leaders and some delegates, W. C. White, E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones were uninformed.

Jones said he had no idea. “In all innocence we came to the meeting expecting just nothing but plain Bible study to know the truth.”³⁷⁰

W. C. White said, “When I went to the Minneapolis meeting, I was as innocent as a goose, and while my old friends at B. C. [Battle Creek] and even my own relatives were saying the bitterest things against me. . . .”³⁷¹

Elder White went to Minneapolis thinking things had been arranged with Elder Butler for a discussion of the law in Galatians at the institute. Elder Waggoner came prepared with his “reference books.” What they met with was decided opposition. As Elder White put it, “. . . why our brethren from B. C. should oppose the matter, and claim that the proposition to discuss these questions was all a surprise, when we could see from their very actions that it was not a surprise, we never could understand.”³⁷²

“Several hundred” copies of Elder Butler’s pamphlet *The Law in Galatians* were distributed among the delegates by Elder Rupert. So discussions must have been anticipated by the Battle Creek brethren.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁷⁰ Letter A. T. Jones to C. H. Holmes, May 12, 1921, Washington, D. C. *MMM*, p. 328.

³⁷¹ Letter W. C. White to Dan T. Jones, April 8, 1890, Boulder, Colorado., p. 171.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Elder White was on the committee in charge of arrangements for the institute. The committee met at the beginning of the Minneapolis meetings to discuss the subjects and presenters. He argued for a fair amount of time to be given to both groups, just as he understood had been agreed upon with Elder Butler. But this only “secured” for him “the reputation of being an offensive partisan.”³⁷³

Elder White felt keenly about the fact that his mother, Ellen White, was being associated with the West Coast brethren because of him. She was being suspected of partisanship by association with him. He wrote about this to Dan Jones: “The saddest thought in all this matter is that it is necessary for me to separate from mother, that the suspicions which have gathered about me shall not also be attached to her work. . . . I must separate from her in order that her testimony may be believed.”³⁷⁴ Elder W. C. White viewed himself as a “peacemaker,” but as is often the case when caught in the middle, one gets blamed by both sides as being the problem.

A paranoia set in among the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the summer and fall leading up to Minneapolis. Elder W. M. Healey had reported a concerted effort on the part of E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, and W. C. White to get the Seventh-day Adventist Church to look at a change in its doctrines. These brethren had a secret meeting at “Camp Necessity” to plan their course of action. W. M. Healey wrote about this to Elder Butler. This resulted in the California conspiracy theory. Elders Butler, Smith and others believed they were facing an all-out theological war over the issue of the law in Galatians. They, along with their supporters, came prepared for battle at the 1888 Minneapolis Conference.

Furthermore, Ellen White was increasingly being associated with the trio from the West Coast. She was viewed as being influenced by them. Also, she was suspected of supporting

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

their efforts for change. The authority of Ellen White's ministry in the church was being called into question.

And so, the agenda was set for the historic Minneapolis Conference of 1888. It did not arise without a context. Years had been building to this point. Would the church heed the counsel of the Lord to search the Bible, or would it dig in its heels? Traditional views of the law and the covenants had already been staked out as landmarks.

Chapter 12

THE 1888 MINNEAPOLIS GENERAL CONFERENCE

Healdsburg College opened its seventh year September 3, 1888. Elder E. J. Waggoner was head of the “biblical department.” His full-time duties as senior editor of *The Signs of the Times* prevented him from teaching on a more regular basis.³⁷⁵

The Gospel Sickle, published by the Review office, was a media of traditional views on the law in Galatians. G. W. Morse responded to a “correspondent” who held that the “school-master” (Galatians 3:25) was the ten commandments.

But the law of ten commandments has no reference to Christ, and is in no way calculated to bring us to Christ. It would be more reasonable to talk about Christ’s bringing us to the law. . . .

. . . By reading the book of Galatians, it must be evident to the most casual observer that the law under discussion, as the one that expired at the cross, is the ceremonial law.³⁷⁶

The Gospel Sickle did not survive past 1888. Ellen White had said there was no need for it. It was in direct competition with the *Signs*.

Elder Butler had been sick repeatedly over the course of three years. He said his resistance had been lowered by all the stress involved with his heavy responsibilities as president of the General Conference. He believed that the issue over the law in Galatians was an “unnecessary and unjustifiable” evil.³⁷⁷ He even blamed Ellen White for his illness from May-August, 1888. He wrote: “I have never had any doubt myself but what it was sadness of heart

³⁷⁵ “Healdsburg College,” *ST* 14, 32 (August 17, 1888), p. 506.

³⁷⁶ G. W. Morse, “Christ’s Fulfillment of the Law,” *GS* 3, 17 (September 1, 1888), p. 133.

³⁷⁷ Letter G. I. Butler to E. G. White, October 1, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 80.

brought upon me by the position you took that gave me that four month's (*sic.*) sickness."³⁷⁸
She had failed to respond from Switzerland, to his pleas for help against Waggoner and Jones throughout the year 1886.

Then her letter, on February 18, 1887, to the young men was just what he was looking for in condemning their position. He wrote to Ellen White:

There have been simply two views held on this subject of the added law, the one Eld. Waggoner has held that the added law refers to the moral 10 commandments the other that the added law referred to the laws particularly Jewish. . . . They are the points on which the whole matter turns, which has been in debate and controversy for years.³⁷⁹

Elder Butler vehemently protested Waggoner's Sabbath School lessons in the *Instructor* during the summer of 1886.³⁸⁰ Then the "long series" on Galatians 3 in the *Signs*, later that summer of 1886, was circulated to some 20,000 readers.³⁸¹ This was a direct challenge to the leadership and doctrinal authority of the church. It was the president's duty to say something. Elder Butler complained to her: "You never answered me a word concerning it or paid the slightest attention to these things,"³⁸²

All these worries had made him so sick that now he was ready to lay down his burdens. He would not be able to attend the Minneapolis conference. Others would have to take up the cause. He would have to nurse himself and his wife back to health at home in Battle Creek. But he warned the loyalists to "stand by the landmarks."

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

The ministerial institute opened on Wednesday, October 10-16, in the church at 4th Ave. S. and Lake St., Minneapolis, Minnesota.³⁸³ It was held in the basement of the church. It continued until the beginning of the General Conference opening meeting on October 17.

As the institute was opening, Ellen White wrote of Elder Butler's diatribe letter addressed to her. She said to her daughter-in-law, Mary White:

Elder Butler has sent me a long letter, a most curious production of accusations and charges against me, but these things do not move me. . . . Elder Smith and Butler are very loathe to have anything said upon the law in Galatians, but I cannot see how it can be avoided. . . . Tomorrow noon the law in Galatians is to be brought up and discussed.³⁸⁴

Saturday evening, October 13, a long letter from Elder Butler was read to the delegates which kept them up until ten o'clock. Ellen White wrote to Mary White: "The letter written by Eld. Butler was a good thing to open this question so we are in for it."³⁸⁵

On Sunday, she wrote to Elder Butler: "I tremble for you and Elder Smith, for I know from the light God has been giving me from time to time for the last 45 years that you are working upon principles that are not altogether after God's order."³⁸⁶ Just because he was president did not give him the right to treat with contempt younger men "whom God has been raising up." "I cannot be pleased with your spirit, Brother Butler; it is not Christlike."³⁸⁷ The church did not need men who all think like their leaders. They would become "little less than

³⁸³ The chronology followed here is taken from Clinton Wahlen, "Selected Aspects of Ellet J. Waggoner's Eschatology and Their Relation to His Understanding of Righteousness by Faith, 1882-1895," (Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1988), pp. 71-77.

³⁸⁴ Letter E. G. White to Mary White, October 9, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, p. 68.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Letter E. G. White to G. I. Butler, October 14, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, p. 86.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

machines.” Elder Butler had a “prejudice and jealousy” toward the Pacific Coast brethren which was dividing the church.

Ellen White wrote to Elder Butler:

You speak of the affliction that came upon you because of the “way this matter (the question of the law in Galatians) has been pushed and urged by responsible men in the cause, and by your seeming attitude, which has brought me to my present condition more than any other one thing.” I have no knowledge of taking any position in this matter. I have not with me the light God had given me on this subject, and which had been written, and I dared not make any rash statement in relation to it till I could see what I had written upon it. My attitude therefore could not be helped. I had not read Dr. [E. J.] Waggoner's articles in the *Signs*, and I did not know what his views were.³⁸⁸

While in Switzerland she had a nighttime communication with a “guide.” “He stretched out his arms toward Dr. Waggoner, and to you, Elder Butler, and said in substance as follows:

‘Neither have all the light upon the law, neither position is perfect.’”³⁸⁹ The Lord had much light

much light to give to His people. No one should designate the way the Lord should reveal that light. He would choose His own channels.

She would not accept the blame for his illness.

If my letter caused so great consequences to you as five months' illness, I shall not be held accountable for it; for if you had received it in the right spirit, it would have had no such results. I wrote in the anguish of my soul in regard to the course you pursued in the [1886] General Conference two years since. The Lord was not pleased with that meeting. Your spirit, my brother, was not right. The manner in which you treated the case of Dr. Waggoner was perhaps after your own order, but not after God's order.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 97.

On Monday, October 15, E. J. Waggoner began a series of nine lectures on the law and the gospel. He delivered his seventh lecture on Thursday, October 18, at 9 o'clock. He spoke on the law in Galatians.³⁹¹ Uriah Smith provided a summary of this lecture in the daily bulletin.

At 9 a.m. Elder E. J. Waggoner gave another lesson on the law and gospel. In this lesson the first and second chapters of Galatians, in connection with Acts 15, were partially presented by him to show that the same harmony existed there as elsewhere; that the key to the book was "justification by faith in Christ," with the emphasis on the latter word; that liberty in Christ was always freedom from sin, and that separation from Christ to some other means of justification always brought bondage. He stated incidentally that "the law of Moses" and "the law of God" were not distinctive terms as applied to the ceremonial and moral laws, and cited Num. xv., 22-24, and Luke ii., 23-24, as proof. . . . Appeals were made by Brother Waggoner and Sister White to the brethren, old and young, to seek God, put away all spirit of prejudice and opposition, and strive to come into the unity of faith in the bonds of brotherly love.³⁹²

According to W. C. White's notes, Waggoner compared Acts 15 with Galatians. "Acts 15:28, 29. To abstain from pollutions (*sic.*) of idols in a way covers all the 10 com. We have taught that the typical law was done away. Did the Apostles fasten on them things done away years before."³⁹³

Waggoner said of Galatians 2:19 that it was the ceremonial law "nailed to the cross. Did it kill Paul?"³⁹⁴ It never killed anyone. Elder Waggoner was on record as stating there "was nothing in the ordinances of the ceremonial law to condemn anyone. Condemnation could come only through violation of the ten commandments."³⁹⁵ The ceremonial law condemned no one. The sinner was "condemned by the moral law alone, because of their sins. . . ."³⁹⁶ "Justification

³⁹¹ R. DeWitt Hottel, "Diary of 1888," *MMM*, p. 506.

³⁹² *General Conference Daily Bulletin* 2, 1 (Oct. 19, 1888), Minneapolis, Minnesota. *MMM*, p. 359.

³⁹³ W. C. White, "Notes Made at Minneapolis, Minnesota, October, 1888," *MMM*, pp. 423, 424.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

³⁹⁵ E. J. Waggoner, "Comments on Galatians 3. No. 9," *ST* 12 (September 2, 1886), p. 534.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

has reference only to the moral law. From the transgression of that, man needs justification; but the law cannot justify any sinner, it can only condemn. And so it drives him to Christ, that he may be justified by faith.”³⁹⁷

For the condemned sinner in the Old Testament, the law drove him to Christ by faith. Then he expressed that faith in Christ his substitute by availing himself of the sacrificial system. The ceremonial law was the gospel proclaimed to sinners condemned by the moral law in the Old Testament. If the law in Galatians 3 was the ceremonial law, then it would affect the understanding of the Abrahamic covenant.

Ellen White who witnessed Waggoner’s lectures left the record of what he said:

Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law. This was no new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel’s message. What is the burden of that message? John sees a people. He says, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 14:12.³⁹⁸

We are left with no doubt about the subject matter of Waggoner’s presentations. They dealt with the relationship between justification by faith and the moral law. Furthermore, the law and the covenants of Galatians 3 were interrelated with justification. Their proper understanding constituted the third angel’s message of Revelation 14:12.

On Friday, October 19, Waggoner’s seventh lecture quoted Galatians 3:17:

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Then he compared “the Covenant with Abraham with the Second Covenant.”³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ E. G. White, "Looking Back at Minneapolis," written in November or December, 1888. *EGW 1888*, p. 229.

³⁹⁹ W. C. White, “Notes Made at Minneapolis, Minnesota, October, 1888,” *MMM*, p. 424.

By this he meant that the everlasting covenant was one and the same with the second covenant promise God made to Abraham through Christ.

On Sunday, October 21, Waggoner delivered lecture eight:

At 9 a.m. Elder Waggoner continues his lessons on the law and gospel. The Scriptures considered were the fifteenth chapter of Acts and the second and third of Galatians, compared with Romans 4 and other passages in Romans. His purpose was to show that the real point of controversy was justification by faith in Christ, which faith is reckoned to us as to Abraham, for righteousness. The covenant and promises to Abraham are the covenant and promises to us.⁴⁰⁰

Evidently at one point during the conference, Waggoner took up the covenant allegory of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4:21ff. and maintained that the old covenant (Hagar) was a condition of works-salvation that still existed running concurrently with the new.⁴⁰¹ According to the recollections of R. T. Nash,⁴⁰² who was a delegate in 1888, Elder Morrison in rebuttal to Waggoner made the point that Adventists had always believed in justification by faith and were children of the free woman in the covenant allegory of Galatians 4.

On Monday, October 22, Elder Waggoner delivered lecture nine. It was “a discussion of law and Galatians, or Justification by Faith, that lasted an hour and a half.”⁴⁰³ “Elder Waggoner spoke at the early morning session on the subject of “Two Covenants, and Their Relation to the Law.”⁴⁰⁴

On Tuesday, October 23, there was rebuttal time given to Uriah Smith, R. M. Kilgore, and J. H. Morrison who lectured on the Law in Galatians. Elder Morrison had been appointed

⁴⁰⁰ “Third Day’s Proceedings,” *General Conference Daily Bulletin* (Oct. 21, 1888).

⁴⁰¹ As he stated in *The Glad Tidings* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1900, 184ff.

⁴⁰² Letter R. T. Nash to Ellen G. White Estate, June 25, 1955; Document File 189.

⁴⁰³ “They Are for Temperance,” *Minneapolis Tribune* (October 23, 1888). *MMM*, p. 557.

⁴⁰⁴ “Sabbath Disclosures,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (October 22, 1888). *MMM*, p. 582.

by the General Conference to present the traditional viewpoint of the law in Galatians. This day was to be a turning point for Ellen White.

Elder R. M. Kilgore made some statements that day to which Ellen White referred to in her “Morning Talk” on October 24. She said:

Had Brother Kilgore been walking closely with God he never would have walked onto the ground as he did yesterday and made the statement he did in regard to the investigation that is going on. That is, they must not bring in any new light or present any new argument notwithstanding they have been constantly handling the Word of God for years, yet they are not prepared to give a reason of the hope they have because one man is not here. Have we not all been looking into this subject?⁴⁰⁵

W. C. White, in his notes from the 1888 conference, provided some detail as to Elder Kilgore’s remarks. Later that day R. M. Kilgore of the General Conference delegation said:

I opposed bringing up the question, especially when it was said that Dr. W [Waggoner] was misrepresented. I considered it an unfortunate matter to come up here. If W [E. J. Waggoner] had been sick I would have opposed its coming up. It is cowardly. There has never been an opportunity as Dr. W.[aggoner] has had. Another thing has troubled me. The experience of 16 yrs ago. Report “A Test. to Eld. [J. H.] Waggoner.”⁴⁰⁶

Elder Kilgore felt the discussion of the law in Galatians was out of order because Elder Butler was not present. If Elder E. J. Waggoner had been in a similar state of sickness as was Elder Butler, he would have objected to its discussion for the lack of his presence at the meeting. This gave an unfair advantage to Elder Waggoner to air his beliefs to the delegates and bias them. Besides, had not the Spirit of Prophecy already denounced the moral law interpretation of Galatians in a testimony delivered to Elder J. H. Waggoner sixteen years ago?

R. T. Nash provided a first hand account of the proceedings. Elder R. M. Kilgore said:

“Elder George I. Butler is detained at Battle Creek on account of his sick wife and cannot be here until later on, I would like to move that we stop this discussion

⁴⁰⁵ E. G. White, “Morning Talk,” October 24, 1888. *EGW 1888*, p. 151.

⁴⁰⁶ W. C. White, “Notes Made at Minneapolis, October, 1888.” *MMM*, p. 424.

on the subject of ‘Righteousness by Faith’ until the president of the General Conference can be present.”

Mrs. E. G. White who had been seated on the platform arose to her feet and. . . said: “Brethren this is the Lord’s work, does the Lord want His work to wait for Elder Butler? The Lord wants His work to go forward and not wait for any man.” There was no reply to what she said.

Elders Jones and Waggoner went on with their message.⁴⁰⁷

Ellen White’s firm support paved the way for the message to be presented otherwise it would have been silenced by some leaders.

On Wednesday, October 24, Ellen White addressed the delegates about Elder Kilgore’s attempt to get a resolution passed by the conference in order to restrict the discussion of the law in Galatians.

Had Brother Kilgore been walking closely with God he never would have walked onto the ground as he did yesterday and made the statement he did in regard to the investigation that is going on. That is, they must not bring in any new light or present any new argument notwithstanding they have been constantly handling the Word of God for years, And then to take the position that because Elder Butler was not here that that subject should not be taken up. I know this is not of God. . . .

Well, one says, "Your prayers and your talk run in the channel with Dr. Waggoner." I want to tell you, my brethren, that I have not taken any position; I have had no talk with the doctor nor with anyone on this subject, and am not prepared to take a position yet. . . . If Elder Waggoner's views were wrong, what business has anyone to get up and say what they did here yesterday? If we have the truth it will stand. These truths that we have been handling for years--must Elder Butler come and tell us what they are?

. . . Elder Kilgore, I was grieved more than I can express to you when I heard you make that remark, because I have lost confidence in you.⁴⁰⁸

Then Elder U. Smith during his rebuttal time said: “3/4 of what Bro. W. [E. J. Waggoner] presents I fully agree to. I admired Eld. [J. H.] W.’s articles 16 years ago.”⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ R. T. Nash, “An Eyewitness Account.” *MMM*, p. 354.

⁴⁰⁸ E. G. White, “Morning Talk,” October 24, 1888. *EGW 1888*, pp. 151-153.

There followed a rebuttal by the skilled debater J. H. Morrison, president of the Iowa Conference. R. T. Nash recalled: “. . . the opposition selected a man to speak their minds in opposition. . . . Elder J. H. Morrison was their spokesman.”⁴¹⁰ He had a chalkboard set up with opposing propositions written: “‘Resolved--That the Law in Galatians Is the Ceremonial Law’-- signed J. H. Morrison. ‘Resolved--That the Law in Galatians Is the Moral Law.’ It awaited E. J. Waggoner’s signature. He never signed off on it.”⁴¹¹

Elder Morrison “opposed this coming up because no one is present who has given this subject special study.”⁴¹² Then he spoke right to the issue of “the Law in Galatians. Is it trusting in keeping a Law that is right to keep, or is it trusting in a law that it is not right to keep?”⁴¹³ For Morrison the law to which Galatians addressed itself that was “not right to keep” was the ceremonial law. “What sub(??) [subject] in Galatians. The Law of Moses. . . .”⁴¹⁴ At one point he said the law in Gal. 5:3 was “another whole law of which circumcision is a part.”⁴¹⁵

Elder Morrison tried to settle the issue of the ceremonial law in Galatians by quoting from Ellen White’s book *Sketches from the Life of Paul*.⁴¹⁶ The issue agitating the Galatians was “whether the Gentiles should submit to circumcision and keep the ceremonial law.”

When he came to Galatians 3, Elder J. H. Morrison said, according to W. C. White’s handwritten notes taken at the time--“Chap. 3 Paul’s argument . . . Yoke of Bondage, The Cer. Law. . . .”⁴¹⁷ He was championing the traditional position.

⁴⁰⁹ W. C. White, “Notes Made at Minneapolis, Minnesota, October, 1888.” *MMM*, p. 427.

⁴¹⁰ R. T. Nash, “An Eyewitness Account.” *MMM*, p. 352.

⁴¹¹ LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), pp. 243, 244.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ E. G. White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul* (Review and Herald, Battle Creek, Michigan: 1883), pp. 192, 193.

Elder J. H. Morrison spoke on Galatians 5:1. “What mean, Yoke of bondage & the Liberty. The Yoke was not the law of 10 Com. but cer [ceremonial] precepts.”⁴¹⁸

E. G. White reported about Elders Kilgore and Smith speaking and Elder Morrison’s lecture:

When they came into the meeting in the morning I was surprised to hear Elder Kilgore make the kind of speech he did before a large audience of believers and unbelievers--a speech which I knew could not be dictated by the Spirit of the Lord. He was followed by Elder Smith, who made remarks of the same order, before Brother Morrison began his talk, which was all calculated to create sympathy, which I knew was not after God's order. It was human but not divine. And *for the first time* I began to think it might be we did not hold correct views, after all, upon the law in Galatians, for the truth required no such spirit to sustain it.⁴¹⁹

This revealed that Ellen White held with the traditionalists regarding the ceremonial law in Galatians.

However, it was the spirit during that meeting which caused her to reconsider. It would be some time before she would endorse Waggoner’s view of the law, but this was its conception. She began to doubt the traditionalist’s view of the law in Galatians because of the spirit of debate in which they conducted themselves.

Again, on Wednesday, October 24, at 9:00 a.m., J. H. Morrison lectured on the law in Galatians. Ellen White presented the “Morning Talk.” She stated the spirit in the meeting was like Lucifer’s rebellion and compared it to just like the Jews. She had not made up her mind on the issue of the law. She believed there was light through investigation of the Scriptures.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁷ W. C. White, “Notes Made at Minneapolis, Minnesota, October, 1888.” *MMM*, p. 426.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ E. G. White, “Looking Back at Minneapolis,” November or December, 1888. *MMM*, p. 221. Emphasis added.

⁴²⁰ E. G. White, “Morning Talk,” October 24, 1888. *EGW 1888*, pp. 151-153.

On Thursday and Friday, Morrison again presented his views on the law in Galatians. Then beginning on Sunday, October 28, he continued through Tuesday lecturing on the same subject.

On Thursday, November 1, Ellen White spoke a few thoughts. She said:

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

Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct. But I believe him to be perfectly honest in his views, and I would respect his feelings and treat him as a Christian gentleman.⁴²¹

In this talk Ellen White hinted that God may have given Waggoner and Jones some light for her, even though she was inspired of God. Jones and Waggoner were not inspired.

This was a surprisingly humble position for her to take. “The Lord has been pleased to give me great light, yet I know that He leads other minds, and opens to them the mysteries of His Word, and I want to receive every ray of light that God shall send me, though it should come through the humblest of His servants.”⁴²²

Throughout the conference, Butler had been sending telegraphed messages to the delegates in an effort to influence them against Waggoner’s position on the law in Galatians.⁴²³

Ellen White warned about these messages from “your president.”

The messages coming from your president at Battle Creek are calculated to stir you up to make hasty decisions and to take decided positions; but I warn you against doing this. You are not now calm; there are many who do not know what they believe. It is perilous to make decisions upon any controverted point without dispassionately considering all sides of the question. Excited feelings will lead to

⁴²¹ E. G. White, “To Brethren Assembled at General Conference,” November, 1888. *MMM*, pp. 163, 164.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴²³ E. G. White, “Standing by the Landmarks,” Ms. 13, 1889. *EGW 1888*, p. 516.

rash movements. It is certain that many have come to this meeting with false impressions and perverted opinions. They have imaginings that have no foundation in truth. Even if the position which we have held upon the two laws is truth, the Spirit of truth will not countenance any such measures to defend it as many of you would take.⁴²⁴

According to Waggoner's theology, the ten commandments were the schoolmaster which drove the sinner "unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Ellen White, while not agreeing with all of his positions (so far as she understood them), backed him on that central point in the struggle of 1888. "I see," she told the delegates, "the beauty of the truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the Doctor has placed it before us. It harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience."⁴²⁵ The law drove people to Jesus for forgiveness.

What kind of spirit did E. J. Waggoner demonstrate throughout his presentations? Ellen White said: "I insisted that there should be a right spirit, a Christlike spirit manifested, such as Elder E. J. Waggoner had shown all through the presentation of his views. . . ."⁴²⁶ Evidently he did not prejudice his audience by his personal demeanor.

On Sunday, November 4, the final day of the conference, Ellen White wrote to her daughter-in-law Mary White. "This has been a most laborious meeting, for Willie and I have had to watch at every point lest there should be moves made, resolutions passed, that would prove detrimental to the future work."⁴²⁷ The Butler, Smith, Kilgore, and Morrison group sought to force a vote to establish the correct creedal position on the relationship of law and gospel.

A. T. Jones later recalled this effort at the conference:

⁴²⁴ E. G. White, "To Brethren Assembled at General Conference," November, 1888. *EGW 1888*, p. 165.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁴²⁶ E. G. White, "Looking Back at Minneapolis," Ms 24, 1888. *EGW 1888*, p. 219.

⁴²⁷ Letter E. G. White to Mary White, November 4, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, p. 182.

At Minneapolis, in 1888, the G C “administration” did its very best to have the denomination committed by a vote of the G C to the covenant of “Obey and Live,” to righteousness by works.

The attempt failed then; but from that day till this, that spirit and that element have never ceased that endeavor; though when they found that they could not accomplish it just then, they apparently and professedly accepted righteousness by faith. But they never did accept it in the truth that it is. They never did accept it as life and righteousness from God; but only as “a doctrine” to be put in a list or strung as a “subject” with other “doctrinal subjects.”⁴²⁸

There may have been several occasions when this was attempted. W. C. White mentioned “there is almost a craze for orthodoxy. A resolution was introduced into the college meeting, that no new doctrine be taught there till it had been adopted by the General Conf. Mother and I killed it dead, after a hard fight.”⁴²⁹

Uriah Smith felt that justification by faith was just a “rider” to bring in “the real point at issue at that Conference [which] was the law in Galatians. . . .”⁴³⁰

In May, 1889, at the ministerial institute held in Ottawa, Kansas, J. S. Washburn, who was trying to discover where the truth lay in the current controversy, solicited and was granted an interview with Ellen White. He recalled some sixty years later that interview: “Sister White told me of her Guide in Europe, who had stretched his hands out, and said, ‘There are mistakes being made on both sides in this controversy.’ Then she added that the ‘law in Galatians’ is not the real issue of the conference. The real issue is righteousness by faith!”⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ Alonzo T. Jones, “God’s Everlasting Covenant,” *Remarks made in the Battle Creek Sanitarium Sabbath School*, n.p., July 20, 1907, p. 31.

⁴²⁹ Letter W. C. White to Mary White, November 3, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *MMM*, p. 123.

⁴³⁰ Letter Uriah Smith to E. G. White, February 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 154.

⁴³¹ Transcript of Robert J. Wieland interview of J. S. Washburn, June 4, 1950, in Wieland, *An Introduction to the 1888 Message Itself* (Baker, Oregon: Adventist Forum Association, 1977), pp. 137-39.

Ellen White did not agree with everything E. J. Waggoner had to say regarding the law in Galatians. The evidence indicated that she at that time saw things as did the traditionalists regarding the ceremonial law in Galatians. However, she was beginning to question whether their interpretation was correct because of their demeanor. She did see the beauty of the gospel in what Waggoner had to say about justification by faith. The law convicted of sin and brought the sinner to Christ. In Christ the sinner received the forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of the law. Simply put, this was the plan of salvation. In short, this was the fulfillment of the new covenant.

All credible, first-hand evidence indicated that Waggoner presented justification by faith in the context of the covenants and the law in Galatians, Romans and Hebrews. Though the actual lectures of Waggoner were not recorded, eyewitnesses, such as W. C. White, newspaper accounts, and the “daily bulletin,” took notes and accounts which strengthen this conclusion.⁴³² In addition, articles and pamphlets that Waggoner published just prior to the Minneapolis Conference indicated that this was the message he brought to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It cannot be stressed enough. E. J. Waggoner’s message of righteousness by faith was constructed in connection with his understanding of the law and the covenants. To misunderstand, discount, or reject any aspect of this trio would be to distort the 1888 message. The law in Galatians may never be a landmark, but it was crucial for understanding God’s plan of salvation for the ages.

The message of the law in Galatians was rejected at Minneapolis by many Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders. Ellen White remained open to the question, pending study of the

⁴³² Clinton Wahlen, “What Did E. J. Waggoner Say at Minneapolis?” *Adventist Heritage* 13, 1 (Winter, 1988), pp. 22-37.

Scriptures. The same was true regarding her understanding of the covenants. However, she completely endorsed the message of justification by faith as the third angel's message in verity.⁴³³

The aftermath of the 1888 conference was doctrinal confusion on these points and irritable feelings toward brethren. The church was in for a long journey to resolve these issues.

⁴³³ E. G. White, "Repentance the Gift of God," *RH* (April 1, 1890).

Chapter 13

“THE MOST INCOMPREHENSIBLE TUG OF WAR”

Ellen White saw the 1888 Conference as the “most incomprehensible tug of war we have ever had among our people.”⁴³⁴ “. . . The terrible experience at the Minneapolis Conference is one of the saddest chapters in the history of the believers in present truth.”⁴³⁵

At the 1888 Conference nothing really was resolved about the law in Galatians. It would continue to be a festering sore in the side of Adventism for years to come. Ellen White did not have the light to resolve the issue. Evidently God had other means for His people to determine the truth on this matter. If she was always the oracle of truth, she would be no better than the pope in deciding matters of doctrine.

October 24, was a crucial day at the Minneapolis conference when Ellen White said to the delegates--

Now, the words that were spoken here were that Elder Waggoner was running this meeting. Has he not presented to you the words of the Bible? Why was it that I lost the manuscript and for two years could not find it? God has a purpose in this. He wants us to go to the Bible and get the Scripture evidence. I shall find it again and present it to you. But this investigation must go forward.⁴³⁶

Five weeks afterward Ellen White confirmed the fact that her views on the law in Galatians had not changed. In a letter to Brother William Healey she wrote:

I have not changed my views in reference to the law in Galatians, but I hope that I shall never be left to entertain the spirit that was brought into the General Conference. I have not the least hesitancy in saying it was not the Spirit of God. If every idea we have entertained in doctrines is truth will not the truth bear to be

⁴³⁴ Letter E. G. White to Mary White, November 4, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, p. 182.

⁴³⁵ Letter E. G. White to C. P. Bollman, November 19, 1902. *EGW 1888*, p. 1796.

⁴³⁶ E. G. White, “Morning Talk,” October 24, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *EGW 1888*, p. 153.

investigated? Will it totter and fall if criticized? If so, let it fall, the sooner the better. The spirit that would close the door to investigation of points of truth in a Christlike manner is not the Spirit from above.

Why A. T. Jones and Dr. Waggoner hold views upon some doctrinal points which all admit are not vital questions, different from those which some of the leading ones of our people have held. But it is a vital question whether we are Christians, whether we have a Christian spirit, and are true, open, and frank with one another. . . .

I have not told you that my views are not changed in regard to the law in Galatians. [*sic.*] But if we have had the truth upon this subject our brethren have failed to be sanctified through it; the fruits are not after Christ's order, but bitter as gall.⁴³⁷

The issue of the law would have to be revisited at a later time.

But shortly after the conclusion of the Minneapolis conference, E. J. Waggoner was writing Sabbath School lesson notes on "The Covenant Renewed."⁴³⁸ The selection of Scripture was taken from Joshua 24:15-19:

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, . . . therefore will we also serve the Lord; And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord. . . he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Waggoner said: "the words of Joshua were strictly true; they could not serve the Lord in the sense of keeping the covenant made at Sinai; they could serve him only by availing themselves of the help promised in the second covenant. . . ." ⁴³⁹ The second covenant or Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ.

The first covenant which they had made at Sinai was their "unconditional agreement" to keep the law of God. When they broke it by worshipping the golden calf, God was released from

⁴³⁷ Letter E. G. White to William Healey, December 9, 1888, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 186, 188.

⁴³⁸ E. J. Waggoner, "Notes on the International Lesson. The Covenant Renewed. (November 25--Josh. 24:19-28.)," *ST* 14, 44 (November 16, 1888), p. 696, 697.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 696.

His promise. And since there was no forgiveness or divine aid under that covenant to keep the law, there was no hope for release from the violation of the law in the old covenant.

The editorial policy of the *Review* was to counteract the moves of the *Signs* regarding the covenants and the law. R. A. Underwood had been a delegate to the Minneapolis session representing the Ohio Conference as its president from 1882-1889. He said: “. . . It was the same

Jesus Christ who made the new covenant that made the old.”⁴⁴⁰ He did not view the old covenant as the covenant of the people.

Underwood implied that anyone who denied the Christ-centered origin of the old covenant was an antinomian.

But from what we have heard from many, especially those who have opposed the law of God, we would be *inclined* to think that the old covenant had no connection in any manner with Christ; that it was bad, wholly bad, without a redeeming thing in it at all, and unworthy of being associated with the God of the Bible. . . . Who is its author? And we answer, Jesus Christ, the loving Saviour of mankind.⁴⁴¹

Waggoner would certainly be “inclined” to argue that Christ was not the author of the old covenant. It was the people’s covenant.

There was a further problem that persisted with Elder Underwood that lay beneath the surface in both Butler’s and Smith’s theologies of the old covenant. In the “Mosaic dispensation” the “promises were more of a national character, and largely confined to one

⁴⁴⁰ R. A. Underwood, “Christ and His Work,” *RH* 66, 37 (Sept. 17, 1889), p. 579.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

nation.”⁴⁴² The question begged to be asked. Then could only the Jews be saved during the Old Testament times?

Waggoner said of ancient Israel, after they had worshipped the golden calf and violated the ten commandments--“. . . The old covenant was no longer of any service to them; they could repent of their sins and receive pardon, but not by virtue of the covenant made at Sinai; for forgiveness of sins they must look to Christ, or we might say to the second covenant,”⁴⁴³

Uriah Smith directly challenged this statement in a *Review* article:

It was only a type or shadow. The blood of animals could not take away sin; hence no sin was really removed by any or all of that ceremonial service in itself considered. But that was a means ordained of God through which men were to manifest their faith in a Redeemer to come; and a faithful compliance with this arrangement secured to them an interest in Christ’s work, just as much as a compliance with the conditions of the new covenant secures it to us. To say,

therefore, that the old covenant made no provision for the forgiveness of sin, is to deny the relation of its offerings to Christ, as type to antitype.⁴⁴⁴

Elder Smith had a fundamental misunderstanding of what the old covenant was all about. It was the people’s promise to obey. As such there could be no forgiveness of sins associated with it. God did not promise to forgive sins under the old covenant.

Furthermore, Smith seemed to imply that by complying with the provisions of the ceremonial law the Israelites were saved. Again, this had a tone of works-righteousness attached to it. Strictly speaking, there was no salvation in animal sacrifices.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 580.

⁴⁴³ E. J. Waggoner, “Notes on the International Lesson. The Covenant Renewed. (November 25--Josh. 24:19-28.),” *ST* 14, 44 (November 16, 1888), p. 696.

⁴⁴⁴ U. Smith, “Bible Reading on the Sanctuary.--No. 4,” *RH* 66, 34 (August 27, 1889), p. 536, 553.

The Abrahamic covenant was based on the same law as the first, the moral law, but it had “better promises.” The better promises were forgiveness of sins in Christ and writing the law in the heart by divine grace.

Did God know they could not keep the Sinai covenant? Yes, He knew the weakness of their promises. The problem was they did not know their faultiness. So He let them do it in order that they might see their need of the covenant He had made with Abraham long ago.

Waggoner concluded: “God has provided but one Saviour and but one plan of redemption, and in every age the conditions of salvation have been faith and obedience.”⁴⁴⁵ These conditions were provided in the new covenant. God put His will in the heart in such a thorough manner that it became but the spontaneous will of man.

In 1889 Waggoner published *Prophetic Lights*.⁴⁴⁶ The chapter on “The Promises to Israel” had been serialized in the *Signs* as Sabbath Schools lessons under the title “The Inheritance of the Saints.”⁴⁴⁷ *Prophetic Lights* provided a convenient reference tool and easy access to his writings on the covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua and David. The book did not deal with the covenant at Sinai.

Beginning in 1888, E. J. Waggoner was one of three corresponding editors of *The Bible Echo*, the Australian version of the *Signs*. Some of his articles on the law and covenants were reprinted there.⁴⁴⁸ He was receiving international attention with his writings.

⁴⁴⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “Notes on the International Lesson. The Covenant Renewed. (November 25--Josh. 24:19-28.),” *ST* 14, 44 (November 16, 1888), p. 696.

⁴⁴⁶ E. J. Waggoner, *Prophetic Lights: Some of the Prominent Prophecies of the Old and New Testaments Interpreted by the Bible and History* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1889).

⁴⁴⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast. The Inheritance of the Saints,” *ST* 11 (February 12-August 20, 1885).

⁴⁴⁸ E. J. Waggoner, “The Call of Abraham,” *BE* 4, 9 (May 1, 1889), pp. 137, 138; “The Throne of David,” *BE* 4, 13, 14 (July 1, 8, 1889), pp. 201, 202.

But there was a spirit of Pharisaism that prevailed in the churches of North America. Ellen White wrote about the aftermath of 1888. “There were also a number of delegates who returned to Battle Creek before us who were forward to make reports of the meeting at Minneapolis, giving their own incorrect version of the matter, which was unfavorable to Brethren A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, W. C. White and myself, and the work I had been compelled to do at that meeting.”⁴⁴⁹

They felt Ellen White had changed. She had to correct this at the Battle Creek Tabernacle. They would not let A. T. Jones speak there because they deferred to Uriah Smith’s judgment.⁴⁵⁰ She had experienced this same treatment at the hands of the Methodists during the 1844 movement when she and her family were cast out of the church.

Shall there be with the people of God the cropping out of the very same spirit which they have condemned in the denominations, because there was a difference of understanding on some points--not vital questions? Shall the same spirit in any form be cherished among Seventh-day Adventists--the cooling of friendship, the withdrawal of confidence, the misrepresentation of motives, the endeavor to thwart and turn into ridicule those who honestly differ with them in their views? .
..⁴⁵¹

The leadership was acting this way because they felt Waggoner was denying an old landmark of the ceremonial law in Galatians which would lead to the abolition of the Sabbath.

Elder Butler had been sending telegrams to the delegates at Minneapolis to “stand by the landmarks.” Ellen White evaluated all this talk about the “landmarks.”

. . . The minds of men were fixed, sealed against the entrance of light, because they had decided it was a dangerous error removing the "old landmarks" when it was not

⁴⁴⁹ E. G. White, “Experience Following the 1888 Minneapolis Conference,” Ms. 30, late June, 1889. *EGW 1888*, p. 352.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

moving a peg of the old landmarks, but they had perverted ideas of what constituted the old landmarks.⁴⁵²

In the spring of the year 1889, E. J. Waggoner went on a speaking itinerary to the East. After spending a few days with his mother in Burlington, Michigan, and stopping by Battle Creek for official duties, he went on for camp meeting at Williamsport, Pennsylvania, May 28. A. T. Jones was already there. He had been preaching righteousness by faith with marked success. Soon Ellen White joined them. They were hampered by a terrible spring flood which put the grounds under three feet of water on Sabbath, June 1.⁴⁵³

Later that fall he was reported to have attended a ministers' institute at Nashville, Tennessee. Elder J. O. Corliss was there. He mentioned that he had been studying--

the subjects of the covenants, and the law in Galatians. I came to my conclusions without consulting any one but the Word. . . . I think now, that I have the matter straight in my mind, and I can see the beauty and harmony of the Dr.'s [E. J. Waggoner] position on the Galatians law. Since I came here, however, I have talked with him upon the subject with much comfort, and I find that my conclusions are perfectly in harmony with his so far as we have canvassed the matter.⁴⁵⁴

There were some discovering the "beauty and harmony" of the law and covenants.

Following the 1888 Minneapolis Conference, ministers' institutes and campmeetings filled the agenda of Ellen White, A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner. They shared the message of righteousness by faith.

⁴⁵² E. G. White, "Standing by the Landmarks," Ms. 13, 1889, *EGW 1888*, p. 589.

⁴⁵³ E. J. Waggoner, "Editorial Correspondence," *ST* 15, 24 (June 24, 1889), p. 374.

⁴⁵⁴ Letter J. O. Corliss to W. C. White, September 29, 1889, Nashville, Tennessee. *MMM*, pp. 149, 150.

Chapter 14

THE STORY OF *BIBLE READINGS*

A couple of very important doors opened for the 1888 message of the covenants in the year 1889. One was the Sabbath School lessons on Hebrews and the other was *Bible Readings for the Home*.

Bible Readings for the Home first appeared in January, 1884, under the title *The Bible-Reading Gazette*.⁴⁵⁵ “Bible-Reading.--No. 66,” was composed by Elder R. A. Underwood entitled “The Two Covenants.” In 1888 it was revised. It reflected the dispensationalism of Elders Uriah Smith and G. I. Butler. The statement read: “The old covenant was in force from Moses to Christ, and at his death on the cross, gave place to the new, which continues until the end of time.”⁴⁵⁶ There was a large graphic illustrating “The Two Covenants.” The cross was the great divide between the old covenant and the new covenant.⁴⁵⁷ There was no recognition of the new covenant being in effect during the Old Testament. Nothing was indicated that God made a covenant promise to Abraham by which he was justified by faith in Christ.

The basic Webster’s definition of a covenant as “a mutual agreement of two or more persons or parties” was assumed.⁴⁵⁸ The children of Israel “agreed to obey” under the old

⁴⁵⁵ *The Bible-Reading Gazette: Containing One hundred and Sixty-Two Bible-Readings on a Great Variety of Subjects, Doctrinal, Practical, and Prophetical; adapted to All Classes of Society* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald, 1885).

⁴⁵⁶ *Bible Readings for the Home Circle: Comprising One Hundred and Sixty-two Readings for Public and Private Study, in Which Are Answered Over Twenty-eight Hundred Questions on Religious Topics* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald Publishing House, 1888), p. 215.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

covenant. In a similar manner, the question was asked about those under the new covenant. “When we partake of the bread and wine, to what do we *pledge* ourselves?--To be true to *our covenant* relation with God.”⁴⁵⁹ Covenant relations with God were posited on the basis of the believer’s “pledge” and “our covenant.” Whereas, Abraham believed God’s covenant. God accounted him righteous.

The 1889 edition of *Bible Readings* on “The Two Covenants,” was revised by E. J. Waggoner. Elder Dan T. Jones described Waggoner’s explanation of the change.

He [E. J. Waggoner] considered that the Review & Herald Publishing Board were committed to his position as they had accepted a “Reading” which he had prepared on that subject, and put it in the “Bible-readings” in place of the one that was in the first edition of that book, and have been circulating it by the tens of thousands everywhere.⁴⁶⁰

E. J. Waggoner’s “Bible Reading” on the two covenants was quite different from the one on “The Two Covenants” found in the 1888 edition of *Bible Readings*. Question seven made the point that the ten commandments were God’s covenant forming the “basis” of what the people were “to perform” in their “agreement” with God.⁴⁶¹ The old covenant was the people’s promise “to keep all the commandments of God, so as to be worthy of a place in his kingdom. This was a virtual promise to make themselves righteous; for God did not promise to help them.”⁴⁶² The brethren differed with Waggoner on this issue. Elder Smith and others believed there was forgiveness under the old covenant.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 219. Emphasis supplied.

⁴⁶⁰ Letter Dan T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, February 9, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan, p. 5. General Conference Archives.

⁴⁶¹ *Bible Readings for the Home Circle: Comprising One Hundred and Sixty-two Readings for Public and Private Study, in Which Are Answered Over Twenty-eight Hundred Questions on Religious Topics* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1889), p. 215.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 217.

But Waggoner noted: “The fact that Christ, as mediator of the second covenant, died for the remission of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, shows that there was no forgiveness by virtue of that first covenant.”⁴⁶³ The text cited was Hebrews 9:15 as he continued:

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the *first* testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”⁴⁶⁴

Question 27 identified “the second covenant” with “the Abrahamic covenant.” Elder Waggoner’s “notes” by implication completely demolished the dispensationalism of his contemporaries.

Neither must it be supposed that the first or old covenant existed for a period of time as the only covenant with the people before the promise of the second or new covenant could be shared. If that had been the case, then during that time there would have been no pardon for the people. What is called the “second covenant” virtually existed before the covenant was made at Sinai; for the covenant with Abraham was confirmed in Christ (Gal. 3:17), There is no blessing that can be gained by virtue of the second covenant, that was not promised to Abraham.⁴⁶⁵

The second covenant was in place since the time of Adam.

The illustration of the cross as the dividing point between the old and new covenants in the 1888 edition was deleted from the 1889 edition of *Bible Readings*. The idea that the two covenants could run concurrently was revolutionary in Adventist covenant theology. This was a paradigm shift that some were unwilling to make.

Question 28 asked why the Sinai covenant was made. After all, it was the solemn promise of the people to obey God’s commandments or suffer the penalty of violation which is

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

death. Waggoner supplied the answer. They needed to be confronted with their complete inability to keep their own promise and thus to recognize their sinfulness. They were altogether too confident of themselves. They would be convicted of their sins by the pronouncements of the law. They would literally be “driven” for help to God’s covenant promise He made with Abraham. There was forgiveness during the time of the old covenant, but not through its provisions. Pardon was offered only in God’s covenant with Abraham.

It can readily be seen that Elder Waggoner understood the covenants through the apostle Paul’s presentation in Galatians. It was reflected in the closing statement:

. . . God’s plan in the salvation of sinners, whether now or in the days of Moses, is: The law sent home emphatically to the individual, to produce conviction of sin, and thus to drive the sinner to seek freedom; then the acceptance of Christ’s gracious invitation, which was extended long before, but which the sinner would not listen to; and lastly, having accepted Christ, and being justified by faith, the manifestation of the faith, through. . . the living of a life of righteousness by faith in Christ.⁴⁶⁶

The three uses of the law were conviction of sin, driving the sinner to Christ, and as promised guidance for Christian living only through the faith of Christ.

Interestingly enough Waggoner’s influence on *Bible Readings* lasted well into the twentieth century. Waggoner’s comments on “The Two Covenants” endured well beyond the 1930 edition of *Bible Readings*.⁴⁶⁷ Even by 1951 (after *Bible Readings* was revised in 1949) this statement was made regarding the old covenant: “Under this covenant the people promised to keep all the commandments of God in order to be His peculiar people, and this without help.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴⁶⁷ *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* (Washington, D. C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1930, new, revised, and enlarged edition), pp. 293-299.

This was virtually a promise to make themselves righteous.”⁴⁶⁸ “. . . There was no forgiveness by virtue of the first covenant. . . . There was no Christ in it. It was of *works* and not of *grace*.”⁴⁶⁹

The 1951 *Bible Readings* taught that the new covenant made with Abraham was established upon the promise of God. There was no thread of dispensationalism to be found in this edition. It said:

Neither must it be supposed that the first, or old, covenant existed for a time as the only covenant with mankind, and that this must serve its purpose and pass away before anyone could share in the promised blessings of the second or new covenant. In that case, during that time there would have been no pardon for anyone. What is called the new, or second, covenant virtually existed before the covenant made at Sinai; for the covenant with Abraham was confirmed in Christ (Galatians 3:17), and only through Christ is there any value to the new, or second, covenant.⁴⁷⁰

Here were two covenants running parallel one with the other. One was the plan of salvation for all times and the other was man’s promise of righteousness by obedience to the law.

Elder Waggoner’s presentation of the covenants was nothing more or less than the three angels’ messages. The banner that Seventh-day Adventists were to display to the world was “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Justification by faith was the 1888 message. Through Christ came all the blessings of the covenant. “It is synonymous with the ‘everlasting gospel.’ Rev. 14:6. The everlasting gospel is the glad tidings or good news, or the everlasting covenant.”⁴⁷¹ This statement clearly identified the “everlasting covenant” as part of the package

⁴⁶⁸ *Bible Readings for the Home* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951, revised 1949), p. 361. The same statements were found in *Bible Readings for the Home* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958, revised), pp. 387-393.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 361, 362.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 359, 360. This statement was found in *Bible Readings for the Home* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1963), p. 292.

⁴⁷¹ E. J. Waggoner, “Letter to the Hebrews. Chapter 8:8-12. (Lesson 16. January 18, 1890), *ST* 16, 1 (January 6, 1890), p. 10. This was the first time in Waggoner’s writings that “the everlasting covenant” was identified as “the glad tidings.”

of truth involved in the message of justification by faith. Without this component of the covenants the message of 1888 would be distorted. The truth of salvation came only through God's covenant relations with sinners.

Dan Jones may have been sarcastic when he made the remark that colporteurs had "been circulating it [*Bible Readings*] by the tens of thousands everywhere."⁴⁷² But this was exactly what God intended should take place (Revelation 18:1).

The other opportunity for educating the church membership regarding the 1888 message of the covenants was the "Sabbath-School lessons on the Letter to the Hebrews for Senior Classes." They were to run from October 5, 1889 to June 21, 1890. Elder J. H. Waggoner had authored the lessons for three quarters. He died of an aneurysm on April 17, 1889.⁴⁷³ So Elder E. J. Waggoner was asked to finish the editing. Ellen White mentioned that E. J. Waggoner was the author of the Sabbath School lessons for the first quarter of 1890.⁴⁷⁴

When the lessons were sent to the composers, numbers 19 and 20 were lost. During the General Conference session of 1889 the Executive Committee met on October 18 and "Moved that Eld. E. J. Waggoner be requested to re-write lessons 19 and 20 of the Book of Hebrews, which have been lost, and have them ready for examination before the close of the Conference. Carried."⁴⁷⁵ Waggoner found it impossible to write just the two lessons without rewriting four others. So six lessons were composed by him and submitted to the lesson Committee which met November 14, 1889. C. H. Jones called the meeting and sent a list of the committee members to

⁴⁷² Letter Dan T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, February 9, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan, p. 5. General Conference Archives.

⁴⁷³ J. N. Loughborough, "Elder J. H. Waggoner," *ST* 15, 19 (May 20, 1889), p. 294.

⁴⁷⁴ Letter E. G. White to Willie and Mary White, March 13, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 627. They were also discussed in a Letter Dan T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, February 9, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁴⁷⁵ Letter C. H. Jones to Uriah Smith, n.d.

the secretary Miss Alice Bartlett. Unfortunately, she left off the name of Uriah Smith. When this mistake was discovered, Jones sent copies over to Smith by the hand of a messenger. Smith was in a hurry to attend a funeral that day and did not have time to look at them. The lessons remained in his possession for several days and then he returned them to the Review office. He did not notice the new lessons were edited by Waggoner.

When the lessons were later printed in the *Review* Smith expressed his displeasure to C. H. Jones: “These objectionable features which appear in the book, and consequently came out on the Review, are not found on the galley proofs which we examined. Now, when, by whom, and on what authority these changes were made, is what puzzles us.”⁴⁷⁶ Jones felt that Smith inferred that “we have tried to secure the influence of the Review by running in lessons which you have not had the privilege of examining.”⁴⁷⁷

Smith had published a disclaimer in the *Review* regarding the Sabbath School lessons. Jones response was “. . . I should think it strange that you should make such a criticism in the *Review* after having the opportunity of examining the lessons before they were printed.”⁴⁷⁸ Smith felt that a switch had been pulled on him without his knowledge.

E. J. Waggoner’s approach to the covenants was very different from his father’s understanding. When he came to shaping up the first quarter curriculum from January-March 1890 on Hebrews 8-10, he revised a good number of them.⁴⁷⁹

These lessons were well worth studying. Addressing the Horeb covenant, Waggoner asked: “. . . Wherein must the first [covenant] have been faulty? Ans.--In the promises.”⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. Emphasis his.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ They also ran in the *Signs* 15-16 (December 23, 1889-March 1890.)

Hebrews 8:6, 7. “Therefore the first covenant was a promise on the part of the people that they would make themselves holy.”⁴⁸¹ This was an impossibility.

Then some concluded that God was not fair in making this covenant with them if He knew they would fail. Therefore, the first covenant must have provided forgiveness of sins and divine help. But this was far from the case. There was no pardon and no Holy Spirit power for righteous living.⁴⁸²

Waggoner continued the study by asking: “. . . wherein is the great difference between the first covenant and the second? Ans.--In the first covenant the people promised to make themselves holy; in the second, God says that he will do the work for them.”⁴⁸³ “That righteousness covers all past sins, it issues through the life in present good works.”⁴⁸⁴

Citing Galatians 4:24, Waggoner pointed out that the old covenant “gendereth to bondage.” Man would have to obey the law to be released from “past sins” and walk in liberty. Since he is incapable, the first covenant brings nothing but bondage.⁴⁸⁵

God never made a covenant with the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:12). The covenants were made with the Jews (Romans 9:4). If Gentiles believed in the Redeemer they enjoyed the blessings of the covenant (Ephesians 2:13-20).⁴⁸⁶

If there was no forgiveness of sin under the old covenant, how were they saved? Circumcision was a sign that Israel could enjoy the blessings of God’s covenant with Abraham.

⁴⁸⁰ *Sabbath-School Lessons on the Letter to the Hebrews for Senior Classes.* Jan. 4 to Mar. 29, 1890, (Oakland, California: International Sabbath-School Association, 1889), p. 10.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁸⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “Letter to the Hebrews. Chapter 8:8-12. (Lesson 16).” January 18, 1890), p. 10.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

“This was a covenant of faith, already confirmed by the word and oath of the Lord, in Christ, the Seed, and it was not disannulled by any future arrangement. Gal. 3:15-17.”⁴⁸⁷

The old covenant had ordinances and a sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1). “But these were superadditions, not at all necessary to the covenant, but quite necessary as types of the sacrifice and priesthood of the new covenant.”⁴⁸⁸ They were typical in nature. There was no pardon

inherent with them. They were signs pointing to the new covenant. When the people availed themselves of them they expressed faith in the new covenant.

Waggoner continued:

All transgressions committed under that covenant that were pardoned, were pardoned by virtue of the second covenant, of which Christ is mediator. Yet although Christ’s blood was not shed until hundreds of years after the first covenant was made, sins were forgiven whenever they were confessed.⁴⁸⁹

God had already confirmed His covenant with Abraham with a promise and an oath. “These ‘two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie,’ [Hebrews 6:17, 18] made the sacrifice of Christ as efficacious in the days of Abraham and Moses as it is now.”⁴⁹⁰

The old covenant did not exist by itself. Waggoner said: “What is called the ‘second covenant’ virtually existed before the covenant was made at Sinai; for the covenant with Abraham was confirmed in Christ (Gal. 3:17); and it is only through Christ that there is any value to what is known as the second covenant.”⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ *Sabbath-School Lessons on the Letter to the Hebrews for Senior Classes*. Jan. 4 to Mar. 29, 1890, (Oakland, California: International Sabbath-School Association, 1889), p. 17.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

The General Sabbath School Association was responsible for the lessons. C. H. Jones was manager of the Pacific Press. He sent them out for review to the committee members, but he

forgot Elder Uriah Smith on his mailing list.⁴⁹²

As a courtesy to Elder Smith, C. H. Jones later sent the lessons for the first quarter of 1890 including portions edited by Waggoner. He explained the mix up. When Elder Smith finally picked up the sabbath school lessons and saw J. H. Waggoner's name on them, he thought everything was in order. He did not read C. H. Jones' attached note of explanation that E. J. Waggoner had revised some of his father's lesson notes on Hebrews. Elder Smith then sent them on for publication with his approval.⁴⁹³ This resulted in a great deal of trouble for Elder Smith.

After the denomination had been studying the lessons for a full month Elder Smith published a disclaimer in the *Review* about them.

To the many inquirers who are writing us concerning the new theological departure in the Sabbath-school lesson, . . .the Bible. . . is our only rule of faith. . .

. . . It is not necessarily to be understood that the *Review*. . . indorses (*sic.*) all that they may contain. . . .

. . . It is not only the privilege but the duty of those who detect their disagreement with the Scriptures, to reject them without scruple and without reserve.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² C. H. Jones was up for criticism by the General Conference secretary for this oversight. "I hope . . . hereafter more care would be taken that the sabbath-school lessons should be thoroughly examined and approved before being sent out all over the country." Letter Dan T. Jones to C. H. Jones, February, 1890. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

⁴⁹³ C. H. Jones to Uriah Smith, February 18, 1890.

⁴⁹⁴ U. Smith, *RH* (January 28, 1890).

Such a statement of disapproval regarding Sabbath School lessons was unprecedented. It certainly caught the attention of Elders George Butler and O. A. Olsen.⁴⁹⁵

Even Dan Jones, the General Conference secretary and member of the committee, felt Smith's disclaimer of the Sabbath School lessons was unusual. He wrote to Elder Butler that Smith--

. . .wrote a note which has stirred up a hornet's nest; and it is considered by some that Bro. Smith did a very unkind thing when he put in that note. I have never seen the Elder quite so ready to stand up in defense of what he believes to be right, as he is at the present time.⁴⁹⁶

Letters objecting to the Sabbath School lessons were pouring in from all over the country including Iowa, Nebraska, Idaho, Michigan, and Indiana. Jones reported to Elder Olsen that "everything is moving along nicely, except in reference to the sabbath-school lessons. I understand there is quite considerable flurry over the covenant question. They are having it up and down in the different teachers' meetings."⁴⁹⁷

Dan Jones taught Sabbath School at the Battle Creek Tabernacle. He was very agitated about the lessons that were revised by E. J. Waggoner. He wrote to Elder George I. Butler:

I refer, especially, to our late Sabbath-school lessons, in which the covenant question has been presented there has never anything happened in my life that has taken me down like this. I have just felt so thoroughly upset by the whole affair that I have hardly known how to act or what to do. They came on us like a thunder bolt from a clear sky. . . . But by some hook or crook the matter has been wound and twisted in until it is there in all its glory.⁴⁹⁸

Dan Jones reported to E. W. Farnsworth: ". . . The sabbath-school lessons had just come out, and there was a good deal in them that I could not indorse [*sic.*] on the subject of the covenant

⁴⁹⁵ Letter O. A. Olsen to G. I. Butler, March 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁴⁹⁶ Letter Dan T. Jones to George I. Butler, February 13, 1890. Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁴⁹⁷ Letter Dan T. Jones to O. A. Olsen, January 16, 1890. Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁴⁹⁸ Letter Dan T. Jones to George I. Butler, February 13, 1890. Battle Creek, Michigan.

question; so I resigned as teacher of the Sabbath-school, and stayed away from the school a couple of weeks.”⁴⁹⁹

Dan Jones felt that E. J. Waggoner had taken advantage of the leading brethren. He complained to C. H. Jones, the manager of the Pacific Press:

. . . Hereafter more care would be taken that the sabbath-school lessons should be thoroughly examined and approved before being sent out all over the country. It is that disposition to crowd in and take advantage that seems to be so manifest in both Dr. Waggoner and Eld. A. T. Jones that makes their labors unpleasant to some of the brethren at Battle Creek, I think. . . . Here are brethren that have stood by the work from its commencement, have grown up with it, and have done much to formulate the doctrines held by our people and to bring the cause up to the position that it now occupies; and for young men to come in with new theories and, without going to these men at all, begin to teach them in our denominational schools and ministerial institutes, and run them through the sabbath-school lessons, seems altogether out of place. . . .⁵⁰⁰

Dan Jones believed this to be “disrespectful to our old and tried laborers.”

These few Sabbath School lessons on the covenants in Hebrews were to add fuel to the fires of controversy that were already burning in Battle Creek. Ellen White lamented, “What a battle I am obliged to fight!”⁵⁰¹ The glad tidings of the everlasting gospel which God meant to be a blessing to His people would become a curse.

In summary, during the period from 1889-90, two opportunities presented themselves for E. J. Waggoner to publicize his law and covenant theology. The Review and Herald publishers accepted his “Bible Reading” on the two covenants. His reading replaced the old one which endorsed the traditional viewpoint of the law and covenants. Waggoner’s reading was published in the 1889 edition of *Bible Readings for the Home*.

⁴⁹⁹ Letter Dan T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, February 9, 1890. Battle Creek, Michigan. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Archives.

⁵⁰⁰ Letter Dan T. Jones to C. H. Jones, February 19, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁰¹ E. G. White, Diary Entry, January 7, 1890, Ms. 25, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 521.

The other opportunity came with Elder Waggoner revising the adult Sabbath School lessons on the book of Hebrews dealing with the section on the covenants. Through a mix up in the editorial process by C. H. Jones and Uriah Smith, the lessons were published.

With all the church studying the 1888 message of the law and the covenants, it created quite a stir at church headquarters in Battle Creek. The secretary of the General Conference, Dan Jones, resigned as Sabbath School teacher at the Battle Creek Tabernacle in protest.

These lessons were to precipitate the revisiting of the whole issue of the law and the covenants. These points had not been resolved by the denomination in 1888. They would continue to be flash points that would spark tensions again and again. It was like Minneapolis all over again.

Chapter 15

“MINNEAPOLIS” ALL OVER AGAIN

If the 1888 Minneapolis conference focused on righteousness by faith and the law in Galatians, the November 5, 1889-March 25, 1890, ministers' Bible school centered on the covenants.⁵⁰² This issue had been taking on a new sense of urgency ever since the 1888 conference. The Sabbath School lessons of the first quarter (1890) had certainly placed it at the top of the agenda.

Dartmouth graduate Prof. W. W. Prescott, developed the concept of ministerial training in an era when there was no theological education in the church. Some fifty students⁵⁰³ assembled in the east vestry of the Tabernacle⁵⁰⁴ on October 31, at 9:00 a.m. to hear lectures by Uriah Smith, Prof. W. W. Prescott, Prof. McKee, W. A. Colcord, A. T. Jones and Dr. E. J. Waggoner.⁵⁰⁵ Others were later brought in by the General Conference committee to prepare themselves as teachers in future Bible schools. They included R. M. Kilgore, R. C. Porter, J. S. Washburn,⁵⁰⁶ Matthew Larsen, H. E. Robinson, and J. H. Durland.⁵⁰⁷

A. T. Jones presented the covenants. A student who was present at the lectures, Elder E. P. Dexter wrote:

⁵⁰² “The 1890 ministers' school struggled through the winter. . . . The major bone of theological contention had been the covenants, a topic that Waggoner's sabbath school lessons had recently reignited.” George R. Knight, *A User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), p. 120.

⁵⁰³ Letter O. A. Olsen to D. H. Druillard, April 1, 1890, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

⁵⁰⁴ D. T. Jones, *RH* (April 1, 1890).

⁵⁰⁵ Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W. W. Prescott* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1992), p. 50. Waggoner was “first suggested” as “faculty” for the ministers' school by Elder O. A. Olsen. See Letter O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, September 18, 1889, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁰⁶ Letter Dan T. Jones to J. S. Washburn, January 2, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁰⁷ Letter Dan T. Jones to Matthew Larson, January 2, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Since attending Bro. Jones Lectures I have given the *covenants* considerable study, and while cheerfully accepting the advanced light which has accompanied his exposition of this subject, I cannot be blind to the fact that this subject is *not fully understood* by our people. This lack, and want of harmony was exposed in the S. S. lessons on Hebrews. Since then, it has seemed to me, this subject has been avoided.⁵⁰⁸

A. T. Jones had to leave for New York City before Christmas 1889 in order to edit the *Sentinel*. E. J. Waggoner came in as Jones's replacement. Dan Jones reported to H. E. Robinson that "it was with considerable reluctance that Dr. Waggoner was secured for the remainder of the term. . . ."⁵⁰⁹ Waggoner was concerned about the *Signs*. He wanted to improve the paper. Therefore, he could not envision another year of teaching at the ministerial institutes and Bible schools.⁵¹⁰

E. J. Waggoner was teaching a course on the Book of Isaiah during the latter part of 1889.⁵¹¹ But he changed directions at the first of the year and announced he would be teaching the covenants.

Elder Dan T. Jones, secretary of the General Conference, was in charge of the school in the absence of its principal, Prof. W. W. Prescott. Prescott had to be away on business. Elder Jones wrote about what happened:

. . . I heard that Dr. Waggoner had announced in his school that he would take up the covenant question the next Monday morning. . . I thought about it a little, and concluded I would go and have a talk with Bro. White and the Dr. in

⁵⁰⁸ Letter E. P. Dexter to E. G. White, March 11, 1891. Dexter said that "Bro. A. T. Jones [was] at the ministers' institute, Battle Creek, 1888-89. . . ." These dates given by Dexter are incorrect and should be 1889-90. There was no ministers' institute from 1888-89. Furthermore, he referred to question 9 in "The Two Covenants," *Bible Readings* on the topic. Question 9 was revised between the 1888 edition and the 1889 edition of *Bible Readings*. Question 9 in the latter edition did contain the information he was talking about. Question 9 in the 1888 edition had no such information. Emphasis supplied.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter Dan T. Jones to H. E. Robinson, January 3, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵¹⁰ Letter Dan. T. Jones to J. H. Morrison, January 2, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵¹¹ Letter Dan T. Jones to M. Larson, January 2, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

reference to the matter, and try to prevail on them to lay over that question, at least until Prof. Prescott and Eld. Olsen could be here.⁵¹²

Dan Jones felt that if Waggoner had not consulted with the “managing board of the school or the other members of the faculty, it would have caused great dissatisfaction from all quarters.”⁵¹³

Dan Jones went first to Elder W. C. White about the problem. Elder White advised him to talk to Dr. Waggoner to work out the problem. On Friday, Jones talked with Waggoner about holding off on teaching the covenants to the ministers until it could be decided by Prof. Prescott and Elder Olsen. Dan Jones and Waggoner talked for a couple of hours about the problem. Waggoner had already made his plans to begin teaching on Monday and was not about to change his mind.

Sabbath morning, Dan Jones sought Ellen White’s advice on the matter. She felt a committee ought to investigate both sides of the covenant question before it was presented on Monday morning. A committee ought to look at it Sabbath afternoon or else postpone Waggoner’s presentation, which was scheduled for the beginning of the week.

Again, Dan Jones went to Waggoner and asked him to put off the discussion of the covenants for a while, “but he was immovable.” Waggoner was not going to change his plans. He did, however, agree to meet with a committee. Dan Jones discussed it further with Elder Smith, and they called an investigative committee for Sunday evening at seven o’clock.

Dan Jones was appointed chairman. The group consisted of Elders U. Smith, R. C. Porter, McCoy, W. C. White, J. E. White, Prof. E. B. Miller, and Dr. E. J. Waggoner. Their

⁵¹² Letter Dan T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, February 9, 1890.

⁵¹³ Letter Dan T. Jones to C. H. Jones, February 1890.

discussions went on until midnight. Elders W. C. White, McCoy and Prof. E. B. Miller supported Waggoner in teaching the class. Elder U. Smith opposed the covenants being taught.

Dan Jones was asked to lead the discussion regarding the points of difference on the covenants. He said there was no better way to get at the issues than to quote the Sabbath School lessons on Hebrews. He quoted from them as saying--“‘Let the student note that the terms of the old covenant were really all on the part of the people.’ I told them that I could not agree with that statement, and asked if all the others present agreed with it. Bro. Smith said that he did not; Bro. Porter also dissented.”⁵¹⁴

When Elder Smith was asked why he disagreed with the statement, he asked if Deuteronomy 26:17-19 referred to the old covenant.

And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.⁵¹⁵

Elder Smith's point was that God had made all these promises to Israel if they would be obedient. Israel would be a peculiar people. God would make them high above all nations. They would be an holy people unto the Lord. These promises were God's blessings under the old covenant. On this basis, Elder Smith objected to Waggoner's statement made in the Sabbath School lessons. Smith believed that God made the terms and the promises of the old covenant, and the people agreed to those terms.

Waggoner never responded to Smith's point. He might have pointed out that, had the Israelites kept their promise to obey the ten commandments, then all the blessings of God would

⁵¹⁴ Letter Dan T. Jones to C. H. Jones, February 1890.

⁵¹⁵ Deuteronomy 26:18, 19.

have been the consequence. But how could a sinful people obey? They were doomed to failure. And since there was no divine pardon or aid connected with the first covenant, it was an impossibility for the people to gain life through that plan.

Though Dr. Waggoner did not directly respond to Elder Smith, he did object to the approach by the committee in picking apart the lessons rather than “investigating the covenant question.”

Then, if what Dan Jones reported was true, Dr. Waggoner made some astonishing assumptions. Jones explained:

. . . He [E. J. Waggoner] had understood that all agreed with his position on the covenant question. He considered that the REVIEW & HERALD Publishing Board were committed to his position as they had accepted a “Reading” which he had prepared on that subject, and put it in the “Bible-readings” in place of the one that was in the first edition of that book, He also intimated very decidedly that Eld. Smith had practically committed himself in favor of his position.⁵¹⁶

The second assumption on which the Publishing Board agreed with him may have been true since they incorporated his changes into the 1889 edition of *Bible Readings*. However, the first and third assumptions seemed remarkable, indeed, given all that had been published through the Adventist papers up to that point.

Dan Jones also reported that E. J. Waggoner “intimated very decidedly” about Elder Smith favoring his position. This might have been inferred from Elder Smith being on the editorial committee of the Sabbath School lessons on Hebrews. He had signed his approval and sent the lessons off to the publishers.

⁵¹⁶ Letter Dan T. Jones to C. H. Jones, February 1890.

Waggoner also “charged the leading men in the General Conference with having endorsed Canright’s view on the covenants, Bro. Smith among the rest.”⁵¹⁷ This charge was denied by both Dan Jones and Uriah Smith.

At any rate, Dan Jones objected to Elder Waggoner teaching the covenants in the ministers’ Bible school because some of the church leadership were not in agreement with his teachings. Jones reported to R. A. Underwood: “It seems to me it would be better to cause a little ripple than to have things taught on the authority of the denomination, in a denominational school, that are not indorsed (*sic.*) by the denomination.” Jones was willing to take the fallout for his decision as well as the considerable “feeling in the class since”⁵¹⁸ that resulted from preventing Waggoner’s plans to discuss the covenant question in the Bible school.

Dr. Waggoner replied that he came to the school with the understanding that he could “teach his own views.” He really had not wanted to come in the first place, but when he finally agreed to come, he was told that he could teach as he saw fit.

On Monday around six o’clock in the evening, Dr. Waggoner handed Dan Jones a letter of resignation for the one hour class time when the covenants were to be taught. This threw Jones into confusion about what to do. So on Tuesday he tried to get Dr. Waggoner to reconsider, but neither would compromise on their issues. It was decided between Dan Jones and W. C. White that Elder Smith should take over the class.

Then Dan Jones and Uriah Smith--

arranged to make a smooth matter of it before the class as we could; by stating that it had been thought best for Bro. Smith to come in with some of his lines of work for the present, and put off the covenant question for the present, as Dr. Waggoner was overworked and needed rest; and it had been expected that Bro. Smith would

⁵¹⁷ Letter Dan T. Jones to George I. Butler, February 13, 1890.

⁵¹⁸ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, January 30, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

assist in the Bible-school, and so on. They put it on me to introduce the matter before the class. And after the decision was made we only had ten minutes to go on before the hour Bro. Smith was going to take would begin. So I went over with Bro. Smith, and got there a few minutes before the Dr. closed his class. After he had closed, he [Dr. Waggoner] said: "Sometimes the unexpected happens, and something very unexpected has happened to me. There have been objections made to my teaching the covenant question in this school, very much to my surprise, and I will not take it up for the present. Bro. [D. T.] Jones will explain to you the change that has been made." That upset my little speech completely that I had fixed up; so I could only say that it had been thought best to postpone the presentation of the covenant question for the present at least, and that Bro. Smith would take up the sanctuary question.⁵¹⁹

It appeared that Dan Jones was less than honest with the students about what had happened precipitating Dr. Waggoner's departure from the classroom.

In writing to Elder George Butler, Dan Jones said:

I have not written to any one scarcely in reference to it. I thought I would stand the whole brunt of the things myself until some turn could be made to get out of the dilemma in an honorable way. I am glad now that I have not written to you in the past in reference to this question, as I have been asked by some parties if I had received letters from you lately, and so on. I do not wish them to hold you responsible for my wild actions; for I know you would counsel moderation in such matters.⁵²⁰

What Dan Jones considered a "little bobble in the Ministers' school,"⁵²¹ others viewed as a major incident. If he thought things would pass off quietly without notice, he was wrong.

One ministerial student wrote to Elder O. A. Olsen, president of the General Conference, expressing his "... disappointment at being deprived of the instruction of Bro. Waggoner. . . ."⁵²²

S. A. Whittier continued:

I was especially glad that we were to take up the "Covenant" because it is a question that has not been clear to me for a long time. . . . It has not seemed to me that our position on the two covenants was clear. On this account I have always

⁵¹⁹ Letter Dan T. Jones to George I. Butler, February 13, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, February 11, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵²² Letter S. A. Whittier to O. A. Olsen, January 22, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

hesitated about advancing it. For this reason, I was hoping that we might have a candid investigation of it in our Ministerial Bible School.⁵²³

Others felt the same way.⁵²⁴

Ellen White could see the covert dealings against Waggoner. She counseled:

Do not keep up a criticism and objections, in an *underhanded* way. . . . If the ideas presented before the Ministerial Institute are erroneous, come to the front like men and present candidly your Bible evidence why you cannot see the point as they do. . . . Do not stand in the position you do as leaders in the Sabbath-school and resisting the light or views and ideas presented by men whom I know to be agents whom the Lord is using.⁵²⁵

On February 3, 1890, she told of her travels about the country standing “side by side with the messengers of God [Waggoner and Jones] that I knew were His messengers, that I knew had a message for His people. I gave my message with them right in harmony with the very message they were bearing.”⁵²⁶

On February 7, 1890, she stood before the ministers of the Bible school and spoke:

I believe without a doubt that God has given precious truth at the right time to Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner. Do I place them as infallible? Do I say that they will not make a statement or have an idea that cannot be questioned or that cannot be error? Do I say so? No, I do not say any such thing. Nor do I say that of any man in the world. But I do say God has sent light, and do be careful how you treat it.⁵²⁷

It seemed that Dan Jones had been successful in preventing Dr. Waggoner from presenting his view of the covenants in the classroom. Waggoner had suddenly resigned. He

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Letter W. W. Sharp to O. A. Olsen, January 22, 1890, Seventh-day Adventist Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵²⁵ Letter E. G. White to Brn. Ballenger and L. Smith, January 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 528, 529. Emphasis supplied.

⁵²⁶ E. G. White, “Remarks at Bible School,” February 3, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan, MS 9, 1890. *EGW 1888*, pp. 542.

⁵²⁷ E. G. White, “Remarks at Bible School,” February 7, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan, Ms. 56, 1890. *EGW 1888*, pp. 565.

was replaced by Uriah Smith. Elder Smith began his “outline of the question” to the ministers on Sunday morning, February 16.

Prof. W. W. Prescott, principal of the school, and Elder O. A. Olsen,⁵²⁸ president of the General Conference, had been away on business when all this took place. Dan Jones forewarned Elder Olsen, who was in Des Moines, that “there was a desire on the part of the students to have the covenant question investigated in the class. . . . Hope you will find time to give the matter some careful thought, and have your mind well made up by the time you return as to what is best to do.”⁵²⁹ When Prescott and Olsen returned, it was decided that Dr. Waggoner could have his time to present the covenant question.

On Sunday, February 16, Dr. Waggoner was “allowed the floor to present his views.”⁵³⁰ Jones wrote: “It has been decided to investigate the covenant question before the ministers’

school, . . . beginning the first of next week. Prof. Prescott will be chairman of the meeting, and Dr. Waggoner will be allowed the floor. . . .”⁵³¹

In all, Dr. Waggoner was given six presentations and D. T. Bourdeau one and a half. Elder Uriah Smith presented one lecture. R. C. Porter of Iowa presented one and a half representing the traditional view. Dan Jones reported the proceedings to S. N. Haskell who was in Bombay, India:

. . . There were two distinct views of the covenant as it had been presented,-- one favoring the position that has been held in the past by our people, which was presented by Eld. Smith and Bro. Porter; and another party in favor of the

⁵²⁸ Letter O. A. Olsen to J. S. Washburn, February 1, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵²⁹ Letter Dan T. Jones to O. A. Olsen, January 24, 1890. Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵³⁰ Letter Dan T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, February 14, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Archives.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

advanced views held by Dr. Waggoner, supported by Eld. Bourdeau, which were similar to what he presented at Minneapolis.⁵³²

Dan Jones wrote to E. W. Farnsworth:

The covenant question is a live question here just now. After it had been held in suspense for about three weeks, an investigation was decided upon, and commenced yesterday. Dr. Waggoner has had the floor all the time so far, except about ten minutes taken at the beginning by Bro. Smith in giving an outline of his position on the covenant question.⁵³³

On Sunday morning, February 16, in the east vestry of the tabernacle,⁵³⁴ Uriah Smith gave a brief overview of his position on the covenants.

Smith traced the plan of salvation through the covenants given to Adam, Abraham and Israel. Smith said that Israel was “under the Adamic covenant; they were under the Abrahamic covenant.”⁵³⁵ If they would “be obedient to him; keep his laws and commandments,” then He would make them a great nation. Smith concluded: “So I understand the two covenants were the two dispensations through which God was working to carry out his plan originally made with Abraham.”⁵³⁶

When Dr. Waggoner made his presentation⁵³⁷ on Monday, February 17, for two hours, Dan Jones noted:

Nothing was presented that Eld. Smith or any one else posted on the covenant question could object to, until near the close of the last session, when Dr. Waggoner drew a parallel between the old and new covenants, showing that each had three objective points: first, righteousness; second, inheritance of the earth,

⁵³² Letter Dan T. Jones to S. N. Haskell, February 26, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan, p. 910.

⁵³³ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, February 18, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. The date for this letter may be incorrect. It should probably be February 17, 1890.

⁵³⁴ Letter Dan T. Jones to J. O. Corliss, February 16, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵³⁵ Uriah Smith, “Remarks of Eld. Uriah Smith at the Bible-School, Feb. 16th, 1890,” p. 3.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵³⁷ Notes were taken on Uriah Smith’s and R. C. Porter’s lectures. However, there were no notes available for E. J. Waggoner’s presentations.

and third, kingdom of priests. But in the first it all depended upon the obedience of the people; in the second, or new covenant, God does it for the people.⁵³⁸

According to Dan Jones, there was agreement between Waggoner and Smith on the objectives of both covenants. The sticking point was on how it was accomplished. More than likely, Waggoner's opponents would have said that the first covenant depended on obedience plus God's help. The second covenant also depended on obedience, but it was Christ's obedience in the sinner's stead. God's covenant promised forgiveness of sins and divine aid.

Elder O. A. Olsen was present for E. J. Waggoner's presentation on the covenants. He said, "I think that Dr. Waggoner has brought out some very important truth on that subject."⁵³⁹

Elder U. Smith continued his formal presentation on Wednesday, February 19, 1890. Edson White made notes of his remarks. Smith said all was in harmony on the matter of justification by faith. He continued: "But on this subject of the covenants, there are some points, some scriptures, where there seems to be a difference of opinion in regard to the application."⁵⁴⁰

Elder Smith immediately set forth his dispensationalism. Though the language seemed a bit awkward because it was a verbatim report, it was worth noting exactly how he explained the concept in his own words.

. . . I think the promise to Abraham began right there and took in his immediate posterity and ran down through the literal seed, [i.e., the covenant was for the direct descendants] and through the literal seed went on to a wider development of the plan--reaching clear over to the final consummation, the redemption of man, the renewing of the earth, and the final possession of the inheritance. And in the development of that promise I understand God has formed *two dispensations*, two stages, if we may so speak, in the development of that work. In the accomplishment of that promise which he gave to Abraham

⁵³⁸ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, February 18, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan., p. 817.

⁵³⁹ Letter O. A. Olsen to T. L. Waters, March 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁴⁰ Uriah Smith, "Remarks of Uriah Smith, Bible-school, February 19, 1890."

there were *two stages, two dispensations*, and by each of these he was carrying on the same idea, reaching forward to the same end; and both of them were an *advance step* in the development of the plan: the promise, first, embracing the literal seed, securing to them many of the blessings to be had in the world here, in time, in their mortal state, and many of the privileges to be had in the world; and yet the promise to Abraham being such that all could not be secured in this mortal state, in this present earth in its present condition, and, therefore, involving the final resurrection of the dead, immortality, eternal in the new earth, as the final completion of the promise; but taking in these *two stages*. Now, we find ourselves able to see the bearing of some scriptures and see the harmony between some statements from the sacred writing that we could not do if we took the promise to Abraham to be simply a promise made to him and then bounding right over to Christ, and dropping all else from him to Christ. It seems to me the promise to Abraham filled up the whole time between him and Christ; and when it struck Christ, of course it took in all that was to be accomplished through him.⁵⁴¹

Elder Smith saw the Sinai covenant as a continuation of the Abrahamic covenant.

He explained what God accomplished “in making this covenant with the people in bringing them out of Egypt: first, to carry out as it pertained to that time the promise of Abraham.”⁵⁴² He saw no distinction between the Sinaitic covenant made with Israel and the Abrahamic covenant. “. . . It seems to me that this covenant is very intimately related with that Abrahamic covenant.”⁵⁴³

The Sinai covenant was to preserve the purity of the Israelites from other nations. Christ could then trace his genealogy as Messiah back to Abraham who was given the covenant. The impression left by Elder Smith was that salvation under the old covenant was only *figurative*. The Abrahamic covenant could only point to Christ the reality.

Smith explained:

So in Christ were the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant fulfilled, and light and immortality brought to light through the gospel, and conferred upon the people. And finally they would be brought over to the atonement, when sins would be absolutely forgiven, and that not for anybody--not even for Abel--until

⁵⁴¹ Ibid. Emphasis supplied.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

the atonement is made down here at the atonement of Christ,--carrying out to completion the promise made to Abraham and the promise of salvation made to Abraham.⁵⁴⁴

In Elder Smith's view none of the patriarchs who lived by faith received atonement for their sins until Christ died. Their forgiveness was only figurative in anticipation of the cross.

The apostle Paul stated: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman" (Galatians 4:21). Elder Smith interpreted the law here by saying, "Why certain teachers had come down from Jerusalem troubling their minds, and saying, they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses."⁵⁴⁵

Elder Smith said that the apostle Paul was talking about a problem with the old covenant that existed in his day dealing with the Judaizers and Galatian Christians. They wanted to revert back to circumcision in order to be saved like the Israelites were under the old dispensation. Thus, Paul was not speaking negatively of the old covenant during the time of Israel for which it was instituted. It was a good thing which God had ordained for their salvation, but it had no usefulness after the cross.

One pastor who participated in the Bible school, S. A. Whittier, assessed the leadership's view of the covenants. He said: ". . . It has not seemed to me that our position on the two covenants was clear."⁵⁴⁶

The president, Elder O. A. Olsen thought it "amusing." He reported--

I have taken occasion to make inquiries of leading brethren in reference to their views on the covenants, and the fact is. . . that I have not found two that held

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Letter S. A. Whittier to O. A. Olsen, January 22, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

particularly the same views. This has led me to conclude that our brethren are not clear on the subject, neither have they the full light. . . .⁵⁴⁷

This indicated the state of confusion among church leadership regarding the issue of the covenants.

A few days after Elder Smith's presentation, on Monday, February 24, Elder R. C. Porter⁵⁴⁸ of the Minnesota Conference spoke. He set forth his thesis in these words: "I understand the Abrahamic covenant to embrace both the old and the new covenants. . . ."⁵⁴⁹ He continued: ". . . The old covenant, as it is called, was made to carry out the covenant made with Abraham. . . ."⁵⁵⁰ Porter made no distinction between the old and the new covenants. One was but the extension of the other.

Elder Porter made a statement several times that seemed to be responsive to what Dr. Waggoner had been teaching. "The Lord did not expect the people to keep that [old] covenant in their own strength."⁵⁵¹ He made this point several times that God provided divine aid to keep the

old covenant. ". . . The promise of divine help was right there given to them, to enable them to

⁵⁴⁷ Letter O. A. Olsen to R. A. Underwood, February 16, 1890, Coopersville, Michigan.

⁵⁴⁸ Elder Porter had been brought in by the General Conference committee while the Bible school was in progress. He was to be a teacher for the school. Dan Jones reported the committee believed that "Bro. Porter has some natural qualifications that would well fit him for this line of work. . . ." Letter Dan T. Jones to Allen Moon, January 3, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. Cf. Letter Dan T. Jones to R. C. Porter, January 2, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁴⁹ R. C. Porter, "Remarks of Eld. R. C. Porter, at the Ministers' Bible-school," February 24, 1890. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Archives. Edson White took notes on Porter's "speech on the covenant question, delivered at the Bible-school last winter." Letter Dan T. Jones to R. C. Porter, May 5, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

carry out the specifications of the old covenant.”⁵⁵² Waggoner said there was no such promise in the old covenant for divine pardon or aid. Porter was seeking to counter Waggoner on this point.

In Porter’s understanding, God provided for the people to be righteous under the old covenant. “. . . The Lord looked for righteousness in that people; and he certainly would not look for righteousness if he had not provided a way by which they could obtain that righteousness for which he would look.”⁵⁵³ Surely these were points made to rebut Waggoner.

And then, as if to completely wipe away the basic premise of Dr. Waggoner’s understanding of the old covenant as being based on the promises of the people, Elder Porter said: “The conditions on which that [old] covenant was made were that of actual obedience, and not on the promise of the obedience.”⁵⁵⁴ He was saying that Israel must obey the commandments as a condition of the old covenant. They could obey because God would help them. The old covenant was not the promise of the people to obey. There could not have been a more thorough rejection of Waggoner’s message on the covenants.

Finally, Elder Porter asserted his agreement with Elder Smith about dispensationalism. “The Abrahamic covenant is the everlasting covenant; and the two covenants are but the means in the different ages for the carrying out of that plan;”⁵⁵⁵ The Abrahamic covenant is the same as the old and new covenant. The old and new covenants are the same means in “different ages” of restoring the sinner “into favor with God.”

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

Ellen White's reaction to his presentation was a resounding rejection. “. . . Brother Porter, . . . you are not in the light. Do not be surprised if I, when you are in the darkness, refuse to have an interview with. . . you.”⁵⁵⁶

The trio of Dan Jones, Uriah Smith, and R. C. Porter was united in trying to overthrow the glad tidings of the everlasting covenant. In every possible way they sought to confuse the minds of the leadership of the church during the ministers' institute of 1890. It should be emphasized that they were not malicious in doing this. They sincerely believed that they were upholding God's truth. However, they were sincerely deceived.

The evidence for their opposition can be seen in the articles published in the *Review*, and *The Gospel Sickle*. In the ministers' Bible school, and through public lectures, their influence dominated. Their onslaught was relentless. The positions had become polarized over the issue of the covenants during the 1890 ministers' Bible school.

Another example of how Dan Jones worked underhandedly to neutralize Dr. Waggoner's influence was when N. W. Allee wrote to him for advice about speakers for an institute in the Missouri conference. Evidently Allee wanted to arrange for A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner to come as guest speakers, but Dan Jones advised against it. He wrote to Allee and said:

. . . I do not have very much confidence in some of their ways of presenting things. They try to drive everything before them, and will not admit that their positions can possibly be subject to the least criticism. They say, “It is truth; and all you need to do is to study it as long as I have, and you will see it!” . . . But our more thoughtful men, Bro. Smith, Bro. Littlejohn, Bro. Corliss, Bro. Gage, and others, --do not agree with them on many positions which they take on. . . the covenants, the law in Galatians. . . . But these things they make prominent wherever they go. . . upon which there is a difference of opinion among our leading brethren. I do not think you want to bring that spirit into the Missouri Conference.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ E. G. White, Sermon, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 595.

⁵⁵⁷ Letter Dan T. Jones to N. W. Allee, January 23, 1890, p. 674, 675.

Jones capped off his advice to Allee by characterizing Waggoner's theology as "a high-falutin theory that never has worked and never will work anywhere."⁵⁵⁸

There are those who would look back on Seventh-day Adventist denominational history in the 1890's and proclaim, "Glorious results were recorded."⁵⁵⁹ However, Elder J. S. Washburn, who was closer to the events, had a more sober assessment:

I was one of those ordered by the General Conference Committee to attend the Minister's school at Battle Creek, the last winter but was not able to go on account of sickness in the family. But some of the reports from them have made me think it was in a measure "Minneapolis" over again. It seems to me God is just holding over our heads a great blessing, but is waiting for us to be ready for it before bestowing it upon us, and that this blessing is true holiness and that when we shall come up to our duties and privileges in this matter then our work shall go with the "loud cry."⁵⁶⁰

In summary, the ministers' Bible school of 1890 focused on the issue of the covenants. When E. J. Waggoner attempted to open this discussion in a classroom, Dan Jones felt such controversial topics needed approval from the school board. Waggoner resigned from teaching a one-hour segment of his lecture time.

Eventually, when the school principal, Prof. W. W. Prescott, arrived, there were presentations allowed from both sides of the question. The evidence indicated that there was confusion in the minds of the pastors of the church as well as some church leaders over the covenant issue.

Ellen White supported an open and fair discussion among the pastors on the covenant question. She indicated her disapproval of Elder R. C. Porter's presentation of the traditional view.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 675.

⁵⁵⁹ LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), p. 343. "Rising Tide of 1890's Followed by Temporary Recession."

⁵⁶⁰ Letter J. S. Washburn to E. G. White, April 17, 1890, Clarinda, Iowa. *MMM*, p. 174.

The evidence indicated that among some of the leadership of the General Conference, namely Dan Jones, Uriah Smith, R. C. Porter, there was opposition to E. J. Waggoner and the message of the covenants. Ellen White said there were underhanded dealings going on. The way Dan Jones tried to discourage the Missouri Conference from inviting A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner as guest speakers indicated a behind-the-scenes maneuvering.

The issue of the covenants was not resolved by the church at the 1890 institute. It would continue to be an issue of contention in the years to come. But Ellen White did make a public announcement during the institute as to where divine authority rested. The Scriptures were the basis for doctrine and practice. The Bible would have to resolve the matter.

There were a few, one being Elder Corliss, who studied the Bible and came into agreement on the law and the covenants with E. J. Waggoner. Evidently, D. T. Bourdeau was another since he presented a lecture with Waggoner in support of the advanced view.

Ellen White viewed the issue over the law in Galatians as a minor matter. It certainly was not a “landmark” pioneer doctrine of the church. This was the reason why she could not understand why it had caused such an “incomprehensible tug of war.” On the issue of the covenants, she was about to break her silence.

Chapter 16

ELLEN WHITE ENDORSES THE COVENANT

Ever since the Minneapolis conference, Ellen White had been encouraging the study of the Bible on this matter of truth. Neither E. J. Waggoner nor Uriah Smith's word was to be taken for truth. She herself tried to stay out of the controversy by not taking a position on the law in Galatians or the covenants.

Now the time had come. Light was sent from above. On Thursday, March 6, 1890, Ellen White was shown the issue on the covenants. She wrote a letter to Elder Smith that following Sabbath, March 8.

Night before last I was shown that evidences in regard to the covenants were clear and convincing. Yourself, Brother Dan Jones, Brother Porter and others are spending your investigative powers for naught to produce a position on the covenants to vary from the position that Brother Waggoner has presented. Had you received the true light which shineth, you would not have imitated or gone over the same manner of interpretation and misconstruing the Scriptures as did the Jews. What made them so zealous? Why did they hang on the words of Christ? Why did spies follow Him to mark his words that they could repeat and misinterpret and twist in a way to mean that which their own unsanctified minds would make them to mean. In this way, they deceived the people. They made false issues. They handled those things that they could make a means of clouding and misleading minds. The covenant question is a clear question and would be received by every candid, unprejudiced mind, but I was brought where the Lord gave me an insight into this matter. You have turned from plain light because you were afraid that the law question in Galatians would have to be accepted. As to the law in Galatians, I have no burden and never have.⁵⁶¹

This was a ringing endorsement by Ellen White regarding the covenants as presented by E. J. Waggoner. Evidently the Lord observed the great disunity in the leadership of the church. He

⁵⁶¹ Letter Ellen White to Uriah Smith, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Mich., Letter 59, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 604.

wanted to draw them together in the truth as it is in Jesus--if they would just walk in the light as presented from Scripture.

The other aspect of Ellen White's endorsement addressed the issue of comparison between the Jews of Christ's day and the present church leadership. She said they had confused ideas which baffled the people. In the context of the covenants, the Jews believed the Sinaitic covenant to be God's unqualified election of the Hebrew people. Therefore, they rejected Christ when He claimed to be the Mediator of God's covenant.

Likewise, Elder Smith had presented a view of the old covenant which represented Israel as God's elect people by means of the covenant with Abraham. The matter of heart condition and faith toward Christ was secondary to God's election. There was a predestinarian flavor to his views of the old covenant. By presenting his confusing views of the old covenant, Elder Smith was acting just as the Jews did in Christ's day, who hung on all His words and misrepresented Him to the people.

Ellen White warned Elder Smith: "If you turn from one ray of light fearing it will necessitate an acceptance of positions you do not wish to receive, that light becomes to you darkness, that if you were in error, you would honestly assert it to be truth."⁵⁶²

Of course, Elder Smith feared that, if he gave in on the point of the covenants, then he would have to concede the issue of the law in Galatians. Elder Smith had just written to Ellen White on February 17, 1890, about this. He could read the handwriting on the wall as to which direction she was moving, and it disturbed him greatly. He had such cognitive dissonance that it was causing him to question the Testimonies. If one domino fell in his whole theory, then they all would go down.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 605.

Elder Smith wrote to Ellen White about Waggoner's “. . . position on Galatians, which I deem as erroneous. . . . He [E. J. Waggoner] took his position on Galatians, the same which you had condemned in his father [J. H. Waggoner].”⁵⁶³

And then he said to her in no uncertain terms:

As it looks to me, next to the death of Brother [James] White, the greatest calamity that ever befell our cause was when Dr. Waggoner put his articles on the book of Galatians through the *Signs*. I supposed the question of the law in Galatians was settled away back in 1856. . . . I was surprised at the articles, because they seemed to me then, and still seem to me, to contradict so directly what you wrote to J. H. Waggoner. . . .⁵⁶⁴

On Sunday, March 9, the day after she had sent her endorsement of the covenant question to Elder Smith, Ellen White confided to her son W. C. White: “I have no brakes to put on now. I stand in perfect freedom, calling light, light, and darkness, darkness. I told them yesterday that the position of the covenants I believed as presented in my volume 1 *Patriarchs and Prophets*. If that was Dr. Waggoner's position then he had the truth.”⁵⁶⁵

The leadership of the church along with Ellen White had met on Sabbath, March 8, in the afternoon at the *Review* office chapel.⁵⁶⁶

I am much pleased to learn that Professor Prescott is giving the same lessons in his class to the students that Brother Waggoner has been giving. He is presenting the covenants Since I made the statement last Sabbath that the view of the

covenants as it had been taught by Brother Waggoner was truth, it seems that great relief has come to many minds.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ Letter Uriah Smith to E. G. White, February 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 154.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 153. The articles to which Elder Smith referred were E. J. Waggoner's nine-part series “Comments on Galatians 3,” *ST* 12 (July 8-September 2, 1886).

⁵⁶⁵ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 9, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 617.

⁵⁶⁶ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 10, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 623.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Ellen White reported what happened: “There was a large number present. Elders Olsen⁵⁶⁸ and Waggoner led the meeting. The blessing of God came upon me, and all knew that the Spirit and power of God were upon me, and many were greatly blessed. I spoke with earnestness and decision. . . .”⁵⁶⁹

She directed their attention to her statement in *The Patriarchs and Prophets* on the covenants and declared it to be in harmony with Dr. Waggoner. This was a crucial public meeting because her endorsement of Waggoner’s view of the covenants had been by letter to Uriah Smith, W. C. White and Mary White. Now she made the “light” known in a public service.⁵⁷⁰

Ellen White got up to speak that Sabbath afternoon in the office chapel. She told them exactly where she stood in the present conflict. She referred to the revelation that had been given her on Thursday night, March 6. She said:

. . . the light that came to me night before last laid it all open again before me, just the influence that was at work, and just where it would lead. . . . You are just going over the very same ground that they went over in the days of Christ. You have had their experience; but God deliver us. . . . You have stood right in the way of God. The earth is to be lighted with His glory, and if you stand where you stand to-day, you might just as quick say that the Spirit of God was the spirit of the devil. . . .

. . . Do not hang on to Brother Smith. In the name of God, I tell you, he is not in the light. He had (*sic.*) not been in the light since he was at Minneapolis. . . .

⁵⁶⁸ Olsen reported: “. . . I think that probably there is more to this covenant question than we are aware of in some things. Sr. White has come out very pointedly.” Letter O. A. Olsen to R. A. Underwood, March 18, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁶⁹ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 9, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 617.

⁵⁷⁰ Unfortunately, an important player was not there for that meeting. Dan Jones missed this pivotal announcement by two days. Ellen White wrote to her son W. C. White: “I learn Brother Jones has come home this afternoon.” That was March 10. Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 10, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 623. He had been in Tennessee for the King trial. Letter Dan T. Jones to R. M. Kilgore, March 16, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan., p. 963. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

. . . Let the truth of God come into your hearts; open the door. Now I tell you here before God, that the covenant question, as it has been presented, is the truth.⁵⁷¹

Here Ellen White connected the truth of the covenant with light from the Holy Spirit.

This was the same light of the everlasting gospel that would lighten the earth with His glory. Revelation 18:1. To reject the truth of the covenants was to reject the Spirit of God and call him the devil. This was the same kind of dealings which the Jews practiced with the truth Christ presented.

Crediting Elder Smith's view of the covenants was to run in the channels of darkness. His view of the covenants had been reviewed many times. By now there should have been a clear concept between what was truth and error. There was no question where Ellen White stood on the covenants. It was with E. J. Waggoner. The everlasting covenant was the light of justification by

faith. It was the light to be shared with the world. With its reception would come the Holy Spirit's blessing to finish the work.

Early in 1890, Ellen White had been working on an expansion of the first volume of *The Spirit of Prophecy*. When she received divine confirmation on March 6, 1890, of Waggoner's position on the covenants, she incorporated it into her revised edition entitled *The Patriarchs and Prophets*.⁵⁷² This was completely new material. It was one of the best statements on the

⁵⁷¹ E. G. White, Sermon, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 595, 596.

⁵⁷² E. G. White, "The Law and the Covenants," *The Patriarchs and Prophets* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1890), pp. 363-373.

relationship between the covenants and righteousness by faith.⁵⁷³ *The Patriarchs and Prophets* was published August 26, 1890.⁵⁷⁴ Ellen White said:

The covenant God made with Abraham was the same given to Adam.

This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. . . .

The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God's law.

Another compact--called in Scripture the "old" covenant--was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ,⁵⁷⁵

Ellen White distinguished between the two covenants as to when and how they were ratified. She did not confuse them as had Elder Porter.

Then she affirmed the validity of the new covenant for Old Testament times. "That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God--the 'two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.' Hebrews 6:18."⁵⁷⁶

Ellen White continued her observations regarding the covenants:

But if the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the

⁵⁷³ Tim Crosby, "Ellen G. White and the Law in Galatians: A Study in the Dynamics of Present Truth," p. 29.

⁵⁷⁴ See Ron Duffield, "The Return of the Latter Rain," unpublished mss.

⁵⁷⁵ E. G. White, *The Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 370, 371.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

Red Sea--where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible--that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage. . . .

Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught. . . .

. . . The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exodus 24:7. . . . Only a few weeks passed before they broke *their covenant* with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the *Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant* and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.

The terms of the "old covenant" were, Obey and live: . . . The "new covenant" was established upon "better promises"--the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law.⁵⁷⁷

She even picked up the theme of Waggoner that there was no "hope for the favor of God" in their broken covenant. Their sinfulness became pronounced. They felt "their need of pardon." They were brought to the Saviour of the Abrahamic covenant. Now instead of coming with their promises, they were bonded to God by genuine "faith and love." They had a new appreciation for His deliverance from "bondage" to sin. The exact terms which Waggoner had used to describe the relationships between the old and the new covenants were reflected in her statement. If the Holy Spirit ever endorsed a concept more clearly, it was the everlasting covenant of the 1888 message.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 371, 372. Emphasis supplied.

Ellen White emphasized Waggoner's point that the old covenant was legalism. The new covenant promise alone provided pardon from sin and divine aid. *The Patriarchs and Prophets* statement was one of the most beautiful and succinct comments on the glad tidings of the everlasting covenant ever written aside from Scripture.

The Patriarchs and Prophets was delayed in reaching the hands of the canvassers. Ellen White explained what happened:

Just at that time the devil was influencing minds to hold back my books published by the Review and Herald. Those at the head of the work there discouraged the agents about handling *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Great Controversy*, the very books which the people should have had at once, and concentrated the efforts on bible readings, promising that a certain time they would concentrate the efforts in my books. But this promise they never kept. . . . The inner working of this matter was presented to me, and I saw that the very men who said that the canvassers would not handle my books, were themselves arranging matters so that they should not handle them. They told me falsehoods.⁵⁷⁸

Ellen White's nephew Frank Belden was involved in the suppression of the books:

When you insisted that you were doing all in your power to bring "Great Controversy," and "Patriarchs and Prophets" before the people, I knew your statements to be untrue. Captain Eldridge and you confederated together, to uphold, sustain each other and worked according to your blindness of mind in using your influence to control the management of the books' to make as high a show as possible in gathering means into the Office. The Lord brought me into your council meetings. I was bidden to mark the influences at work to repress "Great Controversy", that resulted in its falling nearly dead from the press, as was the case also with "Patriarchs and Prophets".⁵⁷⁹

These men in the office were more interested in promoting *Bible Readings* and other non-
Ellen White materials.

Antipathy in the *Review* office toward Ellen White's writings kept the books from reaching the canvassers in a timely manner. The great issues of the Sabbath-Sunday conflict

⁵⁷⁸ Letter E. G. White to J. N. Loughborough, February 19, 1899. *The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters*, p. 140.

⁵⁷⁹ Letter E. G. White to Frank Belden, June 8, 1895, Granville, Australia. *EGW 1888*, pp. 1380, 1381.

were before the nation. Many souls would have been warned and accepted the truth had these books been in circulation. But the book managers were not pleased with her endorsement of the 1888 message on the covenants.

She said:

Our own workers managed so that the warnings in the books *Great Controversy* and *Patriarchs and Prophets* did not come to the people. Why? Because Satan devised and planned the whole matter that the living, stirring issues should be smothered until he had preoccupied the field.⁵⁸⁰

These methods of stalling the distribution of much needed books weakened the hands of Ellen White, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones in spreading the message of righteousness by faith.

On Monday, March 10, 1890, Ellen White received a hopeful sign of God's providence:

I am much pleased to learn that Professor Prescott is giving the same lessons in his class to his students that Brother Waggoner has been giving. He is presenting the covenants. John [Dr. Froom] thinks it is presented in a clear and convincing manner. Since I made the statement last Sabbath that the view of the covenants as it had been taught by Brother Waggoner was truth, it seems that great relief has come

to many minds. I am inclined to think Brother Prescott receives the testimony, although he was not present when I made this statement. I thought it time to take my position, and I am glad that the Lord urged me to give the testimony that I did.⁵⁸¹

On Tuesday, March 11, Ellen White wrote to her son W. C. White:

Brother Porter was on his feet, all broken up so that he could say nothing for a few moments; then he said that when I had spoken to him personally, before those assembled in the office chapel, he rose up against it, but he felt now that it was just what he needed, and he thanked the Lord for the reproof. He confessed the wrong that he had done me and Elder Waggoner, and humbly asked us to forgive him. He said he could not see clearly on all points in regard to the covenants, but that he would walk humbly before God, follow Jesus and seek light all the time. He said that he had been disbelieving the testimonies, but he said, "I believe them now. God has spoken to us through Sister White this morning. I believe every

⁵⁸⁰ E. G. White, Diary Entry, Washington, D.C., Tuesday, December 23, 1890. *1888 EGW*, p. 771.

⁵⁸¹ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 10, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 623.

word; I accept the testimony as from God. I take my stand upon them, for I believe that to be the Lord's side."⁵⁸²

This was a step in the right direction for Elder R. C. Porter, who had sought to pass a resolution at the 1888 conference in order to stop the discussion on the covenants since Elder Butler was absent.

However, he was still confused in his thinking about the covenants and had not come out completely into the light. On Thursday, March 13, Ellen White noted, "Brother Porter spoke but there was a holding back--nothing free and clear."⁵⁸³

Later that year Elder Porter was back in Minnesota and received a letter from Dan Jones which continued to feed his negativism toward the covenant message. Jones wrote to him:

I find that the agitation on the covenant question and justification by faith has lost none of its force as it has gone out to different parts of the field, but has rather gathered strength and taken on objectionable features, until they see it now in a much worse light than it really is.⁵⁸⁴

In short, on Sabbath, March 8, 1890, Ellen White gave a testimony to the leadership of the church. She had received a night vision, March 6, confirming that Elder Waggoner had the light on the covenant issue. She also confirmed this by letters written to Uriah Smith and W. C. White.

Thus, by letters, public meetings, and her book *The Patriarchs and Prophets* Ellen White expressed where divine authority rested on the matter of the covenants. She now expressed the comprehensive view of the covenants as part and package of the three angel's message. It was

⁵⁸² Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 11, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 625.

⁵⁸³ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 13, 1890. *EGW 1888*, pp. 628, 629.

⁵⁸⁴ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. C. Porter, May 5, 1890.

the light given by the Holy Spirit to be given to the world. The everlasting covenant was the gospel of Jesus Christ unto salvation.

Ellen White's vision about the covenants did not resolve the interpersonal conflicts that were going on at the institute. Nor did it resolve personal beliefs about the covenants among the leadership of the church. There was much heart-work left to be done. Before the institute dismissed, however, the Spirit of God was to provide ample opportunity for confession and reconciliation.

Chapter 17

A SPECIAL MID-WEEK SERVICE

On Wednesday, March 12, 1890, Ellen White called a meeting in order to give Elder Waggoner an opportunity to explain how the Sabbath School lessons on Hebrews came to publication. Those present were Elders Uriah Smith, Leon Smith, O. A. Olsen, Fero, Watt, W. W. Prescott, E. J. Waggoner, McCoy, Matthew Larsen, R. C. Porter, W. A. Colcord, A. F. Ballenger, Webber, Dan T. Jones, Wakeham, George Amadon, Captain Eldridge, A. J. Breed, and Prof. E. B. Miller. At least twenty of the “prominent ones” were there.⁵⁸⁵

Some thought E. J. Waggoner had conspired to foist his views on the church. He disabused their minds of that during the meeting. There was a friendly exchange for about an hour. Dan Jones wrote about what transpired at the committee:

Dr. Waggoner explained how the Sabbath-school lessons were prepared at the request of the Executive of the Sabbath-school Association, and submitted to the Lesson Committee for examination before being published. This being true, I do not see that he was to blame for anything that the lessons might have contained. After he was asked to write the two missing lessons, and when he expressed his inability to do so without changing some of the preceding lessons, was given the privilege of doing so, and then went on and prepared them according to his own ideas and the teaching of the Scriptures, submitted them to the Lesson Committee for examination before being published, I do not really see where he is to blame in the matter. . . . If he was not correct in his interpretation of the scriptures and the position he took on the covenant question, his errors ought to have been detected by the Lesson Committee, and the lessons either refused or rejected. But when they passed through the hands of that Committee and were published by the Sabbath-school Association, it seems to me that the Lesson Committee is as much responsible for the theology that the lessons contained as the writer of the lessons himself.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁵ Elder Olsen reported: “We have also had two special meetings for a select company.” Letter O. A. Olsen to R. M. Kilgore, March 20, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁵⁸⁶ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, March 21, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan., pp. 3, 4.

W. C. White had clear recollections of what transpired with Waggoner's Sabbath School lessons:

I was a member of the committee, and distinctly recollect our disappointment at Eld. Smith's absence, and our great regret when it was ascertained that he had not been notified of the meeting. I also remember that there were three copies, of matter which Dr. Waggoner had added to the lessons as we examined them last July under the apple tree. I remember hearing Dr. Waggoner and Mrs. Jones plan that the first copy should be sent to Oakland, and one placed in the hands of Eld. Smith, and I was afterwards told that this had been done. I have good reason to believe that the statement made by Bro. Jones is correct, and that the reason why Eld. Smith did not examine these added portions of the lessons, was either because he was too busy, or because he overlooked them. In all my connection with the lessons writers and lesson committees I have never seen any disposition or apparent desire to have the lessons passed to the printer without a most thorough examination by Eld. Smith and his associates, . . .⁵⁸⁷

Then Ellen White spoke about how some of the church leaders were taking what she wrote as her own opinion unless they had direct evidence that what she wrote had the authority of a vision. Unfortunately, she said, they manifested the same unyielding spirit as the Pharisees. Her work at Battle Creek had been questioned at every step.

She directly asked Elder Smith, "How could you, Brother Smith, treat me as you did? How could you stand directly in the way of the work of God?"⁵⁸⁸ He had been expressing doubts and unbelief in the testimonies.

Dan Jones gave his version of the Wednesday, March 12, meeting. "Some had come into it thinking there was a *conspiracy* on the part of the *Californians* to push their doctrines on the church through the pre-session at Minneapolis, but he confessed: "I have been laboring under a mistake. . . ."⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁷ Letter W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, March 17, 1890, Boulder, Colorado, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁸ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 13, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 627, 628.

⁵⁸⁹ Letter Dan T. Jones to J. H. Morrison, March 17, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan., p. 975. Emphasis added.

He explained his relief upon hearing from the principal parties at issue: “. . . We have the positive statements of Dr. Waggoner and Sister White. We also have the statement that since that time there has been no concerted plan or line of action laid out to bring about an acceptance of these views by our people.”⁵⁹⁰

But Dan Jones made a series of wrong assumptions which helped him to rationalize away his inner conflict. He said, “I am willing to confess . . . my opposition to this work. . . .”⁵⁹¹

Even though Dan Jones was not present March 8, when Ellen White made her public endorsement of the covenant views of E. J. Waggoner, it was surely public knowledge. Upon his return to Battle Creek he must have been informed of what she said. Despite her public announcement, Dan Jones wrote:

It seemed for awhile that Sister White would come out and endorse Dr. Waggoner’s position on the covenant question fully, and it was a great perplexity to me to know how to look upon the matter; for it seemed clear to my mind that his positions were not all correct. But . . . the matter of doctrine was not the important point in the issue at all. Sister White and Dr. Waggoner said they did not care what we believed on the law in Galatians or on the covenants. . . .⁵⁹²

From this evidence Dan Jones assumed that neither Ellen White nor E. J. Waggoner thought the law or covenants was a crucial issue.

However, there was credible evidence to suggest that E. J. Waggoner never relinquished his position on the law or the covenants. As for Ellen White, she endorsed his view of the covenants, but was not saying anything about the law issue.

Another false assumption under which Dan Jones was operating was that Waggoner had conceded a key point of his teaching. Jones wrote that Waggoner had “. . . given up the position

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 976.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., p. 975.

⁵⁹² Ibid., p. 976.

that in the old covenant the promises were all on the part of the people, and none on the part of God.”⁵⁹³ There was no evidence that Waggoner gave up this position.

Jones sounded relieved when he wrote: “I understood that there was considerable importance attached to the points of doctrine involved in the questions of the law in Galatians and the two covenants.”⁵⁹⁴

So if there was no real doctrinal issue involved, where did the conflict lie? In his own mind Dan Jones had figured out the real problem. He wrote: “It is the spirit alone that has been manifested to which she objected, and to which Eld. Waggoner takes exception. Both Sister White and Dr. Waggoner stated that the doctrinal points were not the points at issue. So that removes the real point that was in my mind all the time.”⁵⁹⁵

He had rationalized that doctrine was unimportant so that he could create some semblance of order in a mind that was conflicted. But his rationalizations had not brought him any peace because he said: “. . . The ministers’ school is almost over. The investigation on the covenant question closed up with no better satisfaction than before it begun [*sic*].”⁵⁹⁶ Poor Dan Jones. Once the Spirit of truth had been shut out, it became easier for him to walk in the light of his own kindling. The truth became too confusing for him.

On Sunday, March 16, another meeting was held in the office chapel. Some of the leading brethren assembled. Ellen White reported what happened. She wrote to Elder W. C. White:

Brother Dan Jones then spoke. He stated that he had been tempted to give up the testimonies; but if he did this, he knew he should yield everything, for we had

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. M. Kilgore, March 16, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan., p. 963.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

regarded the testimonies as interwoven with the third angel's message; and he spoke of terrible scenes of temptations. I really pitied the man.⁵⁹⁷

Ellen White spoke of the stubborn resistance on the part of some leaders to the message of God.

Sunday morning, although weary and almost discouraged, I ventured into the meeting. . . . I kept before them what they had done to make of none effect that which the Lord was trying to do and why. The law in Galatians was their only plea.

"Why," I asked, "is your interpretation of the law in Galatians more dear to you, and you more zealous to maintain your ideas on this point, than to acknowledge the workings of the Spirit of God? You have been weighing every precious heaven-sent testimony by your own scales as you interpreted the law in Galatians." Nothing could come to you in regard to the truth and the power of God unless it should bear your imprint, the precious ideas you had *idolized* on the law of Galatians.

These testimonies of the Spirit of God, the fruits of the Spirit of God, have no weight unless they are stamped with your ideas of the law in Galatians. I am afraid of you and I am afraid of your interpretation of any scripture which has revealed itself in such an unchristlike spirit as you have manifested and has cost me so much unnecessary labor. If you are such very cautious men and so very critical lest you shall receive something not in accordance with the Scriptures, I want your minds to look on these things in the true light. Let your caution be exercised in the line of fear lest you are committing the *sin against the Holy Ghost*. Have your critical minds taken this view of the subject? I say if *your views on the law in Galatians*, and the fruits, are of the character I have seen in Minneapolis and ever since up to this time, my prayer is that I may be as far from your understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures as it is possible for me to be. I am afraid of any application of Scripture that needs such a spirit and bears such fruit as you have manifested. One thing is certain, I shall never come into harmony with such a spirit as long as God gives me my reason.

Now brethren, I have nothing to say, no burden in regard to the *law in Galatians*. This matter looks to me of *minor consequence in comparison with the spirit* you have brought into your faith. It is exactly of the same piece that was manifested by the Jews in reference to the work and mission of Jesus Christ. The most convincing testimony that we can bear to others that we have the truth is the spirit which attends the advocacy of that truth. If it sanctifies the heart of the receiver, if it makes him gentle, kind, forbearing, true and Christlike, then he will

⁵⁹⁷ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 16, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 629.

give some evidence of the fact that he has the genuine truth. But if he acts as did the Jews when their opinions and ideas were crossed, then we certainly cannot receive such testimony, for it does not produce the fruits of righteousness. Their own interpretations of Scripture were not correct, yet the Jews would receive no evidence from the revelation of the Spirit of God, but would, when their ideas were contradicted, even *murder the Son of God*.⁵⁹⁸

It was clear that error brought with it a spirit of persecution.

Truth was evidenced by the Spirit of God manifested in the life. Ellen White had the gift of discernment. She wanted nothing to do with human interpretations of the Bible which bore such an evil attitude that if given free rein would “murder the Son of God.”

The Holy Spirit was leading them into further truth in regard to the covenants and righteousness by faith, but they were resisting the light.⁵⁹⁹ They were afraid, if they believed the covenants as taught by Waggoner, they would have to give up their cherished notions about the ceremonial law in Galatians.

Their interpretation had become their idol. Ellen White made this clear:

Any pet theory, any human idea, becomes of the gravest importance and as sacred as an *idol* to which everything must bow. This has verily been the case in the *theory of the law in Galatians*. Anything that becomes such a hobby as to usurp the place of Christ, any idea so exalted as to be placed where nothing of light or evidence can find a lodgement (*sic.*) in the mind, takes the form of an *idol*, to which everything is sacrificed. The law in Galatians is not a vital question and never has been. Those who have called it one of the old landmarks simply do

⁵⁹⁸ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 16, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 631-633. Emphasis supplied.

⁵⁹⁹ At this Sunday morning meetings Ellen White spoke before the ministerial institute saying: “I know that He has a blessing for us. He had it at Minneapolis, and He had it for us at the time of the General Conference here. But there was no reception.* Some received the light for the people, and rejoiced in it. Then there were others that stood right back, and their position has given confidence to others to talk unbelief. . . .” The asterisks includes this notation supplied by A. L. White: “The word of this sentence is clearly faulty for, isolated, it is out of harmony with what follows and other of her statements relating to the General Conference of 1889.” “[Released in this form to combat a distorted use of a sentence in public address.--A. L. White.]” Such is the extent to which individuals will go to support the “reception theory” of righteousness by faith immediately after 1888 on the part of church leadership. See Manuscript Release #253, E. G. White Estate.

not know what they are talking about. It never was an old landmark, and it never will become such. . . .

I say, through the word given me of God, Those who have stood so firmly to defend their ideas and positions on the law in Galatians have need to search their hearts as with a lighted candle, to see what manner of spirit has actuated them. With Paul I would say, "Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?" Gal. 3:1. What satanic persistency and obstinacy has been evidenced! I have had no anxiety about the law in Galatians, but I have had anxiety that our leading brethren should not go over the same ground of resistance to light and the manifest testimonies of the Spirit of God, and reject everything to *idolize* their own supposed ideas and pet theories. I am forced, by the attitude my brethren have taken and the spirit evidenced, to say, God deliver me from your ideas of the law in Galatians. . . .⁶⁰⁰

It was clear up to this point that Ellen White had not come out with a position on the law in Galatians. She had taken a public position on the covenants endorsing Waggoner's view. The brethren were holding to their cherished interpretations of the law in Galatians. They would not so much as budge on the covenants issue for fear of what they would have to do on the law issue. They had become mean-spirited toward the Lord's messengers over the matter.

In this context Ellen White said: "The law in Galatians is not a vital question and never has been."⁶⁰¹ She made it clear what she was rejecting. "I am forced, by the attitude my brethren have taken and the spirit evidenced, to say, God deliver me from your ideas of the law in Galatians. . . ."⁶⁰²

She was moving away from the old guard position on the law. She discerned the tragic results of what it was doing to the church. The Holy Spirit and truth were being rejected. She sensed "their view" could not be right. "By failing to cherish the Spirit of Christ, by taking *wrong positions* in the controversy over the law in Galatians--a question that many have not fully

⁶⁰⁰ E. G. White, "Peril in Trusting in the Wisdom of Men," MS 55, [March 16], 1890. *EGW* 1888, p. 841. Emphasis supplied.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

understood before taking a *wrong position*--the church has sustained a sad loss."⁶⁰³ On February 27, 1891, Ellen White was now firmly stating that the position on the ceremonial law in Galatians was wrong.

In summary, Ellen White made an official public endorsement of Waggoner's view of the covenants. She sought to be an agent for reconciliation. In public meetings with the leading brethren she tried to bring the opposing sides together. Elder Waggoner was given an opportunity to explain the circumstances that lay behind the publication of his Sabbath School lessons on Hebrews. Many had felt there had been a conspiracy to slip the lessons past the approval of Elder U. Smith. Elder Waggoner and Ellen White's explanations were accepted on this matter.

Dan Jones was glad to admit he was wrong in assuming a "California conspiracy." That made it easier for him to rationalize that the real problem was not over the doctrines of the law in Galatians or the covenants. He did not feel that Ellen White had endorsed either one in favor of Waggoner. And he even felt that Elder Waggoner did not think they were important. Dan Jones believed the problem was over an unchristlike spirit that existed between the brethren. He thought Ellen White was saying the contentious climate was evil. Jones could agree with that.

To characterize these meetings as a victory was far from correct.⁶⁰⁴ The battle was far from over. There was no reconciliation. However, the Holy Spirit was not finished. In God's great mercy He provided further opportunities for confession, reconciliation, and revival.

⁶⁰³ E. G. White, Diary Entry, February 27, 1891. *EGW 1888*, p. 894. Emphasis added. See Ron Duffield's, "Ch 14. Stand by the Landmarks," in his unpublished manuscript "The Return of the Latter Rain," for more details on Ellen White's change of view on the law in Galatians.

⁶⁰⁴ Arthur L. White, "The Backbone of Rebellion Broken," *Ellen G. White Volume 3 The Lonely Years 1876-1891* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984), p. 456.

Chapter 18

THE CASE OF DAN T. JONES⁶⁰⁵

Elder Dan Jones became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1876. He started his ministry in the Missouri Conference in 1881 where he became the president in 1882. After the Minneapolis Conference he became secretary of the General Conference and member of the committee.⁶⁰⁶

During the first ministers' Bible school he played a significant role, as has already been described. He was one of those resisting the light on the covenants and the law. He missed the important Sabbath, March 8, 1890, public endorsement by Ellen White of the covenants as it had been presented by E. J. Waggoner. He was in Tennessee for eight days along with A. T. Jones, assisting a Brother King in a Sunday-law trial. He returned to Battle Creek on March 10. He did get in on the "two special meetings" of March 12 and 16, 1890.

He has left a number of letters during this period which reveal the struggle of mind that at least one leader of the denomination went through over the covenants and the law in Galatians. Elder Jones felt he was completely loyal to the teachings of the Sabbath and the ten commandments. He founded his commitment to the law on the basis of certain interpretations of the law in the book of Galatians. This he held in common with Elders George I. Butler, Uriah Smith and many others. This interpretation of the ceremonial law had become so sacred to them that it was held as one of the landmarks of the faith. Thus, it had become a false idol according to Ellen White. It generated a spirit of unchristian, underhanded dealings towards others of opposing viewpoints.

⁶⁰⁵ See Ron Duffield, "The Return of the Latter Rain." Unpublished manuscript.

⁶⁰⁶ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D. C., Review and Herald Publishing Association: 1966), p. 635.

Elder Dan Jones's erroneous understanding was really undermining the truth of the Sabbath and the commandments. It tilted him toward a deadly legalism. He took for granted that he understood justification by faith and the three angels' messages. He thought he was in full agreement with Waggoner on this point. He was really undercutting the work of the Holy Spirit to lead the church into the clearer light of the gospel in the three angels' messages by means of Waggoner's presentation of the covenants. This, of course, hinged on a different understanding of the law in Galatians. Elder Jones was unwilling to go there.

When he saw Ellen White siding with Waggoner, he was more willing to hold on to his cherished views of Galatians than to follow the leading of the Spirit through her. This cognitive dissonance caused him to question the testimonies. After all, he was convinced that the testimonies had condemned J. H. Waggoner's position on the moral law in Galatians many years previous. And now for Ellen White to take a position on the covenants which appeared to contradict her earlier position on the law seemed to him incomprehensible.

There was a very important meeting of twenty-five brethren called by Ellen White in the *Review* office chapel on the evening of March 12, 1890. Dan Jones shared his thoughts about it with H. W. Cottrell.

There has been some argument on the covenant question, which has not been settled fully; but one thing I think is about to be settled, and that is, that there have been suspicions, and unjust suspicions, and criticisms in reference to the plans and purposes of Dr. Waggoner, Eld. A. T. Jones, W. C. White, and others, in reference to the covenant question and other points that are made specially prominent by them. . . . Explanations were made that seemed in the main satisfactory, and I am free to confess that my mind was relieved on several points.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁷ Letter Dan T. Jones to H. W. Cottrell, March 13, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

The covenant question was not resolved in Dan Jones's mind. He hoped that his own "suspicions" and "criticisms" of the principal brethren could be resolved.

E. J. Waggoner was given an opportunity to clear up some misconceptions about Minneapolis and the Sabbath School lessons. Elder Dan Jones wrote his version of it to Elder R. A. Underwood on Friday, March 14, 1890.

It seems from what has been said that brethren [W. C.] White, Waggoner and Jones did not have any preconcerted plan when they came over from the Pacific Coast to the Minneapolis meeting to lay their views before the brethren at that time, and have not been attempting to carry through any such plans since. Sister White has come out a little stronger in favor of Dr. Waggoner, but yet has not committed herself definitely as to the points of doctrine in his exposition of the two covenants. She says that she has been shown that he had light on the covenant question, but was not shown as to what that light was. At least that is the way I understand it at the present time.⁶⁰⁸

Elder Jones was relieved to admit that his California conspiracy theory was wrong. If his mind played tricks on him with that, perhaps it was playing tricks on him with other issues.

Even though Ellen White had made an unqualified endorsement of Waggoner's covenant position,⁶⁰⁹ Dan Jones could not bring himself to believe it. She was "a little" strong in Waggoner's "favor." She could not be definite on specific points regarding the covenants. Even more befuddling was that he admitted "she has been shown" "light," "but was not shown as to what that light was." But this was all his own confused ideas about "light." "Light" for him was becoming darkness.

On Sabbath, March 15, Ellen White had been asked to give the sermon, but she was exhausted. She suggested to Dan Jones that Elder E. J. Waggoner speak. "There seemed to be a

⁶⁰⁸ Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, March 14, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁶⁰⁹ Ellen White had written to U. Smith: "Night before last I was shown that evidences in regard to the covenants were clear and convincing. Yourself, Brother Dan Jones, Brother Porter and others are spending your investigative powers for naught to produce a position on the covenants to vary from the position that Brother Waggoner has presented." Letter Ellen White to Uriah Smith, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan., Letter 59, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 604.

little reluctance, but finally he was invited and gave a most precious discourse on the message to the Laodicean church,—just what was needed.”⁶¹⁰

That Sabbath afternoon there was another meeting in the office chapel with Elders O. A. Olsen, Captain Eldridge, Matthew Larsen and R. C. Porter speaking. Ellen White was present and reported:

Brother Dan Jones then spoke. He stated that he had been tempted to give up the testimonies; but if he did this, he knew he should yield everything, for we had regarded the testimonies as interwoven with the third angel's message; and he spoke of terrible scenes of temptations. I really pitied the man.⁶¹¹

There was another meeting on Sunday morning, March 16. She asked the gathered ministers:

"Why," I asked, "is your interpretation of the law in Galatians more dear to you, and you more zealous to maintain your ideas on this point, than to acknowledge the workings of the Spirit of God?"

Brother Dan Jones spoke in the Sunday morning meeting, after I had said things as above, and he looked as if he had had a spell of sickness as he made some acknowledgements (*sic.*) and took his position on the testimonies.⁶¹²

Dan Jones was desperately trying to hang on to the spirit of prophecy, but he knew she was taking Waggoner's side. She had just identified the problem. He was clinging to his "interpretation of the law in Galatians" over the direction of the Holy Spirit's endorsement. The inner conflict made him visibly sick to her observation.

That same day Dan Jones wrote to Elder R. M. Kilgore:

The investigation on the covenant question closed up with no better satisfaction than before it begun (*sic.*) . . . Sister White has attended nearly all these meetings, and has spoken quite freely. For a time it was thought that she fully endorsed Dr. Waggoner's position on the covenant question, and was so reported to be when I returned from Tennessee. . . but later developments show

⁶¹⁰ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March 16, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 629.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, p. 631, 633

that such was not the case. It turns out now that the doctrinal points in the matter have [not] been the real points at issue. It is the spirit alone that has been manifested to which she objected, and to which Eld. Waggoner takes exception. Both Sister White and Dr. Waggoner stated that the doctrinal points were not the points at issue. So that removes the real point that was in my mind all the time. I understood that it was the bringing in of new doctrines that were not approved by the denomination, that are the real point at issue. But if I have been mistaken in that matter I am glad to be corrected. I have thought all the time that Sister White did not mean to say that Dr. Waggoner was correct in his position on the covenant question as far as doctrine is concerned; because it was so manifestly wrong that I could not at all be reconciled to the idea that she would give it her unqualified approval. . . . I think, however, some good points will be gained by this investigation this winter. Perhaps both parties will respect each other more than they have in the past, and there will be more counsel in reference to introducing any points of doctrine in the future, than there has been in the past. This has been a very unpleasant winter to me, almost every way. . . .⁶¹³

Again, he admitted his mind was playing tricks on him. He had thought they were trying to bring in new doctrines. Now his understanding from the meeting was that the doctrines were not important. Ellen White and Dr. Waggoner were concerned about the disagreeable spirit with which the discussions had taken place. Jones was so happy that he had been wrong about the doctrines not being the real point because he was convinced that they were wrong.

If she gave her endorsement to the doctrines, it would be an unbearable conflict for him. It was not his fault all these problems came about. It was Elder Waggoner who did not take counsel with the brethren before bringing them into the school. He was the one who precipitated the crisis during the ministers' Bible school.

Thus, despite the fact that Ellen White reported that Dan Jones "took his position on the testimonies" that Sunday morning, his actions revealed that he completely set the testimonies aside. In particular, he would not accept her endorsement of Waggoner's position on the covenants. Furthermore, he was writing out his version of events and biasing the minds of

⁶¹³ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. M. Kilgore, March 16, 1890, p. 963, 964. General Conference of S. D. A. Archives.

ministers who were not present at the Bible school. This was subversive activity at the highest levels of church administration.

On Monday, March 17, Dan Jones wrote to J. D. Pegg:

We have had a pretty stormy time here this winter, especially since you was [*sic.*] here, in reference to the bringing in of the two covenants into the ministers school. Some took positive grounds against it, and others favored it; so it was an open question for several weeks; after which the covenant was taken up as a subject for investigation. A chairman [Prescott] was appointed, and about ten meetings were held. I think, of two hours each. The result has not been to bring the brethren together and unite them in working for the upbuilding of the cause of God, but has rather been to create party spirit and party feelings, and to magnify the differences and views that existed between them. Sister White has been attending the morning meetings in the bible-school for a couple of weeks. . . . She says it is not what we believe that she feels exercised about; it is not that we should all hold just the same view in reference to the covenants, in reference to the law in Galatians, or in reference to any other point of doctrine; but that we should all have the spirit of Christ, and should all be united in building up and pushing forward the third angel's message. It seems to me that her position is evidently the correct one, and the principle will apply to other matters with just so much force as it applies to the covenant question, or the law in Galatians. Whatever be the matter that will bring about difference of sentiment, that will absorb our thoughts, and our attention, is detrimental to the interests of the work in which we are engaged and just in proportion as our strength and attention is given to such matters will the work in which we are engaged suffer. . . . I was just as certain as I could be that certain plans and purposes were being carried out by Dr. Waggoner and others and that certain motives were behind those plans and purposes; but it now appears that I was altogether mistaken in both. It seems strange how it could be wrong. Every circumstance seemed to add to the evidence to prove the things true; but, regardless of all this, they have been proven untrue. This brought to my mind that we can not rely upon circumstantial evidence; we can not unfair attribute [*sic.*] a motive to a man and say that he meant a certain thing under certain circumstances, for perhaps we may be all wrong, and he may never have had such a thought in his heart as we attribute to him.⁶¹⁴

With each passing day Dan Jones's conviction deepened that it was not the doctrine of the covenants that was important, but the spirit in which those doctrinal discussions took place. He claimed Ellen White as the source for these convictions.

⁶¹⁴ Letter Dan T. Jones to J. D. Pegg, March 17, 1890, pp. 979-981.

When had Ellen White ever said that doctrine was not important? Sound doctrine would lead to a loving spirit even in the midst of doctrinal conflict. Jones's attitude was, believe whatever you want to believe about the covenants just so long as you do not get into a big fight about it. He claimed Ellen White's support for this.

He was big enough to admit that he was wrong in attributing "plans and motives" to Waggoner, because that was what he wanted to believe this was all about. Making assumptions about brethren based on "circumstantial" evidence was the issue in his mind. He would gladly concede his error there, but not on the doctrines.

That same day Dan Jones wrote to J. H. Morrison:

Well, we have had quite a hassel [*sic*.] here this winter over bringing the covenant question into the bible school for ministers. I objected to it. It caused quite a stir. . . I am willing to confess that in my opposition to this work I have not always been as free from personal feelings as I should have been; still I have attempted all the while to keep myself perfectly free from anything of a personal nature. It seemed for awhile that Sister White would come out and endorse Dr. Waggoner's position on the covenant question fully, and it was a great perplexity to me to know how to look upon the matter; for it seemed clear to my mind that his positions were not all correct. But later it is stated that the matter of doctrine was not the important point in the issue at all. Sister White and Dr. Waggoner said they did not care what we believed on the law in Galatians or on the covenants: what they wanted to see was that we might all accept the doctrine of justification by faith that we may get the benefit of it ourselves and teach it to others. With this I am perfectly in harmony. I believe in the doctrine of justification by faith, and I am also willing to concede that it has not been given the prominence in the past that its importance demands. . . .

Another thing that has been brought out by these meetings is the fact that a plan had been laid by the brethren who came from California, to teach their peculiar views in the Institute in Minneapolis. For this we have the positive statements of Dr. Waggoner and Sister White. We also have the statement that since that time there has been no concerted plan or line of action laid out to bring about an acceptance of these views by our people. This being true,---and we can not dispute the statements of Dr. Waggoner and Sister White,---I have been laboring under a misapprehension all the way through. In the first place, I understood that there was considerable importance attached to the points of doctrine involved in the questions of the law in Galatians and the two covenants.

I have also thought that these brethren had laid their plans to get their views before the people, and that it was

being accomplished step by step through institutes, workers' meetings, and bible-schools. Now if this is not true, then I say again, I have been laboring under a mistake, and will have to acknowledge that I have been under a mistake in these matters. . . . We had a meeting of about 25 here in the office one evening. . . . That meeting did more toward clearing up some things in connection with the Minneapolis work and the line of policy that has been pursued since that time, than anything that has ever been done so far. I am afraid we have had our minds too much on the discussion of those theoretical points of doctrine, and have not dwelt enough on the saving truths of the gospel of Christ.⁶¹⁵

Here Dan Jones revealed that it was justification by faith that Ellen White and Waggoner were emphasizing. It did not matter what they believed on the covenants or the law in Galatians. That was fine with him. With that he had no problem. After all, he believed in justification by faith.

The reality was that justification by faith was not properly understood without the truth on the law and the covenants. This was just another way for Dan Jones to mollify his conscience with a straw issue which he considered of lesser importance. What was most important for him was to maintain at all costs his theory of the law in Galatians and the covenants.

He thought the special meeting of March 12, had cleared his mind of objectionable areas. The problem was he had interpreted what happened then completely to his own liking. He reasoned it was not about the "doctrine." It was about the contentious spirit.

Dan Jones misrepresented Elder Waggoner on a fundamental point in this same letter which he wrote to Elder J. H. Morrison.

Dr. Waggoner took the position before the bible-school that Christ could not have sinned, that it was impossible, etc. Sister White came out a few evenings later and said that Christ could have been overcome by temptation, and if it were not so he could not be our example and a consolation to us. He has also given up

⁶¹⁵ Letter Dan T. Jones to J. H. Morrison, March 17, 1890, pp. 974-976.

the position that in the old covenant the promises were all on the part of the people, and none on the part of God. . . .⁶¹⁶

There was evidence that Waggoner said “Christ could not have sinned.” The Kresses were witnesses at a meeting when “Elder Waggoner began to teach that Jesus, being God in the flesh, could not fail; that it was impossible for Him to fail. And he went still farther, holding that when we open our hearts fully and Christ takes complete possession, it will be impossible for us to fail.”⁶¹⁷

The following day Ellen White appeared at a five o’clock morning meeting and referred to the theory that Christ could not sin. “She said that this was not so, that God risked something when He gave His only begotten Son to this world; that it was possible for Christ to fail in His mission. . . .”⁶¹⁸

However, Waggoner never gave up the position that the old covenant was the people’s promise and not God’s. This kind of blatant misrepresentation on the part of Dan Jones to discredit an opponent’s position in the minds of those not present was the same kind of underhanded activity of which he had accused Waggoner with his California conspiracy theory.

Ellen White had delivered a sermon the previous day in which she said:

The reason why I felt so at Minneapolis was that I have seen that everyone that has taken a position similar to the one they took in Minneapolis would go into the darkest unbelief. Have we not seen it acted over and over again?

. . . If it is a suggestion of unbelief, credence is given to that at once. You will never have greater light and evidence than you have had here; if you wait till the judgment, what you have had here will condemn you. But God has been speaking and His power has been in our midst, and if you have not evidences enough to show you where and how God is working, you never will have it. You will have to gather up the rays of light that you have had, and not question so. "But there are

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., p. 976.

⁶¹⁷ Lauretta E. Kress and Daniel H. Kress, *Under the Guiding Hand: Life Experiences of the Doctors Kress* (Washington, D. C.: College Press, 1941), p. 88.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 88, 89.

some things that are not explained." Well, what if everything is not explained? Where is the weight of evidence? God will balance the mind if it is susceptible for the influence of the Spirit of God; if it is not, then it will decide on the other side. They will come just exactly where Judas came; they will sell their Lord for thirty pieces of silver or something else. They will sacrifice everything to unbelief.

. . . But oh, let no soul go out from here with darkness, for he will be a body of darkness wherever he goes. He scatters the seeds of darkness everywhere. He carries all these seeds and he begins to sow them, and it unsettles the confidence of the people in the very truths that God wants to come to His people.⁶¹⁹

This was the very work that Dan Jones was doing--scattering "seeds of darkness everywhere." He heard those words that day from Ellen White.

On Tuesday, March 18, Dan Jones wrote to W. C. White. It was almost like a catharsis for him to write to everyone about his Red Sea experience of deliverance from doubting the testimonies. He said:

I have tried to avoid any prejudice, or wrong spirit, or feeling since the Minneapolis meeting, in reference to Dr. Waggoner, Eld. Jones, yourself or any one else that was specially connected with pushing forward the law in Galatians, the covenant question, I had made up my mind from the way things were working that you and Dr. Waggoner and Eld. Jones had formed a plan to push these new doctrines on our people; that you was [*sic.*] using your mother to give influence and power to

your work. . . . From the explanations that were made at the meeting of which I speak, I see that my conclusions were all without foundation, and my surmisings (*sic.*), only the surmisings of a carnal mind. Matters in reference to the Sabbath-school lessons that had been very dark and misterious (*sic.*) to me, were also cleared up to some extent, though it is not as clear yet as I should like to see it. I have laid more blame upon you, in my own mind, than upon all the others in reference to these matters of which I have spoken, as I thought you was (*sic.*) the one that was responsible for it all. I am glad that my mind has been disabused on this matter, that I can see matters in a different light, even though it proves to me that I have been mistaken, that I have misjudged you and others, have made a fool of myself in a good many things. I ask your pardon for all that I have done, said or thought about you that was wrong. . . .⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁹ E. G. White, Sermon, March 16, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 636, 638-640.

⁶²⁰ Letter Dan T. Jones to W. C. White, March 18, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, pp. 159-163.

Dan Jones's assumption was that W. C. White had been in a secret alliance with Waggoner. Elder White would persuade his mother to side with Waggoner.

Dan Jones wrote of the two "special meetings" on March 12 and 19 at which Ellen White was present. He said:

I am glad that these meetings have been held before the school closed [ministers' Bible school], and that things have stood out in their true light as they have. My mind is relieved. . . . I had supposed in the past that a few doctrinal points,---such as the law in Galatians, the theory of the covenants, etc.---were the questions at issue, and that the object of certain ones, which I have named, was to bring in those doctrines and stablish (*sic.*) them as the belief of the denomination. I thought the doctrine of justification by faith, with which I have agreed theoretically, and with which all our leading brethren have agreed, was only a rider, so to speak, to carry through these other things that were more subject to criticism; and by connecting the two together,---one with which no one found objection,--that rather than reject those that were unobjectionable, our people would be led to accept that which they could not fully endorse. Your mother and Dr. Waggoner both say that the points of doctrine are not the matters at issue at all, but it is the spirit shown by our people in opposition to these questions which they object to. I am perfectly free to acknowledge that the spirit has not been the Spirit of Christ. It has not been so in my case,

. . . The point in your mother's mind and in the mind of Dr. Waggoner, was not to bring in these questions and force them upon all, but to bring in the doctrine of justification by faith and the spirit of Christ, and try to get the people converted to God. . . . It has been the most severe trial of my life, and I hope I may never pass through another like it. It went to that extent that I almost doubted the Testimonies, and gave but little weight to what your mother had to say. . . .⁶²¹

Dan Jones had been under the false impression that justification by faith was just a "rider" in order to bring in objectionable points such as the law in Galatians and the covenants. Now he had convinced himself that it was the exact opposite. The objectionable points were really innocuous. Anyone can believe what they wanted to about them. It was the gospel of Christ that was more important.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

Dan Jones was demonstrating an ecumenical spirit. Doctrine was not important. It was the spirit in which things were done that was more important. Believe what you want to believe.

The message of E. J. Waggoner in 1888 was justification by faith in connection with the law in Galatians and the covenants. The everlasting covenant was the gospel. So long as the covenants were misunderstood by the church, there could be no clear understanding of the gospel. The true work of the three angels' messages would be thwarted.

If Dan Jones had to accept the whole package under the endorsement of the spirit of prophecy, then his faith in the latter would crash. Therefore, he clung to his theories of the law and the covenants and separated them from justification, which he already "theoretically" believed and never questioned.

This was how he released himself from theological distress. He had finally disabused his mind of the assumption that the whole theological package was being thrust upon an unwilling leadership of the denomination. ". . . It is easier for me to acknowledge that I was wrong, then to remain in the state of mind in which I have been for some time in the past. It is really a relief to me to know that I was wrong."⁶²²

In reality the Holy Spirit was leading the church into a more biblical position. Unfortunately, the church leadership was kicking and screaming against the Spirit's leading. In so doing, it was rejecting light, shutting out the work of the Spirit, and embracing unbelief and darkness. The testimonies were slighted by reinterpretation to fit the fancies of men.

Dan Jones wrote to R. A. Underwood following the second "special meeting" on Wednesday night, March 19. "After the first one of these meetings was held [March 12], light

⁶²² Ibid.

began to come in, explanations were made that cleared up many things that were in the minds of some of us; and after the last one, which was held yesterday afternoon [March 19].”⁶²³

Ellen White spoke of that meeting. “We thought best to appoint a meeting in the afternoon of the same character as the one we had held Wednesday evening, the week past.”⁶²⁴

Dan Jones explained what happened in that special meeting from his perspective:

There seemed to be nothing remaining that would be ground for division or hard feeling. They did not ask any of us to concede any point of doctrine on the covenants, or the law in Galatians; on the contrary they said that matters of doctrine were not the questions at issue; that they cared nothing about what we believed: it was the spirit that was manifested that they thought was wrong and wished to have corrected. Well, it is evident that some of us had had feelings that were not what they should have been, and of course it was right that we should acknowledge this, and we did. Confessions were also made on the other side just as freely. At the present time there seems to be harmony and union and a general spirit of good feeling among all the brethren.⁶²⁵

Ellen White wrote of Dan Jones’s response at that meeting. “. . . It was as solemn a meeting as I have ever seen. It made a deep impression. Suffice it to say the whole atmosphere is changed. There is now joy with Brother Dan Jones that I held to the point. He says he has made a fool of himself.”⁶²⁶

The burden had been lifted from Dan Jones’s heart.⁶²⁷ He was relieved to be out from under the pressure of theological conflict. In fact, he was now at the point where he wrote to E. W. Farnsworth and said the whole theological crisis of the Bible school was brought on by Dr. Waggoner himself:

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁴ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March, 19, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 642.

⁶²⁵ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, March 21, 1890, p. 2.

⁶²⁶ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, March, 19, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 643.

⁶²⁷ Olsen reported: “Bro. Dan T. Jones feels like another man, and I am glad that it is so. Still he has been pretty slow to make acknowledgements. But he has taken a stand, and acknowledged his errors.” Letter O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, March 20, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

I have not yet seen that I did wrong in asking Dr. Waggoner to postpone the presentation of the covenant question in the school until Eld. Olsen and Prof. Prescott should return first. From what Eld. Olsen has said to me, I think they did not question that I am at fault in that matter at all. But when the Dr. refused to do so, it brought on a complication of circumstances that left the way open for suspicions of his work to arise, and they did arise.⁶²⁸

Now Dan Jones reasoned that, because Elder Olsen and Prof. Prescott did not say anything to him about the way he handled Waggoner teaching the covenants in the classroom, he was somehow justified in the actions he took. According to Jones, the way Waggoner handled himself created an atmosphere of suspicion about his intentions. Thus, Waggoner was at fault, not Dan Jones.

Then on March 27, Dan Jones wrote to the former president, G. I. Butler:

Perhaps we have been mistaken in some of our opinions that we have held. . . . I do not see now what can be done but to accept the explanations that have been made, and act upon them. . . . While I hold the same position on the law in Galatians, and the covenant question that I have always held, I am glad to have my mind relieved in reference to the motive and plans of some of the brethren. . . . Let us hope that in the future our brethren will not act in such a way as to lay the foundation for unjust judgment on their plans and purposes.⁶²⁹

Dan Jones had not changed his mind on the law and the covenants one bit.

Despite the fact that Ellen White had given her endorsement of Waggoner's position, Jones was in utter denial. According to Dan Jones's logic, Waggoner was responsible for the crisis at the ministers' Bible school. Because of the way he went about things, he opened himself up for criticism.

Dan Jones wrote to Elder Butler:

I know it is a little difficult in the face of the circumstantial evidence that has surrounded this matter for a year and a half, for us to come to the conclusion now that those matters that transpired in Minneapolis were all done in lamb-like

⁶²⁸ Letter Dan Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, March 21, 1890, pp. 2, 3. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist.

⁶²⁹ Letter Dan T. Jones to G. I. Butler, March 27, 1890.

innocence. But if Dr. Waggoner says that he did not have any plan when he came there, and Brother Jones says the same, and Sister White sustains them, what can we do but accept it as a fact? . . . You may think that we have kicked a little up here, and then have been roped in, and swallowed whole. Such is not the case by any means. I consider that we gained every point that we were holding for, and think the other side was glad enough to be let down a little easy; and I was willing that it should be, if they have learned the lessons that we designed they should learn. I feel confident now that Dr. Waggoner will be very cautious about throwing his peculiar view before the people until they have been carefully examined by the leading brethren; and I think the leading brethren will be much more careful in their examination of these peculiar views than they have been in the past.⁶³⁰

Now Jones was declaring a victory for the side of the traditionalists. They had taught those “fledglings” a good lesson. Maybe they had learned a lesson or two about bringing new doctrines in before consulting brethren of experience. Whatever lessons Dan Jones had taken away from those two Wednesday night meetings with Ellen White back on March 12 and 19 had long been forgotten.

Dan Jones had been sending off many letters to leaders all over the country (Atlanta, Georgia; Boise City, Idaho, Kansas City, Missouri; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Denver, Colorado) filling the minds of leaders with his version of what was going on at the Bible school in Battle Creek.

In the spring of 1890, Dan Jones returned to his home conference, Kansas City, Missouri, where he had served prior to Minneapolis. He found a lot of rumors and erroneous impressions among the ministry. Elders Chaffee and N. W. Allee were very discouraged. Dan Jones had

written Elder Allee back in January, 1890, disparaging Jones and Waggoner to the effect that “our more thoughtful men,--Bro. Smith, Bro. Littlejohn, Bro. Corliss, Bro. Gage, and others,--do

⁶³⁰ Letter Dan T. Jones to G. I. Butler, April 14, 1890.

not agree with them on many positions which they take on . . . some theological questions,--like the covenants, the law in Galatians.”⁶³¹

Elder Allee was putting together a spring institute for the Missouri Conference ministers and had thought about inviting them to speak. That idea was canceled after Jones said they were pushing “a high-falutin theory that never has worked and never will work anywhere.”⁶³²

When Dan Jones went to the Kansas City, Missouri Institute, April 17-23, 1890,⁶³³ he found them in low spirits. Jones explained the problem to Elder O. A. Olsen:

They had got the impression that there were new views coming out that unsettled the old positions we have held, and they were not certain that the new positions were correct. This referred especially to the position on justification. We had ministers’ meetings each morning after I arrived, and talked over these matters quite fully. After one or two mornings the ministers became quite free, and a better spirit came in. I took charge of the ministers’ meetings, and explained the position that is taken on justification by faith, and the reasons for it; when I was through, Bro. Chaffee said if that was the position it was all right; he had no fault to find with it. He had got the idea some way that the doctrine of justification by faith practically did away with the law; but when the true position was explained to him, he seemed to feel all right about it.⁶³⁴

These brethren had the false impression from the reports they had received, in part from Dan Jones in Battle Creek, that Waggoner’s new views on justification by faith were antinomian.

Dan Jones continued his attack on Waggoner and the covenants. On May 5, 1890, he wrote to R. C. Porter in Minnesota:

From what I can learn, there has been a great deal of discouragement all over the field, especially on the part of ministers (It may be just as extensive among lay brethren, but we have not had opportunity to ascertain that yet), that has grown out of the Sabbath-school lessons, and the discussions that have been had on the covenant question, and on the law in Galatians. Some of our best ministers do not seem to know what to believe, and they are all broken up. The main force of the meetings this spring has been directed toward encouraging and building them up.

⁶³¹ Letter Dan T. Jones to N. W. Allee, January 23, 1890.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. C. Porter, May 5, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁶³⁴ Letter Dan T. Jones to O. A. Olsen, April 21, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

I found this so down in Missouri. Two of the leading ministers in the conference were all discouraged; and the reason for the discouragement was that new doctrines were coming in, and our people were becoming unsettled as to the old land-marks, and they did not know what to preach as they went out into the field. They had always understood that our people were a unit; now the idea that they were differing between themselves, and especially as they were throwing away old and accepted doctrines, and taking up new ones, they thought there was not much assurance that those which we now hold might not be thrown away in the future, and new theories accepted in their place. I find that the agitation on the covenant question and justification by faith has lost none of its force as it has gone out to different parts of the field, but has rather gathered strength and taken on objectionable features, until they see it now in a much worse light than it really is.⁶³⁵

He went on to disparage the Sabbath School lessons on Hebrews that were revised by E.

J. Waggoner. Those lessons for the first quarter of 1890 ended in March. The second quarter lessons were by a different author.

Jones continued:

There seems to me to be such a marked contrast between the present lessons on the latter part of Hebrews and those which we had last winter. The lessons now are full of hope and faith and courage. I enjoy them exceedingly, and know that they contain meat for our people everywhere. How unfortunate, it seems to me, that the others should not have been of the same character. But we must take things as they come to us. Job says, "Shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord, and not receive evil also?" What we get in this world is a mixture of good and evil, usually with the evil very much predominating. I have come to the conclusion that even among Seventh-day Adventists it is necessary for us to heed the injunction of the Apostle, "Try all things; hold fast that which is good."⁶³⁶

By November 25, 1890, Dan Jones had not changed his attitude.

Ellen White wrote to U. Smith about him:

I pity Dan Jones. I have talked with him freely. I begged of him last year at the Ministerial Institute [1889-90], for Christ's sake, to not help you to keep the position you then occupied, I begged of him to lend his influence to help you to come out into the clear light. I told him I knew your dangers.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. C. Porter, May 5, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, November 25, 1890, Brooklyn, N. Y. *EGW 1888*, p. 733.

It has often been asserted that “one of the most important turning points in the prolonged struggle over the law and the covenants took place near the end of the first ministers’ school in March 1890.”⁶³⁸ The evidence does not bear this out. To take Dan Jones’s interpretations of Ellen White’s testimony was very shaky ground for drawing such a far-reaching conclusion.

Yet, it has been said that, “The message as Ellen White viewed it, is not doctrinal. We do not find her concerned with the law in Galatians, the covenants, or the Trinity.”⁶³⁹

Compare this with what Ellen White said on that Sabbath, March 8, when she endorsed the covenants as presented by Waggoner.

Now I tell you here before God, that the covenant question, as it has been presented, is the truth. It is the light. In clear lines it has been laid before me. And those that have been resisting the light, I ask you whether they have been working for God, or for the devil. . . . I told Brother Dan Jones, I will not tell you my opinion; my faith. Dig in the Bible.⁶⁴⁰

She did not tell Dan Jones her opinion. She endorsed light that came from the Bible on the covenants.

In addition, she was very concerned about the unchristian attitudes being displayed. She connected it with their erroneous views of the law and the covenants. She wanted nothing to do with their interpretations:

These testimonies of the Spirit of God, the fruits of the Spirit of God, have no weight unless they are stamped with your ideas of the law in Galatians. I am afraid of you and I am afraid of your interpretation of any scripture which has revealed itself in such an unchristlike spirit as you have manifested and has cost

⁶³⁸ George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987), p. 51. Dan Jones’ letter to W. C. White was pointed to as evidence by Knight. He said: “These explanations proved to be a major turning point in the post-Minneapolis conflict.” *Ibid.*, p. 52. Cf. George R. Knight, *Angry Saints: Tension and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle Over Righteousness by Faith* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989), p. 93.

⁶³⁹ George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy*, pp. 69, 52

⁶⁴⁰ E. G. White, “Sermon,” March 8, 1890, *EGW 1888*, pp. 596, 597.

me so much unnecessary labor. . . . I say if your views on the law in Galatians, and the fruits,

are of the character I have seen in Minneapolis and ever since up to this time, my prayer is that I may be as far from your understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures as it is possible for me to be. I am afraid of any application of Scripture that needs such a spirit and bears such fruit as you have manifested. One thing is certain, I shall never come into harmony with such a spirit as long as God gives me my reason.⁶⁴¹

She connected their doctrines as being the source of their spirit.

False teachings required a harsh, dictatorial spirit to enforce them because they could not be demonstrated from the Scriptures. To discount truth for the sake of experience was a false dilemma. Both were absolutely essential in order to produce a Christlike outcome.

The ministers' Bible school was not a "turning point" after Minneapolis. There was no credible evidence that Dan Jones ever accepted the truth on the covenants or the law in Galatians. There was some evidence from Ellen White that Prof. W. W. Prescott, who taught the class on the covenants, had some truth that he was teaching the pastors.

The best evidence of what took place in Minneapolis was that Waggoner presented righteousness by faith through the motif of the covenants and the law in Galatians. The message was a package. Dan Jones did his best to separate the covenants and the law issue from justification by faith, which he accepted "theoretically." In so doing, he never received the 1888 concepts which Ellen White endorsed.

As for Ellen White, herself, at the 1888 conference, she fully embraced the message of justification by faith as presented by Waggoner.

I have had the question asked, "What do you think of this light that these men are presenting? Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last 45 years--the matchless charms of Christ. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds. When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in Minneapolis, it was

⁶⁴¹ Letter E. G. White to W. C. White and Wife, March 13, 1890, *EGW 1888*, pp. 631, 632. Here she discussed the attitudes of the opposing brethren.

the first clear teaching on this subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the conversations between myself and my husband. I have said to myself, It is because God has presented it to me in vision that I see it so clearly, and they cannot see it because they have never had it presented to them as I have. And when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said, Amen.⁶⁴²

Even though she had no clear light on the law in Galatians, she did not let that prevent her from moving forward with the message of Christ our righteousness in the setting of the everlasting covenant. When, on March 6, 1890, she received the light on the covenants, she quickly came out in a public endorsement. The next link would be to embrace the issue of the law in Galatians.

⁶⁴² E. G. White, Sermon, Rome, New York, June 19, 1889, Ms 5, p. 10. *EGW 1888*, p. 348.

Chapter 19

URIAH SMITH STANDS BY THE LANDMARKS

One way to determine whether the denomination accepted the 1888 message was to look at the publications of its leaders in the post-Minneapolis era. Elder Uriah Smith was a powerful leading figure in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the 1890's. He was editor of the most influential paper, the *Review*. He also had a publisher, Captain Eldridge in the *Review* office,⁶⁴³ who was absolutely loyal to his editor's position.

Dan Jones wrote to Elder R. C. Porter:

Well, you will perhaps want to know how the brethren here are feeling at the present time in reference to matters that were under discussion last winter [1890 ministers' bible school]. Will say that Capt. Eldridge and Bro. Smith, so far as I can tell, feel just about as they did last winter. There is a rumor afloat,--how much credit to give to it I can not tell,---that Sister White is coming out in a testimony against Bro. Smith and Bro. Butler, that stirs up the Captain . . . this may seem to be only a rumor, and that every thing will conspire to let this matter of the covenant question and the Minneapolis matter rest for awhile until it dies out of the minds of the people.⁶⁴⁴

Immediately after Ellen White had received a vision regarding the covenants on March 6, 1890, she communicated this to Elder Smith by letter and then announced it publicly before the brethren in Battle Creek on Sabbath, March 8.

There had been no other letters sent to Elder Smith from Ellen White by May 5, 1890, as mentioned by Dan Jones. Evidently the *Review* office was really agitated by the March communication when she said:

⁶⁴³ Ellen White said of Captain Eldridge and others in the *Review* office: “. . . They had no more respect for the testimonies than for any other literary production, and left them far behind, unnoticed and neglected. . . . I was treated by them with an indifference savoring of contempt. They had the power which position, but not the Lord, gave them. . . .” Letter E. G. White to J. E. White, August 9, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1816.

⁶⁴⁴ Letter Dan T. Jones to R. C. Porter, May 5, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Night before last I was shown that evidences in regard to the covenants were clear and convincing. Yourself, Brother Dan Jones-Brother Porter (*sic.*) and others are spending your investigative powers for naught to produce a position on the covenants to vary from the position that Brother Waggoner has presented,⁶⁴⁵

This did not move Elder Smith in his determination to stay the course on what he considered to be a “landmark” issue.

Exactly one month later in responding to a correspondent’s question Elder Smith wrote:

God can never approach man with offers of blessing through Jesus Christ, without putting in the very fore front of every such transaction his own law, the transcript of his will, harmony with which is the indispensable condition of every favor to be bestowed; for what blessings could God confer, or promise to confer, upon men as individuals, families, or nations who would not yield to him their hearts, and seek to obey him? In the formation of the covenant, this condition must therefore first appear, as it does; “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.” Ex. 19:5. When the people assented to this, then God could proceed to enter upon the covenant proper. And the outward symbol of that covenant. . . must consist of its terms. . . including the promise of the people to obey God’s law on the moral plan of action, . . .⁶⁴⁶

He held to the belief that the old covenant was God’s covenant of strict obedience on the part of the people, and that it was entirely appropriate for them to promise obedience to the ten commandments and anything else God chose to include in the covenant. No one can come to Christ except through the law. This was a formidable model of the covenant.

Elder Smith gave an explanation of Paul’s allegory in Galatians 4:21-31. “Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. . . . But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

Smith’s thesis was that, at the time God gave the old covenant to Israel, it did not “gender to bondage.” It was only after Christ’s death that it became a bondage. Any Jew or Christian

⁶⁴⁵ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 604.

⁶⁴⁶ Uriah Smith, "The Ark and the Law," *RH*, 67, 14 (April 8, 1890), p. 216.

who resorted to the ordinances of the old covenant was then under bondage. This clearly reflected his dispensational approach to the covenants.

Smith wrote:

. . . They have wondered how such a covenant could all the while gender to bondage; . . . we do not understand Paul to say that it did, at that time, gender to that kind of bondage of which he speaks in the allegory. He was speaking from the standpoint of circumstances then present, to correct evils then existing, and to guard against dangers to which they were then exposed.⁶⁴⁷

He interpreted the passage as addressing the present situation in Paul's day and not the past.

He wrote: "Now Paul takes these circumstances to illustrate a condition of things that existed at the time he wrote this epistle to the Galatians, touching the relation of the old covenant to the new, and the Jews to the Christians."⁶⁴⁸

Elder Smith did recognize the historical basis for the typology which the Apostle Paul used in the example of Hagar-Sarah and Ishmael-Isaac. He discussed it thoroughly. However, he did not allow the text to speak when the apostle Paul said, "But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar" (Galatians 4:24, 25).

The historical typology of Hagar-Ishmael ran through the historical experience of Mount Sinai right up to the present Jerusalem. That was the old covenant "which gendereth to bondage," beginning with Abraham's union to Hagar. Abraham did not believe God's promise of a son and sought to fulfill it through his own works. This was the old covenant.

⁶⁴⁷ Uriah Smith, "Paul's Allegory," *RH* 67, 11 (March 18, 1890), p. 168.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The same was true at Sinai. The people did not believe God's renewed offer of the Abrahamic new covenant and said, "All that the Lord has said we will do." That committed them to bondage under the law because all have sinned.

Elder Smith's paradigm of dispensationalism would not allow him to see the new covenant in effect during the time of Abraham. Salvation was only a figurative anticipation before Christ and not yet a reality.

Waggoner, on the other hand, said the everlasting covenant was the new covenant:

What is called the "second covenant" virtually existed before the covenant was made at Sinai; for the covenant with Abraham was confirmed in Christ (Gal. 3:17); and it is only through Christ that there is any value to what is known as the second covenant.⁶⁴⁹

This was a fundamental concept of the covenants as taught by E. J. Waggoner.

Rather than let up on publication of issues relating to the covenants, Elder Smith poured on the pressure through the columns of the *Review*. This "bone of contention" was intensified by a two-part series written by G. I. Butler. He said:

The Lord made a covenant with Abraham. . . called an "everlasting covenant." . . . "The old covenant," was made between God and the children of Israel, at the foot of Sinai. . . . This continued till superseded by the "new covenant," . . . which went into effect when Christ's blood was shed, . . .⁶⁵⁰

It was certainly redundant, if not sad, to have to point out the dispensational frame of mind projected by this statement.⁶⁵¹

Elder Butler, the former General Conference president whose era ended in 1888, was still a theological heavyweight in the denomination. He asserted: "How was it when the covenant was made with Abraham? . . . The condition plainly implied: Abraham was to walk before God,

⁶⁴⁹ *Sabbath-School Lessons on the Letter to the Hebrews for Senior Classes*. Jan. 4 to Mar. 29, 1890, (Oakland, California: International Sabbath-School Association, 1889), p. 20.

⁶⁵⁰ G. I. Butler, "God's Covenant," *RH*, 67, 15 (April 15, 1890).

⁶⁵¹ See also W. C. Wales, "The Everlasting Covenant Not the Old Covenant," *RH*, 67, 23 (June 10, 1890).

and be perfect. If Abraham did this, he would be obliged to conform his life to a perfect rule of conduct, that is, obey a perfect law.”⁶⁵² Clearly, when Butler spoke of the “everlasting covenant” being made with Abraham, he had in mind the ten commandments. Abraham must obey the law in perfect conformity to God’s will.

The new covenant, which went into effect with Christ, Butler continued, “is no exception. . . the condition on God’s part upon which he will enter into covenant relations, is obedience to his covenant, the ten commandments.”⁶⁵³ There was no emphasis on Christ’s obedience on behalf of the sinner. Butler did say the Lord would put his law in their hearts, but this was the condition that had to be met in order to enter into covenant relations with God.

Elder Butler did provide an amazing insight at the conclusion of his series, which unfortunately, he did not incorporate into his covenant theology. “Man often proves false to the promises he makes, and breaks his covenant vows. Such mutual agreements pass away when man violates his promises to keep the condition of them.”⁶⁵⁴ Had he thought this point through, it would be impossible to say that man entered God’s covenant through obedience. Man was incapable of keeping his promises.

Ellen White confirmed that there had been no change in the attitude of Elders Butler and Smith. She wrote to Elder Olsen saying:

Satan had worked up matters so that my burdens and labors would be fifty-fold greater than there was any need of these being. Brother Butler has been at the foundation of it all, but he makes no confession and writes in the papers as though he were all right.

Now unless the Lord bids me, I shall not address the church here in Battle Creek until Elder Smith and those who have been in harmony with him show their colors.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² G. I. Butler, “God’s Covenant,” *RH*, 67, 15 (April 15, 1890).

⁶⁵³ G. I. Butler, “God’s Covenant,” *RH*, 67, 16 (April 22, 1890).

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁵ Letter E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, June 21, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 676.

Stubborn resistance was directed toward Ellen White.

E. J. Waggoner had said in the controversial Sabbath School lessons of the first quarter (1890) that “it is to the ‘new covenant’ that the term ‘everlasting covenant’ refers.”⁶⁵⁶ The rebuttal to this statement came out in the *Review* in June. W. C. Wales said, “. . . the ten commandments are called God’s covenant. This is the everlasting covenant. . . .”⁶⁵⁷ This was a bold attempt to distinguish the “everlasting covenant” from the “new covenant.” Wales made this very clear by his concluding statement:

The blood of Christ is not the blood of the old covenant, not the blood alone of the new, but the blood of the everlasting covenant; that is, the covenant which belongs alike to both dispensations--the covenant violated by every sinning Jew, by every godless antediluvian or modern Gentile.⁶⁵⁸

His point was that the old covenant spanned from Sinai to the cross. The new covenant spanned from the cross onwards. But the everlasting covenant--the ten commandments--spanned both dispensations.

Waggoner, on the other hand, viewed the everlasting covenant as the new covenant which has ever been in place since the inception of sin. It was renewed to Abraham and ratified by Christ’s blood on the cross.

Another article, published in the *Review* later in the year, was aimed directly at Waggoner’s thesis that the old covenant was founded on the promise of the people. “. . . No

⁶⁵⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “Letter to the Hebrews. Chapter 8:8-13. Lesson 16, January 18, 1890,” *ST*, 16, 1 (January 6, 1890), p. 10.

⁶⁵⁷ W. C. Wales, “The Everlasting Covenant Not the Old Covenant,” *RH*, 67, 23 (June 10, 1890).

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

careful reader of that word will say that all the promises of the old covenant were on the part of the people.”⁶⁵⁹ E. R. Jones explained--

. . . the promises of the first covenant. . . . They are two on the part of God, and one on the part of the people. The people made no *promises*, only *one* promise. God’s promises to them were conditional, and that condition was that they should obey his voice; and the promises based on this condition were, first, that they should be his people; and, second, that he would be their God.⁶⁶⁰

The evidence indicated that the editorial policy of the denomination’s leading journal, following Ellen White’s endorsement of Waggoner’s understanding of the covenants on March 8, 1890, was to refute Waggoner’s thesis on the covenants at every point.

Ellen White wrote to Elder Smith about his peril:

. . . During the night season again and again have I been shown your position has been a dangerous one. . . .

You have virtually said, "I have not confidence in the message Sister White bears. . . . I have been compelled to meet your influence in Minneapolis and since that time, everywhere I have been; and now the year 1890 is nearly closed. Will you fall on the Rock and be broken?

. . . You were a man like Elder Butler, - would not confess a wrong step but would make many more wrong steps to justify your first wrong step,⁶⁶¹

Elder Smith did not live in denial. He knew full well that Ellen White stood with Waggoner on the covenants. By this time, the Pacific Press had published her book *The Patriarchs and Prophets*, which upheld Waggoner’s view. There she developed it eloquently.⁶⁶²

Smith’s strategy was to say that she was being “influenced.” Ellen White wrote,

When you have stated that Sr. White was influenced by W. C. W. [White], A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner, you have planted in hearts infidelity that has been nourished and has borne fruit. . . .

⁶⁵⁹ E. R. Jones, “The Promises,” *RH*, 67, 43 (November 4, 1890).

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

⁶⁶¹ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, November 25, 1890, Brooklyn, New York. *EGW 1888*, pp. 732, 733.

⁶⁶² See E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 370-373.

. . . They will say, "O, Sr. White is influenced. Some one has told her these things. If Elder Smith who knows all about the testimonies says this is only her own opinion and her own judgment, and he does not accept the teachings of the testimonies, and he such a good man, I will follow his example and I will risk it."

My brethren have trifled and caviled and criticised (*sic.*) and commented and demerited (*sic.*), 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 judgment and are satisfied.⁶⁶³

Elder Smith was practicing his own form of higher criticism on the spirit of prophecy.⁶⁶⁴ He was influencing others to do the same.

E. P. Dexter of Topeka, Kansas, had a question about Ellen White's newly issued book *The Patriarchs and Prophets*. Regarding a statement she made on page 310, he asked, "Shall I understand the quotation mentioned to be dictated by the spirit of inspiration or has the idea been suggested by investigation?"⁶⁶⁵ In questioning her source of information, Dexter was practicing his own form of source criticism. He was but following in the footsteps of the master, Uriah Smith.

By the end of 1890, Elder Smith was immovable. He was completely opposed to the message and its messengers. However, there would be some change in the next year.

⁶⁶³ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, December 27, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 796, 797, 800.

⁶⁶⁴ Elder Smith's pattern of discarding light from Ellen White had been going on for some time. He wrote to D. M. Canright: ". . . I now have to discriminate between 'testimony' and 'vision.'" Letter U. Smith to D. M. Canright, August 7, 1883, Battle Creek, Michigan. Ellen White confirmed this to be the case: "Elder Uriah Smith questioned the propriety of bringing the testimonies before the church at all. Thus he takes the responsibility of standing between God's word and the people. . . . He has placed himself and his influence in direct opposition to my work, so that I cannot reach the people to impress upon them the testimonies that God has given me. . . . In rejecting these testimonies, Elder Smith you have virtually rejected all the testimonies." E. G. White, "The Testimonies Rejected," *Testimony for the Battle Creek Church* (June 20, 1882), Healdsburg, California, p. 42.

⁶⁶⁵ Letter E. P. Dexter to E. G. White, March 11, 1891.

The covenants were a central motif through which E. J. Waggoner delivered the message of righteousness by faith. To reject one was to reject the other. There was no greater proof that Uriah Smith rejected the message than his editorial policy regarding the covenants.

Then on October 11, 1890, Ellen White made her first statement regarding the traditional position on the law in Galatians. “By failing to cherish the Spirit of Christ, by taking *wrong positions* in the controversy over the law in Galatians--a question that many have not fully understood before taking a *wrong position*--the church has sustained a sad loss.”⁶⁶⁶

This Ellen White statement was not an endorsement of Waggoner’s position on the law. However, it did say the church leadership had taken “wrong positions in the controversy over the law in Galatians.” This would be the earliest statement on record from the pen of inspiration regarding this issue. The position on the exclusive role of the ceremonial law in Galatians 3 was wrong.

By the fall of 1890 a major change was in the offing for E. J. Waggoner. The *Signs* posted the announcement with sadness over the loss of their beloved editor. “Dr. E. J. Waggoner will take a prominent part in teaching in the ministers’ school at Battle Creek, Mich., this winter. We regret exceedingly to lose his help from this office; in fact, we know. . . Brother Waggoner will still write for the *Signs*.”⁶⁶⁷ His co-editor, M. C. Wilcox would eventually take over the responsibilities on May 11, 1891.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁶ E. G. White, "Witnessing," Ms. 21, October 11, 1891, p. 6. “The Law in Galatians,” *Manuscript Releases Volume Nine*, p. 331. Emphasis added.

⁶⁶⁷ “Waggoner at Ministers’ School in Battle Creek,” *ST* 16, 40 (October 13, 1890), p. 520.

⁶⁶⁸ *ST* 17, 19 (May 11, 1891), p. 145.

Waggoner had pastored the Oakland, California, church for many years.⁶⁶⁹ On October 11, 1890, he preached his farewell sermon.⁶⁷⁰ Elder Olsen wanted him to teach at the minister's school in Battle Creek starting October 31.

Later in the year 1890, the Foreign Mission Board voted to send Waggoner to London. A six-week ministerial institute was planned for April 15, 1891.⁶⁷¹ Furthermore, Waggoner was needed to teach the pastors at institutes in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.⁶⁷²

Elder Waggoner's legacy to the *Signs* and its readers was epitomized by his uplifting of the gospel and the commandments of God. He said, "God's precepts are the reflect of his righteousness, his nature, and his exceeding great and precious promises are given that by them we may become partakers of the divine nature."⁶⁷³ The ten commandments were transformed from ten great prohibitions for man to keep, into ten great promises of God for poor sinners.

This was in such contrast to what E. R. Jones said in his article published the following day, "God's promises to them were conditional, and that condition was that they should obey his voice. . . ."⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁹ A. T. Jones told of preaching four years at the San Francisco church across the bay from Waggoner's church in Oakland, California. Jones said: "Once when he [Waggoner] was called away for several days, I was asked to preach in Oakland in his absence. I preached only a simple gospel sermon as I would on any occasion. The next Sabbath he was at home again, he preached in the Oakland church and I in San Francisco. When I came into the printing office Sunday morning to work, I asked Brother Bollman, who was one of our fellow workers, what subject Brother Waggoner preached on the day before. 'The same as yours last Sabbath?' 'What was his text?' 'The same text that you used last Sabbath.' 'What was his line of thought and his illustrations?' 'The same as yours.'" A. T. Jones, "Funeral Services," *The Gathering Call* 4, 5 (November, 1916), p. 6.

⁶⁷⁰ "Waggoner Closes Pastorate in Oakland," *ST* 16, 41 (October 20, 1890), p. 528.

⁶⁷¹ Letter O. A. Olsen to Brother Ericson, December 28, 1890, London.

⁶⁷² Letter O. A. Olsen to L. Johnson, February 4, 1891, Christiania, Norway.

⁶⁷³ E. J. Waggoner, *ST* 16, 43 (November 3, 1890), frontispiece.

⁶⁷⁴ E. R. Jones, "The Promises," *RH* 67, 43 (November 4, 1890).

The minister's school of 1890-91 commenced on Friday, October 31, at 9 a.m., in Battle Creek. There were sixty in attendance.⁶⁷⁵ It continued for sixteen weeks until February 27, 1891.⁶⁷⁶ On the "Managing Board" was Dan T. Jones,⁶⁷⁷ who expressed concerns over allowing E. J. Waggoner to teach the class on Galatians.⁶⁷⁸ Professor W. W. Prescott, who was the principal, arranged to teach the subject. As it turned out, Prescott only covered the first three chapters of Galatians and Waggoner finished the book as well as lecturing on the Epistle to the Romans.⁶⁷⁹

Prescott taught Waggoner's position on "the seed" in Galatians "in the minutest detail." Elder Butler, writing from Florida, was enraged: "Great Scott has it come to this that such things are to be indoctrinated into the minds of our young people. . . ."⁶⁸⁰

Elder Butler's attitude toward the message and the messengers had not changed in the least. He was still publishing articles refuting Waggoner's position on the covenants throughout the year.

Sometime during 1890 Ellen White issued this solemn warning:

But the Jews were obstinate. Their own ideas and customs and practices were their *idols*. Would they give up their own misinterpretations, which they had taught the people to regard as sacred doctrines? No; never! They formed a confederacy to stand by the old traditions. . . . Any pet theory, any human idea, becomes of the gravest importance and as sacred as an *idol* to which everything must bow. . . . This has verily been the case in the theory of the law in Galatians.

⁶⁷⁵ O. A. Olsen, "The Opening of the Ministers' School," *RH* 67 (November 4, 1890), p. 688.

⁶⁷⁶ E. G. White, Diary Entry, "Christ Our Righteousness." *EGW 1888*, p. 899.

⁶⁷⁷ Pamphlet, "Bible School for Ministers, Battle Creek, Mich. Announcement for 1890-91," p. 2.

⁶⁷⁸ Letter D. T. Jones to R. C. Porter, October 23, 1890, 21: Bx 60 Lb 4, GCAr. E. W. Farnsworth, "Ministerial Institute in District No. 3," *RH*, December 22, 1891, p. 800.

⁶⁷⁹ Pamphlet, "Bible School for Ministers, Battle Creek, Michigan. Announcement for 1890-91," p. 6.

⁶⁸⁰ Letter G. I. Butler to D. T. Jones, February 16, 1891, RG 21: Fld 1891-8; Letter D. T. Jones to G. I. Butler, February 19, 1891, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 6, GCAr.

Anything that becomes such a hobby as to usurp the place of Christ, any idea so exalted as to be placed where nothing of light or evidence can find a lodgement (*sic.*) in the mind, takes the form of an *idol*, to which everything is sacrificed. The law in Galatians is not a vital question and never has been. Those who have called it one of the old landmarks simply do not know what they are talking about. It never was an old landmark, and it never will become such. These minds that have been wrought up in such an unbecoming manner, and have manifested such fruits as have been seen since the Minneapolis meeting, may well begin to question whether a good tree produces such evidently bitter fruit.

. . . I have had no anxiety about the law in Galatians, but I have had anxiety that our leading brethren should not go over the same ground of resistance to light and the manifest testimonies of the Spirit of God, and reject everything to *idolize* their own supposed ideas and pet theories.

I am forced, by the attitude my brethren have taken and the spirit evidenced, to say, God deliver me from your ideas of the law in Galatians, if the receiving of these ideas would make me so unchristian in my spirit, words, and works as many who ought to know better have been. I see not the divine credentials accompanying you. I am warned again and again of what will be the result of this warfare you have persistently maintained against the truth.⁶⁸¹

Ellen White developed the concept of idolizing a pet theory of Scripture. In this case it was identifying the ordinances of ceremonies as the exclusive law in Galatians. The brethren, Smith and Butler, feared that if this interpretation gave way to Waggoner's view of the covenants, they would concede the strongest argument for the ten commandments and the Sabbath over to their antinomian opponents. Their worst fears were that Ellen White might endorse Waggoner's position on the law. She had not yet come out and done that.

Throughout the year 1890, following Ellen White's endorsement of the covenants, Uriah Smith remained unmoved. She had specifically sent the letter of endorsement to him. The evidence indicated that Elder Smith pursued an editorial policy in support of the traditionalist's view of the law in Galatians and the covenants. Ellen White statements indicated that this was the case.

⁶⁸¹ E. G. White, "Peril in Trusting in the Wisdom of Men." *EGW 1888*, pp. 840-842. Emphasis added.

The Holy Spirit never gave up on Elders Smith, Butler, and the others. Further opportunities would be given for repentance and acceptance of the message. Ellen White would play a role in reaching out to these brethren.

Chapter 20

ELDER SMITH "FALLS ON THE ROCK"

At the close of the year 1890, there were some deep stirrings of the Holy Spirit at the Battle Creek Tabernacle. A week of prayer had been held. On Sabbath, December 17, 1890, W. W. Prescott read a *Review Extra*⁶⁸² written by Ellen White, in the presence of about 1,600 people. He made confession that since Minneapolis he had not been altogether right. He took Uriah Smith by the arm to lead him forward. All Smith could say was, "The matter comes home to me; it means me."⁶⁸³

On Tuesday, December 30, Ellen White arrived in Battle Creek having returned from Washington, D. C. She was in "agony" over Elder Smith.⁶⁸⁴ That Friday she wrote a letter to him, which she held for a couple of days.⁶⁸⁵ Smith came by to visit her the following week and suggested that a few select individuals should come together. He had some things to say.

Before that meeting of confession, Ellen White penned in her diary of his continued resistance ever since Minneapolis.⁶⁸⁶ She gave him the letter she had penned a few days previous. In it she said:

The feelings cherished by yourself and Elder Butler were not only despising the message, but the messengers. . . . You write that you have said that you would have not [*sic.*] controversy with Sr. White. Better, far better, have had this controversy openly than under cover, for this controversy has been and there has not been harmony between us since the Minneapolis meeting. You have been exceedingly stubborn. . . .⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸² E. G. White, "Be Zealous and Repent," *RH Extra*, (December 23, 1890). See *Manuscript Releases Volume Two*, p. 55.

⁶⁸³ E. G. White, "Diary Entry." *EGW 1888*, p. 862.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 861.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 862.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 871.

⁶⁸⁷ Letter E. G. White to U Smith, January 6, 1891. *EGW 1888*, p. 846.

Elder Smith had been covertly undermining the message and the messengers. She said he operated “under cover.”

The next day, Wednesday, January 7, Elder Smith read her letter before the few gathered. “Then Brother Smith, with tears, made a full and free confession of the wrong course he had pursued.”⁶⁸⁸ Taking her hand he said, ““Sister White, will you forgive me for all the trouble and distress that I have caused you? I assure you this is the last time if the Lord will pardon me. I will not repeat the history of the past three years.””⁶⁸⁹ She wrote, “He had fallen on the Rock and was broken. I cannot describe to you my joy.”⁶⁹⁰

On Sabbath, January 10, Elder Smith again made confession going back to Minneapolis saying, “In their boarding places in Minneapolis, they made light of the truth and of those who advocated the truth.”⁶⁹¹

By the 12th of January, Waggoner had informed Ellen White that things were going much better this year over last in the Bible school.⁶⁹² W. W. Prescott was teaching the class on Galatians. His views on the coming of the “seed” and the “added law” were in harmony with Waggoner’s position.

Elder George Butler took note of all this from afar and fumed about it to Dan Jones.

I hear Prof. Prescott has given the Waggoner position on Galatians to the minutest detail. That absurd position that the “Seed” has not yet come and all. Great Scott has it come to this that such things are to be indoctrinated into the minds of our young people in our theological classes. That they are summoned on these for such a purpose and yet we are told “no plan” existed to push these doctrines among our people. Believe it who can. . . . I will ever enter my solemn protest against such work. But I may be possibly misinformed. So I ask you again whether this be a fact that the Professor did teach in this way. Please “tell me truly I implore.” I happen to have a testimony of Sr. White in my

⁶⁸⁸ E. G. White, “Diary Entries.” *EGW 1888*, p. 873.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 863.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 875.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 876.

pocket book condemning Elders Jones and Waggoner. . . . people and squarely condemning old Eld. Waggoner's position on the "added law." She said she was shown they were wrong. Yet they are now teaching that very position. What can such things mean? We have fallen upon strange times indeed. I know not how to harmonize such a course with propriety next to truth. Well I can leave them all in the hands of God. But I never expect to harmonize with such a course that has been pursued or thought it is right.⁶⁹³

The law in Galatians question was far from settled.

Again, on Tuesday, January 20, in the presence of those assembled at the minister's institute, Elder Smith made confession of wrongs going back to Minneapolis. Said Ellen White, "We respect Brother Smith. Our confidence in him is restored."⁶⁹⁴ However, by the 22nd she penned, "There is a nominal assent to the truth but its deep spiritual meaning is not understood. We have for years been waging a war with *spiritual idolatry*."⁶⁹⁵

By the close of the Institute on February 27, 1891, she confided to herself privately in her diary:

When strong-minded men once set their will against God's will, it is not easy for them to admit that they have erred in judgment. It is very difficult for such men to come fully into the light by honestly confessing their sins; for Satan has great power over the minds of many to whom God has granted evidence sufficient to encourage faith and inspire confidence. Many will not be convinced, because they are not inclined to confess. To resist and reject even one ray of light from heaven because of pride and stubbornness of heart, makes it easier to refuse light the second time. Thus men form the habit of rejecting light.⁶⁹⁶

There were men at the Review office like Captain Eldridge and Frank Belden who were adamant against change. They were involved in delaying the publication of *The Patriarchs and Prophets* because of statements on the law and the covenants with which they took exception. They felt she had been influenced by Waggoner.

⁶⁹³ Letter George I. Butler to Dan T. Jones, February 6, 1891, Bowling Green, Florida.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 885.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 887. Emphasis added.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 895.

She penned something else of interest regarding the law in Galatians on that last day of the minister's institute, February 17, 1891. She wrote:

By failing to cherish the Spirit of Christ, by taking *wrong positions* in the controversy over the *law in Galatians*--a question that many have not fully understood before taking a *wrong position*--the church has sustained a sad loss. The spiritual condition of the church generally, is represented by the words of the True Witness: "Nevertheless," saith the One who loves the souls for whom He has died, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The position taken by many during the Minneapolis General Conference testifies to their Christless condition.⁶⁹⁷

This would be another early statement on the law in Galatians from the pen of inspiration dated February 17, 1891, indicating that the traditionalists took the wrong position and that the church had sustained a great loss spiritually because of it.

Much has been made of "Uriah Smith Falls on the 'Rock'."⁶⁹⁸ There was no reason to call into question Elder Smith's motives of sincerity in confessing his sin. The number of times he did

this before groups both small and large and on several different occasions indicated that he was sincere.

⁶⁹⁷ E. G. White, "Diary Entry," February 27, 1891. *Manuscript Releases Volume Seven*, p. 261; *EGW 1888*, p. 894. The published text in several different sources by the E. G. White Estate indicated this was the preferred reading. However, this transcription at the hand of C. C. Crisler (1903) from the original handwriting, has been disputed by Tim Crosby. He preferred: "It is a sad thing that had been presented to me in the loss the church has sustained in not cherishing the spirit of Jesus Christ, and by the positions taken in controversies over the law in Galatians. They simply did not know what they were talking about." Tim Crosby, "Ellen G. White and the Law in Galatians: A Study in the Dynamics of Present Truth," pp. 31, 32.

⁶⁹⁸ A. V. Olson, *Through Crisis to Victory 1888-1901* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1966), pp. 92-103. "Once more his influence would point in the right direction." R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, p. 193. Durand said: "From 1891, when he settled his conflict with Mrs. White over the righteousness-by-faith message, he was deemed trustworthy enough to continue in his position of high responsibility on the editorial staff of the church paper, even though he did not give that message the emphasis that the leaders felt it deserved." Eugene F. Durand, *Yours in the Blessed Hope, Uriah Smith* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), p. 290.

Did it affect his subsequent course of action in embracing the message of 1888? In particular, did he take up the cause of righteousness by faith, the covenants, and the law in Galatians as presented by God's messengers? Did he cease undercover activities in opposing the message and the messengers? What attitude did he take toward the Spirit of Prophecy? What editorial policies were pursued following these confessions?

Ellen White spoke at the General Conference of March 5-25, 1891, at Battle Creek. Elder Smith was in the audience. She spoke well of his talents and keen intellect. She went on to say to all:

In rejecting the message given at Minneapolis, men committed sin. They have committed far greater sin by retaining for years the same hatred against God's messengers, by rejecting the truth that the Holy Spirit has been urging home. By making light of the message given, they are making light of the word of God.⁶⁹⁹

God sends messengers with truth that the Holy Spirit may direct attention to the precious rays of light in the Scriptures. Ellen White said at the 1891 General Conference:

And when I see my brethren stirred with anger against God's messages and messengers, I think of similar scenes in the life of Christ and the reformers. . . . The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence.⁷⁰⁰

To reject the truth and hate the messengers was to reject the Holy Spirit. This was an everlasting principle fully illustrated in the crucifixion of Christ.

By rejecting the light given at Minneapolis, the enemy had been able to shut out further light coming to the church, especially through leadership. Elder Smith had experienced a loss from which he could not fully recover. He was currently at a loss (1892).

The message given us by A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church, and woe be unto anyone who professes to believe the truth and yet

⁶⁹⁹ E. G. White, "Article read in the Auditorium of the Battle Creek Tabernacle to a large assembly, at the General Conference of 1891." *EGW 1888*, p. 913.

⁷⁰⁰ E. G. White, "Article read in the Auditorium of the Battle Creek Tabernacle to a large assembly, at the General Conference of 1891," Ms. 30, 1890. *EGW 1888*, p. 913.

does not reflect to others the God-given rays. . . . But the first position you took in regard to the message and the messenger, has been a continual snare to you and a stumbling block. . . .

The enemy had prepared a long chain of circumstances, like links in a chain, that you might be prevented from standing where you should have stood. You have lost a rich and powerful experience, and that loss, resulting from refusing the precious treasures of truth presented to you, is still your loss. You are not where God would have had you, and you have missed the providential links one after another in the chain, so that now it is hard for you to see the mysterious connections in the endless chain of providence in His special work.⁷⁰¹

Elder Smith was in a present condition where he had fallen behind the leading edge of truth.

She stated it in the present tense--it “is still your loss.”

As the truth marched on, he was in danger of “never” regaining what he had lost.

But if such men as Elder Smith, Elder Van Horn, and Elder Butler shall stand aloof. . . they will be left behind. . . . These brethren have had every opportunity to stand in the ranks that are pressing on to victory, but if they refuse, the work will advance without them. . . .

. . . And if they refuse the message. . . .these brethren. . .will meet with eternal loss, for though they should repent and be saved at last, they can never regain that which they have lost through their wrong course of action.⁷⁰²

Elder Smith may have made confessions of sin back in January, 1891, but years later Ellen White was writing to him saying he had refused the message and the messengers. No matter how sincere his confessions may have been, it made no difference in terms of his actions.⁷⁰³

Ellen White was desperately trying to save Elder Smith for usefulness in the cause of God. The extent of her love for him was revealed when she wrote to him: “I feel the tenderest

⁷⁰¹ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, September 19, 1892, North Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia, “The Message of 1888; An Appeal for Unity; The Need for the Indwelling Christ.” *EGW 1888*, pp. 1052, 1053.

⁷⁰² Letter E. G. White to William Ings, January 9, 1893, Melbourne. *EGW 1888*, p. 1128.

⁷⁰³ It has been said of Elders Butler and Smith that “within a few years both men saw the mistake they had made in regard to their attitude to the truths brought to the front at Minneapolis. Both made heartfelt confessions; both regained the confidence of Ellen White and of their brethren; both served the cause they loved so well.” Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White The Lonely Years 1876-1891*, p. 411. This conclusion was not sustained by the evidence.

compassion for you. I would give my life to the torture and death if it would save your soul.”⁷⁰⁴ God could bless such a talented man with keen analytical powers and writing skills. But he had to make the decision to advance in the truth. At this late stage in the game he was so far behind, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to make up the difference where he could be at the present.

Despite her earlier assessments that Elder Smith had “fallen on the Rock,” her later testimonies indicated to what extent this was true. Elder Smith had an open future. His choices would determine which direction he would go from 1891 forward. At the time, Ellen White prayed and hoped that he would act according to God’s will for his life. Her prayers and hopes did not come to fruition.

Did the veteran editor support the good news of the covenants as presented by the 1888 messengers following his “confession”? Elder Smith was asked to explain Galatians 4:24, 25. What are the two covenants? He answered: the old covenant was made with Israel. The new covenant was made with the disciples as representatives of the Christian church. This was blatant dispensationalism.⁷⁰⁵

In this same article Elder Smith this statement regarding both the old and the new covenants: “In both cases the covenant consisted of mutual promises, based on mutual conditions between God and the people.”⁷⁰⁶ This was a rebuttal of a key concept in Waggoner’s presentation of the covenants. And this was published over a year and a half after he fell on the “Rock.”

⁷⁰⁴ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, p. 602.

⁷⁰⁵ Uriah Smith, “In the Question Chair. The Two Covenants,” *RH* 69, 21 (May 24, 1892), p. 329.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

For Waggoner the old covenant consisted of promises on the part of the people to obey God. The new covenant consisted of God's promise to meet the conditions of the covenant. God's new covenant was not based upon the people's promise.

Elder Smith offered this further problematic statement: "The old covenant did not exist before it was made at Sinai."⁷⁰⁷ However, Galatians 4:23, 24 cleared up this problem. It said that the bondwoman and her son and the free woman and her son "are the two covenants." So the old covenant went back at least to Abraham's day. When Abraham took to his bosom the Egyptian slave woman, he was in a state of unbelief regarding God's promise. Unbelief was old covenantism.

In the meantime, Ellen White began coming out with statements on the covenants in support of Waggoner's views. There was not a tinge of dispensationalism in any of them.

It has been thought that from the time of the January, 1891, confessions of Uriah Smith, "for the next five years Ellen White had little to say about the law in Galatians. . . . She had never explicitly endorsed the position of Waggoner on the identity of the law in Galatians, though she seemed to be leaning in that direction."⁷⁰⁸ This would mean she was silent on the law in Galatians until 1896. However, this appeared to be an incorrect assessment.

On August 24, 1891, she wrote this significant statement regarding the law and the covenants.

The terms of this oneness between God and man in the great covenant of redemption were arranged with Christ from all eternity. The covenant of grace was revealed to the patriarchs. The covenant made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law was *spoken* on Sinai was a covenant confirmed by God in Christ, the very same gospel which is preached to us. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁸ Tim Crosby, "Ellen G. White and the Law in Galatians: A Study in the Dynamics of Present Truth" (Andrews University: Paper presented for graduate class, 1980), p. 31.

nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. The plan of redemption was not conceived after the fall of man to cure the dreadful evil; the apostle Paul speaks of the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, as “the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith.” (Revised Version).⁷⁰⁹

Analyzing this statement was a an eye-opening revelation.

W. C. Wales had said the everlasting covenant was not the new covenant, but the ten commandments. Here Ellen White stressed “the everlasting covenant” as “the covenant of grace” “from all eternity.” She quoted Galatians 3:17, emphasizing God’s covenant with Abraham was “confirmed by God in Christ.” It was not by law-keeping.

Ellen White said the “law was spoken on Sinai.” The King James Version translation of Galatians 3:19 said the law “was added because of transgressions.” The law was “added” after the gospel in Christ was given to Abraham. Ellen White was definitely following Waggoner’s understanding of the moral law in Galatians 3:19.

Elder Butler emphasized the word “added” (Galatians 3:19) in the King James Version because it supported his theory that the law was the ceremonial law. The ten commandment law could never be “added” because it was God’s eternal law. According to Butler, the “added” law of ceremonies was brought in because of transgressions against the ten commandments which had always existed.

However, Waggoner emphasized that the word “added” was not a matter of addition or mathematics. The word “added” meant “spoken” or emphasized by God. Thus the law was the ten commandments.

⁷⁰⁹ E. G. White, “Christ Our Hope,” *ST* (August 24, 1891). Emphasis added.

E. J. Waggoner had made this point at “Camp Necessity” held outside Oakland, back in June 26, 1888. According to Elder W. C. White’s notes, Elder Waggoner gave a study one day on “the meaning of Added in Gal. 3:19. ‘Added’: See Deut. 5:22. ‘Spoken’: Heb. 12:19. Both referring to Moral Law the same in original of Gal. 3:19. Two texts where this applies to the moral law. No instance where it is applied to the Ceremonial. By means of Transgressions.”⁷¹⁰ We have no evidence that Ellen White was present for this study and heard the special point Waggoner made of the word “added” as meaning “spoken.”

However, she may have heard him state this during his many public presentations. Whether she did or did not hear it from Waggoner, Ellen White, nevertheless, confirmed that “the law was *spoken* on Sinai.” She avoided the use of the word “added” as found in the King James Version. She used the preferred term of Waggoner. The only law which was *spoken* at Sinai was that given by God in the form of the ten commandments. So her understanding of the law in Galatians 3:19 was the moral law.

This, then, became her first statement identifying the “added” law. She had now publicly confirmed the interpretation of E. J. Waggoner on the moral law in Galatians 3:19 through the pages of the *Signs*.

In another statement dealing with the covenants Ellen White said:

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us to-day, through which we have hope. Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the Author and the Finisher of our faith.⁷¹¹

⁷¹⁰ W. C. White, “Notes at ‘Camp Necessity,’” June 26, 1888. *MMM*, p. 419.

⁷¹¹ E. G. White, “Words to the Young,” *The Youth’s Instructor* (September 22, 1892).

This was a Christ-centered statement of the covenant.

She clearly identified the “Abrahamic covenant” as the “covenant of grace.” Abraham was saved by faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was not saved figuratively. He did not have to wait in his grave for Christ to die on the cross before he could be forgiven. He was verily saved the day he believed.

There was not a vestige of dispensationalism in this statement. “The covenant of grace” was just as effective for Abraham as it was for believers living after the cross. Likewise, “the spirit of bondage” “engendered” by “legal religion” was a principle that was just as much alive and well after the cross as it was in the days of ancient Israel. It was the principle of the old covenant. The sinner sought to obey the law in his “own strength.” The old covenant, as far as the ceremonies were concerned, was abolished with the death of Christ, but as far as the condition of the heart was concerned, the principle remained true. Unbelief in God’s promise was rampant among so-called believers in Christ.

There were clear echoes in Ellen White’s statement of Waggoner’s understanding of the covenants. In this statement Elder Smith would find no support whatsoever.

Just as the previous statement on the covenant of grace was Christ-centered, so also was the following quote:

. . . if it were not possible for human beings under the Abrahamic covenant to keep the commandments of God, every soul of us is lost. The Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of grace. “By grace ye are saved” (Ephesians 2:5). “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:11, 12). Disobedient children? No, obedient to all His commandments. If it were not possible for us to be commandment keepers, then why does He make the obedience to His commandments the proof that we love Him?⁷¹²

⁷¹² Letter E. G. White to Brother and Sister Holland, November 10, 1892. *Manuscript Releases Volume One*, p. 110; Nichol, Francis D., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), p. 1092.

The “Abrahamic covenant” promised much more abounding grace. That grace was the power of Jesus Christ “. . . to become the sons of God, even to them that believe. . . .” This was the divine aid God promised to enable believers to be obedient “to the commandments.”

Waggoner would agree that the condition of the Abrahamic covenant was obedience to the commandments of God. It was not man’s obedience. It was the power of Christ. Christ’s obedience in the believer was the “proof”--the evidence--of genuine faith which works by love for Him. There was no human works involved in this statement. It was all by faith in Christ.

The traditionalists would say that the new covenant was faith plus obedience/works. Waggoner said the new covenant was faith in Christ alone. A genuine faith always manifested itself by works of *agape*. There was no legalism involved in faith. The power was in the “name” of Jesus.

These Ellen White statements were in perfect harmony with the 1888 message of the law and the covenants. Two of them were public statements made through the church papers--the *Instructor* and the *Signs*. They came at a time following the public confessions of Uriah Smith, which she characterized as his “falling on the Rock.” This was her way of saying self must die to Christ.

However, in light of subsequent developments, she recognized that Elder Smith had not changed his mind regarding the message or the messengers. It was time for her to give unqualified support on the last outstanding issue of the law in Galatians.

Chapter 21

CALVARY AT SINAI

On April 18, 1891 E. J. Waggoner arrived in London, England. Elder O. A. Olsen followed on another ship. They along with others from America were busily engaged with campmeetings and institutes. These were conducted in London, Copenhagen, Christiania, Norway,⁷¹³ and Basel, Switzerland.⁷¹⁴

Waggoner reported to W. A. Colcord about the institute being held in London.

There are now fifty-eight members enrolled in the class. Of this number forty-five are from England, four from Ireland, four from Norway, four from Germany, and one from Switzerland. Twenty-four give their occupation as canvassing; eight as engaged in ministerial work, two are mission workers, and the remainder have no special connection with any branch of the work.⁷¹⁵

The institute for ministers in Christiania, Norway, was held for several weeks. Elder Olsen wrote to Dan T. Jones regarding its benefits.

Dr. Waggoner's Bible studies have been very interesting, the subject of righteousness by faith has not met with any opposition and I am convinced by listening to their testimonies, that a much larger proportion of the brethren and sisters have had a deep experience in Christian life and justification by faith than we have in America.⁷¹⁶

By the summer of 1891, Waggoner had returned to the United States. He would continue to teach at ministerial institutes at the request of the General Conference. Then he would spend an extended time in Chicago⁷¹⁷ during the fall of the year.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹³ Letter O. A. Olsen to S. N. Haskell, June 22, 1891, Christiania, Norway.

⁷¹⁴ Letter O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, July 12, 1891, Basel, Switzerland.

⁷¹⁵ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, May 12, 1891, London, England.

⁷¹⁶ Letter O. A. Olsen to Dan T. Jones, June 23, 1891, Christiania, Norway.

⁷¹⁷ Letter O. A. Olsen to C. H. Jones, September 11, 1891, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁷¹⁸ Letter O. A. Olsen to S. N. Haskell, November 17, 1891, Battle Creek, Michigan.

While E. J. Waggoner was teaching the pastors all over the country, Elder Olsen was talking behind his back. Elder J. S. Washburn wrote of this to Ellen White:

Brother Waggoner has been misrepresented and worked against in an underhanded way. Brother Olsen has talked and written to Brother Hope and to Brother O. O. Farnsworth and talked to me against D. A. Robinson and Brother Waggoner, and yet not a word directly to them. There has been double dealing, treachery and things that looked to me like falsehood, until they got rid of Brother D. A. Robinson and this all in the name of order and organization, while it was really anarchy and Brother Waggoner has been cruelly misrepresented and treated as a dangerous man who needed to be watched and suspicion cast upon about all he has said or taught,--I mean, by the leaders, NOT D. A. Robinson. . . . But even before I left Washington, D. C. and came to England [1891], Brother Olsen told me that Jones and Waggoner were not practical men, intimated that they were not safe and this was while he was sending them around, all over the United States to hold institutes. . . .

. . . I have spoken of Olsen's talking to others against Brother Waggoner and D. A. Robinson by intimation, but he would say nothing to them directly till THEY spoke to him about it. Brother Olsen had a long talk on those things with me before his talk with them. I was astonished at some things he said. He said that what the General Conference did was the mind of the Holy Spirit and of course they had it so what they did was right--could not be otherwise: now that is only the doctrine of Papal Infallibility and I told him so.⁷¹⁹

Thus, even though O. A. Olsen gave Waggoner "broad exposure through the 1890's" and there was "no official rejection of the message," Waggoner was regarded with suspicion.

By September 22, 1891, Waggoner was in Austell, Georgia, participating in an Institute.

The weather was hot and so were the tempers of some regarding the truth. Waggoner wrote:

They were determined not to commit themselves so much that they might have to revise some of their ideas. Yesterday there was developed "a pretty" strong spirit of fight, and we felt burdened. . . for them. But the Lord was present all the time, and today there was a spirit of tenderness that effectually disarmed fighting. . . . Of course those persons have not yet yielded to the light, but the work is progressing.⁷²⁰

Despite the opposition he later wrote to W. C. White that the institute in Georgia was in--

some respects the most wonderful experience that I ever had. It was not so much the amount of light that we saw, as the glimpse of the wonderful possibilities in the future.

⁷¹⁹ Letter J. S. Washburn to E. G. White, February 10, 1897. Emphasis his.

⁷²⁰ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, October 1, 1891, Austell, Georgia.

However, since that time, the Bible has seemed to be a new book. I felt at the close of that institute that I wanted to stop work and go off somewhere and study for six months, and think.⁷²¹

From there he planned to attend the Institute in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. His wife Jessie was in Chicago while he was on itinerary.⁷²²

The Institute for Lancaster was in session by October 23, 1891.⁷²³ A. T. Jones was with Waggoner teaching. He reported, “. . . it is the hardest kind of work, and the words seem to fly back in our faces. There have been victories, still the bottom has not been reached yet.”⁷²⁴ The Institute closed on November 14, 1891, with a “good interest till the close.”⁷²⁵ Waggoner was on his way back to Chicago by train.

At the Chicago mission there were twenty-four enrolled for the Bible school. Upon his arrival Waggoner immediately took up responsibilities teaching.⁷²⁶ His wife and family had the “grip.”⁷²⁷ He alone was well. Nevertheless, the Lord blessed the Bible school with six baptisms.⁷²⁸

By December 14, 1891, Waggoner reported “. . . according to the vote I shall leave this country in a few months. . . to work on the Present Truth. . . .”⁷²⁹ Waggoner and family were soon to leave on a trip to the west coast.

⁷²¹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, April 1, 1892, Des Moines, Iowa. *MMM*, p. 185.

⁷²² Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, September 22, 1891, Austell, Georgia.

⁷²³ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, October 23, 1891, Lancaster, Massachusetts.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁵ Postcard E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, November 14, 1891, Lancaster, Massachusetts.

⁷²⁶ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, November 20, 1891, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷²⁷ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, December 16, 1891, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷²⁸ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, December 28, 1891, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷²⁹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. A. Colcord, December 24, 1891, Chicago, Illinois.

By April 13, 1891, Ellen White had been asked by the General Conference to go to Australia.⁷³⁰ She was very reluctant to agree to their request. She did not have any clear light as to whether she should go.⁷³¹ She later wrote to Elder Olsen:

Had you stood in the right position the move would not have been made at that time. The Lord would have worked for Australia by other means and a strong influence would have been held at Battle Creek, the great heart of the work. There we should have stood shoulder to shoulder, creating a healthful atmosphere to be felt in all our conferences. It was not the Lord who devised this matter. I could not get one ray of light to leave America. But when the Lord presented this matter to me as it really was, I opened my lips to no one, because I knew that no one would discern the matter in all its bearings. When we left, relief was felt by many, but not so much by yourself, and the Lord was displeased; for he had set us to stand at the wheels of the moving machinery at Battle Creek.⁷³²

It was not in the plan of God for her to go to Australia, but He overruled the actions of men in His divine providence and brought good from the move. After much persistence on the part of O. A. Olsen⁷³³ and the Foreign Mission Board, she finally boarded the ship in San Francisco on November 12, 1891.

During 1892, E. J. Waggoner was busily engaged with ministerial institutes in Georgia, Kansas,⁷³⁴ Healdsburg, California, Walla Walla, Washington⁷³⁵ and Des Moines, Iowa.⁷³⁶ For the

⁷³⁰ “That Whereas, In our judgment it would be a great blessing to the cause in Australia and adjacent colonies for Sister White to visit that field; therefore, - Resolved, That we hereby invite her to do so, as soon as the coming autumn, if her own judgment, and the light she may have in the matter shall be in accordance with this request; it being understood that W. C. White shall accompany her on this visit.” *Daily Bulletin of the General Conference* 4,19 (Monday, April 13, 1891), Battle Creek, Michigan, p. 256.

⁷³¹ “. . . I had not one ray of light that he [the Lord] would have me to come to this country [Australia]. I came in submission to the voice of the General Conference. . . .” Letter E. G. White to J. E. White, August 9, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1817.

⁷³² Letter E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, December 1, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1622.

⁷³³ Letter O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, August 12, 1891, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁷³⁴ Letter O. A. Olsen to S. N. Haskell, December 23, 1891, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁷³⁵ Letter O. A. Olsen to Dan T. Jones, December 8, 1891, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁷³⁶ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, April 1, 1892, Des Moines, Iowa. *MMM*, pp. 185, 186.

most part these were beneficial for the ministry of the church. Ministerial training and education were needed in a time when there were no formal requirements for ordination.

In the Iowa conference Brother J. H. Morrison finally made a confession over his wrongdoing at the time of the Minneapolis conference. However, A. G. Daniells wrote years later about Elder Morrison's attitude toward the "light." ". . . Brother Morrison, and others fought this battle. . . who are still unconverted to this new light."⁷³⁷ So even by the late date of 1902 Elder Morrison was "unconverted" to the "new light" brought in at the 1888 conference.

At this time Elder Henry Nicola confessed "his feeling at Minneapolis." He had been responsible for blocking Ellen White from coming to their campmeeting in Iowa.⁷³⁸ Waggoner wrote of the opposition: "One of the most unimpressible fellows is Brother Larson. . . . He has drilled himself so much as a debater that it seems almost impossible for him to look at any truth except as a critic."⁷³⁹

W. C. White wrote to Waggoner: "I am very sorry to hear what you said about the spirit manifest by some of the believers in Iowa. I am sorry to know that they continue to put stumblingblocks in the way of Eld. Butler."⁷⁴⁰

A minister's institute was held at Healdsburg, California, during February, 1892. The president, Elder O. A. Olsen arrived on February 19, and reported a good attendance. The instructors were S. N. Haskell, A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, J. H. Durland, and Bro. Owen.

Olsen noted, "I had entertained some fears in reference to how things would be. I had heard some reports that gave me some anxiety; but I am glad to say that the Institute is

⁷³⁷ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 14, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 320.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁷³⁹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, April 1, 1892, Des Moines, Iowa. *MMM*, p. 186.

⁷⁴⁰ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, September 1892, North Fitzroy, Australia, p. 2.

prosperous in every respect. . . . Brethren Jones and Waggoner of course are carrying the largest portion of the time.”⁷⁴¹

E. J. Waggoner reported that there was some resistance at the California institute. “It seems very evident that the matter with California, is too much ceremonial law. Not the exact ceremonial law of the Jews. . . .” “. . . There was so much standing on ceremony.”⁷⁴²

When Elder Olsen returned to the east in March, he was not happy about some activities of Waggoner and Jones. He reported to Ellen White who was in Australia:

At present there is a somewhat strained condition of things. I have great respect for Brn. A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and Prof. Prescott, and believe that they have been the instrumentalities in the hands of God of doing much good. But in connection with their work there have been some extreme expressions used, and at times extreme positions taken, which have not strengthened the good work that they were trying to do. . . . The positions that have been taken on healing, and some other matters, have brought about. . . quite a strained condition of things.⁷⁴³

E. J. Waggoner was sent to Europe for a tour of speaking engagements. The president, Elder O. A. Olsen wrote, “Dr. Waggoner and others will in all probability sail for Europe about the 11th of May.”⁷⁴⁴ They boarded the Teutonic for Liverpool. Waggoner led out in ministers’ institutes in Switzerland, Copenhagen and Stockholm.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴¹ Letter O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, February 28, 1892, Oakland, California, p. 5.

⁷⁴² Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, April 1, 1892, Des Moines, Iowa. *MMM*, p. 185.

⁷⁴³ Letter O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, March 10, 1892, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 183.

⁷⁴⁴ Letter O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, February 1, 1892, Chicago, Illinois; Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, April 1, 1892, Des Moines, Iowa. *MMM*, p. 186. “Elder E. J. Waggoner (formerly editor of this paper) sailed from New York for Europe on the 11th inst. After attending some general meetings on the Continent, he will settle in London as editor of the *Present Truth*. He was accompanied by his family.” M. C. Wilcox, “Field Notes,” *ST* 18, 29 (May 30, 1892), p. 461.

⁷⁴⁵ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, November 22, 1892, London.

The General Conference had assigned him to work with the International Tract Society in editing the British missionary journal *The Present Truth*.⁷⁴⁶ W. C. White wrote about removing Waggoner from Battle Creek from his mother's perspective. "She says it has been shown to her that . . . some of our people were well pleased to have him removed from the work at Battle Creek by his appointment to work in England. . . ."⁷⁴⁷ Ellen White was "shown" that "some" in Battle Creek were happy to have him out of the country.

Ellet Waggoner, Jessie, the children, and his sister Alta, arrived in London on July 17, 1892, to take up responsibilities.⁷⁴⁸ They rented a house in the city. Waggoner was to edit *The Present Truth* until 1902.⁷⁴⁹ *The Present Truth* had already published many of his writings. He was accorded a warm British welcome. "For more than a year we have been anxiously looking forward to his coming, and now rejoice that he is here. . . ."⁷⁵⁰ Jessie helped him with the paper.

Ellen White immediately sent a letter from Australia to encourage Waggoner in his new responsibilities.⁷⁵¹ This letter was shared among the "ministering brethren" at an institute held just for them in London. Those who came together were J. S. Washburn, O. O. Farnsworth, Hope, D. A. Robinson, Morrison, Professor Miller and E. J. Waggoner.⁷⁵²

⁷⁴⁶ "Elder E. J. Waggoner and family arrived in Liverpool, England, May 18. *Present Truth* says he has appointments in Scandinavia and Central Europe which will consume about six weeks, after which his labours will be devoted mainly to the work in London." M. C. Wilcox, "Field Notes," *ST* June 13, 1892, p. 493.

⁷⁴⁷ Letter W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, May 30, 1902, Sanitarium, California.

⁷⁴⁸ *Present Truth* 8, 15 (July 28, 1892), p. 240. Hereafter *PT*.

⁷⁴⁹ G. C. Tenney, "Funeral Services," *The Gathering Call* 4, 5 (November, 1916), p. 5.

⁷⁵⁰ *PT* 8, 15 (July 28, 1892), p. 240.

⁷⁵¹ E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, May, 1892, North Fitzroy, Australia. Quoted in *Manuscript Releases Volume Three*, pp. 10-19.

⁷⁵² Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, August 22, 1892, London.

Waggoner wanted to make *The Present Truth* a weekly paper and include a children's department. Other goals he had for the publishing work in London was to make it independent of its mother institution, the Pacific Press.⁷⁵³

The Whites in Australia had plans for him to hold institutes in South Africa and Australia following the continental conferences of July, 1893. In order to allow Waggoner to do this, the possibility of sending him relief at the office in London was discussed. Perhaps W. A. Colcord could come.⁷⁵⁴

Waggoner was burdened with a sense of responsibility in reaching the millions of London for Christ. He observed in writing to Ellen White that there was a greater population in London than in all of the continent of Australia. He felt the divine call to work in the city. “. . . I am sure the Lord sent us here. . . .”⁷⁵⁵ He was energized by the prospects. “I am glad that I am here. . . .” to be used of the Lord.⁷⁵⁶ He had plans for scores of meeting houses throughout the city. He saw the need for many more workers to come to London. In addition, the family was succumbing to colds from the “damp, foggy weather.”

As for the Whites' plans for him to come to Australia, Waggoner wrote to W. C. White: “I lay these things before you, because I know that a letter from you would have more weight with the [Foreign Mission] Board than one from me. . . .”⁷⁵⁷ There was no doubt that Waggoner wanted to see them. He was urging that the Whites come and work in London for a while.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵³ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, September 1892, North Fitzroy, Australia.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁵⁵ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, November 22, 1892, London, England, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁶ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, March 10, 1893, London, England.

⁷⁵⁷ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, November 22, 1892, London, England, p. 2.

⁷⁵⁸ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, December 23, 1892, London, England, p. 1.

Ellen White encouraged him not to leave out the children and youth in his ministry.⁷⁵⁹ She must have been heartened by Waggoner's word of expanding the paper to include a children's department.

She also pointed Waggoner to Jesus. "We must live perfection, because in looking at Jesus we see in Him the embodiment of perfection; and the great Center upon whom our hope of eternal life and happiness is centered will lead us to unity and harmony. . . ."⁷⁶⁰

Waggoner had expressed his heart-rending concern for the poverty stricken of London. He and Jessie had visited a woman living in a one room tenement with her four children. The woman's husband was down with "consumption." They had no heat or food. Waggoner said: "But it makes me feel like crying as I see some of these poor people who have no home in this life nor in the one to come."⁷⁶¹

The believers in north London were meeting in a three-floor meeting hall which was noisy and inadequately heated. Waggoner felt the people reticent to express their testimonies during the "social meeting."

Ellen White responded: "A man who has the true idea of what constitutes perfection of character will reveal the same fruit which he desires to see in others. He will by precept and example give evidence that he is endowed with a kindly, genial disposition, imbued with refinement and tenderness."⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁹ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, December 27, 1892, George's Terrace, Australia. Quoted in E. G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), pp. 580, 581.

⁷⁶⁰ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, January 22, 1893, Melbourne, Australia. Quoted in E. G. White, *The Upward Look* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), p. 36.

⁷⁶¹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, December 23, 1892, London, England.

⁷⁶² Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, January 22, 1893, Melbourne, Australia. Quoted in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases Volume Nine*, p. 209.

In addition, Waggoner and his associates were being threatened with Sunday closing laws for having public meeting houses. Parliament was being urged to push through an act immediately by the Sunday Closing Association. There were already strict Sunday laws in place and the Anglican church had a firm grip on the state.⁷⁶³

When the New Year arrived, Waggoner used it as an opportunity to address the matter of making resolutions. He pointed out how easily they are broken and compared this to making promises to God. He suggested: “Think of a man making a promise to the Lord, and then coming to Him and asking for favours on the strength of the good promises that he has made!”⁷⁶⁴

Because all men are sinners, nothing good dwells in them. Therefore, they are unable to keep their promises. When men make promises they seem satisfied with them. It causes them to overlook better promises. “Not only are our promises unnecessary, but they are harmful, because they shut out the promises of God. They imply that His promises are not sufficient. Surely no one who has any just sense of the exceeding value of the promises of God, will think of supplementing them by worthless promises of his own.”⁷⁶⁵

So was there any value in making human promises? Only God’s promises were worth something. “We do not ask the Lord to bless us because we have made good promises, but because He has made promises.”⁷⁶⁶ This very practical counsel was based on Waggoner’s covenant theology. He clearly saw a distinction between the old and the new covenants. The old covenant was based on human promises. The new covenant was based on God’s promise.

⁷⁶³ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, December 23, 1892, London, England, p. 6.

⁷⁶⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “Promises,” *PT* 9, 3 (February 9, 1893), p. 35.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Elder Waggoner practiced what he taught. When Ellen White exhorted him to listen to the Spirit of God, he acknowledged unknown sin. “. . . I am the chief of sinners, and the weakest and most unprofitable of all God’s servants. . . . I have no confidence in myself. . . .”⁷⁶⁷

By May, 1893, W. C. White had given up his plans to have Waggoner come to Australia. He realized the demands of Waggoner’s work in London.

Elder White informed Waggoner of some changes regarding the publishing work in London. “I rejoice greatly in the action of the Gen. Conf. . . . it has taken full control of the International publishing work that centers in London, and are preparing to incorporate it here.”⁷⁶⁸ The plan was to have the Echo Company in Australia take on the London paper. They expected to have the paper sent to New Zealand and Australia. Elder White proposed a name change. “It seems to me that Bible Echo is a much nicer name. . . .” He added, “We can all see that hereafter, our business relations with the London house, will naturally strengthen.”⁷⁶⁹

It appeared that plans were afoot by the General Conference to eliminate the Australian paper *Bible Echo* and consolidate it with *The Present Truth*. Elder White wrote to Waggoner:

. . . The Gen. Conf. has done its work, and now we have lots of new measures and plans to think about. Some of our cherished ambitions have been swept by the board, but on the whole, we feel nothing but rejoicing and thanksgiving, as we read the proceedings of the Conf.

. . . Please consider fully the matter of making your London paper, not simply English, or for Great Britain, but for the British Empire; and tell us much (*sic.*) you think you can make it meet the wants of the cause in Australia.⁷⁷⁰

A wealthy board member of the *Bible Echo*, Brother W. J. Prismall from the Melbourne church, was being sent to London to make arrangements.⁷⁷¹ Brother Prismall was humiliated by

⁷⁶⁷ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, March 10, 1893, London, England.

⁷⁶⁸ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, May, 1893, p. 1.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.

⁷⁷⁰ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, May 10, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand.

the “cutting down, or giving up the Echo.” He was a naturally “hypercritical” individual and would evidently be hard to deal with. Waggoner was forewarned, “Convert him if you can to an Imperial paper.”⁷⁷²

Elder White was still seeking to make a smooth transition of the two papers by the late summer of 1893.⁷⁷³ The consolidation plan of the General Conference never did materialize.

Some have suggested that by 1893 Waggoner’s covenant theology was receiving support from others. W. H. Littlejohn’s three-part series on “The Covenants” has been identified as being more gospel oriented.⁷⁷⁴

Elder Littlejohn was responding to the antinomians in his covenant apologetics. He understood the ten commandments as God’s covenant which was over and above the “agreement” which God made with Israel at Sinai. After going through all the covenant-making narrative of Exodus he asked the question: “. . . Why does God himself base all of his promises upon the obedience of the people to his voice, if the covenant that he was about to make was an unconditional one?”⁷⁷⁵

The question could be asked: Did God intend to set forth the covenant in order that the people should promise to obey His law? They certainly understood it “required the doing of something on their part.”⁷⁷⁶ Elder Littlejohn laid great stress on this fact. This was the way he understood God’s proposition.

When Israel failed to keep their part of the bargain the “other contracting party” said: “Neighbor B, you have failed to carry out your contract. I know that such would be the case, but

⁷⁷¹ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, May 8, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷⁷³ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Wagoner, August 31, 1893, Sydney, Australia.

⁷⁷⁴ W. H. Littlejohn, “The Covenants,” *RH* 70, 5-6 (January 31-February 7, 1893).

⁷⁷⁵ W. H. Littlejohn, “The Covenants,” *RH* 70, 5 (January 31, 1893), p. 68.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

I thought that such a failure would prove a valuable lesson to you, and so I permitted it to take place. I am ready now to make another contract with you, based upon 'better promises'."⁷⁷⁷

There were some places of coincidence between Waggoner's covenant theology and Littlejohn's theology. It was notable when Littlejohn said:

Do you not perceive reader, that the foregoing illustration presents substantially the condition of things under the first and second covenants respectively? Under the first covenant, the people undertook to win eternal life by keeping the law of God perfectly in their own strength, without intelligently availing themselves of the help which heaven proffered. A disastrous failure was the result. Jehovah knew before hand what the come-out (*sic.*) would be, but it was necessary in order to prepare the people to receive the promised Christ to destroy their overweening self-confidence.⁷⁷⁸

For Littlejohn the old covenant was Israel's obedience to the law.

But along with this helpful statement were mingled confusing concepts: "In due time, the second, or new, covenant was instituted, and took the place of the old one."⁷⁷⁹ This left the impression that the new covenant came in after the old. This reflected the dispensationalism of Uriah Smith and others. Waggoner would never make such a statement. Littlejohn's theology cannot be judged as supportive of Waggoner's theology except on selective points of convergence.⁷⁸⁰

The following spring of 1896, Ellen White wrote of Elder Littlejohn's relationship to the message and the messengers:

Had Eld. Littlejohn walked in the light, he could have been a great blessing in many ways; but selfishness has in a large degree closed about his soul, and he has been watching and criticizing the course of the men to whom God has given the message of truth to give to the world at this time.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁷ W. H. Littlejohn, "The Covenants," *RH* 70, 6 (February 7, 1893), p. 84.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ W. H. Littlejohn had a helpful exposition of 2 Corinthians 3. "The Ministration of Death," *RH* 70 (August 22-September 5, 1893).

⁷⁸¹ Letter E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, June 1, 1894. *EGW 1888*, pp. 1248, 1249.

This spirit of criticism was true of many brethren who participated in the 1888 Minneapolis Conference.

In 1893 Ellen White wrote from Australia to William Ings:

The conference at Minneapolis was the golden opportunity for all present to humble the heart before God and to welcome Jesus as the great Instructor, but the stand taken by some at that meeting proved their ruin. They have never seen clearly since, and they never will, for they persistently cherish the spirit that prevailed there, a wicked, criticizing, denunciatory spirit.⁷⁸²

It was incomprehensible how many leading brethren could be so resistant to God's direction. Because they had shut light out at Minneapolis they would never see clearly again.

The spiritual revivals of the 1893 General Conference session produced more confessions of sin in relationship to Minneapolis. Leroy Nicola was one of them. He was from the Iowa conference. He had been in attendance at the 1888 session. His conference president was Elder J. H. Morrison, the one who had been selected by church leadership to represent the traditional understanding of the ceremonial law in Galatians. Elder Nicola assisted him with his presentations.

Elder Nicola wrote a letter of confession following the 1893 General Conference. Ellen White was in New Zealand at the time Elder Nicola made his repentance. He had gone to Minneapolis in 1888 anticipating a "discussion" of the "law question in Galatians." Elder Nicola wrote: "I listened to Bro. Waggoner, but was in [no] condition of mind to appreciate the best what he had to say directly on the law question. I had no issue with him on his positions on

⁷⁸² Letter E. G. White to William Ings, January 9, 1893, Melbourne, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1125.

justification by faith, but was rather sorry that that subject had to be brought into what I called the ‘discussion.’”⁷⁸³

At the time of the 1888 conference Nicola felt that Ellen White had done the right thing in remaining neutral on the whole issue of the law. However, he expressed his concern to her when he said: “But when you saw the necessity of bearing your testimony in favor of what you considered to be ‘light’ in what Bro. Waggoner had presented, it seemed to me that you were violating some of the excellent principles, on the start.”⁷⁸⁴ He thought this was predisposing the audience in favor of Waggoner before his president, Elder Morrison, had an opportunity to present his case.

Then Elder Nicola said: “I talked to Bro. [W. C.] White quite decidedly, and blamed him for about all the difficulty that I or any body else was having at that meeting.”⁷⁸⁵ There had been many church leaders who viewed Ellen White’s son as biased toward E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones. They believed he had influenced his mother to have a favorable attitude toward them.

Elder Nicola was not a delegate to the 1888 General Conference, therefore he could not vote on any resolutions at the session. But he did admit to Ellen White that he had voted in the “educational meeting” “on the wrong side of the question.”

Now he confessed to her:

I am so sorry. . . .I humbly beg your forgiveness for the course I took at that meeting.
. . .

. . . You have unflinchingly. . . stood for four or more years, in favor of special principles of inestimable value to our work. How the truth would have been dishonored

⁷⁸³ Letter Leroy Nicola to E. G. White, March 24, 1893, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 246.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 247.

had some of the counsels at Minneapolis prevailed. . . . I rejoice in the light that has been shining since that meeting.⁷⁸⁶

Ellen White wrote in her diary: “I have written a letter to Leroy Nicola by lamplight this evening, in response to a humble confession sent to me two months since. He confesses his sin in taking the position he did in Minneapolis, and holding it so long without making confession. He makes full confession and I am rejoiced.”⁷⁸⁷ She wrote to Elder Nicola and forgave him.⁷⁸⁸

However, she later chastised Elder O. A. Olsen for giving Elder Nicola a position of responsibility in the work. She said:

[W]That (*sic.*) reason have you for putting so much dependence on A. R. Henry, Leroy Nicola, and others I might name, who in a crisis will be on the wrong side? What reason have you to think that the Lord is imparting divine wisdom to men who have revealed that they have no spiritual connection with him.⁷⁸⁹

This qualified the position where Elder Nicola stood in the work.

A year earlier she had said of Nicola:

Elder Olsen speaks of LeRoy Nicola as a good one to help him; he will be if he has made crooked things but these men have done so much harm in their blindness, working against the messengers and messages God has sent, that I fear it would be a great mistake to reward them by giving them positions of trust as true men to be depended upon.⁷⁹⁰

It is thought that Elder George I. Butler confessed his opposition to the 1888 message by embracing justification by faith later in his life. Butler made a public declaration of his faith:

. . . I fully believe that God has blessed greatly to the good of his people. . . the greater agitation of the doctrines of justification by faith, the necessity of appropriating Christ’s righteousness by faith in order to our salvation. . . . I never, . . . supposed I could be saved by my own good works, or be justified in any other way than by faith in Jesus. .

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁷⁸⁷ E. G. White, “Diary,” July 19, 1893, *EGW 1888*, p. 1196.

⁷⁸⁸ Letter E. G. White to Leroy Nicola, July 19, 1893. *EGW 1888*, p. 1192.

⁷⁸⁹ Letter E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, June 19, 1895, Granville, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1404.

⁷⁹⁰ Letter E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, September 2, 1892. *EGW 1888*, p. 1034.

. . . I never for a moment supposed that we could keep the law acceptably, . . . in our own strength.⁷⁹¹

He acknowledged in the columns of the *Review* that “. . . my sympathies were not with those leading out in bringing what I now regard as light, before our people.”⁷⁹² This was an obvious reference to Waggoner and Jones. He frankly admitted this had caused him “perplexity.” “Many things have seemed mysterious and hard to understand or explain.”⁷⁹³

Some of those mysteries he mentioned to Stephen Haskell in discussing the “Minneapolis fiasco.” “I can never believe myself, that God led Waggoner to deluge the denomination with the Galatians controversy. If so, I cannot believe the vision sent to him, reproving him for the same, of which Sister White herself sent me a copy.”⁷⁹⁴

George Butler firmly held, as he had in 1887, that Ellen White’s letter of February 18, 1887, to Waggoner had vindicated his position on the law in Galatians. He believed it reproved Waggoner for making doctrinal differences public through the church paper the *Signs*.

Elder Butler may have had second thoughts about how he had handled things during 1886-1888. He recalled: “It may be I made a mistake in opposing the move he [Waggoner] made, though I have never yet been convinced that I committed a sin in so doing.”⁷⁹⁵ He may still have held to the California conspiracy theory because he mentioned “. . . the course Jones and Waggoner took in bringing up these differences and preparing beforehand to do so.”⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹¹ G. I. Butler, “Personal,” *RH* 70, 24 (June 13, 1893).

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁴ Letter G. I. Butler to S. N. Haskell, April 22, 1893, Bowling Green, Florida.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

And, then, with almost a sigh of regret coming through his pen, Butler wrote: “I could have concluded differently from what I did, that Sister White upheld them in all they said.”⁷⁹⁷ At the time, he did not believe she “upheld them.” Maybe he now wished that he had believed she “upheld them.” Had that been the case, the course of the church would have been a much different story. With the president of the General Conference joining hands with Ellen White, E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones, the leadership of the church would certainly have been afforded a more favorable opportunity to give due consideration to the message of 1888.

In fact, this did seem to be what Elder Butler was saying in his letter. “. . . I am forced by what Sister White has said to me to consider myself really to have been a hindrance to the work of God.”⁷⁹⁸ This was a humbling, but accurate conclusion for him to confess.

Ellen White had warned just two months before Elder Butler’s public confession:

But if such men as Elder Smith, Elder Van Horn, and Elder Butler shall stand aloof, . . . they will be left behind. . . . These brethren have had every opportunity to stand in the ranks that are pressing on to victory, but if they refuse, the work will advance without them. . . .

. . . And if they refuse the message, . . . these brethren, . . . will meet with eternal loss, for though they should repent and be saved at last, they can never regain that which they have lost through their wrong course of action.⁷⁹⁹

Church historian George Knight said that Elders Butler and Smith confessed their error. However, Knight observed: “That does not mean that they ever accepted all that was taught at Minneapolis or that they ever learned to appreciate Jones and Waggoner. Smith and Butler. . .

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.* “Elder Butler and some others who have acted a prominent part in the cause have really been standing in the way of others, and have retarded the work.” Letter E. G. White to I. D. Van Horn, January 20, 1893. *EGW 1888*, p. 1140.

⁷⁹⁹ Letter E. G. White to William Ings, January 9, 1893, Melbourne. *EGW 1888*, p. 1128.

let the law in Galatians issue grate upon them until their deaths.”⁸⁰⁰ The law in Galatians was not the only issue they disputed. The covenants and even justification by faith were sticking points. Much has already been documented regarding the controversy over the law in Galatians.

George Knight’s statement was in agreement with Ellen White when she said to Elder Smith: “But the first position you took in regard to the message and the messenger, has been a continual snare to you and a stumbling block. . . .”⁸⁰¹ What she said to Elder Smith applied equally as well to Elder Butler. He continued to reject the message as well as the messengers despite his confession. He never “accepted all that was taught at Minneapolis.” He never “learned to appreciate Jones and Waggoner.”

If Ellen White had not supported Waggoner and Jones, their efforts in proclaiming the gospel would surely have been much more limited. S. N. Haskell wrote of this matter to her:

It has been necessary that your influence uphold Eld. Waggoner and A. T. Jones for these number of years. This was absolutely necessary. The whole country has been silenced against criticizing them to any extent. That battle has been fought, and the victory gained.⁸⁰²

Haskell was overly optimistic about the silenced criticism from church leaders in America.

Uriah Smith discussed the covenants in a couple of articles during the year 1893. Elder Smith said: “Remembering his covenant with Abraham, that he would bring out his people from the house of bondage. . . , he proposed to take them to himself. . . . So, through Moses, he offered to bestow upon them certain blessings upon certain conditions.”⁸⁰³ Elder Smith viewed the covenant which God offered Israel as an “arrangement” “based on mutual promises of the

⁸⁰⁰ George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987), p. 62.

⁸⁰¹ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, September 19, 1892, North Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia, “The Message of 1888; An Appeal for Unity; The Need for the Indwelling Christ.” *EGW 1888*, pp. 1052.

⁸⁰² Letter S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, April 22, 1894.

⁸⁰³ U. Smith, “The Heavenly Things. Heb. 8:1-13,” *RH* 70, 39 (October 3, 1893), p. 620.

contracting parties. The promises were not all on one side. Had they been, it could not have been a covenant.”⁸⁰⁴

Elder Smith viewed the old covenant with Israel as connected with the Abrahamic covenant. God promised to bless Abraham’s “literal descendants” in Canaan and his spiritual descendants through Christ in the “world to come.” “To carry out the first, or preliminary arrangement, the old covenant, made at Horeb, was necessary; to carry out the second, the blessing upon all nations, the new covenant, made by Christ, was necessary. The new covenant did not exist before it was thus made.”⁸⁰⁵ Elder Smith used Jeremiah 31:31 for proof on this point. He said Jeremiah “. . . referred to something that was to be done in the future, to a covenant that would not exist till it was thus made. The new covenant was not the Abrahamic covenant, but a covenant necessary to be made to carry out the promises of the Abrahamic covenant.”⁸⁰⁶

This final statement, of Uriah Smith on the new covenant, had to be explained the following week in the columns of the *Review*. He was questioned about it. He had said the “. . . new covenant was not the Abrahamic covenant. . . .”⁸⁰⁷ He did not want to be misunderstood. What he meant was, “It was all embraced in the Abrahamic covenant, and in this sense the new covenant and the Abrahamic covenant may be said to be identical.”⁸⁰⁸ The plan of redemption in the covenant was offered by God back in Eden after the fall through the seed. “The great

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁷ U. Smith, “The New Covenant,” *RH* 79, 40 (October 10, 1893), p. 644.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

covenant of God's grace dates from the introduction of the plan of salvation, and is the 'everlasting covenant,' covering all subsequent steps necessary to carry it out."⁸⁰⁹

Elder Smith quoted Hebrews 8:7, 8 the previous week to explain the problem with the old covenant. God found fault with the first covenant. Why? Elder Smith said,

. . . it was not adequate to secure the end in view. . . ." ". . . God signified his dissatisfaction with that arrangement. . . it was not regarded as the final development of his plan. . . .

Thus the old covenant continued till Christ brought in the new. . . .⁸¹⁰

Elder Smith passed over Paul's explanation for the old covenant was inadequate. The apostle said, "for finding fault with them. . . ." (Hebrews 8:8). Elder Smith simply offered his own explanation for the faultiness of the old covenant. It was a sort of progressive dispensationalism. God's covenants existed in "separate eras."

Elder Smith still held to dispensationalism. He could not say that Abraham's covenant was the full flowering of what was given by Christ in the new covenant. He said the covenant revelation was a progressive unfolding. He explained: ". . . . By distinct movements, through separate eras, it has been unfolded, expanded, and set before the world in more definite form. A great advance was made in the covenant with Abraham, and all brought out in its completeness in the new covenant established by Christ."⁸¹¹ This was in spite of the fact that Ellen White had emphasized the unity of the plan of salvation in both testaments. She said: "In the old dispensation believers were saved through the grace of Christ, as presented in the gospel, as we are saved today. The only means of salvation is provided under the Abrahamic covenant."⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁰ U. Smith, "The Heavenly Things. Heb. 8:1-13," *RH* 70, 39 (October 3, 1893), pp. 620, 621.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁸¹² E. G. White, "Righteousness Through Christ," *ST* (September 5, 1892).

Elder Smith placed emphasis on the everlasting covenant being “. . . a mutual agreement founded upon mutual promises. We, on our part, covenant to do the will of the Father. . . to keep the commandments. . . .”⁸¹³ There was very little mention of faith or the gospel throughout his articles. Elder Smith had not embraced the beauty of the truth in the covenants as presented by E. J. Waggoner in the 1888 message. He did not come into the light God had for His people.

In Smith’s view Abraham did not have the gospel like Peter did in a “more definite form.” The Apostle Paul taught, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made” (Galatians 3:16). “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). Abraham believed in Christ. Every Christian must believe in Christ. Abraham had as much knowledge and assurance of the complete gospel as did any Christian after the cross.

Ellen White said of both Butler and Smith, that they had “taken their own course” when it came to the “light” of God. “The Lord's work needed every jot and tittle of experience that he had given Eld. Butler and Eld. Smith; but they have taken their own course in some things irrespective of the light God has given.”⁸¹⁴ This more than confirmed the value of the confessions offered to the church by Elders Butler and Smith. However sincere they were in their apologies, they continued to oppose the message and messengers.

They never supported the key concepts of the covenants and the law in Galatians as endorsed by Ellen White. A. G. Daniells wrote to W. C. White about this years later in 1902. “Not only the older men who were at work when Brother Butler, Brother Morrison, and others

⁸¹³ U. Smith, “The Heavenly Things. Heb. 8:1-13,” *RH* 70, 39 (October 3, 1893), pp. 620, 621.

⁸¹⁴ Letter E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, June 1, 1894. *EGW 1888*, p. 1248.

fought this battle, but some of the younger fellows who are coming on, have imbibed these old heresies from the men in the field, who are still unconverted to this new light.”⁸¹⁵

E. J. Waggoner’s concept of the covenants was not understood through the paradigm of time-bound dispensations given to ethnic groups or nations. Waggoner’s model had been consistently clear as he wrote over the years. In 1893 he wrote a full-length article on the issue of dispensationalism. Here he provided a complete exposition on the subject.

He said there are two dispensations. They were conditions of the heart rather than distinct eras:

. . . The “Christian dispensation” began for man as soon, at least, as the fall. There are indeed, two dispensations, a dispensation of sin and death, and a dispensation of righteousness and life, but these two dispensations have run parallel from the fall. God deals with men as individuals, and not as nations, nor according to the century in which they live. No matter what the period of the world’s history, a man can at any time pass from the old dispensation into the new.⁸¹⁶

Elder Waggoner used 2 Corinthians 3:5-18 as the basis for expounding the two dispensations. His article was a classic. He said that the ministration of death and the ministration of righteousness ran parallel at Sinai. “. . . there was the ministration of righteousness at Sinai, as well as the ministration of death.”⁸¹⁷

He made clear what the ministration of death was all about.

The law merely upon tables of stone or written in a book, can work only wrath and death. The reason is that in such a case it is only the statement of righteousness, and no man can be saved by a mere statement of what his duty is. The law on stones, or in a book, simply tells us what to do, but gives us no power to do it. Therefore the giving of the mere written words of the law to any people, is simply ministering death to them. The thunders and lightnings (*sic.*) and the earthquake at the giving of the law, and the fact

⁸¹⁵ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 14, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 320.

⁸¹⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “The ‘Two Dispensations,’” *PT* 9, 23 (September 7, 1893), p. 356.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

that no one could touch the mount without dying, showed that men cannot approach the law to get righteousness from it of themselves.⁸¹⁸

But there was also a ministration of righteousness at Sinai. Moses was a shining example of righteousness. “. . . All would have received the righteousness of the law, through Christ, if all had believed as Moses did.”⁸¹⁹ “The law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5: 20, 21).

The only reason Moses could be invited up on Mount Sinai in the presence of the Lord was because he was a believer in Christ and stood in His righteousness. Calvary was revealed at Sinai. The glory on the face of Moses which had to be veiled in the presence of the people was the glory of the gospel in Christ. The glory of Christ’s righteousness in Moses had to be veiled because of the people’s unbelief.

The apostle Paul continued: “But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4: 3,

4). Waggoner commented:

The minds of the people were blinded, and so the light could not shine in; but the light was there, ready to shine in, for the mind of Moses was not blinded, and the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shone in his face, transforming him. The law and the Gospel were united at Sinai, as everywhere else. The glory of Calvary was shining at Sinai, as clearly as it shines now.⁸²⁰

Calvary at Sinai was a new revelation for some Seventh-day Adventists. Sinai was the gospel and the law combined in Christ.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸²¹ E. E. Andross was to come out in 1894 reflecting some of these same concepts. “The ministration of Moses. . . was one of condemnation, because of their sin, but had they yielded to

Therefore, the two dispensations were two parallel tracks that had run alongside each other ever since the Garden of Eden. “The old dispensation is self, but the new dispensation is Christ.”⁸²² The dispensations were two different principles at work in men’s hearts. They were conditions of the heart. Nothing could be more simple and beautiful. All the confusion of progressive dispensationalism was cleared up. The unity of the testaments was preserved. The plan of salvation in Christ alone was the same for all ages. This was Bible Adventism.

the influence of the Spirit of God, the law would have been written in their hearts, and they would have known righteousness. . . .” E. E. Andross, “Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3,” *ST* 20 (1894), p. 325. Both Waggoner and Andross were picking up on what Ellen White had said: “By this brightness God designed to impress upon Israel the sacred, exalted character of His law, and the glory of the gospel revealed through Christ. While Moses was in the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was pre-figured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age; and it was the heavenly light streaming from Calvary, no less than the glory of the law of God, that shed such a radiance upon the face of Moses. That divine illumination symbolized the glory of the dispensation of which Moses was the visible mediator, a representative of the one true Intercessor.” E. G. White, *The Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 330. Andross concluded, “The heavenly light from Calvary coming with the glory of the law of God which radiated from the face of Moses, ‘illustrated’ blessings to be received by God’s commandment-keeping people through the mediation of Christ.” E. E. Andross, “Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 3,” *ST* 20 (1894), p. 325.

⁸²² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

Chapter 22

“THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER”

E. J. Waggoner’s work in London was progressing well. In the summer of 1894 he had an invitation to teach Bible at Battle Creek College but he declined. He felt the work in London was at a “most interesting state” and the brethren would not let him go. “I am sure that this is the place for us to stay.”⁸²³ His daughter Bessie worked typesetting and proof reading. As busy as he was at the office, Waggoner always had time for his teenage daughter when she would come to see him.

That summer was eventful for the Waggoner family. His sister, Alta, was married to an Englishman, Elder Harry Armstrong,⁸²⁴ who lived in Lincolnshire. They were married in the Anglican Church. The newlyweds would reside in the downstairs apartment with the Waggoner family upstairs sharing rent. The cost of living was exorbitant in London.

In addition, one of Waggoner’s daughters, Bessie, had been baptized in the winter of 1894. Jessie, his wife, had a cyst removed from her leg. She had been going through a long recuperation.⁸²⁵

Scholar that he was, E. J. Waggoner had been rummaging around in the used book stores of London acquiring “hundreds of histories.” He had so many books that shelves had to be built to the ceiling in an adjoining house in order to hold all of them.⁸²⁶

⁸²³ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, July 13, 1894, London.

⁸²⁴ James R. Nix, “Photos from the Waggoner Family Album,” *Adventist Heritage* 13, 1 (Winter 1988), p. 39.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁶ Ellis P. Howard, “Doctor E. J. Waggoner,” p. 2. Loma Linda E. G. White Estate DF 236. Ellis Howard was E. J. Waggoner’s son-in-law.

Of course, the most pressing duties, for Waggoner, were with the International Tract Society, editing *The Present Truth*. He was writing a series on the Epistle to the Romans. His emphasis was on faith. “Faith, and faith alone, stands out through all the history of Israel as the means by which the heirship of the promises of God was received.”⁸²⁷

He was squarely in line with other Seventh-day Adventist writers when he said: “As the natural seed of Abraham were not counted as children without faith, so on the other hand those who were not the natural seed could become united to Israel by faith.”⁸²⁸

Everything promised by God came through the mediation of Jesus Christ. “For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 2:20). Waggoner commented: “There is no promise of God to any man that ever lived on earth, or that will ever live, except through Jesus Christ.” “It is the cross of Christ that transmits the blessings of Abraham to us.”⁸²⁹

Many years before Waggoner had dealt with the comprehensive extent of the promise to Abraham in a series of articles entitled, “The Inheritance of the Saints.”⁸³⁰ His manner of understanding the Old Testament was through the New Testament. This is how he came to understand the subject of the covenants and the law. He studied Hebrews, Galatians, and Romans.

The Apostle Paul expounded the promise to Abraham. “For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the

⁸²⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “True Israel,” *PT* 10, 29 (July 19, 1894), p. 454.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Romans. The Blessing of Abraham,” *PT* 10, 37 (September 13, 1894), p. 582.

⁸³⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “The Sabbath-School. Lesson for the Pacific Coast. The Inheritance of the Saints,” *ST* 11 (March 12-July 9, 1885).

righteousness of faith” (Romans 4:13). Thus, Waggoner understood the promise to Abraham included the whole earth and not just the literal land of Canaan.

The inheritance would be an everlasting possession (Genesis 17:7-11). Thus, it could not refer to any temporal possession in this life. Since everlasting life was a reward of the righteous, it would come only through faith in Christ. Only the righteous would receive the everlasting inheritance.

Waggoner pointed out a common fallacy. God promised the land for a possession. As Stephen said, God “gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him, and to his seed after him. . . .” (Acts 7:5). Waggoner pointed out the erroneous conclusion: “Sometimes we hear it said that God tried one plan, and that when that failed, He tried another. But that cannot be.”⁸³¹

Inherently the progressive dispensationalism theory had the idea that God tried several plans over the course of the Old Testament which failed. God gave Adam a covenant. He gave Abraham, Isaac and Jacob a covenant. Then, He gave Israel a covenant to help the previous covenants along. It was not until the new covenant was instituted that God finally succeeded. None of the traditionalists would have stated this, but their theory left them open to that criticism.

Abraham understood God’s covenant of grace and died in faith. He knew that it was not a temporal promise of land. Abraham believed in the resurrection from the dead (Acts 26:6-8; 23:6). Waggoner explained: “. . . The Lord made it so clear that He meant an heavenly and not an earthly inheritance, that Abraham understood him, and looked only for an heavenly country.

⁸³¹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Heavenly Canaan,” *PT* 10, 38 (September 20, 1894), 597.

If Abraham could understand the promise, there is no reason why we should make a mistake. . .

”⁸³²

All the promises of God were given to Abraham, the father of faith. The promise to Abraham included Christ’s second coming (2 Peter 3:1-4). Waggoner said: “The hope of the promise of God unto the fathers, was the hope of the coming of the Lord to raise the dead, and thus to bestow the inheritance.”⁸³³ The promise of the new heavens and the new earth were all contained in what God purposed for Abraham and his spiritual descendants. Those who have faith in the spiritual promises through Christ would receive a literal inheritance. Spiritual things were, indeed, very literally fulfilled.

The next week Waggoner discussed “Jesus the Surety.” “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (Hebrews 7:22). A surety is one who makes himself responsible for another’s debts and obligations. How was Jesus the Surety of the new covenant?

When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. . . . Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.⁸³⁴

Here God’s oath was connected with making Jesus our High Priest. God’s oath made Jesus the Priest. Waggoner said the “priest is the surety of the promise to Abraham.”⁸³⁵

⁸³² *Ibid.*, p. 598.

⁸³³ E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Romans. Heir of the World,” *PT* 10, 38 (September 20, 1894), p. 597.

⁸³⁴ Hebrews 6:13, 17-20.

⁸³⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Romans. The Surety of the Promise,” *PT* 10, 40 (October 4, 1894), p. 627.

When did God confirm with an oath the priesthood of Jesus? Abraham did not need God's oath in order for him to believe God's promise. He readily offered his son Isaac on the altar believing he could be raised from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). It was on that occasion that God said, "By myself have I sworn, . . . because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son. . . . That in blessing I will bless thee, . . ." (Genesis 22: 16, 17). Thus, God's oath was taken at the time Abraham offered Isaac.

Why, then, did God confirm the promise to Abraham with an oath? That ". . .we might have a strong consolation, . . ." It was for us that God took the oath before Abraham.

When do we need consolation? Waggoner explained:

When we flee for refuge to Christ as priest in the holy places. Within the veil He ministers as high priest; and it is the oath of God that gives us courage to believe that His priesthood will save us. Then our consolation comes from Christ's priesthood, and so from the oath which made Him priest. Therefore the oath of God to Abraham was identical with the oath that made Christ high priest.⁸³⁶

Waggoner viewed the new covenant from the perspective of the sanctuary. This was the first time he published this development in his thinking. All the blessings and fulfillment of the new covenant were ministered by Christ, the High Priest, from the heavenly sanctuary. The consolation of the believer came from the sanctuary.

The new covenant promise of forgiveness of sins came from the sanctuary. The blessings of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross were ministered from the sanctuary. The righteousness of the

law through Christ issued forth from the sanctuary. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to write the law in the hearts of believers. The Spirit came from the presence of Christ in the sanctuary. Maturity of character and the perfecting of the saints came from Christ in the sanctuary. The

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*

oath of God established the high priestly ministry of Christ in the sanctuary in order that the new covenant promise might be fulfilled.

In the year 1896 Ellen White was to clarify the “schoolmaster” law. Marian Davis, her secretary, mailed Elder Uriah Smith the most definitive statement on the law in Galatians heretofore. It endorsed E. J. Waggoner’s position on the moral law in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Marian attached this preface to the statement: “The enclosed pages present a few points which were opened to Sister White last night, and which she wished sent to you.”⁸³⁷ It was sent from Australia to Elder Smith in Battle Creek. The statement from Ellen White read thus in its entirety:

“The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren Waggoner and Jones. By exciting that opposition, Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been their's (*sic.*) in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.⁸³⁸

The first paragraph expounded Galatians 3:24 as Waggoner had explained it from the Bible. The law convicted the guilty sinner. The law then drove the sinner to the only relief possible.

⁸³⁷ Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, June 6, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1574.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1575.

Christ's righteousness was the only remedy for the violated law. Ellen White's vision confirmed Waggoner's biblical studies.

The second paragraph was much more sobering. It said that the issue of the law in Galatians at Minneapolis excited opposition to Waggoner and Jones's message on justification by faith and the covenants. It was the "Lord's message" which the Holy Spirit wanted to use in lighting the whole earth with His glory. The reception of the truth would have been accompanied by the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. But the enemy prevented this from happening by stirring up the brethren against the truth that God wanted to go to the world.

"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."⁸³⁹ This was a reference to Revelation 18:1. It was the message of the mighty fourth angel that joined in with the three angels of Revelation 14 in calling out, preparing, and maturing the harvest of the world for the coming of the Lord. The power of this message was to strengthen the first three angels' messages.

This was exactly as God had designed it should be. The message brought by God's messengers was appointed by Him. They were ordained by the Holy Spirit. God came to His friends, the Seventh-day Adventist leadership. He gave them additional light that was absolutely essential. Had the light been accepted, it would have been accompanied by the power to accomplish the task. However, the "action of our own brethren" had kept it "away from the world" "in a great degree."

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*

Why did God send this statement at this time? Why did he reveal it to Ellen White when she was in Australia separated by thousands of miles from the brethren to whom it was directed?

There was no evidence to indicate how Elder Smith responded to this vision that was sent specifically to him by Ellen White. However, there was no doubt where he stood about another vision she had in 1856. He wrote two letters about it in 1900 and 1901.

In the letter of 1900 Smith said that his position had not changed since 1856 on the law in Galatians. When this whole matter was raised then over J. H. Waggoner's book, Waggoner took the position that the "added law" or "schoolmaster" was the moral law. Then Elder Stephen Pierce came down to Battle Creek from Vermont for an investigation. After three days of meetings they were all satisfied that Pierce was correct. Elder Smith wrote:

Bro. and Sr. White both agreed to it. Bro. Pierce's position was that "the law" in Gal. referred to the whole law system; and the law system was the moral law as a rule of life, and the ceremonial law as a means of recovery from sin, or justification from sin, or the transgressions of that moral law. According to this, the law that was "added," and that was "our school-master," was the ceremonial, or remedial law. . . . A few days afterward, Sr. White had a vision, in which she saw in regard to this investigation, and wrote to Bro. Waggoner, "I saw that your position was wrong." That settled the question with us.⁸⁴⁰

Elder Smith went on to explain the position he took during the time of the 1888 conference.

At the conference in 1888, I attempted to explain these things, and was at [*sic.*] charged with denying justification through Christ, as false a view and as unjust a charge, as could possibly be made. I then gave up this question in discouragement, and do not intend to say anything more on the subject.⁸⁴¹

It was clear from this statement that Elder Smith had his convictions about the subject and was not about to change them.

⁸⁴⁰ Letter U. Smith to H. J. Adams, October 30, 1900, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 304.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*

He wrote a similar letter on the same subject to Elder W. A. McCutchen in the year 1901.

He went over the same details with this added information.

The course of E. J. W. [Waggoner] opened up the whole question again, and the determined men on that side of the question have carried quite an influence and those who have had charge of our publications have given them the field, but those who know the history that I have related cannot change on that account. . . . Some try to make it appear that when Sr. W. [White] said to J. H. W. [Waggoner] that his position was wrong, she did not mean his position on the law in Galatians; but I was there when the investigation took place and know that the only issue involved was whether the law Paul speaks of as “added” was the moral law or not. Waggoner said it was the moral law.⁸⁴²

There was no further evidence to indicate he ever changed his mind on the ceremonial law in Galatians. Elder Uriah Smith went to his grave believing this to be true. Smith was adamant that because of E. J. Waggoner’s position on the issue of the law at Minneapolis, he would not credit anything else he had to say.

Elder Smith was sure he knew what Ellen White had to say on the law back in 1856. She had a vision then. As for Ellen White, she could not find what she had written about the law at that time. Neither could she recall exactly what it was about. Perhaps it was all within the providence of God. At any rate, the Spirit saw fit to confirm, to the Seventh-day Adventist movement during the year 1896, Waggoner’s view of the moral law in the Epistle to the Galatians.

⁸⁴² Letter U. Smith to W. A. McCutchen, August 8, 1901, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 305.

Chapter 23

“THE EVERLASTING COVENANT”

At the turn of the new year, 1896, Waggoner’s beloved journal, the *Signs*, reprinted his series on the Epistle to the Romans.⁸⁴³ This gave his covenant theology further exposure to an American audience. He was now appearing on the masthead as co-editor along with M. C. Wilcox who had assumed the responsibilities ever since Waggoner had left the *Signs*.

The issue of the covenants and the law in Galatians had died out for some time in the American Adventist papers. Even Waggoner had not published much on it since his fall 1894 articles on Romans in *The Present Truth*.

This does not mean that it had not been on his mind. The Lord would not let him rest on the issue of the covenants. This truth must have a wider hearing. He wrote to Ellen White about his plans. He told her that he had been working on a manuscript for three years since 1892. Now his mind was opening up more clearly on the subject. He told her about the book: “It is on The Everlasting Covenant, or God’s Promises to Israel. I have lately been able to write more on it, and the light shines so clearly on it now that I feel that the Lord would have me finish it at once.”⁸⁴⁴

Waggoner had submitted this manuscript for publication to the book committee.⁸⁴⁵ This committee was in charge of approving material for all the North American publishing houses. M. C. Wilcox, one of the committee members, wrote regarding his thoughts on the “Everlasting Covenant” to another committee member F. D. Starr:

⁸⁴³ E. J. Waggoner, “Studies in Romans,” *ST* 22 (February 13-27, 1896).

⁸⁴⁴ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, December 31, 1895, London, p. 3.

⁸⁴⁵ Assistance on this section regarding the book committee has come from Ron Duffield, “History of Waggoner’s *The Everlasting Covenant*,” manuscript.

I am sorry that I have kept so long this manuscript of Elder Waggoner's on the Everlasting Covenant. I have some criticisms to offer. . . . I feel sure that there are serious objections to issuing this manuscript in a book in its present form. It is truth-precious truth; it has many excellent things that have never been written on the subject, but to my mind it has also what is erroneous.⁸⁴⁶

Wilcox was supposed to have been one of Waggoner's closest and loyal friends.⁸⁴⁷ It may seem puzzling why he was so critical of "The Everlasting Covenant."

However, the book committee was biased against anything written by Waggoner. W. C. White had suggested to A. O. Tait that more of Waggoner's material should be made available in North America. Tait told Elder White about the existent problems with the book committee.

You suggest that Elds. Jones, Prescott and Waggoner should be encouraged to set apart three or four months each year to working up some of these new tracts and pamphlets and booklets. I have thought of this same idea, and have suggested it a number of times, but you know, Bro. White, that there is quite a strong element on the Book Committee, that as soon as a manuscript is presented from one of these persons mentioned, they are ready to vote against it without giving it examination. . . .

I will tell you, Bro. White, frankly, that there are quite a number of men in Battle Creek yet, who do not see light in this blessed truth in regard to the righteousness of Christ that has been coming to us as a flood of blessing ever since the Minneapolis Conference. . . . So it seems to me that there is a barrier in our Book Committee to any very great progress in the lines of getting out these tracts and pamphlets that you refer to by these brethren.⁸⁴⁸

The book committee attempted to consolidate its control over materials handled by the publishing houses.

Ellen White was so concerned over this development that she wrote to Elder O. A. Olsen. "I have not confidence in your book committee. I have written to you before in regard to their manner of dealing with the authors of books."⁸⁴⁹ They had refused to publish Prescott's material. And in an obvious reference to God's messengers Waggoner and Jones, Ellen White said, "The

⁸⁴⁶ Letter M. C. Wilcox to F. D. Starr, August 22, 1895.

⁸⁴⁷ Ellis P. Howard, "Doctor E. J. Waggoner," p. 5. Loma Linda E. G. White Estate DF 236.

⁸⁴⁸ Letter A. O. Tait to W. C. White, October 7, 1895.

⁸⁴⁹ Letter E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, May 22, 1896.

book committee has been following in the tread of the paths of Rome. . . . It is not for these men to condemn or control the productions of those whom God is using as His light-bearers to the world.”⁸⁵⁰ The book committee was eventually disbanded in 1897, but the “Everlasting Covenant” was never published in North America.

By May of 1896, Waggoner published the first article on the everlasting covenant⁸⁵¹ which he identified as the “everlasting gospel.” He had written to Ellen White about this manuscript. This long series ran through the year 1896 until March, 1897. It was later published by the International Tract Society in book form.⁸⁵²

A. G. Daniells wrote to W. C. White regarding the merits of this book.

A great blessing would come to our people from reading the book. . . . Its name, “The Everlasting Covenant,” suggests its scope. It leads us to the very heart of the gospel of Christ. It opens up God’s plan of saving the world by grace, through faith in Christ. It strikes that great key-note of the Reformation; namely, justification by faith. It shows the weakness and folly of the covenant of works. The book really deals with the great question that so agitated our people at Minneapolis, and so far as I know, is the only Masterpiece that has been written on this subject since the Minneapolis meeting. Much has been written on this subject for our papers by Sister White, Brother Waggoner, Brother Jones and Brother Wilcox, but “The Everlasting Covenant” is the only large work dealing with this great theme that has been produced. . . . This morning Brother Olsen told me that next to the Bible, and your mother’s works, this book had done him more good than any other he had ever read.⁸⁵³

This was no small praise coming from the president of the General Conference, A. G. Daniells. Also, the former president of the General Conference, Elder O. A. Olsen, held *The Everlasting Covenant* in high esteem.

Because Waggoner could not get the book published, he serialized it in *The Present Truth*. In dealing with the Abrahamic covenant Waggoner pointed out:

⁸⁵⁰ E. G. White, Manuscript 148, October 26, 189[6].

⁸⁵¹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Everlasting Gospel,” *PT* 12, 19 (May 7, 1896), p. 292-295.

⁸⁵² E. J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant* (London: International Tract Society, Ltd., 1900).

⁸⁵³ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, May 12, 1902, London, England.

At the very outset we may see that this promise to Abraham was a promise in Christ. . . .

. . . The blessing of Abraham, which was to come on all the families of the earth, was to come only through the cross of Christ.⁸⁵⁴

He demonstrated his understanding of the covenant was through the Epistle to the Galatians.

Discussing Abraham and Melchizedek, Waggoner talked about the “Christian dispensation” as it is popularly called. He emphasized: “. . . the main point with reference to Melchizedek, is that Abraham lived under the same ‘dispensation’ that we do.”⁸⁵⁵ Christ’s priesthood was after the order of Melchizedek’s priesthood. “Abraham therefore was a Christian as much as any one who has ever lived since the crucifixion of Christ.”⁸⁵⁶

Waggoner never tired of emphasizing that God’s covenant was a promise to be received by faith. “When God spoke the promise, Abraham said ‘Amen,’ . . . he built upon God, taking His word as a sure foundation.”⁸⁵⁷ The promise in the Seed who was Christ included righteousness by faith and the resurrection from the dead. All this Abraham believed.

M. C. Wilcox, who had succeeded Waggoner as editor of the *Signs*, felt that these articles were too spiritualized. Specifically, Wilcox felt the promises made to Abraham included a literal land for Israel whether they had faith or not. Wilcox criticized Waggoner by saying he “thinks that all these things came only through faith.” Wilcox asserted “. . . the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham imply more than what comes through faith to the individual. That covenant promised the literal earthly land of Canaan. . . .” “. . . The Lord did fulfil that covenant to Israel according to the flesh.”⁸⁵⁸ Wilcox made clear exactly what he was saying:

⁸⁵⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “The Promise to Abraham,” *PT* 12, 21 (May 21, 1896), p. 322.

⁸⁵⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “Building an Altar,” *PT* 12, 22 (May 28, 1896), p. 342.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “Making a Covenant,” *PT* 12, 23 (June 4, 1896), p. 355.

⁸⁵⁸ Letter M. C. Wilcox to F. D. Starr, August 22, 1895, Oakland, California, pp. 2, 3.

. . . God gave the land to the children of Israel not because they themselves were holy, but because the Lord would keep the oath which he had sworn unto their fathers. Now what did that mean? It meant simply this: that God would, according to his promise, raise up from the literal seed of Abraham a Saviour. The seed was to come through the loins of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Juda, and the carrying out of that promise implied that Israel as a nation and Juda as a tribe was to be kept separate from the other nations of the world until Christ was born. It mattered not whether they were obedient or disobedient God's promise to Abraham would be fulfilled.⁸⁵⁹

Wilcox seemed to imply a predetermined plan on the part of God through the Abrahamic covenant. God would fulfill His promise to Israel whether they had faith in Christ or not. Disobedient Israel was the beneficiary of Canaan in spite their unbelief.

Waggoner would have none of this. He said the promise was all by faith in Christ. “. . . Nothing outside of Christ is included in the promise. To say that the inheritance of the promise to the seed of Abraham could be possessed by any except those who were possessed of Christ through faith in him, is to ignore the gospel and deny the word of God.”⁸⁶⁰

The principle of unbelief was illustrated by Sarah who doubted the promise that she would bear a son. She convinced her husband to take her bondwoman unto himself. Ishmael was born after the flesh. Anyone born after the flesh cannot be an heir of the promise to Abraham.

Isaac was born after the Spirit as was Christ. Anyone born after the Spirit was a child of the promise (Galatians 4:28).⁸⁶¹

When God gave Abram a new name, Abraham, this signified an assurance to him that God would fulfill His promises. Abraham meant father of many people.

Abraham was given the “everlasting covenant” for an “everlasting possession” with “everlasting life.” Waggoner understood this from Romans 4:1-13. Said Waggoner: “The

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁶⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “The Promise to Abraham,” *PT* 12, 21 (May 21, 1896), p. 322.

⁸⁶¹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Flesh Against the Spirit,” *PT* 12, 24 (June 11, 1896), pp. 371, 372.

blessing that Abraham received is the blessing of sins forgiven, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.”⁸⁶²

Circumcision was a sign of the forgiveness of sins through the righteousness of Christ in the covenant. Circumcision was given to Abraham after he thought he could work out God’s promise through Ishmael who was born after the flesh. Abraham had already been justified and forgiven. Righteousness was bestowed upon him through the Holy Spirit. Now God gave him circumcision which was a cutting off of some flesh. It would forever remind him that he could not work out God’s promise. “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3).⁸⁶³

Abraham’s faith was tested when God asked him to sacrifice the child of the promise, Isaac. But the whole test had to do with Abraham’s belief in Christ who could raise the dead, because of His own resurrection. So Abraham did not balk at slaying his son. By faith in Christ he sacrificed Isaac.

Waggoner discussed this kind of genuine faith which works by love. There was no contradiction between justification by faith and a faith which works. He said: “He was justified, not by faith and works, but by faith which works” by love (Galatians 5:6).⁸⁶⁴

The Jacob and Esau narrative provided abundant insights into the nature of the old and the new covenants. Esau was a profane individual with no interest in spiritual things. He treated the birthright blessing as a common thing of no value.

⁸⁶² E. J. Waggoner, “The Covenant Sealed,” *PT* 12, 25 (June 18, 1896), p. 388.

⁸⁶³ E. J. Waggoner, “The Covenant Sealed,” *PT* 12, 26 (June 25, 1896), p. 406.

⁸⁶⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “The Test of Faith,” *PT* 12, 27 (July 2, 1896), pp. 422, 423.

On the other hand, Jacob had an interest in God. God had promised to bless him. However, his deceptive nature gained the best of him. He was able to obtain his brother's

birthright through a barter. And, then, in order to secure its possession, Rebekah encouraged him to literally steal it out from under the nose of his aged father Isaac.

This led to a sequence of unfavorable events in Jacob's life. He had to flee home under a death threat from his brother. He never saw his beloved mother again. The pattern of Jacob's life was one of bondage in sin under the old covenant. He sought to work out God's promises by his own schemes.

After Jacob received a wonderful assurance of God's presence during a fitful night of sleep, God gave him a dream of a ladder representing Christ and Him crucified. God promised Jacob the blessing of his grandfather Abraham.

With this hope Jacob went on to work for Laban. There Jacob found his match and more with his uncle. He was as much a bargainer as was Jacob.

Finally, the test of Jacob's life was his great time of trouble when he returned home. With his entourage of wives and children, flocks and servants, he awaited the encounter with his brother Esau. Waggoner said: "Jacob had once tried to get the better of his brother by fraud. He had thought that thus he could become an heir of the promise of God. Now he had learned that it could be gained only by faith,"⁸⁶⁵

That night as Jacob prayed he agonized with God over his sin. An unknown assailant came upon him in the dark and they wrestled all night long. It was not until dawn that a "Divine touch" threw his hip out of joint. Then Jacob knew that his opponent was the Lord.

⁸⁶⁵ E. J. Waggoner, "Israel--A Prince of God," *PT* 12, 31 (July 30, 1896), p. 485.

When the Lord sought release from his grip, Jacob would not let him go until he was blessed. “Resting upon God, he had ceased from his own works, so that he was no more the supplanter, seeking to further his own ends, but the prince of God, who had fought the good fight of faith, and had laid hold on eternal life.”⁸⁶⁶ His name would be Israel--one who prevailed with God by faith alone.

Waggoner traced the covenant history through the Israelite’s Egyptian bondage. He said even the Egyptians could enjoy the blessings of the covenant by believing in the God of Israel.

The Lord finally delivered them from slavery under the leadership of Moses. Faith was the victory. By a miraculous opening of the Red Sea the Lord gave them safe passage and destroyed their enemies. The Lord sought to teach them through these miraculous deliverances, that He was their Provider, Sustainer, and Righteousness. They could do absolutely nothing except to believe that God would provide a way.

In the desert passage Israel was given manna to eat. It was a symbol of the presence of the Lord in their midst. When they became thirsty, the Lord provided a flowing stream from the rock. “And that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4). Moses struck the rock at the Lord’s command and life-giving water came forth. Christ was crucified for the sins of the world. When the people drank from the rock, not only would their thirst be physically quenched, but if by faith they believed in Christ, they would receive living waters of righteousness.⁸⁶⁷

Why did God introduce the law at Sinai? Waggoner said: “The object, therefore, of the entering of the law at Sinai, was to cause the sin that already existed to stand out in its true nature

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

⁸⁶⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “Water from the Rock--Living Water,” *PT* 12, 44 (October 29, 1896), p. 693.

and extent, so that the superabounding grace of God might be appreciated at its true value.”⁸⁶⁸

The law did not affect the covenant God had made with Abraham. Waggoner said:

. . . After God’s promise to Abraham not a single new feature could be introduced into the plan of salvation. . .

Therefore the entering of the law at Sinai could not contribute any new feature to the covenant made with Abraham and confirmed in Christ, nor could it in any way whatever interfere with the promise.⁸⁶⁹

When Waggoner penned the article “Sinai and Calvary,” he was at his best. “It was from Horeb, whence the water came that restored their life, that God spoke the law. The law came from the same rock whence the water was already flowing, ‘and that Rock was Christ.’”⁸⁷⁰ Christ was the mediator of the law. “The law was therefore Christ’s life,”⁸⁷¹

Waggoner’s presentation climaxed with these words:

The Cross, with its healing, life-giving stream was at Sinai, and hence the Cross cannot possibly make any change in the law. . . . The smitten rock and the flowing stream at Sinai represented Calvary; Calvary was there so that it is an actual fact that from Calvary the ten commandments are proclaimed in the identical words that were heard from Sinai. Calvary, not less than Sinai, reveals the terrible and unchanging holiness of the law of God, so terrible and so unchangeable that it spared not even the Son of God when “He was reckoned among the transgressors.”⁸⁷²

God brought them to Sinai in order to renew with them the same covenant He had made with Abraham. Had they received it with a hearty, “Amen,” as did Abraham, the blessings of righteousness in Christ, forgiveness of sin, and obedience to His life in the law, would have been theirs. Instead, they self-confidently proclaimed, “All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do” (Exodus 19:8).

⁸⁶⁸ E. J. Waggoner, “The Entering of the Law,” *PT* 12, 46 (November 12, 1896), p. 723.

⁸⁶⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Entering of the Law. (Continued.),” *PT* (November 19, 1896), p. 741.

⁸⁷⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “Sinai and Calvary,” *PT* 12, 48 (December 3, 1896), p. 756.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 757.

Then, why did God make the old covenant with them? It was to be a “witness against them.” “Their entering into that covenant was a virtual notification to the Lord that they could get along very well without Him; that they were able to fulfil any promise He could make.”⁸⁷³

So instead of getting a ministration of righteousness from Christ at Mount Sinai, they received a ministration of death. God delivered the law to them by speaking in thunderous tones, lightning and earthquake. A death boundary was placed about the mountain. All must know that when they signed on to obey the Lord it meant the performance of perfect holiness. The old covenant was the promise of the people that they would obey the Lord, but through the “weakness of the flesh” they could not.

There were those who were locked up in sin because of the law. They wanted release from prison. God’s covenant with Abraham was available for all who believed in Christ.

Waggoner said:

People talk about “the Gospel age” and “the Gospel dispensation,” as though the Gospel were an afterthought on the part of God, or at the most something which God long delayed to give mankind. But the Scriptures teach us that “the Gospel dispensation” or “Gospel age” is from Eden lost to Eden restored. . . .

And so “the Gospel dispensation,” with the cross of Christ shedding the light of the glory of God into the darkness of sin, dates from the fall of Adam.⁸⁷⁴

The Lord did not cast off His people, but He sought to lead them to Christ. This He did through the sanctuary service.

The sacrificial system had been in existence ever since the inception of sin on earth. Now it was formally instituted at Sinai. However, the system meant nothing as far as forgiveness of sins and conveying righteousness were concerned. The sacrificial system could

⁸⁷³ E. J. Waggoner, “The Covenants of Promise,” *PT* 12, 50 (December 10, 1896), pp. 788, 789.

⁸⁷⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “The Veil and the Shadow,” *PT* 12, 51 (December 17, 1896), pp. 806, 807.

never purify the conscience. All the dead animals in the world could not atone for sin or bring righteousness.

Christ, and Christ alone, was the answer. A sinner could believe on Christ and be forgiven and cleansed. The believer expressed his faith in Christ by means of the sanctuary service. Faith manifested itself through the God-ordained ministry of the sanctuary.

E. J. Waggoner's articles on the everlasting gospel were brilliant. They expounded the biblical concepts of the old and new covenants. They marked a time in the career of E. J. Waggoner when his thoughts had matured on the subject.

Ellen White wrote from Australia and spoke for W. C. White as well as herself: "We think *Present Truth* the best paper published by our people."⁸⁷⁵

E. J. Waggoner was not the oracle of all truth. No man was infallible. But he was chosen of God as a messenger with light for the remnant church. Insofar as that light measured with the test of Scripture, it should be heeded. The concepts of righteousness by faith, the covenants, and the law should be tested by Scripture. There was something of value in Waggoner's writings which the earnest seeker for truth would not want to pass over lightly.

⁸⁷⁵ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, August 26, 1898, Cooranbong, Australia. *Manuscript Releases Volume Seventeen*, p. 217.

Chapter 24

“THE GLAD TIDINGS”

By 1896 many changes had taken place for the work in England. J. S. Washburn gave to Ellen White an inside view of what was happening:

I have been almost in a desperate condition the last year, so restricted and bound and limited and the work so narrowed and cheapened. The work has been almost brought to ruin here by H. E. Robinson and his wife and I felt what you said about machines and rule or ruin policy was too true. I told you how we had had liberty while D. A. Robinson was here. But he was shipped out of England by underhanded scheming, by double dealing and H. E. Robinson and wife sent here by the same method of work. I saw some testimonies Brother Waggoner had about the General Conference Association, Brother Olsen, etc., and I KNOW in our own and MY own experience those things are so. Brother Waggoner has been misrepresented and worked against in an underhanded way. Brother Olsen has talked and written to Brother Hope and to Brother O. O. Farnsworth and talked to me against D. A. Robinson and Brother Waggoner, and yet not a word directly to them. There has been double dealing, treachery and things that looked to me like falsehood, until they got rid of Brother D. A. Robinson and this all in the name of order and organization, while it was really anarchy and Brother Waggoner has been cruelly misrepresented and treated as a dangerous man who needed to be watched and suspicion cast upon about all he has said or taught--I mean, by the leaders NOT D. A. Robinson. No one believes more in true order or organization than Brother Waggoner. . .

But even before I left Washington, D. C. and came to England, Brother Olsen told me that Jones and Waggoner were not practical men, intimated that they were not safe and this was while he was sending them around, all over the United States to hold Institutes. Whether they are safe or practical, I know the doctrine which they and you teach is life and salvation to me.

Since Minneapolis, my acquaintance with them and talks with you, my mind has been entirely changed and I hope never to go back to those experiences and opinions again and I know from the talks with you and what you have written that you believe they have been the means of great blessing to all our people. I know Brother Waggoner has been a great blessing to the work in England.⁸⁷⁶

The General Conference Association had sent D. A. Robinson off to India and replaced him with H. E. Robinson of the Atlantic Conference where he had been “such a tyrant, such a boss”

⁸⁷⁶ Letter J. S. Washburn to E. G. White, February 10, 1897, Cardiff, Wales, pp. 1, 2.

that the people there wanted to “get rid of him.” This certainly made the working environment for Waggoner much more restrictive.

Ellen White gave her view of all these events:

When I learned that Brother [H. E.] Robinson and his wife had been sent to England, I said, It is a mistake. He has not the qualifications that would be of use and benefit in Europe; for unless he can rule, he would ruin. . . . What is Elder Olsen doing in Europe now? I feel very sorry for him. I cannot feel in union with him, as I formerly did. . . . I cannot place confidence in him. He has oppressed his brethren by bringing in elements to work against those whom God was using to do His work. Will not God judge for these things?⁸⁷⁷

Ellen White’s confidence in the Battle Creek leadership was greatly diminished. She wrote letters of counsel which were left unheeded. Elder Olsen never shared them with others who were addressed.

E. J. Waggoner replied to Ellen White. Elder Olsen was now president of the European Union Conference. Waggoner confided to her:

I think that he is different from what he was when President of the General Conference. He seems more free and open. The trouble with him as president was that he was afraid to declare himself at the beginning for what he knew to be right, because he was afraid of the men with whom he was associated, and so at last he lost the clear perception of what was right. . . . I cannot help thinking that if Brethren Henry and Lindsay had seen a straightforward course of action on the part of the members of the Conference Committee, even though it was against them, they would have done differently. But they lost respect for those who were on the Committee in a ministerial capacity, for there was not upright dealing.

It was not at our request, but rather to the contrary, that H. E. Robinson came over here. To speak frankly, I think that the principal reason for his being sent over was to counteract my influence, or rather, to kill it. They had the idea that I was getting an influence over the work not for good, and Brother Robinson seemed a good man to overthrow it. . . . There is a much different atmosphere here since Brother Prescott came over. . . .

⁸⁷⁷ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, August 26, 1898, Cooranbong, Australia. E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases Volume Seventeen*, pp. 216, 217.

I don't know but I ought to say a word more about Brother Olsen. . . . While he felt constrained to work against me while he was president of the General Conference, he was always very kind. . . .⁸⁷⁸

Had H. E. Robinson remained long in England the work would have been ruined. As providence would have it, he was only there for a short time and went on to the continent. But the fact remained that Elder Olsen while president of the General Conference made life difficult for Waggoner in London by sending unsupportive leadership.

The year 1897 brought some activity in Adventist journals on the law and covenants. The editor of the *Signs* answered a question on "The Two Covenants." Waggoner's insights were apparent:

Hagar represents the covenant made at Horeb. . . in which the children of Israel promised to obey. They thought they could do it in their strength, even as Abraham thought God's will could be accomplished through the son of Hagar. But in their own strength they failed. They did not have God's power and promise and law in their heart. . . . The children of the old covenant are those who seek by their own works to do God's will, hoping in themselves. This will always lead to the bondage of sin.⁸⁷⁹

The question on the schoolmaster yielded the answer that "the law convicts the sinner of sin" in order to "lead him to Christ."⁸⁸⁰

Uriah Smith was stepping up his opposition to Waggoner's position on Galatians 3:19. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. . . ." Taking the moral law position on this text led Waggoner to conclude that the coming of the Seed referred to Christ's second coming. That is when the promise to Abraham would reach its complete fulfilment. Thus, the moral law would

⁸⁷⁸ E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, November 28, 1898, London, England.

⁸⁷⁹ "Question Corner. Gal. 4:21-28. The Two Covenants," *ST* 23, 7 (February 18, 1897), p. 99.

⁸⁸⁰ "Question Corner. Gal. 3:24, 25. Our Schoolmaster," *ST* 23, 7 (February 18, 1897), p. 99.

have a continuing function after Christ's first coming in pointing out sin, and driving sinners to Christ. This work would progress until the return of the Seed.

On the other hand, Elder Smith taking the ceremonial law position interpreted this text to mean the law pointed Old Testament believers to the first advent of Christ at which time it was abolished. It had then served its function once the reality appeared. Smith asked the question: "How would it sound to read, 'And then shall appear the seed of Abraham coming in the clouds of heaven'? This would strike every one as utterly incongruous. . . ." ⁸⁸¹ This was an obvious reference to Waggoner's main point.

Another point Waggoner made was brought up by Smith. "But it may be said that Christ has not yet come into possession of the promises." ⁸⁸² Smith did not believe that was the issue under discussion by the apostle Paul. "He speaks of an arrangement that was adopted long before the first advent of Christ, which was to continue till the seed should come, evidently only looking to that event. . . ." ⁸⁸³ Of course, that "arrangement" was the law of ordinances which pointed to Christ.

Elder Smith fumed to Elder McCutchen about this issue:

When men, to save their position, have to take the position as E. J. W. [Waggoner] and others do, that the SEED HAS NOT YET COME, they are in a pretty tight place in my opinion. . . . So, when Paul preached Christ as the sole means of justification, the Jews said, No, we can be justified by circumcision, offerings, our priestly atonement, and other services. So to make way for Christ, Paul had to take these all out of the way, saying they were only designed to continue till the SEED should come, and they were an object lesson leading and pointing the way to Christ. ⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸¹ U. Smith, "'And to Thy Seed, Which Is Christ,'" *RH* 74, 21 (May 25, 1897), p. 329.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁴ Letter U. Smith to W. A. McCutchen, August 8, 1900, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, pp. 304, 305. Emphasis his.

This illustrated the continued opposition demonstrated by Elder Smith toward one of the Lord's messengers.

In the fall of 1897 A. T. Jones became the lead co-editor of the *Review* along with Uriah Smith. This provided him with the opportunity of exposing a wider church audience to subjects pertaining to the 1888 message.

In one of his first editorials he discussed the Abrahamic covenant in relationship to righteousness by faith and the Holy Spirit. He used as his text Galatians 3:13, 14: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Jones commented: "The blessing of Abraham is the key that opens into the fullness of the Holy Spirit."⁸⁸⁵ Without the "blessing of Abraham" the promise of the Spirit was impossible. What was the blessing of Abraham?

"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6). Righteousness by faith was the blessing of Abraham. The blessing was not righteousness by works. So the blessing of God's righteousness brought with it the promise of the Spirit. Abraham was "for" "given." God's righteousness was "given" "for" Abraham's sins. What a blessing! Jones never used the word covenant throughout the article but referred to it as God's promise and blessing.

Ellen White published a statement on the covenant about this time. God's people were justified through the administration of the "better covenant," through Christ's righteousness. A covenant was an agreement by which parties bound themselves and each other to the fulfillment of certain conditions. Thus the human agent entered into agreement with God to comply with the

⁸⁸⁵ A. T. Jones, "The Blessing of Abraham," *RH* 74, 41 (October 12, 1897), p. 646.

conditions specified in His Word. His conduct showed whether or not he respected these conditions.

Man gains everything by obeying the covenant-keeping God. God's attributes are imparted to man, enabling him to exercise mercy and compassion. God's covenant assures us of His unchangeable character. Why, then, are those who claim to believe in God changeable, fickle, untrustworthy? Why do they not do service heartily, as under obligation to please and glorify God? It is not enough for us to have a general idea of God's requirements. We must know for ourselves what His requirements and our obligations are. The terms of God's covenant are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." These are the conditions of life. "This do," Christ said, "and thou shalt live."

Christ's death and resurrection completed His covenant. Before this time, it was revealed through types and shadows, which pointed to the great offering to be made by the world's Redeemer, offered in promise for the sins of the world. Anciently believers were saved by the same Saviour as now, but it was a God veiled. They saw God's mercy in figures. The promise given to Adam and Eve in Eden was the gospel to a fallen race. The promise was made that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and it should bruise His heel. Christ's sacrifice is the glorious fulfillment of the whole Jewish economy. The Sun of Righteousness has risen. Christ our *righteousness* is shining in brightness upon us.⁸⁸⁶

This statement placed stress on justification “through Christ’s righteousness” in the “better covenant.” “Man gains everything by obeying” only because God kept His covenant. Mankind’s gain all came from God. God’s “attributes,” “mercy,” “compassion,” “unchangeable character” --all were “imparted” by God. So God met the conditions of the covenant on man’s behalf. But man was an “agent” in the “agreement.” God could not if man would not choose by faith.

⁸⁸⁶ E. G. White, “The Christian’s Life,” December 5, 1897. Francis D. Nichol, ed. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), p. 932. Emphasis supplied.

She also emphasized that salvation was by faith alone in both Old and New Testament times:

The work of salvation in both the Old and the New Testament dispensation is the same. Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The types and shadows under which the Jews worshiped, all pointed forward to the world's Redeemer. It was by faith in a coming Saviour that sinners were saved then. It is through faith in Christ that they are justified to-day.⁸⁸⁷

Ellen White never associated the word “dispensation” with either the old or the new covenants in a sequential sense. Thus she avoided the pitfall of dispensationalism.

By the close of the year 1897, a two-part series on the covenants was published by the *Signs* which reflected the insights of E. J. Waggoner. W. L. Iles explained the new covenant as basically the plan of salvation. It included conversion, the new birth, Christ's robe of righteousness, and Sabbath-keeping.

Iles explained the old covenant from Sinai by the Hagar-Ishmael motif. He drew from insights provided by Ellen White in the chapter, “The Law and the Covenants,” from *The Patriarchs and Prophets*. Israel did not realize their sinfulness when they promised to keep God's law. They thought they could establish their own righteousness. Iles said:

The object and purpose of this [old] covenant is to lead the Jewish nation to the blessings and privileges of the new covenant. The promises God made to them could not be fulfilled until they had faith in Jesus Christ. A self-righteous nation can not be “an holy nation.”⁸⁸⁸

Iles rose to his best when he wrote:

The first covenant was established upon the promise of the Jewish nation to obey God. It was only the promise of sinful man, and the ministration connected with that covenant (this ministration is not the covenant) was only the works of man.

The new covenant was established upon the promise and oath of God, and the ministration connected with the new covenant is the work of the Son of God. The

⁸⁸⁷ E. G. White, “The Law and the Gospel,” *ST* (February 25, 1897).

⁸⁸⁸ W. L. Iles, “The Covenants and the Sabbath,” *ST* 23, 49 (December 16, 1897), p. 774.

success of the old covenant depended upon man fulfilling his promise, but the success of the new covenant depends upon Christ, for he is the “surety.”⁸⁸⁹

It was encouraging to see such things coming into the leading missionary journal of the church.

In 1898 Ellen White published her book *The Desire of Ages*. She incorporated the principle of the moral law as a “schoolmaster.” She wrote:

When the law was proclaimed from Sinai, God made known to men the holiness of His character, that by contrast they might see the sinfulness of their own. The law was given to convict them of sin, and reveal their need of a Saviour. It would do this as its principles were applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. This work it is still to do. In the life of Christ the principles of the law are made plain; and as the Holy Spirit of God touches the heart, as the light of Christ reveals to men their need of His cleansing blood and His justifying righteousness, the law is still an agent in bringing us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.⁸⁹⁰

Ellen White spoke here of the first use of the law to convict of sin. The only relief from the law was Christ in whom are the “principles of the law.”

Next, she used the word “agent” instead of “schoolmaster.” This was the second use of the law to bring sinners to Christ for justification by faith. Tim Crosby pointed out in this passage the following: “In other words, the law functions as an agent (or “schoolmaster”) to lead men to Christ historically (at Sinai) and existentially (in the life of every believer).”⁸⁹¹

The 1888 concepts of the covenants were coming through in some articles by the late 1890’s. One such series was written by Edwin R. Palmer who headed up the publishing work in Australia at the Echo Publishing Company. His four-part series on “The Two Covenants” was refreshing.

⁸⁸⁹ W. L. Iles, “The Covenants and the Sabbath. (Concluded.),” *ST* 23, 50 (December 23, 1897), p. 789.

⁸⁹⁰ E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Pacific Press Publishing Company, London: 1898), p. 308.

⁸⁹¹ Tim Crosby, “Ellen G. White and the Law in Galatians: A Study in the Dynamics of Presents Truth,” p. 30.

He talked about the “contract” that Israel entered with God at Sinai.

Israel had, with full confidence in their ability, entered into a “solemn agreement” to obey God’s law “indeed” They had broken their covenant, and there was no promise or provision in that covenant except on the condition of obedience “indeed.” Obey and live was the only hope under this contract. “Be good first, and I will bless you,” was the promise of the Lord under this covenant, and the people in their self-confidence readily agreed to the terms.⁸⁹²

Palmer explained how the ancient Israelites had prospects for salvation. He said: “Still, during the time of the old covenant there was hope for those who had sinned. The new, or ‘everlasting covenant,’ . . . had existed ever since the fall of man, and all who would by faith accept the blessings . . . could find salvation.”⁸⁹³

Palmer discussed how Israel had been in Egypt for so long that the principle of works-righteousness became firmly embedded in their thinking. He said:

. . . That false principle has been the essence of every form of religion the world has ever known outside of the religion of Christ. Since that fatal hour when Lucifer decided to exalt himself. . . he has worked this self-salvation principle into the hearts of all whom he could induce. . . .

. . . The old covenant was made with the children of Israel at Sinai, and the new covenant was formally made on the night of the betrayal, yet both have existed in principle, and have been a part of the experience of every child of God since sin entered the world.⁸⁹⁴

Palmer viewed the two covenants as running on two tracks throughout time. They represented two completely different experiences of the heart.

The slavery of sin was a biblical theme which E. J. Waggoner had emphasized in his writings. In a short article he made a statement that echoed what Ellen White had said in 1892.

⁸⁹² E. R. Palmer, “The Two Covenants. No. 2,” *BE* (January 24, 1898), p. 26.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁴ E. R. Palmer, “The Two Covenants.--No. 3,” *BE* (January 31, 1898), p. 36.

Waggoner observed: “How many have resolved, and resolved again; and yet their sincerest resolutions have proved in the face of temptation as weak as water!”⁸⁹⁵

Ellen White’s statement read:

Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair.⁸⁹⁶

Though there were favorable signs apparently reflecting the insights of the 1888 message in the church papers, there was strong resistance to anything written by E. J. Waggoner. A. O. Tait of the International Tract Society wrote of this opposition to W. C. White.

. . . There is quite a strong element on the Book Committee, that as soon as a manuscript is presented from one of these persons mentioned [Elders Jones, Prescott, and Waggoner], they are ready to vote against it without giving it examination. . . .

. . . There are quite a number of men in Battle Creek yet, who do not see light in this blessed truth in regard to the righteousness of Christ that has been coming to us as a flood of blessing ever since the Minneapolis General Conference. . . . So it seems there is a barrier in our Book Committee to any very great progress in the lines of getting out these tracts and pamphlets that you refer to by these brethren. . . Now the Book Committee, you know, is a creature of the General Conference, and it is no more related to one publishing house or publishing department, than to another, and the Book Committee is claiming more and more of the censorship of the press, so far as our tracts, pamphlets, and books are concerned.

. . . Various members of the Committee have various degrees of antipathy in their mind against those brethren who are leading out in the presentation of the doctrine of the righteousness of Christ.⁸⁹⁷

The book committee was controlling which manuscripts were passed on to the denominational publishers. It was evident that the committee was blocking manuscripts which came from Waggoner.

Ellen White wrote to Elder Tait about the resistance of the General Conference:

⁸⁹⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “Bond-servants and Freemen,” *BE* (April 18, 1898), p. 123.

⁸⁹⁶ E. G. White, *Steps to Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1892), p. 47.

⁸⁹⁷ Letter O. A. Tait to W. C. White, October 2, 1895. *MMM*, pp. 296-296.

I am distressed beyond any words my pen can trace. Unmistakably, Elder Olsen has acted as did Aaron, in regard to these men who have been opposed to the work of God ever since the Minneapolis meeting. They have not repented of their course of action in resisting light and evidence. Long ago I wrote to A. R. Henry, but not word of response has come from him to me. . . . From the light God has been pleased to give me, until the home field shows more healthful heart beats, the fewer long journeys Elder Olsen shall make with his selected helpers, A. R. Henry and Harmon Lindsay, the better it will be for the cause of God. . . . The disease at the heart of the work poisons the blood, and thus the disease is communicated to the bodies they visit.⁸⁹⁸

While Elder O. A. Olsen was arranging for Waggoner to teach in the ministerial institutes both in America and Europe, he was still supporting some church leaders whose activities were subversive of Waggoner's ministry.

About this same time Ellen White said: "To a large degree the General Conference Association has lost its sacred character because some connected with it have not changed their sentiments in any particular since the conference held at Minneapolis."⁸⁹⁹ The decision-making bodies of the church were inhibiting the message of righteousness by faith.

Workers who had come from South Africa for education in America had received the same "leprosy."

. . . It is a very solemn question whether the souls who became imbued with the spiritual leprosy in Battle Creek will ever be able to distinguish the principles of heaven from the methods and plans of men. The influences and impressions received in Battle Creek have done much to retard the work in South Africa.⁹⁰⁰

Ellen White had lost her respect for the highest authority of God's church. "As for the voice of the General Conference, there is no voice from God through that body that is reliable."⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁸ Letter E. G. White to A. O. Tait, August 27, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1608.

⁸⁹⁹ Letter E. G. White to O. A. Olsen May 31, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW 1888* p. 1567.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰¹ E. G. White, Ms. 57, October 12, 1895.

The year 1897 was a busy one for Waggoner. He had been in attendance at the General Conference session. He returned from America to London on April 7. He was in Finland for twelve days of meetings beginning May 21 and spoke twenty-one times. Then it was on to Stockholm and Upsala, Sweden in June. This was followed by meetings in Norway which closed July 4. From July 7 to September 20 he was conducting meetings in Denmark. Returning to London the Waggoner and Prescott families found a house together not far from the office. In all Waggoner reported: "I spoke 272 times in 273 days (199 times in Danish), traveled 10,000 or 11,000 miles, and wrote on an average two and a half pages of the *Present Truth* each week."⁹⁰² W. A. Spicer was sent off to India and Waggoner was left to edit the paper alone again.

Meanwhile, E. J. Waggoner was co-editor of the *Signs* from 1897-1898. The journal serialized his "Studies in Galatians"⁹⁰³ which were later published under the title *The Glad Tidings*.⁹⁰⁴ This was Waggoner's finest work in biblical studies. Many strands of covenant theology which he had worked on over the years were brought together in this compact series. The exposition of the covenants was centered primarily in Galatians 3-4.

The apostle Paul recorded the blessing of God to Abraham: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). Abraham was a heathen and through him the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. The blessing to the nations was

⁹⁰² Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, March 30, 1898, London, England.

⁹⁰³ E. J. Waggoner, "Studies in Galatians," *ST* (November 24, 1898-May 17, 1899).

⁹⁰⁴ E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1900).

righteousness by faith and the forgiveness of sins.⁹⁰⁵ God did not bless Abraham because he was such a good man. He gave Abraham the blessing in order that he might become a good man.⁹⁰⁶

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. . . .” (Galatians 3:13, 14). Christ bore the curse so the blessing could come upon the Gentiles. What is the curse? It is sin and death. What is the blessing? It is redemption from sin.

The life of sin was under a curse and yet the sinner lived. This was an evidence that the sinner had been delivered from the curse. “The fact that we live, altho (*sic.*) we are sinners, is the assurance that deliverance from sin is ours.”⁹⁰⁷

The blessing of Abraham included the “promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14). “. . . Ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. . . .” (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

The Holy Spirit was a down payment given to the believer on his purchased inheritance. Possession of the Spirit made certain the inheritance. “He is the Mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the remission of transgressions under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:14, 15). Christ lifted the curse of death from the believer in order that he might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit which is the downpayment on the promised eternal inheritance.

This was the same promise given to Abraham. “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land. . . of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. . . .” (Genesis 17: 8). For the

⁹⁰⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “The Blessing and the Curse. Gal. 3:1-10,” *ST* 25, 4 (January 25, 1899), p. 68.

⁹⁰⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “Redeemed from the Curse,” *ST* 25, 5 (February 1, 1899), p. 83.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

land to be an “everlasting possession” it meant that the resurrection and immortality were involved. That would be given only at Christ’s second coming. The land involved was the whole earth made new. “For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Romans 4:13).

The promise and the covenant were the same thing (Galatians 3:17). “. . . God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Galatians 3:18). Waggoner delighted in making this point.

God’s covenant with men can be nothing else than promises to them. . . . God does not make bargains with men, because He well knows that man could not fulfil his part. . . . In short, God promises man everything he needs, and more than we can ask or think, as a gift. We give Him ourselves, that is, nothing, and He gives us Himself, that is, everything. That which makes all the trouble is that even when men are willing to recognize the Lord at all, they want to make bargains with Him. They want it to be a “mutual” affair,--a transaction in which they will be considered as on a par with God. But whoever deals with God must deal with Him on His own terms. . . we have nothing, and He has everything. . . .⁹⁰⁸

Next Waggoner dealt with the relationship of the law to the promise. God’s covenant which he confirmed to Abraham with an oath was unchangeable. “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto” (Galatians 3:15). After swearing to a covenant human agents did not change them. How much more so was it with God’s unchangeable covenant.

“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” (Galatians 3:16). Abraham and Christ were forever linked together. “Nothing was made to Abraham that could be obtained in any

⁹⁰⁸ E. J. Waggoner, “The Promise and Its Surety. Gal. 3:15-18,” *ST* 25, 6 (February 8, 1899), p. 100.

other way than through Christ; and Christ never comes into the possession of anything that does not belong to Abraham.”⁹⁰⁹

The apostle Paul continued: “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect” (Galatians 3:17). The covenant promised righteousness to Abraham in Christ in order that he might receive the inheritance. The fact that the law came in four hundred and thirty years later did not void or change the covenant.

For the benefit of his readers Paul asked a question on their minds: “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgression. . . .” (Galatians 3:19). “Added” meant “spoken.” Waggoner went right to Deuteronomy to prove this point. “These words the Lord

spake. . . with a great voice: and he *added* no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone,” (Deuteronomy 5:22). The “added” law was the “spoken” law of the ten commandments written on “stone.”

Why was it spoken? The law was “spoken” because of transgressions which the people had committed. The very awesome circumstances under which God spoke the law was a warning to them that they did not have faith. As a result, they were not the children of Abraham. They were in danger of losing the promised inheritance. Transgression was unbelief.⁹¹⁰

“. . . It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (Galatians 3:19b-20). The Mediator was not Moses, but Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). God was one party. The people were the other party. Between the two there was only one Mediator who was Christ. Christ the Mediator delivered the law.

⁹⁰⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Promise and the Law. Gal. 3:15-22,” *ST* 25, 7 (February 15, 1899), p. 115.

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. . . .” (Galatians 3:21). It was not without meaning that Christ gave the law to them. Christ was the Seed and promise of the covenant. He was the living law. The giving of the law at Sinai did not introduce any new element into the covenant. It was already there in the Abrahamic covenant. “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts” (Hebrews 8:10). “So, then, the righteousness which the law demands is the only righteousness that can inherit the promised land, but it is obtained, not by the works of the law, but by faith.”⁹¹¹

The majesty and greatness of the law was represented by its presentation at Sinai. It was a “revelation” to them of the greatness of God’s promise to give them what the law demands. It underlined the solemnity of the oath God swore regarding His covenant. But people who do not sense their need of righteousness will go along unalarmed unless they are warned that they are sinners. This was what God did at Sinai.

“But the scripture hath concluded [shut up] all under sin. . . .” (Galatians 3:22a). The omnipresence of God’s law shut up sinners. The whole world was confined under the law for none were righteous. To be “under the law” was to be “under sin.” Why was everybody “shut up” “under sin”? The law was given so “. . . that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Galatians 3:22b). To be “shut up” “under sin” was to be an unbeliever. An unbeliever was “under the law.” Those “under the law” were violators of the law.

“So that the law hath been our tutor unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24, R. V). “Tutor” was better than “schoolmaster.” A correctional officer or jailer was a better translation than “tutor.” Waggoner said the concept was of a “. . . guard who

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*

accompanies a prisoner who is allowed to walk about outside the prison walls. The prisoner, altho (*sic.*) nominally at large, is really deprived of his liberty just the same as tho (*sic.*) he were actually in a cell.”⁹¹² The law was the jailer who locked up his violators in prison. “The law really forms the sinner’s prison walls.”⁹¹³

Jesus was the only door to freedom. There was no other release from bondage to the law and sin. The desperate detainee was driven by his correctional officer to the promise of faith in Christ. He was the righteousness which the law demanded. In Him the sinner found sweet release from prison.

“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:25).

Waggoner explained this text by first asking a question:

When does faith come?--Strangely enough, many have supposed that there was a definite time fixed for faith to come. This passage has been “interpreted” to mean that men were under the law until a certain time in the history of the world, and that at that time faith came, and then they were henceforth free from the law. The coming of faith they make synonymous with the manifestation of Christ on earth. We can not say that anybody ever thought so, for such an “interpretation” indicates utter absence of thought about the matter. It would make men to be saved in bulk, regardless of any concurrence on their part. It would have it that up to a certain time all were in bondage under the law, and that from that time henceforth all were free from sin. A man’s salvation would therefore depend simply on the accident of birth. If he lived before a certain time, he would be lost; if after, he would be saved. . . . No one can seriously think of the idea that the apostle is here speaking of a fixed, definite point of time in the history of the world, dividing between two so-called “dispensations,” without at once abandoning it.⁹¹⁴

The way Waggoner stated it dispensationalists put little “thought” into their scheme of interpretation. The result of dispensationalism was that only the generation present at the time of Christ could be saved; and, that en masse regardless of faith in Him.

⁹¹² E. J. Waggoner, “From Prison to a Palace. Gal. 3:22-29,” *ST* 25, 8 (February 22, 1899), p. 132.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “From Prison to a Palace. Gal. 3:22-29. (Concluded.),” *ST* 25, 9 (March 1, 1899), p. 147.

So when did faith come? “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). Whenever a man heard the Word and believed in Christ, then faith had come. It was not a matter of dispensations, but a condition of the individual heart.

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). Christ was the “representative man.” Abraham’s “seed” included everyone who believed in Christ like Abraham did. “. . . For ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:29b).

Then, what was the meaning of Paul’s phrase “. . . till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. . . .”? Of course, the Seed was Christ (Galatians 3:16). What was the promised inheritance? It was the whole earth made new without sin (Romans 4:13). Abraham never set foot on it (Acts 7:5). Christ had no place to lay His head. “. . . Christ can not come into the inheritance until Abraham received it too, for the promise was “to Abraham and to his seed.”⁹¹⁵

Christ would come to execute judgment upon His enemies, “from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool” (Hebrews 10:13). According to Waggoner: “Then will the Seed be complete, and the promise will be fulfilled.”⁹¹⁶

The other passage in Galatians dealing with the two covenants was chapter 4:22-31. “. . . Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise” (Galatians 4:22, 23). Hagar was an Egyptian slave. Anyone born of a slave was born into bondage “after the flesh.” Sarah was a free woman. Her son was born of promise by the Spirit as a freeman. “. . . These are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage,

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

which is Agar” (Galatians 4:24). Just as Hagar could not give birth to a freeman, likewise even God’s law

spoken at Sinai cannot bear free children. The law only holds its violators in bondage.

Waggoner explained:

The same is true of the covenant from Sinai, for it consisted merely of the promise of the people to keep that law, and had therefore no more power to make them free than the law itself had. . . . Their making it was simply a promise to make themselves righteous by their own works, and man in himself is “without strength.”⁹¹⁷

Was God luring Israel into making a covenant of bondage? He was not. He had already made His covenant with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before. It was “sufficient” to meet the needs of sinners. When God brought Abraham’s children to Sinai, he offered them His covenant. “Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine” (Exodus 19:5).

Which covenant did God offer them? Waggoner said:

Evidently to the only covenant in existence, the one made with Abraham. If they would simply keep God’s covenant, that is, God’s promise, they would be a peculiar treasure unto God, for God. . . was able to do with them all that He had promised. The fact that they in their self-sufficiency rashly took the whole responsibility upon themselves, does not prove that God led them into making that covenant, but the contrary.⁹¹⁸

This was a simple, yet profound explanation of the two covenants.

Furthermore, the two women in the passage “are the two covenants.” Waggoner gave attention to this.

So then the two covenants existed in every essential particular in the days of Abraham. Even so they do to-day; for the Scripture says now as well as then, “Cast out

⁹¹⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “Bond-servant and Freeman. Gal. 4:7-31; 5:1,” *ST* 25, 12 (March 22, 1899), p. 196. Reprinted as “The Two Covenants,” *RH* 75, 41 (October 11, 1898), pp. 647. 648.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the bondwoman and her son.” . . . The two covenants are not matters of time, but of condition. Let no one flatter himself that he is not under the old covenant because the time for that is passed.⁹¹⁹

Again, it was worth noting the difference between the two covenants. “In the covenant from Sinai we ourselves have to do with the law alone, while in the covenant from above, we have the law in Christ.”⁹²⁰

There was never any question in Galatians as to whether the law should be kept or not. The deciding issue was: How shall the law be kept? Was it kept by man’s doing or God working in the believer?

The covenant from Sinai held every sinner “under the law” in absolute bondage, “. . . while the covenant from above gives freedom, not freedom from obedience to the law, but freedom from disobedience to it.”⁹²¹ This freedom was the Spirit. Isaac was born of the Spirit. “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Galatians 4:28). “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). “So the liberty of the covenant from above was that perfect liberty that belongs alone to those who are law-abiding.”⁹²² Waggoner delighted in comparing this to “the soul [who] is as free as a bird soaring above the mountain-tops.”⁹²³

These studies in Galatians with its presentation of the law and the covenants were the culmination of fifteen years of reflection and study of the Scriptures. In substance, however, the basic thesis was the same as Waggoner had presented in his seminal article on the subject back in

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹²¹ *Ibid.*

⁹²² *Ibid.*

⁹²³ *Ibid.*

1884.⁹²⁴ This was the study that launched him into so much grief in the intervening years. But his convictions were the same in 1898 as in 1884. He now had a more full and rich exposition building from that basic thesis.

⁹²⁴ E. J. Waggoner, "Under the Law. (Continued.)," *ST* 10, 35 (September 11, 1884), pp. 553, 554.

Chapter 25

THE AUSTRALIAN AND LONDON CONNECTION

Ellen White and E. J. Waggoner were kindred spirits in the truth. She wanted him to come to Australia to teach. She wrote: “Dear Brother Waggoner: W. C. White, Brother Daniells, and myself had some conversation in regard to you and your family coming to this country. We were all of one mind, that we need you here to teach the Bible in our school. . . .”⁹²⁵ This indicated Ellen White’s full support of Waggoner’s teaching in the year 1899.

A year earlier she had invited Brother and Sister Waggoner to come for a visit. “How much pleased I would be to see you and visit with you. I have so much desired that you would visit us in Australia; but it has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God,”⁹²⁶ For their part the Waggoner’s daughters were of an age that their education was taking a priority. There were no possibilities of higher Adventist education in London and they did not want to send them away to school on their own. So going to Australia where a school would be available seemed appealing.

The problem was the Waggoners had no money for such a trip and relocation. There were so many needs of the work and the poor in London that they were living from hand to mouth. If the Lord was in this call to Australia, then the General Conference committee would have to open the way. Waggoner wrote: “It has always been my plan to wait. . . till the brethren sent me. Then I could feel confidence that I was not following my own ideas, and could trust that the Lord would help me out when I got into difficult places.”⁹²⁷

⁹²⁵ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, February 12, 1899.

⁹²⁶ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, August 26, 1898.

⁹²⁷ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, November 28, 1898, London, England.

Waggoner did attend the General Conference session in March, 1899, held at South Lancaster. It was voted to send him to Australia. Even Ellen White herself offered to finance his trip. Now that financial obstacle had been removed. However, Waggoner still did not feel a clear release from the Lord to go. He really wanted to go, but he had mixed feelings about leaving the paper in London which by now had a weekly circulation of 15,150. It was being sold door-to-door by the canvassers and Bible study groups were springing up all over the city as a result of the interests in the truth. Since there was no one competent to take over writing the paper, it would require Waggoner to provide its copy from long distance. With him just staying in the office writing and editing was a full time job.⁹²⁸

J. S. Washburn thought it was certain that Waggoner would go to Australia. He wrote to Ellen White:

I am glad that you can have Bro. Waggoner in Australia for a time. I am sure he will do much good. It seems to me that he has been and is still used by the Lord more than any man among us to discover truths of living importance to our people for this time. . . . I am sure he will be a great blessing to the work in Australia while he is there. He works very hard indeed doing a good part of the time double work proclaiming as much or more than any other minister, editing the *Present Truth*. I truly think that *Present Truth* is the best paper in all the world and have thought so for a long time.⁹²⁹

Washburn was a colleague and co-worker in London at the time Waggoner was there.

Washburn saw that God would use the light coming from London as the beginning of the fourth angel's message (Revelation 18:1). He wrote to Ellen White: "I have felt that if the work could get a strong hold in this country and especially in London, that it was a very important step toward enlightening the whole world. For truly it seems to be the pinnacle of the whole faith and

⁹²⁸ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, March 23, 1899, Battle Creek, Michigan.

⁹²⁹ Letter J. S. Washburn to E. G. White, May 29, 1899.

that the light lit here is surely a light that will shine to all the world.”⁹³⁰ This indicated Washburn’s support of Waggoner’s teaching authority in the year 1899.

When it came time for Waggoner to leave in August, 1899, he received money for the fare from the Foreign Mission Board, but it was charged to him for payback after a year. Waggoner did not feel he could finance the trip on his own. Furthermore, when Brother W. Spicer had left London for India, Waggoner was left alone editing the paper. It would have meant placing the secretary, Edith Adams, in charge. Although she was a competent individual, she was already editing two other monthlies, the *Missionary Worker* and *Life and Health*. In addition, she was in poor health.

Ellet and Jessie discussed the situation and decided it would be best for him not to make the trip. W. W. Prescott who was prostrate with illness in London was heartened by the word that Waggoner would stay.⁹³¹ Ellen White felt thwarted. “. . . I was so anxious that you should come to Australia. But some how my plan was defeated.”⁹³²

Although W. C. White had heard the disappointing news about Waggoner not coming to Australia, he still proposed to W. W. Prescott a plan whereby W. A. Colcord could go to London and edit the paper. White urged his proposal:

I am also sure that it would be a great blessing to Dr. Waggoner and to our work here if Dr. Waggoner could be with us for a year or two. I think it might strengthen his work in future years to have a change, and to labor for a time where he could have the privilege of counseling frequently with Mother.⁹³³

W. C. White had written to General Conference president, G. A. Irwin, of their urgent needs at the Australian school.

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, October 9, 1899, London, England.

⁹³² Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, October 12, 1900, St. Helena, California.

⁹³³ Letter W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, October 6, 1899, Cooranbong, Australia.

Elder White also wrote a strong appeal for Waggoner to come as a campmeeting speaker and Bible teacher at the college.⁹³⁴ Waggoner responded to White's appeal with a lengthy letter outlining more or less the same reasons for not coming to Australia as he had offered earlier.⁹³⁵

Elder White felt responsible for the whole misunderstanding about the finances of the trip. He explained that their Union Conference had voted to stand the expense of the trip for Elder and Mrs. Waggoner. In addition Ellen White would pay for their daughters to come.

Unfortunately, Elder White was so busy at the time following the vote by the Australian committee that he failed to write to Waggoner about it in a timely fashion. He assumed that Waggoner had already agreed to come and that adjustments on finances would be made later.

But now Elder White could see that God's hand had overruled for the advancement of the cause in England. Meetings were being held there. The health food business was flourishing. The nurses training school and sanitarium were doing well. And the Bible School was growing in attendance. White said: "And I now believe that the Lord permitted us to blunder that you might remain to take a part in this work. I am heartily glad that you are in England. . . ."⁹³⁶ He then offered Waggoner a standing invitation to come for a visit to Australia. The Australian school opened in February, 1900, with one hundred students enrolled and none the worse for Waggoner not having been there.⁹³⁷

By the year 1900 Ellen White had returned to America. She received a letter from Waggoner that indicated he was discouraged. She wrote to him: "This was the reason why I was so anxious that you should come to Australia. . . . Be of good courage: for a discouraged

⁹³⁴ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, October 6, 1899, Cooranbong, Australia.

⁹³⁵ Letter E. J. Waggoner to W. C. White, December 7, 1899, London, England.

⁹³⁶ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, February 8, 1900, Cooranbong, Australia.

⁹³⁷ Letter W. C. White to E. J. Waggoner, February 13, 1900.

man is not able to accomplish the work for this time.”⁹³⁸ Ellen White was solicitous for the spiritual well-being of Waggoner. She wanted to be of the greatest assistance as possible to him and this she could not do with them being so far apart.

Waggoner wrote to Ellen White that he was confident that the Lord wanted him to remain in England. As he contemplated the prospects of attending the 1901 General Conference he recounted to her:

. . . our experience at the two Conferences that I have attended, is such that I cannot see that they are making much progress. There has been a great gain since Minneapolis, and yet the leading ministers. . . the General Conference Committee, are about where they were then. Some of the things that were presented there, they have accepted, but the principles they are almost wholly ignorant. It seems as though it were impossible to get them to appreciate principle, and to hold to it under all circumstances.⁹³⁹

Indeed, things in Battle Creek were in great turmoil on many fronts.

Waggoner confided in Ellen White. Satan had tried on two occasions to take his life. A year previous a ship on which he sailed had sprung a leak due to a severe storm. The ship made port safely.

Again, before the opening of a Bible school in Denmark he was awakened at midnight by the “feeling of a presence in the room, and a great horror. . . . Satan was present. . . . I praised the Lord for His promises, I could see a wall rise up around me, like a stone wall, but it was the Word of the Lord. This shut me in away from Satan. . . . I was in a fort. . . .”⁹⁴⁰ Satan did not give up easily in his efforts to prevent the gospel from being proclaimed.

⁹³⁸ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, October 20, 1900, St. Helena, California.

⁹³⁹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, October 22, 1900, London, England.

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Waggoner's indecisiveness about attending the 1901 General Conference session was broken by his motivation to see Ellen White. “. . . I have been longing to have a talk with you for a long time.”⁹⁴¹ He would arrive in Battle Creek about March 25.

Just before the turn of the century there was a flurry of communications that spanned Australia and London between the White family and the Waggoners. The White's wanted him to come to Australia. However, the visit never materialized. During the same time some interesting developments were taking place at the *Review* in Battle Creek.

⁹⁴¹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, February 1, 1901, London, England.

Chapter 26

A. T. JONES: EDITOR OF THE *REVIEW*

From 1897 to 1901 A. T. Jones was editor-in-chief of the *Review and Herald*. Uriah Smith was the associate editor. Jones immediately republished an article from *The Present Truth* on the covenants by E. J. Waggoner.⁹⁴²

In the summer of 1899 Jones commenced a serialized commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians.⁹⁴³ His introductory editorial addressed the issue of the ceremonial law in Galatians. He raised the issue: “Since the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the general idea of law, are all involved in the argument, what then becomes of the view that has been so long held, and that seems to rest upon authority, that the ceremonial law is the chief subject *as to law* in the book of Galatians?”⁹⁴⁴

This was a position Jones had held at least going back to 1887. Then he wrote to Ellen White about what he was teaching the students at Healdsburg College regarding the law in Galatians: “I think however that I have told them that I thought they would find both laws there, and the gospel--justification by faith--underlying the whole of it.”⁹⁴⁵ He believed that Galatians dealt with the ceremonial law. However, he pointed out that in Galatians there was no mention of sacrifices. Circumcision was the issue with the “false brethren” in Galatians. These believers were Pharisees. They taught that in order to be justified before God, circumcision was absolutely essential for salvation.

A. T. Jones characterized the Pharisaic plan of salvation:

⁹⁴² E. J. Waggoner, “The Two Covenants,” *RH* 75, 41(October 11, 1898), pp. 647, 648.

⁹⁴³ A. T. Jones, “Studies in Galatians,” *RH* 76 (August 22, 1899-July 31, 1900).

⁹⁴⁴ A. T. Jones, “Editorial,” *RH* 76 (August 15, 1899), p. 524. Emphasis his.

⁹⁴⁵ Letter A. T. Jones to E. G. White, March 13, 1887, Healdsburg, California. *MMM*, p. 66.

With the “Pharisees which believed,” everything was ceremonial; because it was outward, of works, of the flesh, of self: everything was done, and must be done, in order to be justified by it, in order to be righteous by it, in order to be saved by

it. In this way the moral law itself was made merely ceremonial--the moral law, the ceremonial law, *all law*, was thus reduced to one vast system of ceremonialism.⁹⁴⁶

So everything the Pharisees did was a work with the aim of being justified.

God meant circumcision as a sign that sin had been cut away from the heart and replaced with His true righteousness of the law by the Spirit. With the believing Pharisees circumcision was a righteous work. With the true Christian righteousness came by faith in Christ.

Jones summarized the reason why Galatians was written with these words: “. . . The book of Galatians was written to set the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the gospel, in their true and relative positions; and to annihilate ceremonialism forever.”⁹⁴⁷ “Ceremonialism” was works-righteousness opposed to righteousness by faith in Christ. “Thus the subject of the book of Galatians is salvation by the gospel, not by law; it is justification, righteousness, life, by faith of Christ, not by works of law.”⁹⁴⁸

So the Epistle to the Galatians dealt with both the ceremonial law and the moral law as a means of justification to the discredit of Jesus Christ. Jones said:

The expression, then, being that of the general idea of law, that men are justified by faith of Christ and not by works of law, in the nature of the case any law and all law would be comprehended, and therefore the highest of all law--the law of God--as well as all other: that there is no justification, no righteousness, no salvation, by any law whatever, nor by the works of any law whatever; but only by the faith of Jesus Christ.⁹⁴⁹

Therefore, the principle was no salvation by human works through any law.

Jones received support on this from writer L. A. Reed. Reed defined “ceremonialism” as man’s attempt to be justified by means of any form of law whether it be God’s ten

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁸ A. T. Jones, “Editorial,” *RH* 76 (August 8, 1899), p. 508. Emphasis his.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

commandments or the ceremonial law. Specifically addressing the issue in Galatians 3 Reed said: “Almost every verse in the third chapter is but a declaration. . . of this one principle,--not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ.”⁹⁵⁰ According to Reed, the principle of excluding law-keeping for salvation in the Epistle to the Galatians included both the moral law as well as the ceremonial law.

Heretofore, Ellen White had affirmed the “schoolmaster” of Galatians 3:24 as being the moral law which forced the sinner to “flee” to Christ.⁹⁵¹ Following Jones’s editorial Bible studies, she affirmed the “schoolmaster” to be both the moral and the ceremonial law. Sometime during the year 1900 she said:

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. “What law is the school-master to bring us to Christ?” I answer: “Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments.”

Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The death of Abel was in consequence of Cain refusing to accept God's plan in the school of obedience to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ typified by the sacrificial offerings pointing to Christ. Cain refused the shedding of blood which symbolized the blood of Christ to be shed for the world. This whole ceremony was prepared by God, and Christ became the foundation of the whole system. This is the beginning of its work as the schoolmaster to bring sinful human agents to a consideration of Christ the Foundation of the whole Jewish economy.⁹⁵²

Ellen White’s confirmation of this understanding came after Jones’s editorials. This was an endorsement of what he was teaching regarding the law and justification by faith in Galatians.

⁹⁵⁰ L. A. Reed, “The Epistle to the Galatians,” *RH* 77, 25 (June 26, 1900), p. 409.

⁹⁵¹ “‘The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.’ In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Letter E. G. White to U. Smith, June 6, 1896, Cooranbong, Australia. *EGW* 1888, p. 1574.

⁹⁵² E. G. White, Manuscript 87, 1900 in *Selected Messages*, Book 1, (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), p. 233.

This was the position which Stephen Pierce had taken “in the 1850s, namely, . . . that the schoolmaster was all forms of law.”⁹⁵³ The law in Galatians 3:24 was both moral and ceremonial.⁹⁵⁴

In this respect A. T. Jones and E. G. White were building on the foundation laid by E. J. Waggoner. Waggoner had limited the “schoolmaster” to primarily the moral law of God. No doubt this was what Ellen White’s “guide” had in mind back in 1888 when he inspired her to write to Elder Butler: “He⁹⁵⁵ stretched out his arms toward Dr. Waggoner and to you, Elder Butler, and said in substance as follows: ‘Neither have all the light upon the law; neither position is perfect.’”⁹⁵⁶ Waggoner was beginning to receive the rays of light on righteousness by faith and the law which would develop into the complete message God had for His people.

While Jones’s “Studies in Galatians” were serialized in the *Review*, another series written by E. J. Hibbard on “The Two Laws” ran concurrently.⁹⁵⁷ Hibbard recognized the distinction between the Abrahamic and the Sinaitic covenant. He emphasized:

At Mount Sinai they covenanted with God to obey his voice and keep his commandments, a thing which the natural man can not do. . . . But the conditions of the covenant which they had just made, the whole multitude merited instant death; but through the covenant of grace given to Adam, and afterward confirmed to Abraham, the repentant ones were forgiven. . . .

After this fearful transgression, *they saw* “their utter inability in themselves to keep God’s law,” and therefore *their need of a Saviour*.⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁵³ C. Mervyn Maxwell (February 27, 1983) statement attached to, Tim Crosby, “Ellen G. White and the Law in Galatians: A Study in the Dynamics of Present Truth,” p. 48.

⁹⁵⁴ Tim Crosby, “The Law of the Prophet,” *RH* 163, 21 (May 22, 1986), p. 549.

⁹⁵⁵ This was Ellen White’s guide while in vision.

⁹⁵⁶ Letter E. G. White to G. I. Butler, October 14, 1888, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Manuscript Releases Volume Nine*, p. 326.

⁹⁵⁷ E. J. Hibbard, “The Two Laws,” *RH* 76-77 (September 19, 1899-January 2, 1900). Later reprinted in the Bible Student’s Library. *The Two Laws: Object, Function, and Duration of Each* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1902).

⁹⁵⁸ E. J. Hibbard, “The Two Laws,” *RH* 76, 40 (October 3, 1899), p. 638. Emphasis his.

Hibbard was able to break the synthesis between faith and works by distinguishing between the two covenants.

This was beautifully illustrated by the way Hibbard discussed the ceremonial sacrifices. Hibbard pointed out that the heathen offered animals in order to appease an offended god. With Israel it was different. Hibbard said:

How foolish it would have been for the Lord to require sacrifices of them *before they had learned the need of them, and also what they typified.* . . .

The gospel idea is just the opposite of this. The offering represents the Son of God as the Infinite gift to reconcile man to God.”⁹⁵⁹

Thus, the sacrifices were not a good work which reconciled the sinner to God. On the contrary, the sinner was brought to Christ by the law of God. There he found forgiveness and release from bondage to sin. Then his faith in Christ’s sacrifice was expressed through the appointed means of the ceremonies. The law of sacrifices and the ministration of the Levitical priesthood had no saving power.

All they could do was point to the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ which was a fact of faith anticipated. Such sacrifices and priesthood “must be changed when the offering is made which CAN and Does (*sic.*) take away sin. THIS OFFERING WAS MADE WHEN CHRIST OFFERED UP HIMSELF.”⁹⁶⁰

Through the efforts of A. T. Jones and E. J. Hibbard, the *Review* was reflecting a faith-alone approach to the law and the covenants. The synthesis of faith plus works for salvation was broken. The distinction between the old and the new covenants provided a proper understanding of justification by faith.

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

⁹⁶⁰ E. J. Hibbard, “The Two Laws,” *RH* 76, 41(October 10, 1899), p. 654. Emphasis his.

In addition, the *Signs* published an article by Cyrus Simmons of Knoxville, Tennessee, which distinguished between the two covenants. He said:

The people, on their part, promised to keep the Ten Commandments. . . . Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7; Deut. 5:27. . . .

A tremendous, an impossible, undertaking without divine power. . . .

The new or everlasting covenant agrees, by man's co-operation, to keep the law. . . . Man never did nor ever can keep God's law. But God in man can and will keep it for him if he will only let Him.⁹⁶¹

The beauty of the new covenant in Simmons' view was having "Christ and the law." "The new covenant is the Gospel of Christ. . . ."⁹⁶² Simmons' short article demonstrated some glimmers of light on the new covenant.

Frank A. Washburn wrote a two-part series on 2 Corinthians 3 which was excellent. He made so many insightful statements. He clarified the issue to which the passage addressed itself. "Now the contrast in 2 Corinthians 3 is not between dispensations or ministrations, by priests or people, it is between the letter and the Spirit."⁹⁶³ Here Washburn signaled the deathnell of dispensationalism's support from 2 Corinthians 3. He delineated his argument: "The new covenant is not *confined* or *limited* to the time since Christ came and died. . . . The new covenant

⁹⁶¹ Cyrus Simmons, "The Two Covenants," *ST* 25, 38 (September 20, 1899), pp. 612, 613.

⁹⁶² *Ibid.*

⁹⁶³ Frank A. Washburn, "The Law and the Gospel of 2 Corinthians 3," *ST* 26 (February 14, 1900), p. 99. Uriah Smith emphasized the aspect of two ministrations. Smith asked: "And what is a ministration?--It is the service by which the thing spoken of is put in practice, or carried out. The ministration, in this case, was the whole system of services and ordinances introduced and established by Moses which was 'glorious;' but its glory was eclipsed by the great glory of the ministration of the Spirit, introduced and maintained by Christ and the apostles." U. Smith, "The Ministration Written and Engraven in Stones. 2 Cor. 3:7," *RH* 78, 25 (June 18, 1901), p. 394. By using the word "introduced" in connection with the "ministration of the Spirit," Smith's dispensationalism was clearly present. He had not changed his view of two administrations of the old and the new covenants. This was during the time when he had resumed the editorship of the *Review* following A. T. Jones's departure from the office about mid-May 1901.

spans the great gulf from Eden lost to Eden restored.”⁹⁶⁴ Here was the unity of the everlasting covenant in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Washburn contrasted the letter and the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3. The letter of the old covenant was the law written on stone which was a ministration of condemnation and death. The new covenant was the law written by the Spirit upon the heart. The glory on the face of Moses had to be veiled at the request of the people. That glory was fading to give place to something more glorious. If the glory of God’s law which condemned the sinner was so blinding that it had to be veiled, then how much more glorious was the law in the hand of the Spirit to bring the righteousness of God upon sinners?

Washburn expressed the perfect balance between the law and the gospel when he said of God’s law--

It is glorious in its righteousness, divine in its perfection, proclaimed in thunder tones from the smoking, flaming mount, and yet, towering above even Sinai’s lofty head, stands the cross of Calvary, reaching with one long arm to the paradise of the first Eden, and with the other to the Eden of the future. . . .⁹⁶⁵

Sinai without Calvary was nothing but the letter of the law. Calvary without Sinai was nothing but license. However, Calvary at Sinai was Christ the living law. “The letter alone will never save us, but the Gospel saves us through the perfect obedience of law keeping of Christ, and by His keeping the law again in us.”⁹⁶⁶

Elder R. A. Underwood, who had been Waggoner’s protagonist during the 1888 conference, later became president of the Ohio conference. He preached a sermon at the Ohio

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

⁹⁶⁵ Frank S. Washburn, “The Law and the Gospel of 2 Corinthians (Concluded.),” *ST* 26, 7 (February 21, 1900), p. 115.

⁹⁶⁶ Frank S. Washburn, “The Law and the Gospel of 2 Corinthians 3,” *ST* 26, 6 (February 14, 1900), p. 99.

Mt. Vernon Academy, on God's law as ten promises. A. T. Jones published the sermon in the *Review*.

Underwood said, to the unbeliever God's commandments were ten negative prohibitions. For the one who believed in Christ, God's law was ten promises of assurance that God's power would deliver from the agony and destruction of sin. Underwood asked the congregation:

On which side of the law do you stand? Does it speak condemnation to your soul? Does it speak despair, and do you see nothing but a law of prohibition and darkness? Or does it speak to you as a law full of promise, of assurance, of God's protection, of God's peace, and of God's love?⁹⁶⁷

In this sermon Elder Underwood demonstrated some hopeful signs of understanding the righteousness of the law as a gift from God. However, he never developed the concept of the law in Christ.

Furthermore, Underwood presented confused concepts of making promises to God. He said: "The weakness of the children of Israel was not in their promise to obey God, but in trusting in their own ability to keep their promise. It is always proper to promise to do right."⁹⁶⁸ It was clear from this statement that Underwood was never able to break the synthesis between faith and works. Underwood's concept of God's promises and man's promises combined was nothing more than Roman Catholicism's faith plus works for salvation.

However, it was A. T. Jones who proclaimed the gospel of God's covenant prominently at the turn of the century. Commenting on Galatians 3:6-9 Jones said that Abraham was given the promised inheritance as an heir. Abraham believed God's promise. God accounted him

⁹⁶⁷ R. A. Underwood, "The Sermon. The Law--The Promises," *RH* 77 (April 17, 1900), p. 244.

⁹⁶⁸ R. A. Underwood, *The Law and the Covenants: An Exposition* (Minneapolis Minnesota, n.p., 1908), p. 36.

righteous. He received the forgiveness of sins. These were the necessary prerequisites for receiving the eternal inheritance.⁹⁶⁹ Abraham received all of this before he was circumcised.

The Pharisaic believers told the Galatians that they must have faith in Christ and add to it circumcision like Abraham in order to be saved. But Jones observed that circumcision was no part of God's original plan with Abraham. If he had simply believed the promise without doubting, circumcision would have been unnecessary.

God cut a covenant with Abraham pledging His own life and throne that the promise would be fulfilled. At the outset Abraham believed God's promise, but then he faltered in unbelief when he took Hagar in order to produce the promised Seed. Ishmael was a work of Abraham's flesh rather than a son given supernaturally by the Spirit of God.

Because of unbelief circumcision was introduced following the test of Abraham's faith with Isaac. Jones concluded:

Thus it is perfectly plain that if Abraham had been faithful to that which he received from God by faith, he never would have been circumcised. And it is equally certain that when any one, receiving by faith in Christ alone, as Abraham received it, that which Abraham received, he needs not to be circumcised.⁹⁷⁰

Jones sought to emphasize the one-sided nature of God's promise to Abraham by expounding the oath of God in connection with the covenant. Normally in a covenant there were two contracting parties, but this was not the case with the Abrahamic covenant.

Jones noted the oath-taking ceremony of Genesis 15:9-18.

But *Abram did not pass between the parts of these victims*; only God passed through. This because this is not a covenant of agreement between two persons in which each is equally responsible; but it is a covenant *of promise* from God, in which *he alone* is the responsible party. Consequently, God *alone* passed between the parts of the slain victims, in the making of this covenant. And, in that act, God agreed, . . . that covenant could not more fall than that he himself could be severed in twain. Thus the Lord

⁹⁶⁹ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:6-9," *RH* 76, 47 (November 21, 1899), p. 757.

⁹⁷⁰ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:6-9," *RH* 76, 48 (December 5, 1899), p. 789.

pledged himself, in his very life, that all the promises which he had made to Abram should be fulfilled. . . .⁹⁷¹

God's covenant with Abraham was doubly confirmed by His promise and oath (Hebrews. 6:17). Thus, "though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto" (Galatians 3:15). Nothing that came after God's covenant with Abraham could add to or take away from His promise of salvation to be received by faith in Jesus Christ.

The great mistake of Israel was to put the law of God in the place of God's covenant of salvation.⁹⁷² Thus they substituted themselves and their obedience to the law in the place of Christ. God gave His law to Israel in order to bring them to Christ. The same was true of the Levitical priesthood and the earthly sanctuary. It was to bring them to the true priesthood of Christ and the ministry of salvation in His sanctuary. But Israel misunderstood the purposes of God. They used the law, the priesthood, and the sanctuary as the means of salvation. This was how they recommended themselves before God.

Jones picked up on the question of Galatians 3:19.

"Wherefore then the law?" In the minds of the believing Pharisees which the apostle Paul countered, the Levitical law, the sacrificial system, the law of offerings, the priesthood, the sanctuary was for one purpose alone and that was justification with God. But this was a perversion of the whole divine economy. True justification came only through faith in Christ under the old economy. The whole system was only the divinely appointed means of expressing the faith that they already had and that had already brought to them the righteousness of God without any deeds of any law.⁹⁷³

The way faith in Christ was expressed during the Old Testament was through the visible means appointed by God.

⁹⁷¹ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:15," *RH 77*, 2 (January 9, 1900), p. 25. Emphasis his.

⁹⁷² A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:16, 17," *RH 77*, 3 (January 16, 1900), p. 41.

⁹⁷³ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:19," *RH 77*, 6 (February 13, 1900), p. 105.

In a similar manner in the New Testament the visible means of expressing faith in Christ was through eating the bread and drinking the cup which represented Christ's death on the cross. It was not the ordinance itself which saved the sinner. However, genuine faith always expressed itself through the divinely appointed visible tokens.

In all of his expositions of the covenants, A. T. Jones was building on the foundation laid by E. J. Waggoner. There was a beautiful consistency between the two messengers. This carried through into Jones's commentary on the "added" law of which there had been so much controversy during the 1888 era.

He pointed out that the word "added" in Galatians 3:19 was often used by the antinomians as a proof text for the abolition of the ten commandments at Christ's first advent. But he noted that "added" does not have the sense of addition to the covenant with Abraham; otherwise, Galatians 3:15 would be falsified when it said: "though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man. . . addeth thereto." Therefore, the word "added" in Galatians 3:15 does not have the same sense as the word "added" found in verse 19.⁹⁷⁴

The word "added" meant "spoken." Israel listened to God's voice from Sinai, "which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken [or added] to them any more" (Deuteronomy 5:22). The only law which was spoken by God at Sinai was the ten commandments.

Furthermore, this law came "in the hand of a mediator." Although the "mediator" had been misunderstood to be Moses, the only "mediator" between God and man was Christ. It was through His hand alone that God's law was ordained.

⁹⁷⁴ Cp. "What is the use of the Law? It was *given* later to show that we sin." *Contemporary English Version* (New York, New York: American Bible Society, 1995), p. 1417. Emphasis supplied.

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions,” (Galatians 3:19). The proponents of the “added” law being the ceremonial law would say that because of transgressions of the ten commandments, the relief that was “added” was the remedial system. However Jones said:

The law entered, that the offense might abound.” Romans 5:20. This could never be said of the ceremonial law. Thus, according to Jones, the ten commandment law was primarily the “added” law, given by God in order that “transgressions” might become exceedingly sinful in the mind of the guilty.⁹⁷⁵

Ellen White was in agreement with this concept. She said:

And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant. . . they would have kept God’s law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai, or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the ten commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.⁹⁷⁶

In other words, the proclamation of the law at Sinai “added” nothing to God’s covenant with Abraham. It was “spoken” at Sinai because of Israel’s neglect to cherish the Abrahamic covenant. Therefore, sin must become absolutely clear by the pronouncement of the law in order that grace might abound.

In summary, Jones said of the “added” law:

Thus, of either the moral law or the ceremonial law it is true that it was *given*, added, because of transgressions. The question then is, Which one is the law pre-eminently referred to in this clause in Gal. 3:19? . . . It certainly must be the truth that the law which in this passage is pre-eminently intended; is the law of God, the ten commandments, in written form on tables of stone. . . .⁹⁷⁷

Jones pointed out that when the antinomians wanted to seize upon a proof text for the abolition of the law they pointed to Galatians 3:19. After all, it said that the law “was added

⁹⁷⁵ A. T. Jones, “Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:19,” *RH* 77, 7 (February 20, 1900), p. 121.

⁹⁷⁶ E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 364.

⁹⁷⁷ A. T. Jones, “Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:19,” *RH* 77, 8 (February 17, 1900), p. 157. Emphasis supplied. Augustine said: “What need was there for the law to be given? . . . The law was given to a proud people, but the grace of love cannot be received by any but the humble.” J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: Migne, 1844-1864), pp. 2121, 2122.

because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. . . .” They said the coming of the Seed was the first advent at which time the law was abolished.

The friends of the law of God assumed, along with the antinomians, that Galatians 3:19 addressed the issue of the abolition of the law. Since Sabbatarians could not abide the idea that the ten commandments were abolished at the first advent, they assumed the “added” law was strictly the ceremonial system which was done away with at the cross.

However, Jones observed that the passage did not speak to the abolition of any law: “. . . There is nothing in the passage, nor anywhere in its whole connection, that suggests the abolition of any law. The subject is, Wherefore serveth the law? What is the purpose, the object, the aim, of the law?”⁹⁷⁸ The aim of the law was to bring the believing sinner to Christ as an heir of the promise into the full inheritance at the second coming of Christ.

Furthermore, Jones said:

The object of that law, thus written and given to men, bringing transgressions to a head, making sins abound, was and is that men might find the grace of Christ much more abounding--that through him they might attain to the fullness of that everlasting covenant with Abraham, and so to the inheritance of which that covenant was and is the pledge.⁹⁷⁹

In view of this, the “added” law of Galatians 3:19, rather than being abolished at the first advent, served to bring people to Christ and the fullness of righteousness, right down to the second coming and the world’s end. Rightly understood this text became a strong affirmation of the perpetuity of the law of God.

At Christ’s first coming He received a crown of thorns and had no throne. He was nailed to a cross. At His second coming the kingdom of this world would become “the kingdom of our

⁹⁷⁸ A. T. Jones, *Studies in Galatians*. Gal. 3:19,” *RH 77*, 11 (March 13, 1900), p. 168.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). Thus neither Christ nor Abraham received their promised inheritance at the first advent.

Of Christ it was said: “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psalm 2:7, 8). This was the promise of God made to the Seed. The heathen were not subdued neither the “uttermost parts of the earth” until the second coming.

So it made sense that the ten commandments would continue their function of driving sinners to Christ’s righteousness until the kingdom of everlasting righteousness was ushered into the new earth. This was the provision of the new covenant to write God’s law of righteousness into the hearts and minds of believers. Such individuals kept the “commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” The new covenant was completed by the proclamation of the third angel’s message.

Ellen White connected the consummation of the ages with the covenant and the third angel’s message:

The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the Third Angel’s Message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept his law.

. . . As God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus’ coming, and delivered the everlasting covenant to his people, he spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth.⁹⁸⁰

Ellen White saw that the fulfillment of the everlasting covenant occurred at the second coming. The purpose of the new covenant was to bring sinners into harmony with God’s law

⁹⁸⁰ E. G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 146.

through Christ's righteousness. Thus they would be qualified to inherit the dominion of the kingdom promised.

As for the continued function of the law, Jones affirmed:

And when the saints of God have thus attained to the fullness of the everlasting covenant, the covenant with Abraham, when the object of the giving of the law from Sinai, and in the Bible has thus been accomplished, the law will *not* then be abolished, but will be *kept in mind*, in heart, in soul, just as it was by Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, when as yet there was "no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai, or written on the tables of stone."⁹⁸¹

This point of when the Seed would come was contested by Elder George I. Butler during the 1888 era. He along with Uriah Smith believed the coming of the Seed was the first advent. According to their view the "added law" of ceremonies was abolished then. Smith wrote of this contention in 1902:

It seems to me that one thing is true and sure: if the "added law" and the "schoolmaster" referred to in the third of Galatians apply to the moral law, then, when the Seed came, that is, when Christ came, there was a change in our relation to the law, and we are no longer held by it as a rule of duty. We can not maintain the perpetuity of the moral law with the view that has been lately introduced; and it seems to me like making a move backward to give ourselves away to the claims of our opponents.⁹⁸²

Elder Smith's sense of "duty" to the moral law would not allow him to understand its proper function in relationship to Christ. For him it would be a complete capitulation to the antinomians to concede the moral law as the "schoolmaster."

He held this position throughout his life until he died in 1903. He wrote about his unchanged position to H. J. Adams in October, 1900:

I have never seen occasion to change my position since 1856. Bro. J. H. Waggoner in his book on *The Law of God*, published in Rochester, N. Y. took the position that the law in Gal. 3:19 referred to the moral law. The Brn. in Vermont felt so deeply over it, that Elder Stephen Pierce came on to Battle Creek, to have an investigation of the question.

⁹⁸¹ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:19," *RH* 77, 11 (March 13, 1900), p. 170. Emphasis his.

⁹⁸² Letter Uriah Smith to L. F. Trubey, February 11, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 312. Emphasis his.

Meetings were held some three days studying the subject, in which we all became satisfied that the position of Eld. Pierce was correct. Bro. and Sr. White both agreed to it. Bro. Pierce's position was that "the law" in Gal. referred to the whole law system; and the law system was the moral law as a rule of life, and the ceremonial law as a means of recovery from sin, or justification from sin, or the transgressions of that moral law. According to this, the law that was "added," and that was "our school-master," was the ceremonial, or remedial law. Bro. Waggoner would not attend the discussion, and would not yield a particle. A few days afterward, Sr. White had a vision, in which she saw in regard to this investigation, and wrote to Bro. Waggoner, "I saw that your position was wrong." That settled the question with us. Bro. Waggoner's book was taken out of the market; and when Bro. Waggoner requested its republication, Bro. White said, Not until you will change your position on the law in Galatians. But this Bro. Waggoner would never do; and so the book was not republished. But now a great many do not know that Sr. W, has ever seen anything on this question, and she has lost what she has written, so it cannot be produced. This is why I understand Brn. now are advocating the views they are. At the conference in 1888, I attempted to explain these things, and was at [sic.] charged with denying justification through Christ, as false a view, and as unjust a charge, as could possibly be made. I then gave up this question in discouragement, and do not intend to say anything more⁹⁸³

Elder Smith even noted that Stephen Pierce's position on the law in Galatians was the whole law system including the moral and ceremonial laws. Smith concluded it was only the latter because he was convinced that a vision from Ellen White in 1856 had confirmed the "added law" as being the ceremonial law.

Elder James White was adamant about refusing to republish J. H. Waggoner's book on *The Law of God* unless he revised it accordingly. This was Smith's evidence for holding his position on the law in Galatians. He did not move from this view even though A. T. Jones took a different editorial position during the years 1897-1901.

A. T. Jones continued his exposition of Galatians 3. "Is the law against the promises of God?" (Galatians 3:21). Jones answered this question by saying no. The law was an aid in bringing sinners to the promises of God. But if righteousness came by the law then it cannot be by promise. Furthermore, the law brought no life. Hence, "what the law could not do, in that it

⁹⁸³ Letter Uriah Smith to H. J. Adams, October 30, 1900, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 304.

was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” did (Romans 8:3). Jones said: “. . . Instead of the law being against the promises of God, it is the God-given means of men’s attaining to the perfect surety of the promises of God by faith of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁸⁴

The editor of the *Signs*, Milton C. Wilcox, discussed the two covenants of Galatians 4. He reflected some of the insights of Jones and Waggoner. Hagar represented the old covenant made at Sinai which gendered to bondage. It was the promise of the people. Since the promise was made in unbelief, their hearts were at enmity with God. Therefore, whatever they determined to do was worthless so far as fulfilling the righteousness of the law was concerned. Wilcox stated: “And every effort to save himself, or to help God out by human device, is of the Sinaitic covenant, and genders to bondage.”⁹⁸⁵ Just as Isaac was the son of the Spirit and born free, so everyone who is born again of the Holy Spirit experienced the freedom in Christ of the new covenant.

But it was A. T. Jones who provided a thorough exposition of the two covenants in Galatians 4:21-31. Did the old covenant commence at Mount Sinai? No. It existed in the family of Abram. But Abram believed in the new covenant. It was true that he believed in Christ. His faith was accounted to Abram for righteousness. He was promised a Seed. He had no child. He presumed that his servant Eliezer of Damascus would be the heir. God said Abraham’s heir would be one from his own body (Genesis 15:2-7).

Sarai, Abraham’s wife, did not believe God’s promise of a Seed. Therefore, she was barren. She blamed God for her childlessness and thus demonstrated her distrust of God. Sarai

⁹⁸⁴ A. T. Jones, “Studies in Galatians. Gal. 3:21, 22,” *RH* 77, 12 (March 20, 1900), p. 185.

⁹⁸⁵ Milton C. Wilcox, “The Two Covenants. Bondage or Freedom,” *ST* 26 (April 11, 1900), p. 231.

said, "Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing." Abram listened to his wife. She bid him take Hagar, her Egyptian slave. Hagar was the old covenant. This act of Abram's flesh produced a child under bondage to sin. Ishmael, son of a handmaid, remained a son of slavery. His character was that of a wild man.

Jones said:

The covenant, therefore for which Hagar stands,--the covenant from Mount Sinai,--is a covenant in which people, in distrust of God and unbelief of his promise, knowing only the natural man and the birth of the flesh, seek by their own inventions, and their own efforts, to attain to the righteousness of God, and to the inheritance which attaches to that righteousness.⁹⁸⁶

Abram and Sarai intended that God's promise would be fulfilled through Ishmael. But how could a wild man of the flesh keep the commandments of God? Abram had believed God and obtained the righteousness of Christ which manifested itself in obedience to the law of God. But this could never be the case of a man born after the flesh and not after the Spirit.⁹⁸⁷

In time Sarah did believe God's promise along with Abraham. "Through faith Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed" (Hebrews 11:11). The son of the Spirit was Isaac through whom the covenant was renewed.

Jones stated: Isaac was a man of faith because in the vigor of his youth he submitted himself to be sacrificed on Mount Moriah. In addition, throughout his journeys Isaac repeatedly uncovered wells dug by his father. So he doubly owned them. Yet the Philistines took them from him. Isaac did not protest. He did not lay claim to the land as his own. He was a sojourner seeking a better land filled with righteousness. Through Isaac's quiet and yielding spirit, he gave testimony that he was a son of God. He trusted in the Lord to provide for him.

⁹⁸⁶ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. Gal. 4:21-24. The Two Covenants," *RH 77* (June 5, 1900), p. 361.

⁹⁸⁷ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4:21-25," *RH 77* (June 19, 1900), p. 393.

Abraham had turned from God's promise at the instigation of his wife Sarai. The bondwoman and her son had to be cast out from the home. The whole scheme of the old covenant must be removed both root and fruit. In order to call Abraham back to the original promise, God asked him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Jones said, "Thus Abraham was brought to depend upon and trust in the naked promise of God alone, for all that the promise contained."⁹⁸⁸ What that promise of God contained was the resurrection from the dead. Abraham believed his son would be brought back from the ashes of the burnt offering. In so doing, Abraham cast out all distrust and unbelief in God from his life. Such was the old covenant.

Israel was in Egypt four hundred and thirty years. God remembered His covenant with Abraham.

And God spake unto Moses. . . I appeared unto Abraham. . . And I have also established my covenant with them. . . . And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. . . . I will rid you out of their bondage. . . . I will take you to me for a people. . . . I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham. . . .⁹⁸⁹

God had the Abrahamic covenant for Israel while they were yet in Egypt. Under His covenant of grace God delivered them miraculously without any of their doing. They sang the victor's song of faith on the other side of the Red Sea.

Jones pointed out that had they continued in the faith of Christ and His everlasting covenant, there would have been no necessity for another covenant.⁹⁹⁰ But Israel's murmurings at Marah and Rephidim expressed distrust in God's promise to bring them into the promised land.

⁹⁸⁸ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4:21-31," *RH 77* (July 3, 1900), p. 425.

⁹⁸⁹ Exodus 6:2-8.

⁹⁹⁰ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4:21-25," *RH 77* (July 12, 1900), p. 377.

When God sought to present the Abrahamic covenant to them at Sinai, Israel responded with their promise to obey the Lord (Exodus 19:4-8). The fault with the Sinaitic covenant was with the promises of the people (Hebrews 8:8). They could not trust the Lord's covenant promise. They made a promise of their flesh which was at enmity with God. Therefore, their promises were worth nothing. They promised to obey the commandments, but their promise was immediately broken. Therefore, God was no longer obligated to give them what He had promised, conditioned upon their promised obedience.⁹⁹¹

Jones drew the parallel with Hagar: "In that condition they could no more keep God's covenant than the scheme of Sarai in bringing in Hagar was the keeping of that covenant. . . . Thus, in that covenant, they were breakers of the law, and BREAKERS OF THEIR PROMISE not to break the law."⁹⁹²

Jones found support for this concept of the old covenant in Ellen White. Why, then, did God enter into covenant with Israel at Sinai? She said:

They had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught. . . . The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."⁹⁹³

This placed the responsibility for the old covenant squarely on the shoulders of the people rather than making God responsible for it.

⁹⁹¹ Moses came down from the mount and saw Israel's idol worship "he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (Exodus 32:19) "thus signifying that as they had broken their covenant with God, so God had broken his covenant with them." E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 320.

⁹⁹² A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4:21-25," *RH* 77 (July 12, 1900), p. 378. Emphasis his.

⁹⁹³ E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

God knew that they could not keep their covenant with Him, but they did not know. Therefore, He entered into covenant with them so that they might know what it meant to fail. Having failed they would see the beauty of the everlasting covenant and cast out the old covenant. Just as there was no room for Hagar and Ishmael in the family of Abraham so there was no room for the old covenant in the family of Israel. There was room only for one son, Isaac. Likewise, there was room only for one covenant in Israel--the covenant of God's grace.

Jones observed:

. . . So the trouble and the dismal failure that Israel experienced in the first covenant brought them to the point where they appreciated, and implicitly trusted in, God's original covenant,--the covenant with Abraham,--his everlasting covenant,--which he had given them before they left Egypt at all.⁹⁹⁴

Instead of striving to enter into their own righteousness the people must submit themselves to the righteousness of God in Christ the Mediator of the new covenant.

After Israel had broken their covenant promise to God through idolatry, God was no longer obligated to keep His part of the bargain under the Sinai covenant. Therefore, Moses appealed to the Lord on the basis of the covenant of grace.

And Moses besought the Lord. . . . Turn from thy wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.⁹⁹⁵

It was Moses' appeal to the Lord's covenant with Abraham that saved the people from their bondage to sin. The broken agreement of the old covenant drove them to the new covenant.

Ellen White had observed the same principle when she wrote in 1890:

⁹⁹⁴ A. T. Jones, "Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4: 21-31," *RH* 77 (July 17, 1900), p. 457.

⁹⁹⁵ Exodus 32:11-14.

And now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.⁹⁹⁶

There was always the sanctuary service and the sacrifices to remind them of Christ. Christ the Mediator stood between them and the broken law. When by faith they came to Christ, they were delivered from the bondage of being under the law.

But Israel perverted the sanctuary service and the sacrificial system into ceremonialism. Through unbelief in Christ they thought they were saved by a multitude of good works expressed through offerings and ceremonies. That which was to have been a blessing to them was turned into a curse.

Jones ended his series on the two covenants by saying: “The old covenant, the covenant from Sinai, is summed up in the word ‘SELF.’ The new covenant, the everlasting covenant is summed up in the word ‘CHRIST.’”⁹⁹⁷ Jones’s series may not have been of the literary quality of Waggoner’s studies on Galatians, but in content he was in exact harmony with his colleague. Jones’s covenant theology was a repudiation of dispensationalism. God’s plan of salvation was unified for all times and circumstances.

The 1888 message of the covenants received a strong emphasis in the pages of the *Review* at the turn of the century because A. T. Jones was its editor. In addition, the message of righteousness by faith received enforcement through other channels in the church.

⁹⁹⁶ E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 373.

⁹⁹⁷ A. T. Jones, “Studies in Galatians. The Two Covenants. Gal. 4: 21-31; 5:1,” *RH 77* (July 31, 1900), p. 489. Emphasis his.

Chapter 27

THE MEDIATOR OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

E. J. Waggoner authored the fourth quarter Sabbath School lessons for 1900. They were on the Book of Galatians. So many Adventist writers had opted for Webster's definition of the covenants. Waggoner warned his students against such a practice, directing them rather to the Scriptures. Waggoner said: "It is so rare for men to promise anything without expecting an equivalent, that it has been taken for granted that it is the same with God; and so we have a covenant defined as 'a mutual agreement of two or more persons' . . ." ⁹⁹⁸ With faulty premises a Bible student ended up with God making bargains for people's salvation. However, "God promises freely; our part is simply to accept." ⁹⁹⁹

The Apostle Paul taught that God preached the gospel of Jesus Christ unto Abraham with the words, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). This blessing was forgiveness of sins and the "righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus." Quoting Romans 5:18 Waggoner stated: "This blessing has come upon all men. . . ." ¹⁰⁰⁰ This blessing "comes only through the cross of Christ. . . . Therefore Abraham's faith was in Christ and His cross." ¹⁰⁰¹ There was nothing typical or figurative about Abraham's righteousness. He had the actual forgiveness of sins in Christ and Him crucified. He was legally justified in every sense of the word.

The blessing of Abraham included "the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). The promise of the gift of the Spirit came through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. But the

⁹⁹⁸ E. J. Waggoner, *Galatians*. International Sabbath-school Quarterly (Oakland, California: Pacific Press, October 1, 1900), pp. 13, 14.

⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

promise of the Spirit was the inheritance (Galatians 3:18). “The gift of the Spirit is the pledge of the inheritance. Eph. 1:13, 14.”¹⁰⁰² The inheritance was the “promise which the Spirit makes to us.”¹⁰⁰³ The focus of the whole covenant God promised to Abraham and his Seed was the inheritance (Genesis 17:4-11).

That inheritance was that “he should be the heir of the world” (Romans 4:13) or the “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13). “The inheritance is a free gift, however, and therefore the righteousness that wins it is a free gift from God.”¹⁰⁰⁴ So this righteousness of the covenant “embraces everlasting life” for this will be an eternal inheritance. This meant the destruction of sin and death, the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Jesus, and the renewing of the earth (1 Corinthians 15:26).¹⁰⁰⁵

The inheritance was never meant to come by the law, but through the promise (Galatians 3:18). Why, then, the law? It was spoken because of sin and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” How long would the law perform its task? “Until the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Galatians 3:19). Law would continue to remind of sin until the promise of the inheritance was fulfilled.

Waggoner taught:

Remember that Abraham is the father of all them that believe, so that the seed will not be fully come until all who will believe shall have come to the possession of the inheritance. . . . There will then be no more need of a law to remind men of their sins, for the law will be in the heart of each one, so that there will be no more sin.¹⁰⁰⁶

If the law was put in the heart of the redeemed who received the inheritance, then how could the law be against the promises of God? The law proclaimed from Sinai was in complete

¹⁰⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

harmony with God's promise. It declared the righteousness of God which only could see the new earth. It was impossible for weak humans to perform the law, but with God all things were possible.

Waggoner stated it well:

The law coming in at Sinai was not as an antagonist to the promises of God, but a faithful ally. The law was contained in the promise to Abraham; for the everlasting inheritance is only the fruit of everlasting righteousness, which is manifested in the lives of believers, because the Holy Spirit of promise writes the law in their hearts, making it their life. The entering of the law, with all the terrors of the day of judgment, show how great is this righteousness, and how utterly impossible it is for anybody to attain to it, and thus gain the inheritance by his own efforts. Thus the law from Sinai works in perfect harmony with the promise, by throwing everybody back upon the sure promise and the oath of God.¹⁰⁰⁷

After the law shuts up all under sin "instead of requiring men to keep it in order to be saved, as some suppose, [the law] will not allow anybody to be saved except by faith in Christ Jesus."¹⁰⁰⁸ When the faith of Jesus came, the believer was no longer under the schoolmaster law.

The allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Galatians 4:19-26) was the two covenants. "In the first one the people promise to keep the law; in the second one God promised to write the law in their hearts by His Spirit."¹⁰⁰⁹ Abraham tried to fulfill God's promise in producing a son and made a great mistake. Ishmael was never more than a slave. But Isaac was the child of promise given of the Spirit as are all who are born again children of the promise.

The Apostle Paul said, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son" (Galatians 4:30). Waggoner gave a compact explanation: "The bondwoman is the covenant of human works, and the son is our own sinful flesh, which only shows itself the more sinful the more we try to do the

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

works of the law.”¹⁰¹⁰ Only those free in Christ through the Spirit received the inheritance.

Waggoner exhorted:

Don't stay in slavery after the emancipation has been proclaimed. Liberty has been proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the land, to the sinners of the Jews as well as to the sinners of the Gentiles; to professed Christians, who find a yoke of bondage still on their necks, as well as to the reckless transgressor.”¹⁰¹¹

The “emancipation” proclaimed liberty for the whole world. Who would choose to enjoy its benefits?

This sustained exposition of the covenants from Galatians was breathtaking in scope and assurance. It marked the highwater mark of understanding regarding the plan of salvation within the Adventist church. This was the beginning of the message God wanted presented to the world.

The year 1900 saw E. J. Waggoner's book on *The Everlasting Covenant* published. *The Glad Tidings* was also published the same year. It was his exposition of the Book of Galatians. The announcement for *The Everlasting Covenant* in *The Present Truth* made clear what the theme of the new covenant was all about:

The title is used in the sense of “The everlasting Gospel,” the book being a following up of the Gospel promise, or covenant, made to Abraham, and through him to the whole world. . . . The golden thread of the Gospel running through the grand books of the Old Testament is clearly revealed, and all the way along the intimate connection between it and the New is plainly pointed out. The vital oneness of the Old and the New Testaments is thus demonstrated in as natural and conclusive manner.¹⁰¹²

The Abrahamic covenant was the everlasting gospel of the third angel's message.

Waggoner believed that the unifying theme of the Bible was the covenant. He said: “One line runs through the entire Bible, God's everlasting covenant. Standing at the Cross, one

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰¹² “The Everlasting Covenant,” *PT* 16, 20 (May 17, 1900), p. 320.

can see the working of God's eternal purpose, which He purposed 'in Christ before the world began.' The history from Paradise lost till Paradise restored, is set forth as in a panorama."¹⁰¹³

The major themes of the Bible were encompassed by the everlasting covenant: creation, the Sabbath, justification by faith, sanctification, the ten commandments, Christology, pneumatology, the sanctuary, etc.

About this time Waggoner published a wonderful little article in the editorial column of *The Present Truth* which connected the message of the new covenant with the high priestly role of Christ in the sanctuary. Although he never used the word sanctuary in the article he addressed the issue of Christ as Mediator of the new covenant.

Several denominational writers over the years sought to defend the Sabbath by saying that it was included in the new covenant because Christ kept the Sabbath before He died and thus confirmed it in His will upon His death. Once a person had died nothing could be added to a person's testament or subtracted from it. Thus the Sabbath was confirmed in Christ's last will and testament by His blood on the cross.

But Waggoner refused to set up the analogy of a will and God's covenant. He said:

Many theories and arguments have been built on the idea of a will which Christ made, and which came into force after His death, but not before; but all of them were wasted breath and energy; yes, worse than wasted, for they tend only to mislead the hearers or readers, instead of to instruct them.¹⁰¹⁴

By this Waggoner meant that a will left the impression that the new covenant was not enforce until the death of Christ on the cross. This would be a dispensational construct where the new covenant was initiated at the cross and was operative until the second advent.

¹⁰¹³ E. J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant* (London, England: International Tract Society, Limited, 1900), p. vi.

¹⁰¹⁴ E. J. Waggoner, "One Mediator," *PT* 16, 52(December 27, 1900), p. 820.

This was exactly the use Uriah Smith and others¹⁰¹⁵ made of this argument that the covenant was Christ will. Smith was trying to exclude Sunday-keeping because it was not included by Christ in His will/covenant before the cross. However, Smith's dispensational view of the change from the old covenant to the new covenant came through clearly when he said:

. . . Christ's blood was actually shed upon the cross, and there the new covenant was ratified and sealed. . . .

From that moment the new covenant was in *force*. . . .

When a covenant is once confirmed, no change can be made in it, not an item can be added to it, and not an item can be taken from it.¹⁰¹⁶

Waggoner saw through the dispensationalism of this argument and viewed it as faulty and unbiblical.¹⁰¹⁷

The text used to support this argument was Hebrews 9:17, "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." The Greek *diatheke* had been translated as "testament" in the Authorized Version. However, *diatheke* was translated "covenant" from Hebrews 8:6-9:1. Then from Hebrews 9:15-18 *diatheke* was translated "testament." In the remainder of Hebrews 9:19ff., the King James Version went back to "covenant." *Diatheke* should have been consistently translated "covenant" through Hebrews 9:15-18. *Diatheke* did not mean a "will" or "last testament" in these verses.

¹⁰¹⁵ F. Hilliard said: "No provision whatever for the substitution of Sunday, the first day, in place of the seventh-day Sabbath, was made prior to the cross; therefore it never could be added this side of the cross. It comes in too late to find any place in the new covenant." *The Signs of the Times* [Australian] (September 18, 1906), p. 458. Cf. F. L. Sharp, "The Two Covenants," *The Signs of the Times* [Australian] (September 30, 1907), p. 615.

¹⁰¹⁶ U. Smith, "Was the New Covenant Made with the Gentiles?" *The Signs of the Times* [Australian] 22 (August 12, 1907), 503. Emphasis added.

¹⁰¹⁷ This same argument is used today in Adventist evangelism to support the seventh day Sabbath being included within the new covenant. See Joe Crews, *Why the Old Covenant Failed* (Amazing Facts, Inc., 1980), pp. 21-22.

The Hebrew word for “covenant” was *berith*. It never meant “testament.” Wherever the Hebrew word *berith* was found in the Hebrew Bible, the Greek Septuagint translated it *diatheke*. The Apostle meant “covenant” by using the word *diatheke* in Hebrews 9:15-18.

The Apostle’s main point was that a “covenant” was confirmed or ratified by the death of a victim. “For where a covenant exists, the death of that which has ratified it is necessary to be produced; because a covenant is firm over dead victims, since it was never valid when that which ratifies it lives” (Hebrews 9:17, *Emphatic Diaglott*). When Jesus died upon the cross and said, “It is finished,” the covenant between the Father was fully legitimized and made legally binding in the eyes of the universe and the Adversary. The two thousand-year-old promise and oath of the Abrahamic covenant was legally confirmed by the blood of the Son of Man.

To allow the idea of a last will and testament which became effective upon the death of a Testator into the text was to change the meaning of *diatheke*. This interpretation was unfortunately endorsed by *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. “A will has no force whatever so long as the testator lives. For it to become effective, the testator must die.”¹⁰¹⁸ It was in no case true that a will came into force in New Testament times upon the death of a testator. For example, the prodigal son demanded the inheritance of his father and received it before the testator’s death.

To use this argument of a “testament” in Hebrews 9:17 was to play right into the hands of the dispensationalists. Stanley W. Paher has observed:

As part of the popular theology of the establishment of a new-in-kind covenant after the death of Christ, there is often an appeal to Hebrews 9:15-18 to set forth the notion that, in God’s plan for man’s redemption, He established a “last will and testament” as part of a proper understanding of the nature of law. . . .

¹⁰¹⁸ F. D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 454.

The two-covenant advocates insist that *diatheke* be translated “testament,” to allow a new law given by Christ to be instituted alongside a new covenant, just as the law of Moses was the legal auxiliary to an old covenant.¹⁰¹⁹

It will be noted in the subsequent survey how this erroneous understanding has played a key role in Adventist evangelism to support the idea that the Sabbath was part of the new covenant.

The next point Waggoner laid down was that the Abrahamic covenant was the plan of salvation for anyone who believed regardless of time and circumstances. He said: “Indeed, every promise of God must necessarily be unconditional, since we have nothing to give, can do nothing, and are nothing.”¹⁰²⁰ In times past Waggoner spoke of the new covenant conditions. However, those conditions were set between God and Christ, who was the Surety and Mediator of the new covenant. The Surety fulfilled them on man’s behalf.

Another condition which had been mentioned by Waggoner was faith, but in his understanding faith was never viewed as man’s work. Man’s faith had no virtue. The only virtue of faith was in its object--the faith of *Jesus*. At any rate, Waggoner now asserted the unconditional nature of God’s promise in contrast to the utter worthlessness of man’s ability to do good.

Over the course of time, Waggoner had changed his view of the covenant in Exodus 19:4-6. When God said to Israel “keep my covenant,” the early Waggoner said God’s covenant was the ten commandments. For example, in his Sabbath School lessons of 1890 he quoted this text:

What was the old covenant that was made with Israel? Ex. 19:5-8. . . . Let the student note that the promises in the old covenant were really all on the part of the people. God said, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant [the ten commandments], then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, . . . and ye

¹⁰¹⁹ Stanley W. Paher, *The Covenant of Peace* (Las Vegas, Nevada: Nevada Publications, 1996), p. 55.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*

shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” God did not say that he would make them such, but that they would be such a people if they obeyed his commandments. It could not be otherwise. The keeping of God’s holy law would constitute them a holy people; and as such they would indeed be a peculiar treasure. . . . All that was set before them was simply what would result from obedience to the law, and that covenant contained no promise of help in doing that.¹⁰²¹

It was clear that in 1889 Waggoner viewed God’s words in Exodus 19:4-6 as the old covenant.

However, by 1900 he viewed Exodus 19:4-6 as the Abrahamic covenant. Waggoner said:

So we see that the covenant which God made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law was spoken from Sinai, is the covenant by which we now find salvation. . . . That covenant included all that God has to give to any people, and all that He ever requires of anybody.

It was to this covenant that God referred when He said to the Israelites: [Ex. 19:4-6 quoted]. No other covenant than that made with Abraham was needed, for that was “confirmed in Christ” (Gal. 3:17), and it was not God’s design to make any other.¹⁰²²

This advance, on Waggoner’s part, was more in line with the meaning of the text.

The New English Bible translated Exodus 19:4 more accurately than the King James Version: “If only you will now listen to me. . . .” (Exodus 19:5). Jewish scholar Jacob Benno observed, “Here we had only two commands: listen to HIS voice and maintain HIS covenant. . . . The former involves basic preparation for listening to HIM and following His guidance. . . . The term ‘my covenant’ must refer to an already existent covenant.”¹⁰²³

God had said, “. . . And *keep* my covenant. . . .” The verb “keep” in Hebrew was *shamar*. *Shamar* did not mean “obey.” It meant to “cherish” or “treasure in your heart” or “maintain” as Benno had written.

¹⁰²¹ E. J. Waggoner, *Letter to the Hebrews* (Oakland, California: International Sabbath-School Association, 1889), pp. 10, 11.

¹⁰²² E. J. Waggoner, “One Mediator,” *PT* (December 27, 1900), p. 820.

¹⁰²³ Jacob Benno, *The Second Book of the Bible, Exodus* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1992), p. 527. Emphasis his.

God was exhorting Israel--“If you will ‘*treasure*’ the promise I made to your father Abraham, if you will have the faith of your father Abraham, then I will do some wonderful things.” There was a play on the word *treasure* here which was lost in the English translation. “. . . Then ye shall be a peculiar *treasure* unto me above all people. . . .”

The Lord was saying, “If you will *treasure* the promise I made to Abraham, I will *treasure* you above all people. If you cherished the faith of your father Abraham, then the divine blessings would be yours.”¹⁰²⁴ This was to be righteousness by faith, not righteousness by works or even partly by works. The Lord did not propose to make a “contract” or “compact” with Israel based on their promises to obey. Theirs was simply to believe, to appreciate with heart-felt thanks, the glorious salvation He promised.

A year later Waggoner made the same point of this passage in Exodus 19:5-6. He said:

This was God’s promise: Ye shall be a kingdom of priests, if ye keep My covenant. Mark that God did not say, “If ye will *perform* My promise.” He never expects anyone to perform His promises, but He fulfils them Himself. Our part is simply to *keep*, to accept and hold fast to them, and then as He fulfils them we get all the blessedness of it. His covenant is His promise. “If ye will keep My promise, keep the faith, I will do all this for you.”¹⁰²⁵

Thus in Waggoner’s view there was nothing wrong with what God offered Israel in terms of the covenant at Sinai. It was their response that was faulty (Hebrews 8:7).

Ellen White took a similar approach to the covenant of God in Exodus 19:5-6.

The covenant that God made with His people at Sinai is to be our *refuge* and *defense*. The Lord said to Moses: [Exodus 19:3-8 quoted]. This covenant is of just as much force today as it was when the Lord made it with ancient Israel.... This is the pledge that God’s people are to make in these last days. Their acceptance with God depends on a faithful

¹⁰²⁴ R. J. Wieland provided this insight at Leoni Meadows, California, August, 2000.

¹⁰²⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Law of the Spirit of Life,” *PT* 17, 33 (August 15, 1901), pp. 515, 516. Emphasis his.

fulfillment of the terms of their agreement with Him. God includes in His covenant all who will obey Him.¹⁰²⁶

She certainly viewed Exodus 19:3-8 as God's everlasting covenant which she characterized as a "refuge and defense."

Ellen White used the word "pledge" in the sense of faith-commitment. The object of one's faith made all the difference. The "pledge" of Exodus 19:8 was good so far as it went, but of more importance was the faith expressed by the "pledge." For Israel their confidence was in themselves. They refused the glorious righteousness of their Mediator by having Moses veil his face. On the other hand, "pledge" in the sense of faith in Christ as Mediator of the everlasting covenant was the exact response God wanted.

Waggoner did not view the fulfillment of the everlasting covenant as occurring until the second coming.¹⁰²⁷ He said: "The fact that Christ is the 'Surety' or pledge of this covenant (Heb. 7:22) shows that the covenant itself has not yet been made; for we need no surety for that which we already have. . . . In the meantime, we have the covenant made with Abraham. . . ." ¹⁰²⁸ So there was a proleptic fulfillment of the new covenant and then an eschatological dimension to the everlasting covenant.

A surety was one who stood as a pledge or guarantee for another who could not uphold his obligations to the law. Christ was the One and only Mediator between God and man. His righteousness was the requirement of the law of God. He was made flesh. He took our sinful human nature and united it to His divine nature. His victory over temptation to sin and His sacrificial death was our victory and righteousness.

¹⁰²⁶ E. G. White, "Be not Deceived," Letter 263, November 12, 1903, Quoted in *Manuscript Releases Volume One*, p. 116. Cf. E. G. White, "Hold Fast the Faith," *The Southern Watchman* (March 1, 1904). Emphasis supplied.

¹⁰²⁷ Waggoners' view of Galatians 4:19 has already been discussed.

¹⁰²⁸ E. J. Waggoner, "One Mediator," *PT* (December 27, 1900), p. 821.

The Sinaitic covenant had no mediator. Moses did not serve to bring God and man together under the old covenant. Moses could not put the law of God in their hearts that alone would restore the image of God in man.

However, Christ was the “Mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:16). Christ, the living law, could put these principles of divine love into the hearts and minds of mankind. He could justify and pardon alienated sinners by virtue of His righteousness. This was the proleptic experience of the new covenant. Thus, Christ could perfect all those who came to Him through faith.

According to Waggoner, this was all that was necessary in order to receive the promised inheritance of the new covenant. The eternal reward of the New Jerusalem and the new earth would be given to the righteous. The saints’ characters would be perfected and ultimately their flesh changed to incorruption through the administration of Christ’s righteousness in His role as Mediator. This was the eschatological fulfillment of the everlasting covenant. Thus the mediatorial role of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary was intimately connected with the fulfillment of the new covenant.

Chapter 28

THE TEN PROMISES

The ten promises were the ten commandments. “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20). In Waggoner’s view the commandments of God were wonderful gospel promises.¹⁰²⁹ They proclaimed the gospel in Christ.

Ellen White placed the emphasis upon the ten commandments as promises of God. She said:

The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai's mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in *promise*. "This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan." There is *not a negative in that law*, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live. . . . The Lord has given His holy commandments to be a wall of protection around His created beings.¹⁰³⁰

This was a faith approach to obedience. If obedience came through God’s promise, then it was wholly by faith. Man’s works of obedience to the law were excluded. Through the new covenant perspective the ten commandments were promises. Through the old covenant point of view they were negative “Thou shalt nots.”

The common understanding was that the law of God consisted of prohibitions. This was an old covenant mentality. Waggoner said:

God’s “Thou shalt,” or “Thou shalt not,” is not an arbitrary decree which He issues, leaving the entire responsibility of performance with us, but is the statement of what will

¹⁰²⁹ A book has been written about the ten commandments from this perspective. See Robert J. Wieland, *A New Look at God's Law: How the Ten Commandments Become Good News* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Glad Tidings Publishers, 2000).

¹⁰³⁰ Letter E. G. White to J. E. White, October 30, 1898. *Manuscript Releases Volume Five*, p. 305. Emphasis supplied.

be the result if we allow Him to have His way with us. He has charged Himself with our salvation, and even as He is in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, so He Himself becomes responsible for the obedience of every one who sees and acknowledges Him.¹⁰³¹

The law of God became freedom for the believer in Christ. Freedom from the bondage of sin was the greatest release ever experienced by the Christian. The law was not negative. Christ manifested Himself as a “doer of the law” within the life. “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:25).

Waggoner reminded his readers of the preface to the ten commandments. “I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2). There were many in Waggoner’s day who, like the Pharisees of old, went about saying, “We . . . were never in bondage to any man. . . . Jesus answered them, . . . Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:33, 34). Waggoner said:

Egypt is a synonym for self-exaltation and defiance of God. . . . God makes Himself known to us when we are in the bondage of sin, and delivers us that we may serve Him. . . .

When God brings us out of bondage, we find that the commandment which we thought was a grievous yoke is liberty itself. So far is it from being a yoke of bondage that only free men can keep it. . . . And so the commandment, instead of being an arbitrary rule, is a glorious promise.¹⁰³²

Thus God’s law became a wonderful assurance of continuance in the covenant of peace with Him. Christ the Mediator of the law was the Surety of these blessings.

¹⁰³¹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Second Commandment,” *PT* 17, 13 (March 28, 1901), p. 197.

¹⁰³² E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The First Commandment. (Continued.),” *PT* 17, 12 (March 21, 1901), p. 178.

With this understanding Waggoner commenced a series of twenty articles on the ten commandments in *The Present Truth*.¹⁰³³ He saw a natural sequence and interconnectedness to the commandments.¹⁰³⁴ The first proclaimed God as the only Saviour from bondage to sin. The second commandment preserved men from setting up false idols which cannot save. The third commandment proclaimed the name and character of the true saving God. Anyone taking that name unto himself would benefit from it. The God whose name meant salvation has worked through creation and redemption in order that He might offer His Sabbath rest.

Knowing God as Creator progressed to the contemplation of Him as Father. Human parenthood was modeled after the Fatherhood of God. By rendering honor to human parents man learns the proper honor due to God. In the sixth commandment God upheld the sanctity of all life originating with Him. God had given the privilege of transmitting life to man who was created in His image. In the seventh commandment the sanctity of life was upheld by keeping it pure and unadulterated. And so, through a natural order and progression God adapted the heavenly law of His character to the sinner's need.

Waggoner found it strange that so many Christians had a negative relationship with the law of God. Every converted Christian must love righteousness, truth, and purity. This was the beauty of God's law. Why then the antipathy to the law on the part of the friends of God?

To "have no other gods before me" was the whole duty of man. The love of God with all the human heart, soul, strength, and mind was the distinguishing mark of service. But only holy people could serve God with singleness of devotion. Joshua had made a perceptive statement to

¹⁰³³ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life," *PT* 17 (March 14-August 1, 1901).

¹⁰³⁴ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Seventh Commandment," *PT* 17, 23 (June 6, 1901), p. 355.

Israel when he proclaimed: “Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God. . . .” (Joshua 24:19). Waggoner observed:

. . . Since God says to us, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve, we may take it as the assurance that he will sanctify us if we will yield to Him, so that it will be possible for us to serve Him perfectly. . . . This shows how we may keep the commandments. We do not keep them in order to be righteous, but God makes us righteous,--frees us from the bondage of sin,--in order that we may keep them. Only when God has cleansed the heart, and driven out every idol, can this first and great commandment be kept.¹⁰³⁵

The Christian was never on his own in relationship to the commandments. In Christ they were powerful assurances of salvation.

The first angel’s message was nothing more than the first commandment. “. . . Fear God, and give glory to him. . . and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7). When God installed the first commandment in the life, it was a preparation for the second coming of Christ.¹⁰³⁶ The first commandment had to do with the complete denial of self. By faith the believer recognized his utter worthlessness. He abandoned all anxiety of the heathen regarding the future. He entrusted himself completely in the eternal salvation which came from God alone.

The second commandment dealt with man’s proclivity to imagine the invisible God according to his vain constructs and then turn those ideas into visible idols. “. . . When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankkkful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21). There could be no visible representation of the true God. The moment He was reduced to such a model He became the creation of man.

¹⁰³⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “The First Commandment,” *PT* 17, 11 (March 14, 1901), p. 164.

¹⁰³⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “The First Commandment. (Continued.),” *PT* 17, 12 (March 21, 1901), p. 177.

For Waggoner the principle was transparent.

Everyone, therefore, who has vain thoughts,--the imaginations of his own heart,--who trusts in his own wisdom, which is foolishness in the sight of God, is essentially an idolater. . . . Is it not clear that this commandment forbids every vain thought, that it provides for a perfect mind, a perfect heart? Its message is identical with that to be given in the last days as a preparation for the revelation of the power and glory of God in the clouds of heaven at the second coming of Christ.¹⁰³⁷

Waggoner's thought flowed back and forth from the commandments of God to the proclamation of the three angels' messages. The glory of God (God's character in His commandments) revealed in man was the essential preparation for the second coming of Christ.

The jealousy of God was completely unrelated to human selfish dignity and possessiveness. God was jealous for His children because they went after gods which were nothing. False gods were the enemy's seductive lure to destruction. Waggoner said of God's jealousy: "Instead of cringing and cowering with dread at the thought that God is a jealous God, we should rather rejoice with exceeding great joy; for it assures us that He who is the Almighty will effectually guard us from the arts of the cunning foe, who seduces in order to destroy."¹⁰³⁸ The jealousy of God, far from being something to fear, was an assurance that God would cause His people to stand in the midst of an idolatrous generation.

In the third commandment Waggoner saw the glorious truth of a God who knows the innermost thoughts of the heart. To take the name of the Lord in vain encompassed far more than taking God's name upon the lips in profanity. The outer life might appear to be in conformity with God, but the heart might be far from Him. Such a one would take God's name in vain. Waggoner said: "It is not a thing to be dreaded, but a glorious comfort, to know that

¹⁰³⁷ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Second Commandment," *PT* 17, 13 (March 28, 1901), pp. 196, 197.

¹⁰³⁸ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Second Commandment. (Continued.)," *PT* 17, 14 (April 4, 1901), p. 213.

God understands the innermost thought of the soul.”¹⁰³⁹ What man does not know about himself God knows. God would reveal the unknown sin to the earnest soul who desired to be cleansed of all sin.

There were echoes here of the Laodicean message specifically addressed to the remnant church. The Son of Man who stood in the midst of the “seven candlesticks” and held the “seven stars” in his “right hand” (Revelation 1:13, 20) unerringly cut to the quick. “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and *knowest not* that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. . . .” (Revelation 3:17). Waggoner observed: “Many professed Christians are unconsciously taking the name of the Lord in vain.”¹⁰⁴⁰

The Laodicean church professed to understand and experience righteousness by faith, but in reality belied the fact. Sin might continue to plague it with horrible and unseemly regularity, and this at a time when its testimony to the world should be one of victory in Christ. Such a continued testimony to the world would be taking the name of the Lord in vain.

Waggoner spelled out the consequences clearly:

Now if God is not given the supreme place in the life, and the individual’s sinful self is exhibited under the name of Christ, it is plainly seen that the Lord is dishonoured. Neighbours look at the professor, and say that there is no power in Christianity. They blaspheme the name of God saying that He is not able to keep those who trust in Him.¹⁰⁴¹

This unknown sin in the midst of the remnant people of God clearly had to be revealed. If the church would only see what Jesus was saying to them.

¹⁰³⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Third Commandment,” *PT* 17, 15 (April 11, 1901), p. 227.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

¹⁰⁴¹ *Ibid.*

To plead that victory over sin and obedience to the commandments of God was impossible would be to take the name of the Lord in vain. Adhering to a theory of justification by faith but denying the power thereof would be to mire the church down indefinitely with no divine deliverance on the horizon.

But Waggoner had a warning attached to some good news:

So let nobody say of this [the third] or any other commandment, "I cannot keep it!" God has given us the power, for He has given us Himself. He made men to be kings, and though we have been slaves, He has through the Spirit proclaimed our emancipation, and for ever delivered us from the necessity of saying, "I can't." "I can't" means slavery. . . . If we walk in the Spirit, we shall keep the commandments, and be at liberty.¹⁰⁴²

The mighty Spirit of God was much more powerful than the flesh. The church and the world was dying to hear such good news. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Exodus 20:7) was indeed a promise in the hand of a Mediator "conveying" "everything pure, tender, gentle, sweet, and easy, and that tends to lift up, strengthen, and bless."¹⁰⁴³

The twofold blessing of the new covenant was to be found in the third commandment. Not only would God's law be written in the heart and mind, but also the guilty sinner would find divine pardon from sin. The third commandment said--"the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). Cast in a positive framework, for those who took God's name without guile, the blessing God promised was to hold them guiltless. Waggoner said, "But the man who takes that name thoughtfully and reverently, will find in it cleansing from sin, so that he will be guiltless before God."¹⁰⁴⁴

When the sinner came to Christ prepared to allow self to be completely removed, he could cash the check at heaven's bank without forgery and be forgiven and delivered from sin

¹⁰⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁴ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Third Commandment. Continued," *PT* 17, 16 (April 18, 1901), p. 243.

with the Lord's name signed on the bottom line. All of this was comprehended in the third commandment which proclaimed the message of the new covenant gospel in Christ.

The Sabbath was the visible sign of the new covenant. God had the power to create. His power to recreate sinners into a new creation made Him the Redeemer. The sign or memorial of His creative power was in the Sabbath. Likewise, the Sabbath rest of God in Christ was deliverance from slavery to sin. When Christ said on the cross, "It is finished," He made reference

to the completed sacrifice for sin pledged in the new covenant on behalf of the world. Just as God finished His work of creation on the sixth day and rested on His seventh day from all His work, so Christ finished His perfect offering on the sixth day and rested from His work of redemption in the tomb over the seventh day. Waggoner observed: "Therefore, since the Sabbath is the mark or seal of a perfect new creation, it is the seal of the Gospel, the sign of the cross, the pledge of the complete redemption of all things."¹⁰⁴⁵

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Again, holiness was from the Lord. No man could keep the Sabbath holy. But because the Christian had ceased from his own righteous works and rested in Christ's righteousness, he kept the Sabbath holy in Christ. Waggoner said, "We keep the Sabbath, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Sabbath-keeping is rest in God, the assurance of His finished work."¹⁰⁴⁶

The justification of the ungodly was through faith in Christ. It meant rest from sin. The Sabbath meant rest. It was God's rest. God's rest was deliverance from sin. And so, justification by faith and the Sabbath were intimately connected. "There can be no perfect

¹⁰⁴⁵ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Fourth Commandment. Continued," *PT* 17, 18 (May 2, 1901), p. 273.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

Sabbath-keeping without perfect faith in God, which means perfect righteousness, because we are justified by faith. So the Sabbath means pre-eminently justification by faith.”¹⁰⁴⁷

Since justification by faith was the third angel’s message in verity, the Sabbath was the third angel’s message in verity. The Sabbath was thus to be proclaimed more fully in light of the gospel plan of justification by faith. Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting the cross of Christ and His plan of salvation through the new covenant before the world.

The Sabbath would play a significant role as the seal of God’s righteousness when Sunday worship became the mark of mankind’s attempted righteousness by faith. Waggoner explained the concept of mankind’s self-efforts at holiness as symbolized by Sunday-keeping:

. . . Sunday-keeping stands as a sign of attempted justification by works. It is the attempt of man to do the work which only God can do, namely, sanctify a day; for God never sanctified any day except the seventh day, so that all the sanctity Sunday has is what man has put upon it. He who can sanctify one thing can sanctify anything, because he must have the sanctifying power in himself. So the idea that man can make any day holy, involves the idea that he can make himself holy, that is, justify himself by his own works; its principle is that man has holiness in himself. Sunday-keeping is therefore the sign of the man of sin who “exalteth himself against God.”¹⁰⁴⁸

This attempt of man to designate Sunday sacredness would apply in principle to any change of the twenty-four hour seventh-day Sabbath. Thus to designate all time as a sabbath devoted to God would be for man to make holy all time. However, God’s seventh-day Sabbath was His holy time (Exodus 20:10). The Sabbath was God’s gift of rest made for man (Mark 2:27).

In the fifth commandment Waggoner saw the promise God gave to Abraham. The land promised to Abraham was the inheritance. “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12). He sought to disabuse the minds of those who were inclined to think that Palestine was the land promised to

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Abraham. Even when Israel was most prosperous on the land under King David, they did not experience the fulfillment of the promise. God said to David: “I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime” (2 Samuel 7:1, 10).

When David handed the kingdom over to Solomon he said: “We are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding” (1 Chronicles 29:15). Waggoner’s insight regarding the true land of Canaan was profound:

The true land of Canaan, the land where God will plant His people so that their days may be long in it, for they will have it for an everlasting possession, is the whole earth, where righteousness will dwell, and the children of wickedness will not afflict them. Canaan means *submission*, bowing the knee, and in that new earth all flesh will come before the God who hears prayer, and will worship Him. . . .¹⁰⁴⁹

Righteousness meant long life. He who honored father and mother was given long life or righteousness. Thus the fifth commandment contained the promise of the new covenant.

All those who live by faith in Christ were heirs of the promise to Abraham. Like Isaac they were children of the promise.

The promise referred to in the fifth commandment, which is the reward for obedience to it, is the power by which we obey it; for the exceeding great and precious promises make us “partakers of the Divine nature. . . .” Let us then honour Him by our faith in His promises, and He will honour us with His salvation.¹⁰⁵⁰

¹⁰⁴⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “The Promises to Israel. The Fifth Commandment,” *PT* 17, 19 (May 9, 1901), p. 293. Emphasis supplied.

¹⁰⁵⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Fifth Commandment. (Continued.),” *PT* 17, 20 (May 16, 1901), pp. 307, 308.

Any child born of faith might possess the divine nature. Such a blessed birthright was exhibited in the lives of Jesus, John the Baptist, Samuel, Jeremiah, and others. Parents of faith might nurture the blessing in their children and thus honor their Father in heaven.

The sanctity of God's life manifested in every man was preserved by the sixth commandment. Waggoner commented on this gift of God. "The sacredness of the commandment is seen when we realize that life is the gift of God,--not the gift of something apart from Him, but the gift of Himself. Life is as sacred as God, because He is our life. Therefore he who would destroy life would if it were possible destroy God."¹⁰⁵¹ The life of God was manifested in His creation.

The great controversy between Christ and Satan challenged this great principle of heaven. Satan was jealous and envied Christ's position of equality with God. Though Satan never had the opportunity in heaven to murder the Son of God, he took advantage of the opportunity when He came to earth. Of course, the root of this sin was found in his hatred and jealousy--a sin of the heart.

The promise of the sixth commandment was that all who will allow God's love to have full control of their life will be preserved from the agony and horror that accompanied such feelings of revenge. Waggoner said: "There is no depth of cruelty of which human nature is not capable

when it is not influenced by the love of God: and there is no measure of righteousness that is not possible where that love is given full sway."¹⁰⁵² The sin of the serial killer was the sin of every man, but for the grace of God. How much the sinner saved by grace owed to His mercies.

¹⁰⁵¹ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Sixth Commandment. (Continued.), *PT* 17, 22 (May 30, 1901), p. 340.

¹⁰⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 339.

The purity and sanctity of marriage was upheld by the seventh commandment. Marriage was a twin institution with the Sabbath given to man at creation. Among other lessons, marriage would teach man of the union God desired to have with him through the Holy Spirit. The lust of the flesh was for the love of the world. The Christian was united with Christ in spiritual union. To love the world was to commit spiritual adultery. The positive assurance of this command was that by yielding the life to God, He would allow His purity to flow throughout the being preserving it undefiled.¹⁰⁵³

The root of the problem addressed in the eighth commandment was distrust of God to take care of our needs. There would be no stealing if people had faith in God. The tithe was designated holy unto the Lord as well as the Sabbath. But Christians robbed God by failing to return what belonged to Him because they felt they did not have enough for themselves. God would give the trusting soul the contentment to know that God would take care of him. Thus he would never have to experience the pain involved with theft and especially stealing from God.¹⁰⁵⁴

All born into this world have been liars. Without Christ who was the way, the truth, and the life, there could be no honesty in the inward parts. But to reject the Christ who had come in the flesh, was a denial of the truth. “. . . Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (1 John 4:2, 3). The fact that Christ took our sinful human flesh which was not His by nature meant that He crucified it.

¹⁰⁵³ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Seventh Commandment (Concluded.), *PT* 17, 24 (June 13, 1901), p. 372.

¹⁰⁵⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Eighth Commandment (Concluded.), *PT* 17, 26 (June 27, 1901), pp. 405, 406.

Paul confessed “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). E. J. Waggoner explained:

To confess Jesus, therefore, is to be just as He was--to allow Him to dwell in us, and to speak and act through us. If this be the case, we cannot help telling the truth, since He is the truth; and if this be not the case, our whole life will be a lie. The man who has not Christ abiding in him cannot help being a liar.¹⁰⁵⁵

The Spirit of Christ would keep the Christian from lying. The big lie would be to reject the birthright of the great salvation given to everyone born into the world. Having experienced this salvation in Christ, one would be free indeed.

Of the tenth commandment the Apostle Paul said: “I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7). This commandment defined the root of all other sins identified in the law of God. Waggoner said, “*Lust* simply means *desire*; and since in the fall the desire of mankind is only to evil, ‘lust’ has degenerated into *evil desires*. . . .”¹⁰⁵⁶ Covetousness consisted of forming an idol of desire within the heart. So long before anyone of the other commandments had been broken, the tenth link had been severed. And if one commandment was broken, all have been broken. That was why the tenth commandment was inclusive of them all. The law was spiritual in nature. This meant that it revealed the spirituality of the person, that is, the inner man.

Waggoner further defined covetousness as desiring more than one needed.¹⁰⁵⁷ To worry over things not possessed or lost was distrust of God’s provisions for life. In short, the tenth

¹⁰⁵⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Ninth Commandment (Concluded.),” *PT* 17, 29 (July 18, 1901), pp. 482, 483.

¹⁰⁵⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. Tenth Commandment,” *PT* 17, 30 (July 25, 1901), pp. 465, 466. Emphasis his.

¹⁰⁵⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. Tenth Commandment. (Concluded.),” *PT* 17, 31 (August 1, 1901), p. 484.

commandment taught perfect faith in God. “This absolute trust in the Lord is absolute righteousness, the very opposite of heathenism. . . . Coveteousness, therefore, is the desire for anything contrary to the commandments, anything except God’s life.”¹⁰⁵⁸ “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). The Christian was convinced that he had all things in Christ and therefore was content and freed from the acquisitive spirit of coveteousness.

Waggoner’s series on the ten commandments was a masterful exposition of their underlying principles. Furthermore, in the hand of a Mediator, the law was freedom from sin. Rightly understood, they were the three angels’ message. The law and the gospel were comprehended within the ten promises. Calvary was uplifted at Mount Sinai.

Meanwhile some moves were being made in Battle Creek that would continue to exacerbate the proclamation of righteousness by faith. There was a change in the offering for the *Review*.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

Chapter 29

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT THE *REVIEW*

The 1901 General Conference was held in Battle Creek. E. J. Waggoner and W. W. Prescott made their plans to attend the session. Waggoner wrote to Ellen White: “I am looking forward to this with a great deal of interest, for I have been longing to have a talk with you for a long time.”¹⁰⁵⁹ They were kindred spirits in the truth who had been separated too long. He would arrive in Battle Creek around March 25, 1901.

During the year 1901 the law and the covenants received extensive treatment in Seventh-day Adventist’s journals. While the *Review* experienced a decline in the understanding of the covenants, the *Signs* under the editorship of Milton C. Wilcox demonstrated right principles.

Wilcox said the law did not bring bondage, but sin gendered to bondage. The problem with the covenant at Sinai was the people’s promise. “They promised to do it without God.”¹⁰⁶⁰ God would have written His law in their hearts and minds, but Israel said to Moses, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:19). “Israel put God far from them, and went into the bondage of sin.”¹⁰⁶¹

The function of the law in Galatians 3:23 was understood to bring the sinner to Christ. Wilcox said: “The law is the jailer, the warder, the keeper, the pedagogue, the hard master, till liberty, blessed liberty from the power of sin is found in Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁶²

¹⁰⁵⁹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, February 1, 1901, London.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Milton C. Wilcox, “Gendering to Bondage,” *ST* 27, 5 (January 30, 1901), p. 70.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶² Milton C. Wilcox, “Under the Law,” *ST* 27, 5 (January 30, 1901), p. 70. Cf. “‘Under the law,’ Again,” *ST* 27, 16 (April 17, 1901), p. 246. A similar viewpoint was expressed by F. O. Oakley, “Under the Law,” *ST* 27, 14 (April 2, 1901), p. 261.

T. H. Starbuck of Walla Walla, Washington, provided an excellent treatment of Galatians 3:23-25. He paraphrased the passage: “*Before believing in Christ, we were imprisoned under the guardianship of the law until we exercised faith in Him. Wherefore the law was our monitor to lead us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But having believed in Him, we are released from that imprisonment.*”¹⁰⁶³ It was clear that Starbuck understood the law’s function in conversion. It was to bring mankind to Christ. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 19:7).

He insisted that the “schoolmaster” and the “added law” were the same. “The added law defines sin; for, logically, a law put forth because of transgressions could be no other than that which reveals sin in its true light.”¹⁰⁶⁴ He agreed with A. T. Jones that the law as a system was in the mind of the Apostle Paul.

The law is the appointed means; hence we can say at the present time that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It would not be teaching the whole counsel of God to say that Paul meant the ceremonial law only. It will be absolutely safe for us to leave it just as Paul does, and say “the law,” without any qualifying terms either in the text or context; for it--both moral and ceremonial bring to Christ, and that was the original design in its promulgation.¹⁰⁶⁵

Thus, Sinai functioned to bring sinners to Calvary and not vice versa. “The soul approaches Calvary in vain unless it goes by way of Sinai.”¹⁰⁶⁶

When Starbuck commented on the coming of the Seed he went a step beyond Waggoner by saying it included both the first and second comings of Christ.

The promulgation of the added law is temporal, limited by the coming of the “Seed,” which embraces all the comings necessary to the inheritance of the promise. . . . At the first advent He was the Seed incarnate; at His second coming He will be the same Seed

¹⁰⁶³ T. H. Starbuck, “Our Schoolmaster,” *ST* 27, 12 (March 20, 1901), p. 179. Emphasis his.

¹⁰⁶⁴ T. H. Starbuck, “Our Schoolmaster. (Concluded.),” *ST* 27, 13 (March 27, 1901), p. 196.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁶ T. H. Starbuck, “Our Schoolmaster,” *ST* 27, 12 (March 20, 1901), p. 180.

glorified. . . . If the law was added because of transgressions, logically it cannot cease to be added until transgressions cease; but that reaches to the second advent.¹⁰⁶⁷

Waggoner would not have considered this an exegetically sound interpretation. For him the law was *spoken* because of transgressions. Yet Starbuck was correct in nothing that this function of the law would not cease until the second coming. Furthermore, the inheritance promised to Abraham would not be fulfilled until Christ's return.

There were others who followed Waggoner's understanding of Galatians 3:19 and the coming of the Seed. H. C. Lacey commented on the passage: "The coming of the Seed here referred to is the second, and not the first, advent of Christ."¹⁰⁶⁸

A. T. Jones had served as editor-in-chief of the *Review* from 1897 through April 1901. He had been supportive of the 1888 concepts of the law and the covenants. However, W. H. Granger's article in the *Review* was not particularly groundbreaking.¹⁰⁶⁹ S. B. Whitney reiterated familiar ideas which reinforced Waggoner's views of the covenants.¹⁰⁷⁰ A. T. Jones closed out his term as editor of the *Review* by beginning a series on the ten commandments which was never completed.¹⁰⁷¹ But this series never equaled the sublimity and literary quality of Waggoner's series on the ten commandments.

The decision to replace A. T. Jones with Uriah Smith as editor of the *Review* was made April 29, 1901, at the Battle Creek General Conference.¹⁰⁷² A. T. Jones then became the president of the California Conference.¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁶⁷ T. H. Starbuck, "Our Schoolmaster. (Concluded.)," *ST* 27, 13 (March 27, 1901), p. 196.

¹⁰⁶⁸ H. C. Lacey, "The Two Laws.--No. 1," *The Bible Echo*(June 18, 1900), p. 395.

¹⁰⁶⁹ W. H. Granger, "Thoughts on Galatians 4:21-30," *RH* 78, 3 (January 15, 1901), p. 34.

¹⁰⁷⁰ S. B. Whitney, "The Old Covenant," *RH* 78, 12 (March 19, 1901), p. 178.

¹⁰⁷¹ A. T. Jones, "The Keeping of the Commandments," *RH* 78, 12 (March 19-April 23, 1901).

¹⁰⁷² H. E. Osborne, Secretary of the General Conference, "Action of the General Conference Committee (April 29, 1901). See *RH* (May 14, 1901) masthead: Uriah Smith, editor.

Elder Smith's hiatus from the chief's chair under Jones had not changed his position on the covenants. It was reflected in a brief answer he gave on a question about 2 Corinthians 3:7. "The ministration, in this case, was the whole system of services and ordinances introduced and established by Moses, which was 'glorious;' but its glory was eclipsed by the greater glory of the ministration of the Spirit, *introduced* and maintained by Christ and the apostles."¹⁰⁷⁴ His model of two ministrations, the old and the new, that were consecutive indicated dispensationalism. His word "introduced" in association with the ministration of the Spirit supported this conclusion. This was all of one piece with what Smith had taught throughout his career. Uriah Smith was a thoroughgoing dispensationalist.

This came at a time, when shortly before, E. J. Waggoner had clarified the issues of the dispensations in the columns of *The Present Truth*.

In nothing else do people show their utter failure to comprehend the Gospel, so much as in the use of the word "dispensation." Without the slightest warrant in the Scripture, they have divided up the time from creation to the end of the world into periods which they term "dispensations." Some have more, and others fewer; but all who have the "dispensation" idea agree that God acts differently in each of them, treating the people in one "dispensation" differently from what He does those in another, and having a different Gospel, a different way of salvation, in each. Indeed, some, by applying the term "Gospel dispensation" to one period of time, imply that there has been a time since the fall, when there was no Gospel, and, consequently, no salvation. It seems as though the mere statement of the case should be sufficient to show anybody how dishonouring to God is such a position.¹⁰⁷⁵

Waggoner believed that if this was the situation, then God had different plans to save men in different periods. Consequently, He would have to have different standards in the judgment day

¹⁰⁷³ Eugene F. Durand, *Yours in the Blessed Hope, Uriah Smith*, p. 266.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Uriah Smith, "The Ministration Written and Engraven in Stones. 2 Cor. 3:7," *RH* 78, 25 (June 18, 1901), p. 394. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁷⁵ E. J. Waggoner, "The Dispensation of Law and Grace," *PT* 17, 7 (February 14, 1901), p. 100.

upon which to decide each one's case according to what was required of them at any given period of time.

Waggoner also gave a marvelous little summary of the two covenants. He said: "Both the old and the new covenant require the keeping of the law; the great different between the two is that the old covenant is man's promise to keep the law, while the new covenant is God's promise that we shall keep it."¹⁰⁷⁶ God accomplished this by giving the life of His Son which became man's life. Christ's life provided for the writing of God's law in the heart and in the mind.

Waggoner went on to say:

God first gives the law to us, then asks us for it, and we can give it back to Him in a life of obedience to His commandments. He may ask us for never so much, if He gives it to us before He asks for it. No matter then what He requires, He can make no demands that we cannot meet. But if He should ask us for ever so little, without first supplying it, it would be in vain, for we have absolutely nothing to give. In the making of the old covenant, the Jews purposed to give without receiving,--to keep the law themselves, before it was given by God into their minds and hearts. Consequently they failed, as do we under those conditions. But whatever God asks, He gives; therefore receive first from Him, and then give. Take hold of the promise, receive the Spirit of life into the mind and heart, and give it back to Him in a life of loving obedience and service.¹⁰⁷⁷

For Waggoner the new covenant was the promise of everlasting life in Christ.

By this late date in Elder Smith's career, he had not changed his views on the law in Galatians. He wrote to Elder W. A. McCutchen:

In regard to what Sr. White wrote J. H. W. [Waggoner], as to his position on the Law in Galatians, I am knowing something about that. J. H. W. wrote his pamphlet on "THE LAW OF GOD" in Rochester, N. Y., and it was published there before the office was moved to Battle Creek in 1855. In that work he takes the position that "the added law" of Galatians 3:19, and the "Schoolmaster" of verse 24 was the moral law. He says: "So it is evident that the law spoken of in Gal. 3:19, 24, is a moral law, one that will detect and convince of sin." p. 81. The Brethren in Vermont were so stirred up over this question, that they sent Eld. Stephen Pierce on here to Battle Creek in 1856 to have a study on the

¹⁰⁷⁶ E. J. Waggoner, "The Giving of the Law," *PT* 17, 12 (March 21, 1901), p. 192.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

question of the law in Galatians. J. H. W. was then here in B.B. [*sic.*, read Battle Creek], but was living in Burlington, Mich. He would not stay to the examination, but returned to his home. So the time was given to Bro. Pierce, and we had meetings at different times for some three days going over the whole question. Bro. W. [James White] took the position, (or had taken it in his book) that the law in Galatians was the moral law. Bro. Pierce argued that it was the law system, “including the ceremonial law.” I was then quite young in the truth and as these meetings were new to me, I including both Bro. and Sr. White became convinced that Bro. Pierce had the right view, and J. H. W. was wrong. Sr. White shortly after this had a vision in which this law question was shown her, and she immediately wrote J. H. W. that his position on the law was wrong, and Bro. Pierce was right. Bro. White then took Bro. W’s book out of the market, for we all then considered the matter settled.

Waggoner repeatedly solicited that his book on the law be republished, but White said, NOT until you revise your position on the law. He never would do this, and so the book was never republished. . . . The next we heard of it was when E. J. W. [Waggoner] came out in the SIGNS and INSTRUCTOR and taught in Healdsburg College taking the old position of his father, which Sr. W. [White] had pronounced wrong. This stirred up Bro. Butler to correspond with Sr. W. who was then in Switzerland, and that called forth the letter from her to Bro. Butler. . . . This course of E. J. W. opened up the whole question again, and the determined men on that side of the question have carried quite an influence and those who have had charge of our publications have given them the field, but those who know the history that I have related cannot change on that account. When men, to save their position have to take the position as E. J. W. and others do, that the SEED HAS NOT YET COME, they are in a pretty tight place in my opinion. Some try to make it appear that when Sr. W. said to J. H. W. that his position was wrong, she did not mean his position on the law in Galatians; but I was there when the investigation took place and know that the only issue involved was whether the law Paul speaks of as “added” was the moral law or not. Waggoner said it was the moral law. Pierce said, No, but that it included more. The Jews had come to believe that they could be justified from everything wrong by the law of Moses. Acts 13:39. So, when Paul preached Christ as the sole means of justification, the Jews said, No, we can be justified by circumcision, offerings, our priestly atonement, and other services. So to make way for Christ, Paul had to take these all out of the way, saying they were only designed to continue till the SEED should come, and they were an object lesson leading and pointing the way to Christ. . . . I hope the truth will prevail.¹⁰⁷⁸

This letter was quoted at length in order to indicate Elder Smith’s position on the law in Galatians.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Letter Uriah Smith to W. A. McCutchen, August 8, 1901, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, pp. 305, 306. Emphasis his.

This letter was written during the summer of 1901 following his resumption of the *Review's* editorial chair. It was a point by point refutation of J. H. Waggoner's views and E. J. Waggoner's position on the law. Smith believed that by 1901 E. J. Waggoner's views of the law in Galatians had "carried quite an influence and those who have had charge of our publications have given them the field."¹⁰⁷⁹

Immediately after this Ellen White came out with some counsel regarding the law in Galatians. She directed her advice to fellow believers in the Iowa Conference: "It is not essential to understand the precise particulars in regard to the relation of the two laws. It is of far greater consequence that we know whether we are justified or condemned by the holy precepts of God's law."¹⁰⁸⁰ This counsel came at a time when the whole question of the law in Galatians was about to flare up all over again. Her counsel went unheeded.

She also published a statement on the unity of the plan of salvation in both the Old and the New Testaments. She warned people not to look upon the rituals of Israel as being mere ceremonies. Rather, through the eyes of faith Christ was portrayed:

But men in that age were saved by Christ as verily as men are saved by him to-day. They were under a discipline of mercy, and had special privileges in their day, even as we have in ours. Christ was shadowed forth in the sacrifices and symbols, which were to last till type should reach antitype in his coming to our world. The Hebrews rejoiced in a Saviour to come. We rejoice in a Saviour who has come, and who is coming again.¹⁰⁸¹

There was not a hint of differing methods of salvation in the words of Ellen White.

Elder Smith published a three-part series in the *Review* on the law in Galatians written by William Brickey. This argumentative series was directly aimed at E. J. Waggoner and his

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Letter E. G. White to Brethren and Sisters of the Iowa Conference, November 6, 1901. *EGW 1888*, p. 1782.

¹⁰⁸¹ E. G. White, "In the Wilderness With God," *YI* (July 18, 1901).

supporters. Brickey was a dispensationalist. This was evident from a number of comments he made.

Brickey started out by saying: “But will any man of sound faith take the position that they had the same degree and kind of faith in the *old dispensation* as in the *new*? They had faith in God, but their knowledge of Jesus Christ was limited.”¹⁰⁸² Brickey did not believe that during the ministration of the law there was much if any knowledge about the resurrection of Christ. He held that there was a limited influence of the Holy Spirit during Old Testament times, but not like there was once Christ had come. And as far as faith was concerned, Brickey said: “It is perfectly plain that faith had not yet come according to the gospel standard, else the Spirit would have been given. . . .”¹⁰⁸³

But there was more on this point of dispensationalism. Brickey refuted the moral law view of the “schoolmaster.”

For us to apply this schoolmaster to the Ten Commandments, and this faith spoken of, to a personal experience, and argue that men had faith in the *old dispensation*, and seek to prove it by the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, is an error. We have no disposition to deny that some men had faith in the *old dispensation*, and a certain knowledge of Christ, and even prophesied of Him, but they did not fully comprehend His work. . . . But with the fullness of the time, a *new era of faith* began, and a flood of light came in, which is compared to the sun. . . . This was “the time of reformation,” and Paul would be perfectly justified in speaking of such a time as the coming of faith.¹⁰⁸⁴

Brickey had a sequential view of the old and the new covenants. It was clear that this was the model from which he worked. If there was any doubt as to whether this was so, he made it

¹⁰⁸² William Brickey, “Notes on the Book of Galatians.--No. 1,” *RH* 79, 3 (January 21, 1902), p. 36. Emphasis supplied.

¹⁰⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁴ William Brickey, “Notes on the Book of Galatians.--No. 3 (Concluded),” *RH* 79, 5 (February 4, 1902), pp. 67, 68. Emphasis supplied.

absolutely clear when he said: “The *transition* from the old covenant to the new began with the preaching of John, and ended with the preaching of Christ.”¹⁰⁸⁵

Brickey’s polemics came through when he addressed the issue of the “Seed” in Galatians 3:19. He said: “Sometimes we read in books and papers (not the Bible) that the seed has not yet come, and cannot come until all the children of Abraham are gathered home in the kingdom.”¹⁰⁸⁶ His point was that the “Seed” had come already at the first advent. Waggoner had said the coming of the “Seed” would bring the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham at the second coming.

Then of the “added law” Brickey argued: “Some say the ‘added’ simply means ‘spoken.’ The translators say it was added: I believe it.”¹⁰⁸⁷ This abrasiveness in presentation was to provoke one correspondent to say he was “not pleased with the remarks of Brother Brickey on Galatians.”¹⁰⁸⁸

Brickey believed that the ceremonial law was “added” to the covenants given to Abraham and to Israel at Sinai. For him, those covenants were the ten commandments. So the ceremonial law was “added” to the ten commandments. He said:

. . . God made this covenant with Abraham, and renewed it with Israel, adding the ceremonial law; and, altogether, Paul calls it the old covenant, and says that it had ordinances of divine service. . . . He does not make the fine distinction that some of our modern writers make. He does not speak of the *Abrahamic* covenant apart from the *old* covenant. He does not call the covenant with Abraham *the new covenant*, and one four hundred years later *the old*.¹⁰⁸⁹

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67. Emphasis supplied.

¹⁰⁸⁶ William Brickey, “Notes on the Book of Galatians.--No. 2,” *RH* 79, 4 (January 28, 1902), p. 52.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁸ Letter Uriah Smith to L. F. Trubey, February 11, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 312.

¹⁰⁸⁹ William Brickey, “Notes on the Book of Galatians.--No. 2,” *RH* 79, 4 (January 28, 1902), p. 52. Emphasis his.

So Brickey saw no distinction between the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinai covenant. They were both the old covenant.

The “added law” was the ordinances of ceremonies pointing forward to Christ who would deliver them from such a curse. He said:

But why was this law added, and for how long?--It was added because of transgression. Now if transgression is sin, then it was added because of sin; not as a remedy, but to point forward to the real remedy--the Seed. It was to continue until the Seed should come. Gal. 3:19. It stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the times of reformation (Heb. 9:10), to the fullness of the time. Gal. 4:4. This added law had certain curses attached to it. See Deut. 27:14-26. Christ redeemed them from those curses.¹⁰⁹⁰

Brickey viewed the ceremonial law as a curse upon Israel. However, God meant it for good unto them. It was the gospel in type. It never was intended by God to be the method of salvation. Unfortunately, Israel perverted it into a system of works-righteousness, but that was not God’s fault. So the ceremonial law was not a curse from God put upon Israel.

Brickey could not see that the “added law” was the moral law which convicted the sinner and drove him to Christ. For him that was an unscriptural position to take. He said:

I have no objection to any one making a personal application of this scripture, and drawing all the consolation from it he can; but in the study of the Sacred Word, I have always thought it more safe to search for the exact meaning of the writer, and then, if from this one wishes to draw some lesson of personal comfort, there is no objection.¹⁰⁹¹

This was his way of saying that the view of the “added law” being the ten commandments was nothing more than a personal application of the text to one’s conversion experience, but that such an application was not supported by exegesis of the passage. If someone wanted to say that the law of God had convicted him of his sins and brought him to Christ, that was fine, but it was unsupported by the text.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Brickey went on the next week to comment on Galatians 3:24 and the “schoolmaster” law. He said:

Some good people still believe that this schoolmaster is the Ten Commandments, but they seem to be confused, and divided in opinion, as to what is meant by the words “under the law.” But this law was added *till the Seed should come*. But the Ten Commandments were never added to anything; for they are as eternal as God.¹⁰⁹²

These words, “confused” and “divided,” lumped “good people” like E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones together with all other writers on the subject as “confused” and “divided in opinion.” These words tended to condemn the spokesman for the inconsistencies of others. Waggoner had never wavered from his understanding of what “under the law” meant. Those “under the law” were sinners condemned by their rejection of Christ. Thus they were subjected to the penalty of the law.

Brickey had some other means of salvation in mind for Old Testament times. It may have been some vague notion of Christ which saved. Here was his statement:

For us to apply this schoolmaster to the Ten Commandments, and this faith spoken of, to a personal experience, and argue that men had faith in the old dispensation, and seek to prove it by the eleventh of Hebrews, is an error. We have no disposition to deny that some men had faith in the old dispensation, and a certain knowledge of Christ, and even prophesied of Him, but they did not fully comprehend His work.¹⁰⁹³

The unity of the plan of salvation in both the Old and the New Testaments was not preserved by this sort of comment. Neither did it take into account the rich and abundant evidence of both Testaments as to how men have been saved by faith in Christ in all ages. Brickey simply dismissed the great faith chapter of Hebrews 11 as being inconsequential in understanding how the patriarchs and prophets were saved.

Brickey’s thoroughgoing legalism came through loud and clear when he said:

¹⁰⁹² William Brickey, “Notes on Galatians.--No. 3 (Concluded),” *RH* 79, 5 (February 4, 1902), p. 67. Emphasis his.

¹⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*

I do not wish to argue the duties of a schoolmaster, but I am perfectly free to say that I am unable to see how the Ten Commandments can be justly called a yoke of bondage or a schoolmaster. But I can readily see that all the Jewish ceremonies did point to Christ, whether the people fully comprehended it or not. And I can easily see that as they were a shadow of good things to come, they would be like a school.¹⁰⁹⁴

If he could not see how the ten commandments could be a “yoke of bondage,” then he had no clear conception of what works-righteousness was all about. And if he had no clear conception of what righteousness-by-works-of-the-law was all about, he certainly had no understanding of what it meant to be justified by faith in Christ alone.

These articles by Brickey were so irritating to at least one reader that he expressed his protest to the editor, Uriah Smith. Smith responded in his typically confident manner:

I am sorry that you are not pleased with the remarks of Brother Brickey on Galatians, for I think he is correct. This, if you are acquainted with the past history of our cause, you will remember, used to be the old established view of our people, viz., the same view that Brother Brickey advocates.

It seems to me that if any dissatisfaction was aroused, or any injury done, it should have been when this view was ruthlessly broken into by the articles in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and the lectures in Healdsburg College, and subsequent articles in the YOUTH’S INSTRUCTOR and REVIEW.

We have always believed in justification by faith; and, how the articles of Brother Brickey militate against that view, I do not see. We have had this battle to fight all along for the past forty years, against the charges of our opponents who claimed the law was abolished, and appealed to Galatians in proof of it.

It seems to me that one thing is true and sure: if the “added law” and the “schoolmaster” referred to in the third of Galatians apply to the moral law, then, when the Seed came, that is, when Christ came, there was a change in our relation to the law, and we are no longer held by it as a rule of duty. We can not maintain the perpetuity of the moral law with the view that has been lately introduced; and it seems to me like making a move backward to give ourselves away to the claims of our opponents.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

I do not know, and never have known, of a position that fully gets the no-law position, except the position that Paul in the Galatians refers largely to the ceremonial law; and this does not interfere at all with the question of justification by faith.¹⁰⁹⁵

This letter indicated a number of points that were fixed in Smith's mind at this late stage of his career.

First, Elder Smith believed himself to be the injured party in all the discussions regarding the law in Galatians. E. J. Waggoner had "aroused" all the "dissatisfaction" by stirring up this question through the church papers and his teaching at Healdsburg College.

Second, evidently L. F. Trubey felt the understanding of the law in Galatians impacted on the doctrine of justification by faith. But Smith felt that the ceremonial law interpretation of Galatians 3 did not affect justification by faith. He said, "We have always believed in justification by faith. . . ."¹⁰⁹⁶ Smith believed that what Brickey had to say about the law did not "militate against that view" at all.

Third, Smith believed the "added law" and the "schoolmaster" in Galatians 3 was the ceremonial law. He had been fighting this battle for some "forty years" with the antinomians--those "no-law" people. This was their main proof text in doing away with the ten commandments. If Seventh-day Adventists should capitulate the argument and agree with their opponents that the "added law" was the ten commandments, it would be a step "backward" in his mind.

Elder Smith believed he understood justification by faith. But in his view all these other questions about the law and the covenants had nothing to do with justification. Those presenting these views were nothing but ruthless interlopers in the cause creating "dissatisfaction" and

¹⁰⁹⁵ Letter Uriah Smith to L. F. Trubey, February 11, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 312. Emphasis his.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

“injury.” He had been personally offended by all of this over the years. Obviously, Elder Smith was never able to bring himself to forgive his protagonists. He always harbored bitterness in his heart toward the message and the messengers of 1888.

Unfortunately for Elder Smith, if one did not understand the role of the moral law in convicting the sinner, he never could be humbled as was the Apostle Paul who said, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). He could not truly understand the Laodicean message.

Furthermore, Elders Smith and Brickey taught dispensationalism. More than anything else, this divided the plan of salvation into two separate time periods. This did nothing to unite the testimony of Scripture regarding faith in Christ for redemption in both Testaments. As much as these brethren fought against the antinomians by upholding the ten commandments, they were unable to break away from their opponent’s dispensationalism. This was devastating for their view of the law and the covenants.

Under the old covenant Christ was only a figurative Saviour from sin. Christ was only a Redeemer foreshadowed by the law of sacrifices which were viewed as a curse upon Israel. Certainly nothing of the complete faith in Christ, the fullest blessings of the Holy Spirit, nor a knowledge of the resurrection from the dead was made known to men of old times.

These articles by Brickey precipitated the removal of Elder Smith from being the editor of the *Review*. Elder A. G. Daniells, who had become the General Conference president in 1901, was second-guessed in these actions by former president, George I. Butler. Butler was concerned that Smith had been mistreated and cut off from the editorial chair. Daniells explained to Elder Butler the circumstances precipitating the change. One of the factors was the Brickey articles on Galatians. Said Daniells:

They were openly and squarely against the message that came to this people at Minneapolis, and that has been embraced by thousands of our people and openly and repeatedly endorsed by the Spirit of Prophecy. These articles have caused a great deal of trouble and dissatisfaction among our brethren in different States. Many of our ministers were perfectly astonished that the REVIEW would publish them. . . . Some of them gave due warning that if the REVIEW continued to publish such theology, it would be necessary for the State Conference Committees to take their stand against the REVIEW, and use their State papers and other local facilities to place the situation truly and fairly before their brethren. . . . I know that the REVIEW could not stand with our brethren if it continued that course.¹⁰⁹⁷

The Review and Herald Board met in what was an agonizing decision and asked W. W. Prescott to join the editorial staff.

Elder A. G. Daniells pointed out his objections to the “Brickey articles” in writing to W. C. White:

I want to ask if you read what is called the Brickey articles. . . . These articles were an open and vicious attack on the message of righteousness by faith presented at Minneapolis, and repeated over and over again by Brethren Jones and Waggoner and others since that time. They were as crooked and unsound as they could be. As I understand the Scriptures, they were directly opposed to the truth of the gospel. And as I understand the teaching of “Patriarchs and Prophets” on the covenants, they were in direct conflict with that book. You can get the papers and read the articles for yourself. You will not be edified by either the richness of thought nor the logic. They are not only scripturally erroneous, but they are weak and illogical.¹⁰⁹⁸

Thus Daniells viewed Brickey’s writings as subversive to the “reforms” of righteousness by faith which were the goals of the General Conference and the Mission Board under his administration.

Then Elder Daniells went right to Elder Smith and asked him about the circumstances surrounding the publication of these articles. Daniells recalled the conversation to Elder White:

Finally I spoke to Elder Smith about them. . . . He said that he read them himself, and published them because he believed they set forth the truth. He said they taught what this

¹⁰⁹⁷ Letter A. G. Daniells to George I. Butler, April 11, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 314.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 14, 1902, Battle Creek, Michigan. *MMM*, p. 318.

people first taught on the question, and what he still believed. From this I saw that Brother Smith was far from being in harmony with the truths taught by Brethren Jones and Waggoner at Minneapolis, and sustained over and over again by the Spirit of Prophecy since that time.¹⁰⁹⁹

The Brickey articles had stirred up a firestorm of protest including students at Union College who inquired of their Bible teachers whether they were “scriptural.”

Elder Daniells said that something had to be done with the *Review* editor in view of these events. “Now that I have learned that Brother Smith is utterly at variance with this teaching, and that he is free to see it opposed in public and private, I feel clearer still that we have done right in placing Brother Prescott on the editorial staff.”¹¹⁰⁰ Though Elder Smith’s name continued on the masthead as editor, W. W. Prescott was now the editor-in-chief of the *Review*.

For his part Elder Daniells observed: “God has put his seal of approval upon the message that came at Minneapolis, and I can not understand how a man [Uriah Smith] can proclaim his unbounded confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy, and reject the Minneapolis message.”¹¹⁰¹

Daniells wanted to move the church leadership into the light of reform from Minneapolis. But he realized there was a good deal of opposition that prevailed. In the “Northwestern States” there was a lot of “fog over this question.”

As surely as we live, they are still under the *old covenant*, the *covenant of works*. Matthew Larsen seems to be the leader of this faction. He is traveling about wherever he can, sowing this evil seed. Not only the older men who were at work when Brother Butler, Brother Morrison, and others fought this battle, but some of the younger fellows who are coming on, have imbibed these old heresies from the men in the field, who are still unconverted to this new light. . . .

It certainly looks to me as though Satan is endeavoring to revive this cursed thing, and keep our workers and people in a stew. . . .

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 321.

¹¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

. . . The whole brood of *old-covenant* men who are continually raising doubts and unbelief regarding the light that came at the Minneapolis meeting.¹¹⁰²

The opposition to the 1888 message on the covenants was still strong in 1901.

In 1902 Daniells indicated that church leaders such as Elders George I. Butler, J. H. Morrison, Matthew Larsen, Uriah Smith, William Brickey, etc., were in opposition to the 1888 message. Historian Eugene Durand said: “It is obvious that Uriah Smith’s views on righteousness by faith and the law in Galatians changed not one whit throughout his lifetime. His tearful promises to Ellen White in 1891 proved to be more than he could keep.”¹¹⁰³ There was a mysterious and incomprehensible opposition on the part of some leadership to the message of righteousness by faith, the law, and the covenants.

Ellen White was very concerned about that “terrible experience” of Minneapolis recurring all over again. In light of the current agitation over the law in Galatians she wrote to editor C. P. Bollman:

Never should that which God has not given as a test be carried as was the subject of the law in Galatians. 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. God forbid that the subject of the two laws should ever again be agitated as it then was. Some are not yet healed of their defection and would plunge into this subject once more. Should they do this, differences of opinion would again create division. This question must not be revived.¹¹⁰⁴

This counsel was not directed toward E. J. Waggoner’s view of the law, because it had already become fairly well established. She had already endorsed his position on the law and the covenants. Tim Crosby said “Ellen White insisted that the matter be dropped.”¹¹⁰⁵ Her counsel

¹¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 319-321. Emphasis supplied.

¹¹⁰³ Eugene F. Durand, *Yours in the Blessed Hope, Uriah Smith*, p. 268.

¹¹⁰⁴ Letter E. G. White to C. P. Bollman, November 19, 1902, Elmshaven, California. *EGW 1888*, p. 1797.

¹¹⁰⁵ Tim Crosby, “The Law of the Prophet,” *RH* 163, 21 (May 22, 1986), p. 548.

in 1902 came at a time when Smith and Brickey were agitating the old views of the ceremonial law in Galatians.

The evidence indicated that there was support for the 1888 message. Elder A. G. Daniells, Milton C. Wilcox, T. H. Starbuck, and “many of our ministers” believed the true message regarding the covenants. This seemed a hopeful sign that the tide had turned.

But there was also significant opposition. In fact, Ellen White feared that the “terrible experience at the Minneapolis Conference” might erupt all over again. The “subject of the law in Galatians” and the “two laws” were like a recurring nightmare for Seventh-day Adventists. The issues had still not been resolved.

Chapter 30

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT IN SALVATION HISTORY

E. J. Waggoner never tired of retelling the story of salvation history. Whenever this story was told, he always began with Abraham the father of the faithful. Everything that God gave to Abraham was given to us upon whom the ends of the earth are come. Abraham received the third angel's message for his day just as we have received it in our day. Abraham received the glorious message of Christ and His righteousness just as we have been beneficiaries of it too. The same message given to Abraham that perfected his faith would be the same message in the last days which would perfect the last generation in preparation for translation at the coming of Christ.

It has been said that our history as a people was of little interest. The future of the church should engage the attention. However, the story of Seventh-day Adventists has been sacred history. God's work in the world has been intertwined with the interests of the Advent Movement. For one who considered history of little moment it should give pause that Scripture was the record of God's movement in time through a historical people--first the church "called out," beginning with Abraham, until the *ecclesia* or the saints "called out" from the world in the New Testament church. History was of utmost importance. It was God's story of leading the remnant of His covenant.

In the summer of 1901 Waggoner was writing commentary on the international Sabbath School lessons which dealt with the ancient history of Genesis.¹¹⁰⁶ Abram was a Gentile heathen when God chose him. God foreknew that Abram would be predisposed to following Him and

¹¹⁰⁶ E. J. Waggoner, "Internation Sunday-school Lesson," *PT* 17 (July 16-December 12 , 1901).

that he would believe God. The Lord could use him as a prophet to proclaim the gospel to the nations. God promised to make him a blessing to the nations through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Genesis 12:1-3). “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8). So the story of Abraham cannot be read without the history of the gospel being told. And the gospel was all about the cross of Christ.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.¹¹⁰⁷

There was no stronger affirmation that Abraham was a Spirit-filled preacher of the cross of Christ to the Gentiles.¹¹⁰⁸

Upon his arrival in Canaan the Scripture recorded “there Abram called on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 13:4). “Called” was better rendered “proclaimed” or “preached.” So Abram preached the name or glory of the Lord.¹¹⁰⁹ He was a gospel evangelist.

After Abraham was corrected in his belief that his servant Eliezer would be his heir of the promise (for the inheritance can never be passed to a race of servants), the Lord told him the heir would come from his own “bowels” (Genesis 15:4). “And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now, toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:4-6).

Why would Abraham’s belief in a seed as numerous as the stars be counted to him for righteousness? Because he believed the Lord would be revealed in his flesh. “. . . He that shall

¹¹⁰⁷ Galatians 3:13, 14.

¹¹⁰⁸ E. J. Waggoner, “The Call of Abraham,” *PT* 17, 29 (July 16, 1901), p. 450.

¹¹⁰⁹ E. J. Waggoner, “A Lesson in Unselfishness,” *PT* 17, 30 (July 25, 1901), p. 466.

come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Genesis 15:4). Waggoner said: “So we see that the promise to Abraham was in Christ, and Abraham saw Christ in it. It was the Gospel to Abraham. It was no half-way Gospel, dimly set forth, but the complete Gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹¹¹⁰

This was just as the Apostle Paul had testified of Abraham:

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.¹¹¹¹

So Abraham believed in Christ crucified for him from the foundation of the world. He believed in Christ resurrected from the dead for our justification. “. . . He saw Christ revealed to all the world in his flesh, recognized as descended from him according to the flesh. . . . The covenant was based on the life of God, the shed blood of Christ. . . .”¹¹¹² Abraham believed that his Saviour would assume his own sinful flesh. Christ was completely identified with the plight of man’s need. He was a near kinsman Redeemer perfectly adapted to the needs of sinners and yet He was without sin.

According to Waggoner God revealed to Abraham, while in a deep sleep, the first time prophecy--¹¹¹³

Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in

¹¹¹⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “God’s Promise to Abraham,” *PT* 17, 31 (August 1, 1901), p. 482.

¹¹¹¹ Romans 4:20-25.

¹¹¹² E. J. Waggoner, “God’s Promise to Abraham,” *PT* 17, 31 (August 1, 1901), p. 482.

¹¹¹³ E. J. Waggoner, “The Hope of the Promise,” *PT* 17, 43 (October 24, 1901), p. 675.

the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.¹¹¹⁴

He was told he would die before receiving the inheritance of the land.

. . . The faith which was counted to Abraham for righteousness was faith in the resurrection, for he was plainly told that he should die without inheriting the land. . . . The covenant taught Abraham not only that death could not break it, but also that death--the death of Christ, and his death with Christ--was the very means by which it would be established.¹¹¹⁵

The covenant promised to Abraham that after the fourth generation following his death he, along with his faithful descendants, would inherit the land of Canaan for an everlasting heritage. That meant following the Exodus from Egypt, the resurrection of the dead would have occurred and together with the living faithful they would have entered the promised land.

The psalmist expressed the Lord's lament:

Oh that my people had harkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.¹¹¹⁶

A people of faith in Christ would have been righteous and received the everlasting possession. But the Israel which came out of Egypt did not enter because of unbelief (Hebrews 4).

Abraham knew that everything depended upon the birth of their son of faith for it was through him that the Messiah, the world's Redeemer, would be born. Abraham and Sarah had to wait twenty-five years for the fulfilment of this promise. Isaac must be born at a time in their lives when it was beyond human possibility and all a gift of God. Abraham was about one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety. They were both well beyond child-bearing years. Their

¹¹¹⁴ Genesis 15:13-16.

¹¹¹⁵ E. J. Waggoner, "God's Promise to Abraham," *PT* 17, 31 (August 1, 1901), p. 482.

¹¹¹⁶ Psalms 81:13-15.

eternal salvation depended on Isaac. “No other person, save Mary of Nazareth, ever had such wondrous reason to rejoice over the birth of a son.”¹¹¹⁷ Isaac was a son of the Spirit. In this he was a type of Christ born of the Holy Ghost.

When Isaac was twenty-five years old the supreme test came to Abraham. The Messiah was to be cut off. God said to him: “Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2). Waggoner observed of Abraham: “He had believed that God would give him a son, through whom the Messiah should be born, and now he was called on to sacrifice that son, and, seemingly his hope of salvation, since another son was not in the question.”¹¹¹⁸ Abraham’s faith did not falter. However, he was severely tempted by unbelief.

He believed that just as God had given Isaac to them; likewise, he would be raised from the dead immediately upon his sacrifice. Waggoner said:

Abraham could offer up his only begotten son, because of his confidence that God had--not *would*, but *had*--already offered up His only begotten Son, and that by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ Isaac would be raised from the dead. That is, the Messiah yet to be born of Isaac’s line would raise Isaac from the dead in order that He might be born!¹¹¹⁹

Abraham understood about the sacrifice of the Son of God upon which the salvation of the nations depended. His faith was the assurance that God would do what He said He would do. He needed no oath from God.

Isaac willingly gave himself up at the age of twenty-five. He was a type of Christ who voluntarily offered Himself. Abraham was “called the friend of God” (James 2:23). Having

¹¹¹⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “The Test of Faith,” *PT* 17, 33 (August 15, 1901), p. 513.

¹¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 514.

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

gone through this unique experience of offering his son, Abraham understood what God the Father had gone through in offering His only-begotten Son. This mutual experience made them special friends.

When Isaac blessed his son Jacob he invoked the promise of the covenant by saying: “God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude [church] of people” (Genesis 28:3). Waggoner said this blessing was realized by the time God called Israel out of Egypt. There was a vast number which were “called out” [*ecclesia*, the church is the “called out ones” from the world] of Egypt. It was known as “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). Waggoner spoke of this covenant people of God as the church: “God’s purpose with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not to build up a nation, like the nations of the earth, but a congregation of worshippers, nowadays known as a church.”¹¹²⁰

The church of God’s covenant was to be a sojourning people as in a strange land. The church had no power in this evil world. It had a lasting kingdom in the earth made new filled with righteous people. Whenever the church had forgotten its promised inheritance of the future, it had sought to be like all the nations around it having a king over them. This was a vain attempt to attain power in this world. Israel wanted to be like the nations and they became just like them and lost all their spiritual power. Whenever the Christian church forgot its covenant heritage and sought worldly power, it too adopted worldly policy and became weak.¹¹²¹

Continuing on in covenant history to the prayer vigil of Jacob, before encountering his angry brother Esau at the Jabbok River, this narrative provided Waggoner with an illustration of how to plead the covenant promise of God. Hosea said of Jacob that “by his strength he had power with God. Yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed” (Hosea 12:3, 4). The

¹¹²⁰ E. J. Waggoner, “The Land and the Church,” *PT* 17, 35 (August 29, 1901), p. 548.

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*

strength of Jacob was his utter helplessness after the Angel had touched his thigh and put it out of joint. Jacob literally had to throw his arms around the neck of his assailant for support. The Lord could never tear Himself away from one who leaned completely upon Him for help.

Jacob's prayer was based on pleading the covenant with God. "Thou saidst, Lord, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude" (Genesis 32:12). Waggoner said: "He pleaded God's promise. He told God what He had said: and when one does that, and remembers that God cannot lie, he has the things that he asked for. Only one thing is necessary to enable anyone to have all good things that He needs, and that is to believe that God is true."¹¹²² Jacob became Israel--a prince, an overcomer--as a result of this experience of complete surrender to God.

Joseph's hope was in the promise God made to his ancestors. He knew about the first time prophecy which had been given to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died. . . .¹¹²³

Waggoner said:

Joseph's hope was in the promise made of God unto the Fathers. . . . He [God] was promising the inheritance through the resurrection, when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed. He [Joseph] understood the glorious hope that God was holding out to Israel, and died full of faith in it.¹¹²⁴

Joseph believed the covenant of God and was saved by the Messiah.

¹¹²² E. J. Waggoner, "Face to Face with God," *PT* 17, 36 (September 5, 1901), p. 562.

¹¹²³ Genesis 50:24-26.

¹¹²⁴ E. J. Waggoner, "Confidence in God's Promise," *PT* 17, 43 (October 24, 1901), p. 677.

The apostle Paul said: “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Hebrews 11:22).

Waggoner commented:

During all the oppression, when the children of Israel experienced that which their fathers had made Joseph undergo, they had the bones of Joseph as a constant reminder of his trust in the faithfulness of God, and how it had been justified. Never had they any excuse for forgetting the promise of God; and in the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness the bones of Joseph were a constant reproof of their unbelief and murmuring.¹¹²⁵

Joseph did not consider God slack concerning His promise and neither should we.

Waggoner said that later in covenant history God gave Israel a choice between two laws at Sinai. They could chose the letter or the Spirit. They could choose between the ministration of condemnation or the ministration of righteousness and life. If they chose to “treasure” God’s covenant in Christ who had “brought them unto Himself,” they would experience deliverance from bondage to sin. If they should choose to perform God’s promise, then they would experience a ministration of death.¹¹²⁶

When Moses returned from the mountain his face shone. It was a ministration of life. The glory of God’s righteous character was revealed in Christ crucified for them at Sinai. But they perceived it as a threat to their life and asked for Moses’ face to be veiled. In so doing, they shut out the Spirit of the living Christ from them and chose the form of righteousness over the reality. They received the stone tablets of the letter upon which were written the law of God rather than believing upon the living law of Christ in their hearts. Waggoner observed:

Christ stood on the rock, and He is the Rock, the Living Stone. The law is in His heart, and He came to magnify and make it honourable. . . . The Lord would have us know that the very mountain that burned with fire was pouring forth the word of life.

¹¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “The Law of Life. The Law of the Spirit of Life,” *PT* 17, 33 (August 15, 1901), p. 515.

The statutes and judgments were commanded in Horeb for the people, but the rock was there pouring out a stream of life for them. The fountain that it was death to touch, was sending forth rivers of life.¹¹²⁷

When Israel drank from the Rock, Mount Sinai, by faith they could have the spiritual law of life in Christ and thus experience liberty.

Notice how Ellen White commented about the glory on Moses' face some months later: "The glory that shone on the face of Moses was a reflection of the righteousness of Christ in the law. The law itself would have no glory, only that in it Christ is embodied. It has no power to save. It is lusterless only as in it Christ is represented as full of righteousness and truth."¹¹²⁸

The same lightning, thunder, and earthquake took place at Calvary. It represented the wrath of God's law against sin. Christ experienced the full torment of sin's curse on man's behalf. The parallels between Sinai and Calvary were strikingly set forth by Waggoner: "At Sinai you have the law as both life and death, and you take which you will. At Calvary you have the law slaying the sinner, but life flowing from Christ, to wash the sin away."¹¹²⁹ Thus, Sinai and Calvary can be received either as letter or Spirit, ceremonial or spiritual, formal or moral.

Waggoner reported that--

Someone said to me, "You do not in your teaching make any distinction between the law and the Gospel." Certainly not. The Gospel is the life of God's living law, which is perfect, converting the soul. . . .

If we receive the law in Christ, every one of the commandments is a promise of God, that cleanses from sin.¹¹³⁰

¹¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

¹¹²⁸ E. G. White, "The Righteousness of Christ in the Law," *RH* (April 22, 1902).

¹¹²⁹ E. J. Waggoner, "The Law of Life. The Law of the Spirit of Life," *PT* 17, 33 (August 15, 1901), p. 516.

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Calvary at Sinai best described Waggoner's understanding of the unity between the law and the gospel. In Christ there was a perfect harmony between the cross and the ten commandments

Ellen White represented the unity of law and gospel in a similar manner:

The law and the gospel are in perfect harmony. Each upholds the other. In all its majesty the law confronts the conscience, causing the sinner to feel his need of Christ as the propitiation for sin. The gospel recognizes the power and immutability of the law. "I had not known sin, but by the law," Paul declares. The sense of sin, urged home by the law, drives the sinner to the Saviour. In his need man may present the mighty arguments furnished by the cross of Calvary.¹¹³¹

The law of God described His righteousness. It was especially adapted for the human situation. The gospel was the remedy for sinners. Jesus Christ the righteous One reconciled the sinner to God's righteousness. His death to our sin which He took upon Himself upheld the law of God. Thus the gospel is in complete harmony with the law of God.

The inheritance of God's covenant promise was received by faith in Christ's righteousness alone. Waggoner illustrated this idea with the capture of Jericho.¹¹³² "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. . . ." (Hebrews 11:30).

Faith received God's word and as a consequence was blessed with righteousness. "The land which they were to inherit, in fulfillment of the promise of God, was one that could be inherited only by faith--by a people full of faith, and living and moving only by faith."¹¹³³ If they were a righteous people by faith in their Surety in the land of Canaan, they would remain free. But if they forsook their Saviour through unbelief, even though they might dwell in the land, it

¹¹³¹ E. G. White, "The Righteousness of Christ in the Law," *RH* (April 22, 1902).

¹¹³² E. J. Waggoner, "The Real Land of Promise," *RH* 79 (November 25, 1902), p. 8.

¹¹³³ *Ibid.*

would be as if they were in Egypt. “The Israelites crossed the Jordan, and captured Jericho, by faith--the faith of Jesus--the faith that means the receiving of God the Divine Word.”¹¹³⁴

Waggoner applied the lesson to the Christian’s battle--

against sin in our flesh.

. . . Jesus Christ is one with us, in our flesh, a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for our sins, and to succour us when we are tried by mighty foes; and He delivers us. . . .

. . . To know the nature and character of God, and to believe that *He is*. . . is the one thing essential to perfect victory over every enemy. . . .¹¹³⁵

God’s victory over Jericho was a type of the present day victories to be manifested for the believer.

In Christ the Christian obtained the pledge of the Holy Spirit as a down payment of the inheritance. The Spirit brought hope and confidence of Christ’s coming and the “restoration of all things.” Then the curse brought on by sin would be removed from the earth and the blessing promised to Abraham would be a reality. The blessing was a righteous people who have the forgiveness of sins from Christ and have turned from sin. Such people of faith inherited the “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

Waggoner’s message of the everlasting covenant in these studies during the early 1900’s were set within the framework of Old Testament history. He said:

Why is it that most people seem to think that the Old Testament narratives, such as that of Joseph and his brethren, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan, and others, are merely stories for children? The reason is that these things are looked upon as mythical, or at best, even if historically true, as events too far in the past to be of any practical importance at the present time. They forget that God does not tell stories to amuse His children, and that “whatsoever things were written

¹¹³⁴ E. J. Waggoner, “The Real Land of Promise,” *PT* 18, 41 (October 9, 1902), p. 644.

¹¹³⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “The Taking of a City. How to Win Victories,” *PT* 18, 41 (October 9, 1902), p. 642. Emphasis his.

aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

. . . If we truly believe God, our journey to the promised land will be just as full of marvelous deliverances as was that of God’s people. . . . The deliverances which God will work for His people in these days will be so much greater than that of the children of Israel from Egypt, that that event will be lost sight of.¹¹³⁶

God’s story of His covenant faithfulness was history.

Waggoner posed the gospel of the everlasting covenant in history. It was as if he were saying, Look at the past and see God’s dealings with His people. Faith was the evidence of things not seen, but faith had the evidence of the past for its verification. However, all the evidence of the past meant nothing without the presence of faith in Christ which meant fact. The three angel’s message in the setting of Old Testament narratives was to be taught to earth’s last generation. Even children could understand these stories.

The superiority of Waggoner’s covenant theology over William Brickey’s covenant theology need hardly be mentioned. Waggoner uplifted the cross of Christ throughout his Old Testament expositions. The unity of the plan of salvation in both testaments was preserved.

Waggoner’s covenant theology was very practical. A disheartened soul identified as a “Christian worker” wrote asking: “Will you tell me *how to overcome?*”¹¹³⁷ This Sunday school teacher had fallen prey to a “black sin.” This Christian said: “I go on my knees and implore God’s forgiveness; I realise (*sic.*) that He has forgiven me, and I promise Him that I will never do it again; but alas, after a few days the temptation comes again, and again I yield.”¹¹³⁸

Waggoner advised that was the secret of failure.

¹¹³⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “A Marvelous Deliverance,” *PT* 17, 50 (December 12, 1901), p. 786.

¹¹³⁷ E. J. Waggoner, “The Editor’s Private Corner. A Cry for Help,” *PT* 18, 24 (June 19, 1902), p. 387. Emphasis his.

¹¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Instead of promising the Lord that you will not yield again, you must take His promise that you shall not. Your mistake has been in trusting your own promise instead of the Lord's promise. . . . That very promise implies the supposition of strength on our part, whereas power belongs only to God. . . .¹¹³⁹

A promise which relied on human strength was worthless. God's promises were to be received by faith in His power to perform. One might exercise the God-given freedom of choice to resist temptation only in the strength of the Lord.

Waggoner viewed the promise to Abraham as inclusive of the Gentiles. After all, Abraham himself was a heathen Gentile when God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees. "Thus we see that the gathering of the Gentiles in fulfilment of the promise is no new departure, but the consistent carrying out of God's original purpose."¹¹⁴⁰ Rahab, Ruth, the Syro-Phoenician woman, and many other prophecies (for example, Acts 15:14-18) demonstrated God's promises of grace were for all regardless of race.

The everlasting covenant promised cleansing from all sin. This was a message for the last days that would cause God's people to stand when the world passed away. Waggoner explained:

We need to be on our guard against the idea that the blotting out of sin is merely as the passing of a sponge over a slate, or an entry in a ledger, to balance the account. This is not the blotting out of sin.

The blotting out of sin is the erasing of sin from the nature, the being of man. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. . . .

It is for ever gone from them,--it is foreign to their new natures, and even though they may be able to recall the fact that they have committed certain sins, they have forgotten the sin itself--they do not think of doing it any more. This is the work of Christ in the true sanctuary. . . .¹¹⁴¹

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 387, 388.

¹¹⁴⁰ E. J. Waggoner, "The Coming in of the Gentiles," *PT* 18, 31 (July 31, 1902), p. 484.

¹¹⁴¹ E. J. Waggoner, "The Editor's Private Corner. The Blotting Out of Sin," *PT* 18, 36 (September 4, 1902), p. 564.

Christ's work in the sanctuary involved blotting out sin in the thoughts or minds of new covenant believers. This was His divine nature united with fallen humanity--a new nature. The power was in the blood to "cleanse from all sin." The translation hope of seeing Christ come burned within the heart of Waggoner.

Waggoner believed that children could understand the covenants. He wrote a corner in *The Present Truth* just for them. He explained God's promise to Abraham as an inheritance of the earth for an everlasting home. All who believe in Jesus are children of their father Abraham.¹¹⁴²

Waggoner detailed Sarah and Abraham's failure of faith in God's promise of a son. God never intended that he should have more than one wife. Hagar always remained Sarah's maid and therefore could not give birth to a free child of the promise.¹¹⁴³

When God fulfilled His promise by giving Isaac, Abraham learned God was faithful to His Word. Abraham was tested further. He was required to offer his son a sacrifice. ". . . Abraham learned more of the wonderful love of God in giving up His only begotten Son to die for us."¹¹⁴⁴ Isaac, too, delighted in the will of God and freely offered himself to God as a sacrifice. The fact that Abraham and Isaac believed in Christ as their Saviour was evident in that they sacrificed a ram which the Lord provided.

Of the two sons born to Isaac, Jacob cherished the birthright heritage of his brother Esau. What attracted Jacob most about the birthright was not family rulership or material wealth, but the promised Saviour who would come through the heir's line. "But Jacob did not know God

¹¹⁴² E. J. Waggoner, "For Little Ones. The Call of Abraham," *PT* 18, 33 (August 14, 1902), p. 522.

¹¹⁴³ E. J. Waggoner, "The Children. Hagar and Ishmael," *PT* 18, 34 (August 21, 1902), p. 538.

¹¹⁴⁴ E. J. Waggoner, "For Little Ones. The Offering of Isaac," *PT* 18, 37 (September 11, 1902), p. 586.

enough to trust Him to bring His own word to pass. He made the same mistake that his grandfather once made, and tried to get the birthright for himself, instead of waiting for God to give it to him.”¹¹⁴⁵ Esau despised his birthright by selling it to Jacob. Esau was a type of those who loved the world and lost their birthright riches.

Rebecca did not trust God to fulfill His promise to Jacob. “Rebecca thought that she was doing a good deed, and saving her husband from going against the will of God, when she deceived him as she did.”¹¹⁴⁶ Jacob the supplanter operated on the principle of tricking others for personal gain. Nevertheless, God had promised Jacob a blessing over his brother Esau. Esau sold his birthright and God took it from him. Yet Jacob had many more lessons to learn in trusting God before his character could be changed.

E. J. Waggoner was a delightful story teller. He did it in such a way that history came alive with the gospel story. The message of the two covenants came through the vehicle of sacred history. The story of the covenants from the Old Testament was present truth--the third angel’s message.

¹¹⁴⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “For Little Ones. Jacob and Esau: The Birthright,” *PT* 18, 39 (September 25, 1902), p. 618.

¹¹⁴⁶ E. J. Waggoner, “The Children. Jacob and Esau: The Blessing,” *PT* 18, 40 (October 2, 1902), p. 634.

Chapter 31

WAGGONER'S FINAL YEARS IN GREAT BRITAIN

A. G. Daniells had a plan to counteract the opposition to the 1888 message. He wrote to W. C. White:

. . . There is more or less influence being exercised in the central and western States against the light that came to us at Minneapolis. I believe we are doing our people a positive injury by keeping this light away from them. They are not reading on this subject, and ministers in whom they suppose they should have confidence are giving them error and darkness for truth and light. There is no question about this. Some of them are strongly arrayed on the side of those who opposed the light at Minneapolis. It is a fact that some of our younger ministers are not free to preach righteousness by faith as fully as they desire to. They have told me this. I am deeply convinced that something ought to be done to place a flood of light in the homes of our people. I know of no better book to do this, outside of the Bible, than Brother Waggoner's book.¹¹⁴⁷

He wanted to sell Waggoner's book *The Everlasting Covenant* and remove the indebtedness of the General Conference by its proceeds.

A similar plan had been used to promote Ellen White's book *Christ's Object Lessons*. If they could sell 50,000 copies of *The Everlasting Covenant* they could pay off some of the worker's wages which were in arrears. Daniells wrote enthusiastically:

A great blessing would come to our people from reading the book. . . . It's name, "The Everlasting Covenant," suggests its scope. It leads us to the very heart of the great gospel of Christ. It opens up God's plan of saving the world by grace, through faith in Christ. It strikes that great key-note of the Reformation; namely, justification by faith. It shows the weakness and folly of the covenant of works. The book really deals with the great question that so agitated our people at Minneapolis, and so far as I know, is the only Masterpiece that has been written on this subject since the Minneapolis meeting. Much has been written on this subject for our papers by Sister White, Brother Waggoner, Brother Jones and Brother Wilcox, but "The Everlasting Covenant" is the only large work dealing with this great theme that has been produced. . . . This morning Brother Olsen told me that next to the Bible, and your mother's works, this book had done him more good than any other he has ever read.¹¹⁴⁸

¹¹⁴⁷ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, May 12, 1902, London, England.

¹¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

The former General Conference President, O. A. Olsen, endorsed *The Everlasting Covenant*. Daniells had spoken to E. J. Waggoner about the promotion of his book and he was “delighted” and had a “great burden to have this light go to the world.”

W. C. White was a little hesitant about the “circulation of a book with the express purpose of relieving the indebtedness of the General Conference. . . .”¹¹⁴⁹ W. W. Prescott had discussed the book promotion idea widely in Battle Creek. Daniells wrote to him saying:

Am glad to learn that none of the brethren seem opposed to . . . book and that, if its sale can be managed without interfering with the sale of “Object Lessons” or the “Living Temple,” they will be pleased to see it circulated. . . . I would like to see all our own people supplied with the work.¹¹⁵⁰

Daniells plan never materialized despite his enthusiasm for the book.

As early as May, 1902, A. G. Daniells had spoken to E. J. Waggoner about the possibility of teaching Bible at Emmanuel Missionary College in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Daniells was very concerned about the quality of Bible teaching in Adventist educational institutions of North America. The world field needed to hear the message from trained messengers.

Daniells wrote to W. W. Prescott and E. A. Sutherland: “I know of no man in the denomination who is better prepared to give the Bible its place, and so conduct a model Bible training school than Dr. Waggoner.”¹¹⁵¹ Daniells wrote to A. T. Jones: “You have some idea of Dr. Waggoner’s knowledge of the Scriptures and his advanced views of the Gospel and how to teach and present it.”¹¹⁵²

¹¹⁴⁹ Letter W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, May 28, 1902, Sanitarium, California.

¹¹⁵⁰ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, June 17, 1902, Stockholm, Sweden.

¹¹⁵¹ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott and E. A. Sutherland, May 15, 1902, London, England.

¹¹⁵² Letter A. G. Daniells to A. T. Jones, May 15, 1902, London, England.

By the end of May, Daniells was meeting with resistance to his idea of sending Waggoner to Emmanuel Missionary College. The Advisory Counsel in England waffled on the issue and Brethren Champness and Salisbury were against it because they wanted to retain him in the field.

Daniells was absolutely certain, however, that the college needed Waggoner. “I know as well as I know anything that the Gospel itself is the only remedy under heaven for the dreadful situation in which we find our ministry and our schools in America. . . . I know of no one who can help us so much as Dr. Waggoner can.”¹¹⁵³

W. C. White wrote of his support for the idea:

. . . I felt to say a hearty “Amen” to the proposition that Elder Waggoner should be employed as Bible teacher for Emmanuel Missionary College. . . .

After reading your letters to mother, she expressed herself as heartily in favor of the employment of Dr. Waggoner as Bible teacher for Emmanuel Missionary College. She says it has been shown to her that whereas some of our people were well pleased to have him removed from the work at Battle Creek by his appointment to work in England, that he would be brought back again to assist as a teacher at the heart of our work.¹¹⁵⁴

By June 17, O. A. Olsen “thought the doctor had decided to go. . . .”¹¹⁵⁵

In the meantime, Waggoner had written a letter to W. W. Prescott “stating his convictions regarding the work that ought to be done by a Bible teacher at the Emmanuel Missionary College. . . and the conditions upon which he would consent to come. . . .”¹¹⁵⁶ Evidently Waggoner was under the impression that Daniells wanted him to come in for a short stay in order to train the staff and then return to London.

¹¹⁵³ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, May 29, 1902, London, England.

¹¹⁵⁴ Letter W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, May 30, 1902, Sanitarium, California.

¹¹⁵⁵ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, June 17, 1902, Stockholm, Sweden.

¹¹⁵⁶ Letter W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, July 3, 1902, Sanitarium, California.

W. C. White expressed the concerns that his mother had about Waggoner staying for only short term at Emmanuel Missionary College.

Her mind was led out to speak to me at some length regarding the principles underlying such propositions, and the evils which will come into our work, if men having strong and clear convictions regarding reforms that should be made, shall ask all their brethren to sit down as pupils, while they show them how the work ought to be done. Mother expressed the conviction that if Dr. Waggoner comes to take a leading part in the Bible instruction at Berrien Springs, that he ought to come for steady, earnest work for a couple of years.

Mother pointed out to me the evils which have come to our work from removing men from responsibility, whose work has been supposed to be faulty, and placing other men in charge who would for a limited period make a great showing as to how things ought to be done, and then go away, leaving everybody in discouragement. She says our work is not most benefited by this meteoric display of light.¹¹⁵⁷

Indeed, Ellen White had cautioned Waggoner with regard to some of these areas of concern.

She expressed herself to him:

I think that the terms upon which you consent to accept the invitation settle the matter. It is evident to me that these propositions are not prompted by the Holy Spirit.

. . . If you can come trusting yourself in the hands of God, willing to do the work He calls you to do, without insisting on the carrying out of such propositions as were made in your letter, then come. But if you cannot come unless these propositions are accepted, I could not advise you to come.¹¹⁵⁸

Waggoner did not go to Berrien Springs in 1902.

By August, 1902, he had been elected president of the Southern England Conference. It was just as well that he did not go to Emmanuel Missionary College for the time being. Feelings were stirred up about his coming because of Waggoner's letter to Prescott. Daniells wrote: ". . . Brethren Magan and Sutherland made it very plain that they understood that the doctor wanted to

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁸ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, June 30, 1902, Sanitarium, California. *Manuscript Releases Volume Twenty-one* (Silver Spring, Maryland: E. G. White Estate, 1993), pp. 72, 73.

take charge of the school, and that he did not have confidence that either one of the brethren was working on right lines.”¹¹⁵⁹ They had even cabled England saying Waggoner was unacceptable.

Daniells felt they had “missed the opportunity of a lifetime.”¹¹⁶⁰ Now Union College was willing to pay E. J. Waggoner and his family’s expenses to come and teach at their Bible school. They believed in his plans.

However, there was no possible way of getting Waggoner to return to America for the coming year. He had settled into his work in England. He worked with Homer Salisbury. Salisbury had established a Bible school in north London at Duncombe Hall. Waggoner had pastored the church at Cuncombe Hall for many years. There were seventy-five students enrolled at the school. They were training as missionaries to be sent out to the “dark places of the earth.”

Waggoner had received Ellen White’s June 30th letter of counsel. He expressed that he never intended to take “control of the Berrien Springs school from those who have it in charge; for it was never in my mind that if I went over there I should stay there more than six months, or a year at most.”¹¹⁶¹ He went on to express appreciation for her cautions. He wanted to remain humble.

It is my earnest desire that my own natural pride and self assertion and self-confidence shall not hinder the Lord from doing all through me what He wishes to. I am constantly confronted with my own pride, which tends to arrogate to self that which belongs to God alone; and my only hope is that He has the power to work humility in me.

...¹¹⁶²

Pride was common to all mortals. To recognize its presence was a work of the Holy Spirit.

Waggoner accepted the reproofs and counsels directed his way.

¹¹⁵⁹ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, August 22, 1902.

¹¹⁶⁰ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, August 24, 1902.

¹¹⁶¹ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, October 5, 1902, London, England.

¹¹⁶² Ibid.

Having failed at bringing Waggoner to teach at Emmanuel Missionary College, Daniells came up with another plan. He felt keenly about the “superficial” and “defective” training our young people were receiving in preparation for missionary service. There was confusion among the “schoolmen” over how to go about it. “One of the greatest perplexities that confronts us is the lack of union, or the difference of opinion among those in charge of our schools.”¹¹⁶³ He had confidence in the program which Waggoner and Champness were developing in Great Britain. Daniells would send the best young people there for their final two or three years of training and then they could go to the mission fields.

Finally in September, 1903, the Waggoners departed from London for the United States. It was a very stormy trip across the Atlantic. By October 20, 1903, Waggoner was teaching Bible at Berrien Springs, Michigan. He said: “I feel that I am here on probation, and I have put myself in the hands of the Lord. . . .”¹¹⁶⁴ He taught Bible in the fall and winter of 1903-04. He said: “I know that I could show how to use the Bible in the study of history, language, natural science, physiology, chemistry, astronomy, etc. . . . No teacher is fit to teach anything for which he is dependent on a so-called textbook.”¹¹⁶⁵ The school board was not happy about some of his reforms, but his teaching proved popular among the students.

The last few years in London had been demanding. There had been little opportunity for continuing education. The cost of living was unbearable. Now in Michigan Waggoner had more opportunity to study and pursue training along medical lines. His daughters found work and

¹¹⁶³ A. G. Daniells to E. J. Waggoner, January 6, 1903, Graysville, Tennessee.

¹¹⁶⁴ Letter E. J. Waggoner to E. G. White, November 3, 1903, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

¹¹⁶⁵ Emmett K. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), p. 114.

were happy in their new life in Michigan.¹¹⁶⁶ They took some classes at the college. The family was assigned a house to live in that was filled with holes. The snow came in everytime there was foul weather. Clothes had to be packed around the doors to keep the wind out.

Over the course of time Waggoner was nurturing spiritualistic teachings. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg's was to write his pantheistic philosophy in the book *The Living Temple*. Ellen White specified what Waggoner believed. She warned him:

Had God desired to be represented as dwelling personally in the things of nature--in the flower, the tree, the spear of grass--would not Christ have spoken of this to His disciples? To take the works of God and represent them to be God, is a fearful misrepresentation. . . . The theory that He is an essence, pervading everything, is one of Satan's most subtle devices. . . .¹¹⁶⁷

She saw how Satan was seeking to "ensnare" "those who have had the most light."

Indeed, Waggoner had been incorporating detectable panentheism into his writings since 1900. In *The Everlasting Covenant* he wrote:

Nothing is done merely to represent something else. . . . So in the Lord's Supper we partake of the body of Christ, and not of a mere representation of His body.

. . . It is utterly useless to spend time arguing. . . that the priest has not the power to change the bread into the body of Christ; for the Scripture tells us that it is that already.¹¹⁶⁸

Waggoner was not a pantheist. Pantheism believed god had no personality. Rather god was everything and everything was god.

Waggoner was a panentheist. Ellen White said this theory reduced God to an "essence." Waggoner believed everything was in God. God was immanently present in all things and yet

¹¹⁶⁶ Letter E. J. Waggoner to A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott, September 5, 1904, Battle Creek, Michigan.

¹¹⁶⁷ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, October 2, 1903, Sanitarium, California. Quoted in E. G. White, "The Danger of False Views About God," Manuscript Releases Volume Twenty-one (Silver Spring, Maryland: E. G. White Estate, 1993), p. 172.

¹¹⁶⁸ E. G. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant* (London: International Tract Society, Ltd., 1900), pp. 254, 255.

He was transcendent. This would tend to incorporate Satan and evil into God. Hence Ellen White labeled it spiritualism.

Evidently Waggoner was using panentheistic beliefs to fantasize a heavenly “free-loveism.” Ellen White continued her counsel to Waggoner warning him of Satan’s spiritualistic suggestions. “He shows them charming pictures of women whom they have found congenial, suggesting that in the future life they will be united to the one who is so congenial and whom they will ever love throughout the ages of eternity.”¹¹⁶⁹ She appealed for him to repent. These beliefs were separating him from fellow-laborers.¹¹⁷⁰

Three days later, October 5, 1903, Ellen White wrote Waggoner about these same concerns.

My brother Waggoner, remember that the woman who receives the least manifestation of affection from a man who is the husband of another woman, shows herself to be in need of repentance and conversion. And the man who allows his wife to occupy the second place in his affections is dishonoring himself and his God.¹¹⁷¹

Here, again, she mentioned that he was romanticizing about raising a family in heaven with another woman other than his wife. The Lord had presented this to Ellen White “some time ago.”

Waggoner had become involved with his secretary, Edith Adams, with whom he had worked in the London office. She soon came to Michigan after Waggoner’s arrival. Jessie Waggoner had also become embroiled in an affair with a younger man, Eddie Spicer, who had worked in the same London office. He followed the Waggoners to Michigan even taking

¹¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 173.

¹¹⁷⁰ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, November 30, 1903, Sanitarium, California.

¹¹⁷¹ Letter E. G. White to E. J. Waggoner, October 5, 1903, St. Helena, California. Quoted in E. G. White, “Marriage and the Christian Home,” Manuscript Releases Volume Ten (Silver Spring, Maryland: E. G. White Estate, 1993), p. 185.

passage on the same ship. Spicer was successful in stealing the affections of Jessie away from Ellet. Spicer had been suggesting to Jessie that Waggoner and Adams were having an affair.

After returning to the United States Jessie initiated a divorce. However, Ellet took the blame for the divorce publicly. Jessie ended up with Eddie briefly. They lived in Kankakee, Illinois and then Toledo, Ohio. Finally, Eddie abruptly left Jessie for another woman. Jessie was left completely embarrassed and scorned.¹¹⁷² She died in 1944.

E. J. Waggoner discontinued denominational employment in 1904. He was dropped from church membership in 1905. He wrote articles on a regular basis for *The Medical Missionary* from 1904-5. He married Edith Adams in April, 1907.¹¹⁷³ They spent some time in Europe and Denmark and then returned to Battle Creek.

While Waggoner's daughter contended that his relationship with Edith Adams was platonic, J. S. Washburn had a different perspective. He wrote G. B. Starr:

[Waggoner] believed that he was led by the Spirit. . . . God had revealed to him that the woman he had married was not his true wife so it would be sin (adultery) for him to live with Jessie Mosier as his wife. . . . She was not his God given companion. . . . Edith Adams was his God formed, God intended eternal companion. . . . There was a dangerous counterfeit. He knew God had forgiven him and he was following the guidance of the Spirit when he was putting away his real wife and the mother of his children and loving another woman. . . . [Ellen White] said "Dr. Waggoner has gone as far as he can go" and more.¹¹⁷⁴

Undoubtedly, E. J. Waggoner was as much responsible for the breakup of his marriage as was Jessie Waggoner. It was a tragic conclusion to a life and career which had been dedicated to uplifting the Saviour of the world. Now he was bereft of the true Spirit which had led him so remarkably in the past.

¹¹⁷² Letter Pearl Waggoner to L. E. Froom, September 20, 1921, Winterhaven, California.

¹¹⁷³ Letter Pearl Waggoner to L. E. Froom, October 15, 1961, Winterhaven, California.

¹¹⁷⁴ Letter J. S. Washburn to G. B. Starr, January 1, 1942.

By 1910 he was working at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. He loved to teach about righteousness by faith in the Sabbath School class. Waggoner worked in the laboratory at the sanitarium. He supported the health reform work. He never gave up his faith in Jesus or the Sabbath. He never became critical or opposed the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Waggoner said, “. . . I have never undertaken, and never shall undertake *any* propaganda against the denomination. . . . [I] freely acknowledge, the superior goodness of the brethren in the denomination.”¹¹⁷⁵

Waggoner did deny the cleansing of the sanctuary, the significance of the 2300 day/years ending in 1844, and the investigative judgment.¹¹⁷⁶ Consequently, he called into question the Spirit of Prophecy.¹¹⁷⁷

E. J. Waggoner died on May 28, 1916, at Battle Creek, Michigan. He was sixty-one years old. He had preached in the Sanitarium that day. He died of heart disease late in the evening with his family at his bedside.¹¹⁷⁸ His funeral was held at the Battle Creek Tabernacle on May 31, 1916. It was conducted by Elders A. T. Jones and G. C. Tenney.¹¹⁷⁹

Jones remarked:

Only those who knew Dr. Waggoner intimately were prepared to properly estimate his real worth. He was so unassuming, so gentle as not to attract attention to himself. His knowledge of the Scriptures was broad and profound, and he carefully put all that knowledge to practical use in his own life. As a preacher and expositor of the Bible he was excelled by very few. As a comrade and a brother he was most obliging and kindly--this I personally know from the relationship of a friend and brother of thirty-two years. Never a word of criticism or unkindness concerning others escaped his lips or were permitted to dwell in his heart.¹¹⁸⁰

¹¹⁷⁵ E. J. Waggoner, *The “Confession of Faith”* (1916), pp. 31, 32. Emphasis his.

¹¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 14-20.

¹¹⁷⁷ Letter E. J. Waggoner to A. G. Daniells, c. November, 1909.

¹¹⁷⁸ Letter Pearl Waggoner to L. E. Froom, December 1, 1961, Winterhaven, California.

¹¹⁷⁹ “Funeral Services,” *The Gathering Call* 4, 5 (November, 1916), p. 5.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

So ended the life of one of God's messengers.

Ellen White had warned: "Should the Lord's messengers, after standing manfully for the truth for a time, fall under temptation, and dishonor Him who has given them their work, will that be proof that the message is not true? No, because the Bible is true."¹¹⁸¹ Obviously, E. J. Waggoner had been moving away from the truth with his panentheistic beliefs before the turn of the century.

¹¹⁸¹ Letter E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, September 1, 1892, North Fitzroy, Australia. *EGW 1888*, p. 1025.

Chapter 32

THE PRESCOTT YEARS AT THE *REVIEW*

W. W. Prescott was editor-in-chief of the *Review* from June 1901-1909. His editorials appeared on the front page. The controversial issue of the “added” law “till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made” (Galatians 3:19) was discussed. Waggoner’s view that the coming referred to was the second advent had become acceptable. Prescott said: “Therefore the promise of the land will not be fulfilled before, or apart from, the second coming of Christ, and the promise of the land was also a promise of the coming of Christ, the coming of the Seed.”¹¹⁸² All the familiar themes developed by Waggoner regarding the faith of Abraham associated with justification, the resurrection and the inheritance were embraced by Prescott. “The Lord promised: Abraham believed the promise.”¹¹⁸³

Waggoner’s covenant theology was reflected in the *Topical Bible Studies*.¹¹⁸⁴ The author called Sinai a “*conditional* covenant” where the nation of Israel promised to keep the law. “So this covenant, by the introduction of their promise, became no stronger than their promise, and of course it was faulty. Heb. 8:7.”¹¹⁸⁵ The new covenant was God’s unconditional promise made to individuals composing “spiritual Israel.” The old covenant had a changeable human priesthood; whereas, the new covenant had an unchangeable Mediator.

¹¹⁸² W. W. Prescott, “The Coming of the Seed. The Promise of the Land,” *RH* 80, 51 (December 24, 1903), p. 4.

¹¹⁸³ W. W. Prescott, “The Coming of the Seed. Righteousness by Faith,” *RH* 80, 52 (December 31, 1903), p. 3.

¹¹⁸⁴ “God’s Covenants,” *Topical Bible Studies*. Bible Students’ Library. (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Company, July, 1904), pp. 12-14.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

This Bible study recognized the “new existed from the beginning, and has been in force between God and every child of faith, and it is an everlasting covenant. . . . Just as Christ was slain from the foundation of the world. . . so the covenant was confirmed in effect from the foundation of the world.”¹¹⁸⁶

The *Signs* and the Pacific Press had seemed to be more open to the gospel message of Waggoner and Jones. Its publications were supportive of the 1888 message of the law and the covenants. The Press had published Waggoner’s books such as *Prophetic Lights*, *The Glad Tidings*, and a number of his pamphlets dealing with the law and the gospel. Waggoner had been a co-editor of the *Signs*.

There was an article in the *Signs* which dealt with Exodus 19:5-8. In it the author said:

The promise was the promise of the people. They promised of themselves, after the power and wisdom of the flesh, to be all that God wished them to be. . . . At Sinai, Israel, after the flesh, simply said, Let the Lord do His part, and *we will do ours*. . . . What was the result of the people’s promises?--Bondage, a deeper bondage in sin than ever. In themselves they had no power to do God’s will. . . . And every effort to save himself, or to help God out by human device, is of the Sinaitic covenant, and genders to bondage.¹¹⁸⁷

In contrast to the old covenant based on the promise of the people, the new covenant was God’s promise. God’s covenant provided a spiritual rebirth.

W. N. Glenn who had been with the Pacific Press since 1876, was assistant editor of the *Signs* from 1900-1906. He was chairman of the editorial committee for The Bible Students’ Library and Apples of Gold Library. These were pocket-sized topical essays on various themes.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

¹¹⁸⁷ Anonymous, “The Two Covenants,” *ST* 31, 9 (March 1, 1905), p. 132. First published in *ST* 28 (April 14, 1902). Emphasis his.

¹¹⁸⁸ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, p. 468.

Glenn understood “My covenant” in Exodus 19:5 as the ten commandments.¹¹⁸⁹ In so doing Glenn turned God’s gracious gift to Abraham of forgiveness of sins and divine aid in overcoming sin into a covenant of works. Essentially Glenn was saying that God told them to obey His commandments or else they would not receive any of the blessings He had promised to them. With this premise of obey and live, everything else Glenn would say, that might have elements of truth in it, would be erroneous.

In contrast E. J. Waggoner understood “My covenant” as the everlasting covenant of grace which God gave to Abraham. This was a covenant of faith in Christ and His righteousness alone for the sinner.

Glenn understood the old covenant to be the promise of the people to obey God’s ten commandments which he recognized to be faulty. They soon broke their promise.

After Moses pled Israel’s case with God, Glenn said, “The covenant between God and Israel was then virtually renewed, and, faulty as it was, it was recognized and faithfully adhered to on the Lord’s part until it was taken out of the way at the cross.”¹¹⁹⁰ Was Glenn saying that God would renew the old covenant with Israel? This could hardly be the case. God would never offer a faulty covenant to the people in the first place. How could the Lord continue to adhere to a covenant which they would break on a daily basis?

Furthermore, for Glenn to say that the covenant needed to be renewed was a virtual admission that there was something wrong with what God offered to Israel in the first place. God’s covenant with Abraham, however, was perfectly suited for the needs of sinners. Glenn completely failed to understand that God’s covenant needed no renewal. The sinful Israelites

¹¹⁸⁹ W. N. Glenn, *The Two Covenants*. Apples of Gold Library. (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing Company, January, 1904), pp.. 3, 4.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

needed the renewal. All the way through his essay Glenn made confusing statements that did not have any of the luster and beauty that was found in the writings of Jones and Waggoner.

At one point Glenn said: “The covenant is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is the glad tidings pointing sinners to the glorious possibilities of the new covenant relation to God.”¹¹⁹¹ The new covenant, if anything, was the essence of the plan of salvation and the Gospel of glad tidings to the world.

Thankfully, Glenn was no dispensationalist. He made statements which indicated that he understood that Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, and David were saved by faith in Jesus Christ. He said:

Just as Christ was *slain* from the foundation of the world. . . , so the covenant was *confirmed* from the foundation of the world. The actual death did not take place, but the blood of Christ availed for the salvation of souls from the very moment the plan of salvation became a necessity, just as though the blood had been verily shed.¹¹⁹²

In maintaining this point Glenn was to be commended. For the most part, Glenn’s writing was a mixture of truth and error. As such he was a faulty guide.

The *Signs* confirmed that by 1905 the established view of the “added” law in Galatians 3:19 was the ten commandments. “It seems very evident. . . that the added law of Gal. 3:19 is the Decalogue.”¹¹⁹³ The writer articulated the gospel order of the law being spoken in order that sinful man might see the necessity of the plan of salvation. The writer asked the question:

For how long is it thus given to man?--“Till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.” That Seed is Christ. That promise is the inheritance of the whole world. Rom. 4:13. He came once to prepare the way. But His kingdom is yet in the hands of usurpers, and will so continue till He shall come whose right it is; then God shall give it Him. Eze. 21:27.¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

¹¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 12. Emphasis his.

¹¹⁹³ Anonymous, “The Added Law. Gal. 3:19,” *ST* 31, 8 (February, 1905), p. 117.

¹¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

This all coincided with Waggoner's understanding of the promise being fulfilled to the "Seed."

During the period of 1903-05 the evidence indicated that there still was no unanimity on the question of the covenants within Seventh-day Adventist writings. W. W. Prescott did not promote extensively the issues of the law and the covenants through the columns of the *Review*. And even at the Pacific Press the material being published, such as W. N. Glenn's pamphlet, had no clarity on the matter. The glorious portrayal of the gospel in the everlasting covenant was fading from the consciousness of the church. It would reach an all-time low by the end of the decade.

Chapter 33

“OBEY AND LIVE”

The Sabbath School lessons for the third quarter of 1907 were on the everlasting covenant.¹¹⁹⁵ The theme of the lessons was established at the outset by the first study of July 6. God created Adam with freedom of choice. The lessons taught--“That the compact, or covenant, under which Adam began his existence was that God promised life only on condition of Adam’s obedience.”¹¹⁹⁶ Not only was Adam “under” a covenant of obedience but so were the angels. “Hence the angels must have lived under the same covenant as man, namely, ‘Obey and Live.’”¹¹⁹⁷

It was clear that the covenant to which the lesson authors made reference was the ten commandments. In the lesson on July 20, the title was “God’s Covenant Broken.”¹¹⁹⁸ The question was asked: “When Adam and Eve broke God’s covenant, did they violate the Ten Commandments?”¹¹⁹⁹ Yes, the answer was contained in the question. Thus the theme of the lessons was established: “Hence the covenant is ‘obey and live.’”¹²⁰⁰ Again, it was stated: “We have found the condition of the covenant between God and His creatures to be ‘Obey and live,’ and that God has given all, both angels and men, the absolute power of choice.”¹²⁰¹ So God’s plan of salvation in the everlasting covenant was “obey and live.”

¹¹⁹⁵ “Sabbath-School Lessons on God’s Everlasting Covenant,” (1907).

¹¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

This reflected Uriah Smith's Adamic covenant theology. He wrote: "We go back to Adam in his innocence in Eden. He was placed, was he not, under a covenant of works? There was just one simple condition--obey and live. A law was given by which to direct his conduct; and he had power in his uprightness to comply fully with the demands of that law."¹²⁰²

Furthermore, God's covenant could be broken and necessitated its renewal. ". . . God has one eternal, universal covenant, the center of which is His law, and also one universal plan for renewing this covenant when it is broken, in Christ Jesus, and that is the Gospel of Christ. . . ."¹²⁰³ Christ must ". . . renew the broken covenant in Himself and with the people in Him."¹²⁰⁴ Thus God's everlasting covenant could be broken.

These lessons elicited a response from A. T. Jones in the Battle Creek Sanitarium on July 20, 1907.¹²⁰⁵ Jones pointed to what the lessons had stated--"That the compact, or covenant, under which Adam began his existence was that God promised life only on condition of Adam's obedience."¹²⁰⁶ Jones said that Adam would have had to make such a covenant with God before his life began on earth since his life depended upon obedience. Adam would have had to agree before God to be obedient in order to enter life. And since the angels were "under" the same

¹²⁰² U. Smith, "Our Righteousness Again," *RH* 66, 27 (July 2, 1889), p. 424. Cf. "Before the fall, man might have been justified by works only, without faith. . . . As long as Adam had obeyed this command [Gen. 2:16-17], he would have lived. . . . Hence he could live, or continue to be justified, by keeping the commands of God,--by his works." D. M. Canright, "Faith and Works," *RH* 27, 21 (April 24, 1866), p. 161. This reflected the Reformed understanding of the Adamic covenant of works. "The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." "The Westminster Confession" (1646) in John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 202.

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹²⁰⁵ A. T. Jones, "God's Everlasting Covenant." Originally published as A. T. Jones, "The Everlasting Covenant Is not 'Obey and Live,'" *The Medical Missionary* 16 (September 11-25, 1907). Hereinafter *MM*.

¹²⁰⁶ "Sabbath-School Lessons on God's Everlasting Covenant," (1907), p. 3.

covenant as Adam, the same conditions would have to prevail for them, too, before entering their life. And so life for Adam and the angels was all arranged on the basis of a “compact” or bargain with God.

Lesson 1 asked the question: “Upon what condition was this life to be continued?”¹²⁰⁷ The answer provided in the notes stated: “That his continued existence was dependent upon his choosing in harmony with God’s will.”¹²⁰⁸ This amounted to God promising Adam life “ONLY on *condition* of Adam’s obedience.”¹²⁰⁹ Jones contended that this made God an accomplice in arranging a covenant of works with man. Adam must be obedient in order to earn God’s life. The lessons taught “God has one eternal, universal covenant, the center of which is His law. . . .”¹²¹⁰ This would amount to Adam working for his righteousness in obedience to the law in order to earn life.

If this were the case, then it would undermine the entire reason for God’s creation of intelligent beings. God was love. God’s love meant service. He desired to populate His universe with intelligences which could serve in the same capacity as Himself. But in order for love to be

authentic it could not be a forced allegiance. Therefore, God created angels and mankind with the freedom of choice. And such choice had within it the potential of a creature choosing not to love and serve God and others. Such was the risk God took in creating free intelligent beings.

But for God to set up a “compact” with angels and mankind to comply with the conditions of God’s law in order to obtain life meant that life with God was a matter of legalism.

¹²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹²⁰⁹ A. T. Jones, “God’s Everlasting Covenant,” pp. 2, 3. Emphasis his.

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

God would have to make His law explicit to them. The conditions for life would have had to be clearly outlined in order for intelligences to enter into such a contract.

Jones quoted from Ellen White's book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

But in Heaven service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy.¹²¹¹

Jones then commented on the issue of "legality":

A holy angel, *of his own choice*, rendering service by the law would be "legality." But for angels to be constrained by *bargain* and "compact," upon "condition," and proviso, to render service by the law and in order to get life or to have life--that would change it from "ity" to "ism" and make it only *legalism*. And for sinful men to render service by the law is also only *legalism*.¹²¹²

If God required obedience to his law from His angels, then He would be involved in a legalistic relationship. But God never did enter such a bargain either with regard to the angels or Adam. In fact, neither angels nor Adam were aware that there was such a thing as law in their unfallen state. It was their nature to render service in love without legalities. And surely, God did not require obedience of a known law in order for them to obtain life.

Before God created man He assumed the risk to Himself. If they should choose not to love Him, "He purposed to give *himself a sacrifice to redeem all* who should sin; and give them even *a second freedom* to choose Him or themselves, to choose life or death."¹²¹³ So God gave them life as a gift. Their life was to be received by faith from the Giver.

Neither angels nor mankind could give his own righteousness in obedience to the law as an exchange for life. When Jesus took our nature and became a man, He emptied Himself,

¹²¹¹ E. G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Battle Creek, Michigan: International Tract Society, 1896), p. 161.

¹²¹² A. T. Jones, "God's Everlasting Covenant," p. 26.

¹²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Emphasis his.

meaning He could not manifest His own righteousness.¹²¹⁴ This was in order that the “righteousness of God might appear--the righteousness of God by faith.”¹²¹⁵ The righteousness of God was the only righteousness acceptable with God. Jones made his point: “. . . The way of righteousness of the angels and of Adam at the beginning of their existence was only the way of righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.”¹²¹⁶

Furthermore, the idea that God’s covenant could be broken by man’s disobedience to the ten commandments was unacceptable to Jones. God’s covenant rested firmly on God’s promise which can never be broken.¹²¹⁷ Nothing about God’s promise needed renewal. It stood fast forever. God’s covenant did not need renewing. The people who broke it needed the renewal. And that was exactly what God’s covenant offered them.

Jones believed these Sabbath School lessons turned God’s everlasting covenant into the “covenant from Sinai which the Scriptures declare to be a covenant of bondage.”¹²¹⁸ Since these lessons had been approved by the lesson committee and the denomination, Jones concluded--“it stands undisputable that the Seventh-day Adventist ‘denomination’ stands so committed to sheer legalism that they have involved in it the very universe of God.”¹²¹⁹

The church leadership had been engaged in obfuscating the gospel of the everlasting covenant ever since Minneapolis. In Jones’s view:

Twenty years ago God sent to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination the message of the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ to deliver them from any appearance of liability to the charge of legalism. This righteousness of God, which is by faith, was then treated with contempt by “the administration” of the “organized work of

¹²¹⁴ A. T. Jones, “The Everlasting Covenant Is not ‘Obey and Live,’” *MM* 16, 39 (September 25, 1907), p. 310.

¹²¹⁵ A. T. Jones, “God’s Everlasting Covenant,” pp. 17, 18. Emphasis his.

¹²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 15.

¹²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the denomination.” By the then president of the General Conference it was flouted as “the much-vaunted doctrine of justification by faith.” At Minneapolis, in 1888, the General Conference “administration” did its very best to have the denomination committed by a vote of the General Conference to the covenant of “Obey and Live,” to righteousness by works. The attempt failed then, but from that day till this, that spirit and that element have never ceased that endeavor; though when they found that they could not accomplish it just then, they apparently and professedly accepted righteousness by faith. But they never did accept it in the truth that it is. They never did accept it as life and righteousness from God; but only as “a doctrine” to be put in a list or strung on a string with “other doctrines,” and preached as a “subject” with *other* “doctrinal subjects.”¹²²⁰

There was nothing worse than to have a dry-as-bones theory of righteousness by faith which denied the power thereof. The denial came in teaching the everlasting covenant as obedience to the law as God’s contract with mankind. However wonderful the official talk may be about justification by faith, if the theory of “Obey and live” was the substance of God’s covenant, then it was works-righteousness.

When the editor of the *Review*,¹²²¹ took notice of A. T. Jones’s “severe criticism” of the denomination in publishing the Sabbath School lessons, he felt compelled to respond in its columns. He really believed that what lay behind Jones’s prejudiced review of the lessons was a sour-grapes attitude over having been censured by the General Conference Committee. The committee had gone on record as saying: “We hereby declare that he [A. T. Jones] does not now properly represent this denomination before the public [so he is] no longer authorized to do so.”¹²²²

Jones’s leaflet was characterized as “substitution of logic for good sense,” “rabbinical methods,” “unfair manipulation,” and taking lesson notes “out of its connection and handled with

¹²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31. Emphasis his.

¹²²¹ The editor of the *Review* at this time was W. W. Prescott. Presumably either he wrote this editorial or else it was published under his approval. The article, “The Present Sabbath-School Lessons,” appeared under the “Editorial” column.

¹²²² Editor, “The Present Sabbath-School Lessons,” *RH* 84, 37 (September 12, 1907), p. 5.

much acumen.”¹²²³ The editor felt specifically that Jones had mishandled the phrase “Obey and Live” in the lessons, especially since Jesus had taught the very same thing to the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-20).

One of the statements in the lessons which Jones had singled out for criticism was the one which said--“That his [Adam’s] continued existence was dependent upon his choosing in harmony with God’s will. . . . That the compact; or covenant, under which Adam began his existence was that God promised life only on condition of Adam’s obedience.”¹²²⁴ The editor confirmed that this was exactly the truth. He said:

When thus taken in the connection in which it appeared in the Lesson Quarterly it will be clear to any one who is not looking for an opportunity to make an accusation against the denomination that this paragraph. . . means that *the continuance* of life to Adam depended upon his obedience to the commandment of God that he should not eat of the forbidden tree.¹²²⁵

Thus the editor agreed fully with the author of the lessons that obedience was absolutely essential for life. “. . . The continuance of life to Adam depended upon his obedience to the commandment of God. . . .” This proved Jones’s point to be true.

Although the editor went on to quote offsetting Christ-centered statements from the Sabbath School lessons about the new covenant, he could not recover from this devastating admission. He finally ended by saying he remained unconvinced of the necessity to recall the lessons. However, “We are willing to admit that they might have been improved in the form of statement.”¹²²⁶

¹²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

¹²²⁴ “Sabbath-School Lessons on God’s Everlasting Covenant,” (1907), p. 3.

¹²²⁵ Editor, “The Present Sabbath-School Lessons,” *RH* 84, 37 (September 12, 1907), p. 4.

Emphasis his.

¹²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

This was followed up by another editorial response to Jones by W. A. Colcord who was on the book committee of the Review and Herald publishing house.¹²²⁷ Colcord took exception to Jones's criticism that the church had committed itself to "sheer legalism." He believed the Ellen White statements used by Jones to prove his point had been taken out of their context. He wanted to set the record straight by quoting offsetting statements. All of the statements quoted made the point that angels and mankind must obey God's law in order to live. Colcord's conclusive statement was from *Steps to Christ*: "*The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,--just what it was in paradise before the fall of our first parents,--perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness.*"¹²²⁸

The battle of quoting Ellen White statements pro and con on the issue of salvation could be waged unendingly without resolution. Ellen White was neither a legalist nor an antinomian. She taught a perfect harmony between the law and the gospel. The law was the gospel promised. The gospel was the law revealed in Christ.

Colcord sought to portray Ellen White as a legalist. He fully agreed with the premise upon which the author of the Sabbath School lessons based his theme of "Obey and live." Colcord said: ". . . Life is conditioned upon obedience. When we accept Christ as our substitute, we are then choosing the way of obedience as truly as Adam would have chosen it had he never sinned."¹²²⁹ No matter how much Colcord might write about Christ as man's "substitute" it still came down to man's obedience as the condition for life.

¹²²⁷ W. A. Colcord, "The Criticisms on the Present Sabbath-School Lessons Examined in the Light of the Spirit of Prophecy," *RH* 84, 37 (September 12, 1907), pp. 6, 7.

¹²²⁸ E. G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 77. Emphasis his.

¹²²⁹ W. A. Colcord, "The Criticisms on the Present Sabbath-School Lessons Examined in the Light of the Spirit of Prophecy," *RH* 84, 37 (September 12, 1907), p. 7.

The editor of the *Signs*, Milton C. Wilcox, featured the theme of the everlasting covenant with several studies.¹²³⁰ In the questions-and-answers column one correspondent asked: “What is God’s everlasting covenant? Is it ‘Obey and live’? If not, what is it?”¹²³¹ The question was obviously asked in light of the recent Sabbath School lessons on the everlasting covenant.

The editor attempted to strike a mediating position with his answer by saying:

God’s everlasting covenant is that relationship between the believer and Himself in Jesus Christ, by which the believer is saved. If we understand “Obey and live” aright, it is comprehended in that expression. We would prefer to put it, “Believe and live,” for the man who will truly believe will be the man who will truly obey.¹²³²

The careful reader would note that here the editor was equating God’s covenant with the “relationship” between believer and Christ who saves. The stress here was no longer on God’s promise to save through Christ, but on the “relationship.” A “relationship” consisted of two parties, God and man. Thus for man to be saved he had to maintain a relationship by faith in God through Christ. Essentially this was salvation-by-faith-plus-works.

The editor was in hopes of helping the questioner better understand the recent Sabbath School lessons by striking this position on the “relationship.” He said: “The last Sabbath-school quarterly covers the ground of the covenant, and if the term ‘Obey and live’ were understood in the light of the other teachings of the pamphlet there would be no trouble over the expression.”¹²³³ So the editor was supportive of the lessons and sought to qualify the definition of “Obey and live” as “Believe and live.” For him belief and obedience were the same. He said: “Obey and believe are used synonymously in John 3:35, A. R. V.”¹²³⁴ Faith and obedience in

¹²³⁰ M. C. Wilcox, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *ST* 33, 5 (January 29, 1908), p. 8.

¹²³¹ L. D. W., “The Everlasting Covenant,” *ST* 33, 5 (January 29, 1908).

¹²³² *Ibid.*

¹²³³ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁴ *Ibid.*

Christ was the saving “relationship” of God’s covenant. The end result was still the same. Faith-plus-works-equals-salvation under the everlasting covenant.

The editor was back on safer ground when he contrasted the promises of the two covenants. He said: “The difference between the two covenants is the difference between the weak, puny promises of sinful men, trusting in their own strength, afraid of God’s voice, and the infinite promises of God, asking only simple faith and submission on the part of His children.”¹²³⁵ This sequence of editorials in the *Signs* served to demonstrate that in any given article or series there could be a mixture of truth and error.

Even the Australian *Signs* weighed in on the controversy over the covenants in the Sabbath School lessons. They printed an article by Uriah Smith. His main point was to defend the abolition of the Sabbath over Sunday-keeping. In so doing, his dispensationalism was apparent. Smith raised the question: “When Was the New Covenant Made?” It was instituted at the Lord’s Supper. Smith said:

The disciples present on this occasion were Jews, and there, as representatives of the whole Christian church, they entered into the new covenant with the Lord. . . . They, by partaking of those emblems, accepted the arrangement.

The next day, Christ’s blood was actually shed upon the cross, and there the new covenant was ratified and sealed. . . .

From that moment the new covenant was in force.¹²³⁶

Uriah Smith was a hopeless dispensationalist and would never change.

One received the distinct impression from reading Smith’s article that the Jews were the only ones entitled to salvation under the old covenant. He said: “God never made, and never

¹²³⁵ Anonymous, “Home Bible Studies for Winter Evenings. The Everlasting Covenant,” *ST* 33, 5 (January 29, 1908).

¹²³⁶ U. Smith, “Was the New Covenant Made with the Gentiles?” *The Signs of the Times* [Australian] 22 (August 12, 1907), p. 503.

proposed to make, a covenant with the Gentiles.”¹²³⁷ God purposed in establishing the covenant with Abraham and his descendants to create a “people [who] were set apart to be the depositaries of God’s law, and preserve the worship and the knowledge of the true God in the earth.”¹²³⁸ It was not until the new covenant came in after the cross that the “middle wall of partition between the Jews and themselves [Gentiles] was broken down by what Christ abolished on the cross. It was the old covenant that was abolished. . . .”¹²³⁹ Uriah Smith died in 1903. This article was published posthumously. Smith never relinquished his dispensationalism.

A month later F. L. Sharp published an article on the covenants. He demonstrated little acumen in distinguishing the old and the new covenants. He said the old covenant symbolized by Hagar was instituted at Sinai. Sharp understood “My covenant” in Exodus 19:5 as the ten commandments. He said: “*Israel’s part* was to obey God’s voice and keep *His covenant*. Verse 5. . . . Abraham without doubt instructed ‘his household’ concerning God’s covenant, and when Israel promised to obey. . . and keep His covenant, they, too, understood that they were to keep the law. . . .”¹²⁴⁰ Thus, Sharp saw no difference between the terms of the old and the new covenants. Both Abraham and Israel agreed to obey God’s law. Sharp said nothing about God’s forgiveness or divine aid in obeying the law. Sharp had a legalistic understanding of both the old and the new covenants.

E. J. Waggoner returned to America from London in 1903. The following years at *The Present Truth* had some faint echoes of Waggoner’s covenant theology. Although some volumes are missing, in 1908 William Knight made some observations on 2 Corinthians 3 and the two covenants. He said:

¹²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

¹²³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁰ F. L. Sharp, “The Two Covenants,” *ST* (September 30, 1907), p. 614.

The place where the law is inscribed makes all the difference as to whether death or life results. Under the old covenant, with the faulty promises of the people, and consequent “ministration of death,” it was written in stone. In the new covenant, with the promises of Christ, it is written: “I will put My laws into their minds and write them in their hearts.” In this new relation the law becomes the “ministration of life,” but it is in each instance the same divine code.¹²⁴¹

Knight distinguished between the two covenants. The old covenant was the “faulty promises of the people.” The new covenant was the “promises of Christ.”

The editor of *The Present Truth* said the difference between the two covenants was not over the ten commandments. “It is the difference between the letter and the spirit, between tables of stone and the living Christ. The law of God is identical under both covenants.”¹²⁴² The writer distinguished so emphatically between what Moses offered on tables of stone and what Paul offered through the Spirit of the living Christ that it left one wondering whether he understood that Moses was a new covenant believer too. Moses surely preached Christ to ancient Israel.

The same covenant theology of Waggoner was being taught by *The Present Truth*.¹²⁴³ It was evidenced by an article from the pen of W. W. Prescott. Writing of Israel’s perceptions of God’s character and law and their failure to recognize their own inability to render obedience they rashly promised, “We will do.” “But there was no power either in themselves or in *their* covenant to deliver them from the self-life. . . . The utter uselessness of a covenant resting wholly in the power of the flesh was thus fully demonstrated. . . .”¹²⁴⁴ Quoting Jeremiah 31:32, Prescott distinguished the new covenant from the old covenant by saying, “. . . there was a

¹²⁴¹ William Knight, “The Ministration of Death and the Spirit,” *PT* 24, 19 (May 7, 1908), p. 291.

¹²⁴² “What Was Done Away in Christ?” *PT* 24, 35 (August 27, 1908), p. 554.

¹²⁴³ There was an emphasis in *The Present Truth* on the future inheritance of the saints in the earth made new as the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham. See W. H. Meredith, “The Promised Inheritance,” *PT* 24, 20 (May 14, 1908), pp. 306, 307.

¹²⁴⁴ W. W. Prescott, “The Law in the Heart,” *PT* 24, 42 (October 15, 1908), p. 660.

radical difference between this covenant and the one made at Sinai. . . . In the old covenant the law was spoken to the people, and written upon tables of stone. . . they promised obedience.”¹²⁴⁵ The new covenant was God putting His laws in the heart by man’s choice. Prescott concluded: “. . . There is a vast difference between an obedience promised but not rendered, and an obedience made possible by the fulfilment of God’s promise and His assisting grace received through faith.”¹²⁴⁶ The light on the covenants was still shining in the words of W. W. Prescott.

R. A. Underwood had been an outspoken opponent of Waggoner’s law and covenant theology since 1888. He continued this opposition in a series of Bible studies presented at the Northern Union Conference held in Minneapolis, March 5-15, 1908. He still believed that some old landmark issues were at stake with the law question in Galatians.¹²⁴⁷

God’s covenant with fallen Adam “promised . . . to accomplish redemption for man on condition of faith and obedience on man’s part.”¹²⁴⁸ This followed from Underwood’s definition of covenant as the “promises of God . . . conditioned on certain terms on the part of man, as obedience, repentance, faith. . . .”¹²⁴⁹ Man must obey the law as a condition for salvation. Underwood went so far as to say that “. . . we must declare the oath of perfect obedience to the moral law before we can share in the ‘better promises’ of forgiveness of sin in the new covenant.”¹²⁵⁰ This made man a co-redeemer in the plan of salvation just as Catholicism had tried to make Mary a co-redemptrix along with Christ.

¹²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁷ R. A. Underwood, *The Law and the Covenants: An Exposition* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: n.p., 1908), p. 3.

¹²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.

¹²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Underwood offered an insight into Old Testament salvation that deserved recognition.

He said:

Christ presented Himself to Adam to die in his stead, as a sin offering, upon the very day that Adam transgressed. . . .

. . . Christ's consequent ministration and sacrifice were in existence before the visible manifestation at Calvary just as truly and effectively to save from sin as they have existed since that time. Christ is a "priest after the order of Melchisedek." That order of priesthood existed from the fall of man till the introduction of the Levitical order of priesthood, and then contemporaneously with the latter, and since the Levitical order ceased (at the cross), the Saviour has been a priest as he was before according to the Melchisedek order, ministering and offering his own blood before the Father, to make reconciliation for all who accept Him as their substitute regardless of the age of their sojourn on the earth. Thus, Christ, the author of man's salvation, *abideth continually*, a great High Priest, and is the *mediator* of the everlasting covenant of grace.

. . . This penalty for sin, was transferred from Adam to Christ, who bore it as man's *substitute by promise*, the very day that man sinned.¹²⁵¹

This was one of the finest affirmations of Christ's High Priestly ministry running from Adam's fall to the end of sin that could be found in Adventist writings.

In addition, Underwood emphasized the existence of the new covenant given by God to Adam. Many had understood Hebrew 8:8 as a new covenant "*not already in existence.*" So he quoted several translations:

The Douay Bible reads: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will *perfect* a new covenant." The Emphatic Diaglot gives it: "Behold the days come when I will *complete* a new covenant." The Revised Version has it: "Behold the days come that I will *accomplish* a new covenant."

These translations all imply that the new covenant was *already in* existence, though not completed. The covenant of grace, which began with Adam, could not be completed without the death of Christ and the restoration of all things lost by the fall of man. The ratification of this covenant at the cross made sure the fulfillment of its provisions.¹²⁵²

¹²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18. Emphasis his.

¹²⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19. Emphasis his.

This was a point upon which many modern writers have been confused. The statement also made future reference beyond the cross to the “restoration of all things lost by the fall of man.” The eschatological fulfillment of the new covenant will be when God announces His covenant with the redeemed just before the second coming of Jesus.¹²⁵³

Then Underwood took Jones and Waggoner head on with one of their basic premises.

No one doubts that man was required to make promises under the old covenant; but some do question that man must make promises if he enters into the blessings of the new covenant. Some even regard such promises on man’s part as an act of sinking man more deeply into the depths of despair and sin.¹²⁵⁴

Jones and Waggoner contended that the old covenant was the people’s promise to obey. The new covenant was God’s better promises to forgive sins and provide divine aid.

Underwood believed the old covenant was something good from Jesus. He said: “. . . *the principal party in making both the old and new covenants is the same,--Jesus Christ.*”¹²⁵⁵ Then he went on to say that many faithful ones were saved under the old covenant.

Some who entered into the old covenant at Sinai *did not seek salvation by their own efforts*, but maintained their faith and integrity in God alone for salvation. . . . All might likewise have been faithful to God, which shows the fallacy of confounding man’s experience in trusting in self with the old covenant.¹²⁵⁶

Underwood was convinced that Caleb and Joshua found salvation in the old covenant. “These facts demonstrate the utter fallacy of the claim that the promises of Israel constituted the

¹²⁵³ “But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, which shook the heavens and the earth. . . . And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus’ coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn.” E. G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 34.

¹²⁵⁴ R. A. Underwood, *The Law and the Covenants*, p. 21.

¹²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20. Emphasis his.

¹²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

old covenant; and further emphasize the fact that man must promise loyalty to God as he enters into the new covenant with Him.”¹²⁵⁷

Furthermore, Underwood was a confirmed dispensationalist. He did not believe that the covenants were conditions of the heart. “But let us not, because of this experience, in an unregenerate state, confound man’s experience with the old covenant, when there is no Biblical authority nor good reason for doing so.”¹²⁵⁸ The old covenant was God’s plan within time parameters. “The Bible plainly places the creation of the old covenant at Sinai, and its termination at Calvary.”¹²⁵⁹

Underwood did not believe there was forgiveness of sins or salvation in the old covenant.¹²⁶⁰ However, the old covenant contained a ceremonial system of sacrifices and a sanctuary which pointed to Christ the Saviour. It was the schoolmaster that would lead to Christ. He found this to be a “yoke of bondage” to Israel. The ceremonial law was faulty and not the promises of Israel.¹²⁶¹

When Israel transgressed God’s eternal law at Sinai, He added the ceremonial laws, some of which were not good, to the gospel which He had already given to the patriarchs. Underwood explained: “The ceremonial law was not ‘annexed’ to the moral law, for the reason that the law was complete. . . . It was added, or annexed, to the Abrahamic covenant because of transgressions, and as a means of leading men to seek the means of grace as provided in the everlasting covenant.”¹²⁶²

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

¹²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.

¹²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Underwood said the “schoolmaster” and “added law” was the ceremonial law. The antinomians understood it to be the ten commandments. If that was the case the moral law was truly done away with by Christ.¹²⁶³ But that could not be. It was the ceremonial law that was done away with by Christ.

Underwood quoted Uriah Smith’s article on “The Two Covenants” with approval:

. . . When the minister of the new covenant came to take away the first and establish the second, he said, “I delight to do thy will”

That the old covenant has been abolished by being superseded by the new, Paul plainly states. . . . This therefore becomes a test question. It determines as definitely as any one subject can, the whole question of the perpetuity or abolition of the moral law.¹²⁶⁴

More than anything else the dispensationalism of Uriah Smith and R. A. Underwood governed their interpretation of Galatians 3. They viewed the old covenant as superseded chronologically by the new covenant. That the old covenant included the ceremonial law and not the moral law was a “test question.” Underwood called it an old landmark.

Elder A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, wrote to W. C. White in 1910 and said:

While attending the Florida camp-meeting a few weeks ago, Brother Butler told me in the course of the interview we were having how he felt about the message Jones and Waggoner brought to this denomination in 1888. He spoke especially of their position on the laws and covenants, and then pointed to the course they are now taking, and told me with considerable emphasis, that he never could see light in their special message, and that he had never taken his position. Now, Brother White, you and I know full well, that those brethren brough (*sic.*) light in the laws and covenants, and on righteousness by faith instead of works. The Spirit of Prophecy later endorsed some of the new views they presented. In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, we find the most postive (*sic.*) statements regarding the new covenant, and they contradict the former teaching of our brethren on this subject. Elder U. Smith and Elder J. N. Andrews and Elder Butler, and in fact all our leading brethren were absolutely wrong on the vital question regarding the new covenant. They took the position that it had no force and efficacy whatever until the death of Christ. Whereas, the *Patriarchs and Prophets* on pages 370 and 371 tells us that the new

¹²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

covenant was made with Adam, repeated to Abraham, and ratified by the blood of Christ at his death. It tells us that this covenant was in full force from Adam to Moses, and that it was by this covenant that the people were saved through the gospel dispensation. Now this is a vital question. The new view absolutely sets aside the old view.¹²⁶⁵

This letter spoke for itself. Elder Butler never accepted the light on the law and the covenants in 1888 or subsequently. Daniells was clear that Ellen White had fully endorsed Waggoner's position in her book *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

In summary, the adult Sabbath School lessons of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came from and were officially endorsed by denominational authority. The studies of 1907 indicated that the official church channels were teaching legalism as God's plan of salvation. A. T. Jones critiqued these lessons and found them teaching legalism. He in turn was criticized by a couple of editorials in the *Review*. These editorials merely confirmed the teaching of the Sabbath School lessons as being legalistic, although the writers would never have admitted such.

Unfortunately, there was a veil over the faces of some in church leadership who could not clearly perceive the gospel in the everlasting covenant. God had sought to correct this problem in so many ways over the course of a couple of decades since Minneapolis. Some crucial church leaders did not heed the message. As a result, some in church leadership still did not have God's message or power to give to the world. The message and the power of God went hand in hand.

¹²⁶⁵ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, January 21, 1910. *MMM*, p. 325.

Chapter 34

W. W. PRESCOTT THE LAST OF A GENERATION: 1916-1939

At this point it would be well to provide a contrast in the two models of the new covenant within Adventist covenant theology. They may be characterized by their main proponents.

New Covenant Models in Seventh-day Adventist Theology

Waggoner/Jones/White	Butler/Smith/Porter
1. Covenant was God's one-sided promise.	Covenant was compact, contract between parties.
2. Believe and live.	Obey and live.
3. "Amen" of Faith.	"We will do."
4. Distinguished Abrahamic new covenant from Sinaitic old covenant.	Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenant are one.
5. Salvation by grace through the faith of Jesus.	Salvation by faith and obedience (works).
6. A condition of the heart.	Dispensational/sequential.
7. Ten commandments were not the covenant but its basis.	Ten commandments were not the covenant but its basis or they were the covenant.
8. For the church and the individual.	Old covenant for national Israel/new covenant for the individual.
9. Based on <i>Agape</i> .	Based on synthesis of <i>Agape</i> and <i>eros</i> .

Of course, not all writers who held the Butler/Smith model were dispensationalists, but many were. These elements re-emerge in surveying the Adventist covenant writings of the twentieth century.

W. G. Kneeland believed that the ancients were saved by the blood of the Lamb. "The everlasting covenant is God's arrangement for bringing his wayward children into harmony with himself. All who come to Him with genuine sorrow for sin, and a sincere desire to do His will,

can find peace and pardon in this covenant.”¹²⁶⁶ Access to pardon and peace was gained through “sorrow for sin” and submission to God’s will.

Kneeland portrayed God coming to Sinai with His covenant, but Israel was blinded by the condition of their hearts. Once the covenant was made shortly thereafter “they had broken their agreement with God. There was no hope of pardon so far as that covenant was concerned.”¹²⁶⁷ Kneeland said they along with Moses repented of their sin and now were “prepared as never before to appreciate the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Together with Moses they pleaded for mercy and pardon under the provisions of the everlasting covenant which they had overlooked.”¹²⁶⁸ He saw that they could not find forgiveness under the old covenant “contract” and had to flee to Christ in the everlasting covenant.

Matthew Larsen had been a long-standing protagonist of the 1888 message. A. G. Daniells wrote of his opposition to W. C. White:

I am surprised to find scattered all through these Northwestern States men who are deep in the fog over this question [righteousness by faith]. As surely as we live, they are still under the old covenant, the covenant of works. Matthew Larsen seems to be the leader of this faction. He is traveling about wherever he can, sowing this evil seed.¹²⁶⁹

Larsen wrote under a pseudonym. It was a venomous attack on Waggoner and Jones’s view of the law in Galatians.¹²⁷⁰ He framed the controversy over the law question by providing some history:

¹²⁶⁶ W. G. Kneeland, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *RH* 94, 44 (November 1, 1917), p. 1040.

¹²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁹ Letter A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 14, 1902, College View, Nebraska. *MMM*, pp. 319, 320.

¹²⁷⁰ Paideutes Ago Agonistes, *The Law in Galatians: Is It the Moral Law?* (n.p., n.d.). Letter E. A. Jones to R. L. Odom, January 5, 1961 authenticates this as written by Matthew Larsen in 1919.

It is a matter of common knowledge with all the older members of the denomination, that, at one time, the church was practically a unit in believing and teaching that the Galatian letter dealt primarily with the ceremonial law, and its observance in its relation to the Gospel and the great question of justification by faith. Almost every minister and layman in the church believed and taught that the “added law,” the “schoolmaster,” was no other than the ceremonial law; and that Paul’s letter, unmistakably, showed that this law had served its purpose, and had passed away at the first advent of Christ. . . .

In 1886, when Jones and Waggoner first came out with their position that the “added law,--the “schoolmaster” law,--was the moral law, and presented their ideas and arguments on that question before the students at Healdsburg College, California; and through the “*Signs of the Times*” and “*Youth’s Instructor*”, it was by no means a new thing. It was simply a revival of the old controversy, started nearly thirty years before by Eld. J. H. Waggoner,--E. J. Waggoner’s father; but which, through the Spirit of Prophecy had been silenced for a number of years.¹²⁷¹

Waggoner’s position on the law in Galatians had been set forth in *The Glad Tidings* published by the Pacific Press. Larsen said: “And to think, this abominable rot--this inexcusable, self-contradictory stuff--is dubbed ‘Glad Tidings’, and sent out by the sanction of the church!”¹²⁷²

As far as Larsen was concerned Waggoner’s arguments abolished the ten commandments. “The position that the ten commandments are the ‘added law’, or ‘schoolmaster’, is utterly indefensible from the standpoint of the law’s perpetuity. If these passages from Paul apply to the moral law, then just as well concede that it has been abolished, or done away.”¹²⁷³ And why was this? Because the Seed’s coming was the first advent and not the second as argued by Waggoner.

Larsen second guessed Waggoner’s knowledge of the Greek by ridicule: “A little more of their ‘spoken’--‘jailer’--‘taskmaster’ Greek criticisms, and we will have about reached the limit of Greek lore!” He wanted no more “further danger of the Greek suffering any more such

¹²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3.

¹²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

painful tortures, or dislocations, at their hands!”¹²⁷⁴ Larsen’s essay was a vitriolic polemic which added more heat than light to the law question in Galatians.

A. O. Tait presented the subject of the covenants at the 1919 Bible Conference.¹²⁷⁵ Tait positioned the new covenant in relationship to the sanctuary message.

In the final fulfillment of this closing new covenant relation, when our sins are blotted out through the mediatorial work of Christ, in the sanctuary, no sin that we have ever committed will be remembered again in all the universe of God. They are blotted out and gone, so that we do not have to stand in the presence of our heavenly Father as culprits, but as men and women that have been redeemed through the blood of Christ, and that are in harmony with His great law, and have that law in our hearts and are sons and daughters of God.

I understand that is the new covenant. This new covenant, as we learn from the 3d chapter of Galatians, the 15th to the 17 verses, was given to Abraham 400 years before we come to Sinai. . . .¹²⁷⁶

The new covenant was the glorious gospel of Christ from the heavenly sanctuary which would prepare His bride for translation. This was the beginning of the comprehensive view of the third angel’s message in verity given to Abraham and amplified by the Apostle Paul.

Addressing the issue of the Sinai covenant Tait observed:

No man has any right to make any such promise as that, because there is no man in his own strength that can keep the law of God and do all these things. The only way that can be done is for Christ himself to come into the life and take possession of the individual, and live the life of God and keep the law of God in the individual by His divine power. But they said, “All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do.”¹²⁷⁷

¹²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹²⁷⁵ A. O. Tait, “The Covenants” (Andrews University: E. G. White Research Center, 1919 Bible Conference Papers, Thursday, July 10).

¹²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

He saw that the old covenant was associated with the promises of the people. Israel proposed the impossible--to keep the law and thus get the life of God. The only way to have God's life was for Christ to take possession of their lives. "The new covenant is a covenant of faith."¹²⁷⁸

Was it because they had no Christ that they lapsed into a religion of self? Tait said: "In those times they might have looked forward and got a vision of the cross, but they did not catch that vision. They simply saw ceremonials."¹²⁷⁹ Tait seemed to be in harmony with the 1888 message of the two covenants.

Frederick Johnston believed that God made a covenant with Israel in which they agreed to keep God's commandments. ". . . What is this covenant which He calls 'My covenant,' . . . the ten commandments. . . . Therefore the old covenant, or agreement between God and Israel, was a covenant on the part of the latter to keep God's covenant, the ten commandments."¹²⁸⁰ However, Israel made promises they could not keep. "Now when Israel broke God's covenant, their own covenant was made void."¹²⁸¹ Since God found fault with the people He would make a new covenant with Israel.

Never mind that the "new covenant was not in force, however, until Christ died. . . and furthermore, no one can be saved except by the new covenant, or the gospel."¹²⁸² Well, then, how could anybody be saved under the old covenant? ". . . Because God's promise of salvation in ancient times was as good as when the salvation existed in full force, Christ is regarded as 'the

¹²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁰ Frederick W. Johnston, "God's Two Covenants with the House of Israel," *The Canadian Watchman* (February, 1923), p. 10.

¹²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’”¹²⁸³ So believing Israel was saved under a covenant that “was not in force” during their lifetime.

W. W. Prescott (1855-1944) was an educator, writer, and editor. At first he resisted the 1888 message, but later confessed his wrong and united his efforts with Ellen White and others in teaching righteousness by faith. He said that the “essence of all paganism” and the “root of legalism” was the “solemn compact”--the “covenant of works”--which Israel made at Sinai “without realizing their need of the grace and power of Christ. . . .”¹²⁸⁴

After Israel failed to keep their promise, God announced the gospel promised to Abraham in the sanctuary service. This included: forgiveness of sins, the commandments as promises, restoration of the sinner, and the Sabbath rest in Christ. The law announced from Sinai would condemn the sinner and lead to Christ for surely “from its summit a glimpse of Mt. Calvary” had been given.¹²⁸⁵

Prescott was the last of a generation who had been an eyewitness to the events of 1888 to publish a series of articles on the covenants in biblical history. His writings came well into the twentieth century.¹²⁸⁶ Prescott recognized how important the covenants were in understanding the third angel’s message. He said:

We have been plainly instructed that justification by faith “is the third angel’s message in verity,” and inasmuch as justification by faith is the essential feature of the covenant with Abraham, as is taught in Galatians 3:8 . . . the covenant with Abraham is the very essence of the third angel’s message. . . . We should proclaim the fullness of the meaning of that covenant developed from the time of Abraham until now. This is “the

¹²⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁴ W. W. Prescott, “The Law and the Gospel Proclaimed in the Wilderness: Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary,” *RH* (January 30, 1930), p. 18.

¹²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁶ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant,” *RH* 113 (August 20-October 1, 1936).

everlasting gospel” which is to be preached to the whole world in preparation for the great consummation.¹²⁸⁷

Everything that was necessary to prepare a sinful generation for translation and the second coming of Christ was contained in God’s promise to Abraham.

The prophet Moses recorded the blessing of Abraham. “And he believed in Jehovah; and He reckoned it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). Moses wrote it for our sakes: “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification” (Romans 4:23-25). The essence of Abraham’s faith was the hope of the resurrection of the Seed. It was this faith in the resurrection which secured the reality of Christ “our justification.” Prescott demonstrated that “God,” “righteousness,” “justification,” “life,” were all covenants terms which permeated the Old and the New Testaments.¹²⁸⁸

Prescott stated categorically: “God’s promise to man is God’s covenant. . . . The words ‘covenant’ and ‘promise’ are used interchangeably, and such we observe to be the case in Galatians 3:17. . . . An active faith . . . appropriates the covenant-promise.”¹²⁸⁹ These were the same basic principles taught by Waggoner and Jones. Prescott continued:

The Promiser is inseparable from the promise. His very existence is involved in the keeping of His promise. If He failed, He would cease to be God. . . . Inasmuch as there is no future with God, but an eternal now, every promise has a present fulfillment in the divine mind, just as the Lamb was slain “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), and as the benefits of the slain Lamb were available to faith in the promise of the coming Lamb, so all the blessings of the gospel promises. . . are available to faith. . . . “Now

¹²⁸⁷ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. IV--The Doctrine of the Promise-Covenant,” *RH* 113, 47 (September 10, 1936), p. 8.

¹²⁸⁸ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. V--The Covenant or Righteousness,” *RH* 113, 49 (September 17, 1936), pp. 4-6.

¹²⁸⁹ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. I--The Promise-Covenant,” *RH* 113, 44 (August 20, 1936), pp. 3, 4.

faith is giving substance to things hoped for.” Heb. 11:1. What is promised becomes a present reality to faith which gives substance to it.¹²⁹⁰

The covenant and the promise were one. Faith welcomed the promise. This was the Abrahamic covenant.

The first element of the Abrahamic covenant involved the promise of a Seed from his bowels. Abraham’s Saviour would be the incarnate Son of God.¹²⁹¹

. . . The most important thing in the promises to Abraham, that upon which all the rest depended, was the gift of the Son of God in the flesh as the seed of the woman. . . .

The very heart and soul of “the everlasting gospel” are found in the fact that the Word. . . should become flesh, “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” and thus make the actual union between divinity and fallen humanity. As there can never be any other gospel than the one “everlasting gospel,” it follows that when this gospel is truly preached, the central truth presented must always be the gift of the Son of God in our flesh. . . .¹²⁹²

Christ *took* the post-lapsarian fallen will of humanity uniting it with His divinity at the incarnation. “When the Son of God became the Son of man, he came as ‘the last Adam,’ the head of a new humanity, that man might again be restored to the image of God.”¹²⁹³

Prescott developed the covenant in blood theme in relationship to the “last Adam.” He said:

A sinless life, an infinitely precious life, the life of the God-man offered “through the eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14), the life of the last Adam, in whom the whole human family is condensed in union with the divine nature, is the only sufficient ransom price, and this was freely given. . . . All sinned in the racial sin of the first Adam (Rom. 5:12); and all died in the racial death of the last Adam, the head of the new human family, and so was the redemption price paid.¹²⁹⁴

¹²⁹⁰ W. W. Prescott, W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. IV--The Doctrine of the Promise-Covenant,” *RH* 113, 47 (September 10, 1936), pp. 6, 7.

¹²⁹¹ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. III--The Abrahamic Covenant,” *RH* 113, 46 (September 3, 1936), p. 9.

¹²⁹² W. W. Prescott, “Studies in the Gospel Message,” *RH* (April 22, 1902).

¹²⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹⁴ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. VI--The Blood of the Covenant,” *RH* 113, 49 (September 24, 1936), p. 4.

The blood of Christ has power on two counts. First, it was the redemptive price paid for sinners. Second, the blood has the power for the sinner to walk in newness of life.¹²⁹⁵

Addressing the issue of the law code, Prescott observed that with Israel it was written on stone:

In the old covenant it was the law as a code, written upon stone, the keeping of which conditioned all blessings. This arrangement failed. Why? Because those who promised could not realize their promises. This covenant rested upon the promises of weak men, the will of man instead of the will of God.¹²⁹⁶

All are prone to make old covenant promises, “We will do.” The only way to receive the new covenant was the way of faith in Christ.

The law of love was in His heart, not as a code of hard and fast commands, but as a spiritual principle, a holy power capable of manifesting the righteousness of God in a wicked world. . . . It is quite impossible for us to reveal a love which we do not possess. . . . It is a divine gift imparted by divine power. . . . The Holy Spirit of God is the very essence of love.¹²⁹⁷

The divine principle of love which was God’s law incarnate in Christ became the very being of man accomplished by the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹⁸

Prescott understood all the promises made to Abraham were to his Seed. “And so to-day we look for the final step in the development of the original promise in Eden, waiting and working ‘till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.’”¹²⁹⁹ Along with Waggoner he understood the promise of Galatians 3:19 to be fulfilled completely at the second coming.

Another eyewitness to the Minneapolis Conference was G. B. Starr. He testified:

It is my conviction that these epistles to the Romans and Galatians, which so clearly present justification by faith, will never be separated from the proclamation of the threefold message in their worldwide work and influence. . . .

¹²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

¹²⁹⁶ W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of the Covenant. VII--The Law in the Heart,” *RH* 113, 50 (October 1, 1936), p. 5.

¹²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

¹²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²⁹⁹ W. W. Prescott, “Studies in the Gospel Message,” *RH* (May 6, 1902), p. 6.

The Holy Spirit was manifestly present during that Conference. . . . His person, His love, His righteousness, and His power to save to the uttermost, were exalted as I had never heard them in any preceding Conference.

At that meeting a statement was made by the servant of the Lord that the presentation of the righteousness of Christ. . . marked the beginning of the loud cry of the third angel's message, and the joining with the third angel of that other angel mentioned in Revelation 18:1, whose glory was to fill the whole earth.¹³⁰⁰

The focus of attention at the Minneapolis conference was justification by faith as presented from Romans and Galatians. This was the beginning of the loud cry and the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. Thus the message was a critical aspect of receiving the latter rain. The message and the power went together.

Herbert M. Kelley understood the covenant as a contract. He illustrated his point by drawing it up in those terms:

WITNESSETH That said parties of the first part hereby covenant and agree to and with said party of the second part, for the consideration hereinafter named to live as becometh the children of God in manner of life as shall hereinafter be declared, during the term of this contract, being the natural life of each member of the said Twelve Tribes of the children of Israel.

Said parties to the first part hereby further covenant to obey the voice of the said party of the second part, and do all those things that are hereinafter commanded.¹³⁰¹

Kelley had this whole contract witnessed by Lucifer and Gabriel. When Israel sinned the contract was made "null and void."

Then Christ entered into another contract with His Father called the new covenant. He sealed this will and testament with His blood on behalf of sinners. ". . . When Jesus died on the cruel cross of Calvary, and thus ratified the New Covenant by His own precious blood, it at that

¹³⁰⁰ G. B. Starr, "Increased Light Since 1888: A Prediction in Process of Fulfillment Now," *RH* 107, 41 (July 24, 1930), p. 6.

¹³⁰¹ Herbert M. Kelley, "The Two Covenants Made Plain" (Keene, Texas: The College Press, September 5, 1935), p. 5. Emphasis his.

instant became everlastingly too late to make any change in the divine covenant, will or testament.”¹³⁰² Of course, Sunday came into significance for Christian worship after the cross so it was too late to be included within the new covenant. This indicated the inherent dispensationalism of Kelley’s covenant theology.

The only clear voice on the covenants during the period of 1916-1939 was W. W. Prescott. W. G. Kneeland and A. O. Tait had some valuable insights to contribute. All the rest of the writers had a mixture of truth with error. The outstanding protagonist of the period to the 1888 message on the law question was Matthew Larsen. What would future decades hold for Adventist covenant theology?

¹³⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11.

Chapter 35

DALE RATZLAFF: “SABBATH IN CRISIS”

Dale Ratzlaff, a former Seventh-day Adventist pastor and teacher, was educated in the church school system through graduate studies. He was a fourth-generation Adventist.¹³⁰³ He now wrote literature opposing the church’s teachings.

Ratzlaff affirmed a crucial point when he said: “A correct understanding of the covenants is fundamental to a correct interpretation of all Scripture and it is absolutely critical for one’s view of the Sabbath.”¹³⁰⁴

Ratzlaff particularly identified the Sabbath as old covenant. He said: “A correct understanding of the seventh-day Sabbath requires that we see it *in relationship* to the totality of old covenant life and experience.”¹³⁰⁵ He also stated that the ten commandments were abolished. “. . . The clear statements of Scripture . . . declare the Ten Commandments are no longer binding upon Christians. . . .”¹³⁰⁶ All of this came about because of his study of the covenants. “. . . As I have restudied this subject in greater depth, especially in the light of the covenants, I now feel I must share with you my deep concern.”¹³⁰⁷ His understanding of the covenants had convinced him of the abolition of the commandments with Christ’s coming.

Ratzlaff appealed to his Seventh-day Adventist friends, “Make sure your understanding of the Sabbath and the covenants is biblical. It is my prayer that this book may in some small

¹³⁰³ Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis* (Applegate, California: Life Assurance Ministries, 1989), p. 310.

¹³⁰⁴ Dale Ratzlaff, “Editor’s Comments: Covenants: Why Print Both Sides?” *Proclamation* 2, 4 (August, 2001), p. 1.

¹³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65. Emphasis his.

¹³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

¹³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

way lead you to a fuller understanding of the Sabbath and the covenants. . . .”¹³⁰⁸ Ratzlaff had linked the ten commandments and the seventh-day Sabbath with the old covenant.

In many respects Dale Ratzlaff was the new D. M. Canright. He used many of the same arguments as had his predecessor. Canright had reasoned:

No other subject perplexes Adventists so much as the covenants. They dread to meet it. They have tried various ways to explain it away, but they are not satisfactory even to themselves. I have been there and know. The abolition of the Sinaitic covenant carries with it the abolition of the Jewish Sabbath so completely that no authoritative trace of it can be found this side of the grave of our risen Lord.

Elder Smith says: “If the ten commandments constituted the old covenant, then they are forever gone.” This, therefore, becomes a test question.¹³⁰⁹

This was the same position Ratzlaff took. The ten commandments were the old covenant. Therefore, they were abolished with the coming of Christ.

This was the Pope’s argument in his pastoral letter regarding the seventh-day Sabbath. It was identified with the old covenant. Sunday was the day of worship under the new covenant. “The Sabbath precept, which in the first Covenant prepares for the Sunday of the new and eternal Covenant, is therefore rooted in the depths of God’s plan.”¹³¹⁰ It seemed as though this former Adventist minister were coming into line with the same views as the papacy.

John Paul exhorted the faithful to study more deeply the creation Sabbath as the predecessor of the true new covenant sabbath (Sunday).

. . . The “Sabbath” [was], so characteristic of the first Covenant, and which in some ways foretells the sacred day of the new and final Covenant. The theme of “God’s rest” (cf. Gn 2:2) and the rest which he offered to the people of the

¹³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

¹³⁰⁹ D. M. Canright., “The Two Covenants-Chapter XIX,” *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 1914, p. 350.

¹³¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, “Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Catholic Church on Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy” (May 31, 1998).

Exodus when they entered the Promised Land . . . is re-read in the New Testament in the light of the definitive “Sabbath rest” (Heb 4:9) into which Christ himself has entered by his Resurrection. The People of God are called to enter into this same rest by persevering in Christ’s example of filial obedience (cf. Heb 4:3-16). In order to grasp fully the meaning of Sunday, therefore, we must re-read the great story of creation and deepen our understanding of the theology of the “Sabbath”.¹³¹¹

These statements of the Pope clearly indicated a sequential understanding of the first covenant followed by the new covenant. Dispensationalism was firmly rooted in Roman Catholic covenant theology. The Pope it was used in the service of abolishing the seventh-day creation Sabbath.

In *Proclamation!* Ratzlaff invited Edwin Reiner to be the representative of Adventist covenant theology. Reiner had the same dispensational approach to the old and the new covenants. “With the close of the old dispensation, a new covenant came into being at the cross.”¹³¹² In a diagram Reiner had the Patriarchal dispensation followed by the Aaronic and Gospel dispensations. The old covenant last for 1,500 years between Sinai and the cross. The new covenant coincided with the gospel dispensation following the cross. Reiner had the same basic assumptions regarding the dispensations as did his protagonist Ratzlaff.

How could a Seventh-day Adventist such as Dale Ratzlaff, raised and educated in the system, renounce his belief in God’s law and the Sabbath? Did his teachers fail? Was there a flaw in the teaching of the church somewhere along the way? What went wrong that Ratzlaff could be such an avowed opponent of Adventist core theology?

Ratzlaff said the Sabbath was for Israel alone. Circumcision and the Sabbath were given as the continuing signs which Israel was to “remember.” Ratzlaff wrote:

¹³¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹³¹² Edwin W. Reiner, “An Adventist’s View: The Covenants,” *Proclamation!* 2, 4 (August, 2001), p. 4.

Both were important aspects of the Sinaitic Covenant. . . .

Scripture makes it very clear that the Sinaitic Covenant was made with the nation of Israel only.¹³¹³

So the Sabbath was Jewish.

The old covenant God made with Israel was a good thing so far as it went, but it was all law-oriented. Although Ratzlaff acknowledged that Israel did not keep the covenant, God received most of the blame for making a less than perfect covenant with Israel. He enumerated the problems:

. . . God chose to make the old covenant a covenant of great detail. Because of *Israel's weakness* God gave them a list of do's and don'ts. Because of the minutiae of detail contained in the old covenant the *sons of Israel* stumbled as they applied the specifics of these laws to their real-life experiences. A third shortcoming of the old covenant was that God limited His revelation of truth *because of their weakness*. The old covenant revelation. . . was fragmentary and incomplete. . . . A fourth deficiency of the old covenant was that it did not provide *real* freedom from sin.¹³¹⁴

This really placed a heavy burden on God for making a defective covenant with Israel. Ratzlaff never did acknowledge in his book that Israel made a promise to obey God's law, "We will do," which might have something to do with its being the old covenant of works-righteousness.

Ratzlaff constructed his idea of the Sinaitic covenant after the Near Eastern suzerainty treaties. Speaking of the two tables of stone Ratzlaff said: "One copy was for the vassal (Israel) and the other was for the Suzerain (God)."¹³¹⁵ So this covenant had two parties involved in the agreement. Israel must obey in order to obtain blessings from God. God made a covenant of works-righteousness with Israel.

¹³¹³ Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 41.

¹³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 205. Emphasis his.

¹³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Ratzlaff did not believe that the ten commandments were part of any previous covenants God made in the Old Testament. He said:

. . . The stipulations of the Sinaitic Covenant were *not* included in the covenants God made with Noah or Abraham. . . .

The Ten Commandments and the other laws of the “book of the covenant” were *not* given to Abraham, or to “the fathers” as part of the covenant stipulations God made with them.¹³¹⁶

The unacknowledged assumption lying behind this statement was that God made a different kind of covenant with Noah and Abraham than He did with Israel. If this was the case, then God’s way of salvation was different for various times and circumstances.

Not only was this the case for the Old Testament, but also for the New Testament.

Comparing the old and the new covenants Ratzlaff said:

Just as the old, slow, cumbersome, hand-operated calculator has been antiquated by the new, fast, compact, electronic computer, so the old covenant has been antiquated by the new. Not that the old was bad, for it was not. It was the best for its time, but now, new better things have come.¹³¹⁷

It was clear that Ratzlaff had at least three or four dispensations strung along the Old and New Testaments’ timeline: the Noachic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, the Sinaitic covenant, and the new covenant.

He went on to say: “The old covenant was given ‘to the fathers’ ‘long ago,’ for the time then present. The new is given ‘to us’ ‘in these last days.’ The old revelation of truth was incomplete, fragmentary: ‘God spoke.’ In the new revelation God speaks with finality: ‘God has spoken.’”¹³¹⁸

¹³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38. Emphasis his.

¹³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

God's "fragmentary" revelation impeded Abraham from fully comprehending the divine promise, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Ratzlaff said this "shadowy" statement "was not fully understood by the fathers. It would take hundreds, yes thousands of years before the full meaning of that succinct statement would be fully understood."¹³¹⁹

The Apostle Paul made it clear that God preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to Abraham in this promise (Galatians 3:8). Ratzlaff had not done his homework in the book of Galatians regarding the covenants. He never dealt with the crucial chapters of Galatians 3 or Hebrews 8 in a significant manner for his understanding of the two covenants.

Ratzlaff had the same idea regarding the forgiveness of sins in the Old Testament that was frequently encountered in Adventist covenant theology. He said:

While in the old covenant we see God's mercy time and again, nevertheless, complete forgiveness was only typified, as Christ had not yet died for the sins of the world. In the new covenant God *really* deals with grace and mercy, and Christ, as our substitute and surety, fulfills the covenant stipulations for us.¹³²⁰

Thus forgiveness which the patriarchs experienced was typical and anticipatory rather than real. This made Old Testament believers second class children in God's family.

All of this was to emphasize that Ratzlaff's covenant theology was filled with dispensational assumptions. Perhaps he picked this up somewhere from his Adventist theological heritage. Whatever the source, it led him to abolish the ten commandments with the termination of the old covenant. When he did finally deal with Galatians 3, Ratzlaff revealed his understanding of the "added law" (vs. 19).

¹³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 193. Emphasis his.

In answer to “Why the Law?” Paul says, “It was added because of transgressions. . . *until the seed* should come to whom the promise had been made” (Gal. 3:19). . . . [Gal. 3:23, 24 quoted.]

. . . Paul calls the law our tutor, then says we are no longer under a tutor. In other words he is saying that *the old covenant law no longer has authority over the life of a Christian.*¹³²¹

He understood the coming of the seed to be Christ’s first advent. The law of the old covenant was abolished with the coming of Christ. “The old or first covenant which included the Ten Commandments was in force only until the death of Christ.”¹³²² He was oblivious to the law’s function of convicting the sinner and driving him to Christ which was its perpetual function as long as sin should last. He could only think dispensationally in terms of interpreting Galatians 3:19, 24, 25. This had been Canright’s downfall too.

Ratzlaff concluded: “(1) The law was given 430 years after Abraham *until* the coming of Christ. (2) With the coming of Christ we are no longer *under* the Law. (3) Christians are to ‘*cast out*’ the old covenant and those who promote its being kept.”¹³²³ This seemed to be irresistible logic.

Ratzlaff was correct about the “added law” and the “tutor” being the moral law. He was wrong about the coming of the Seed being the first advent. He was right about casting out the old covenant, but the law was not the old covenant. God’s law was the basis of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:10). God wanted to write His law in their hearts and minds. Laws written on tables of stone under the old covenant was the result of Israel’s unbelief in Christ.

Ratzlaff left the Seventh-day Adventist church. He wrote against the church’s theology for the same reasons that D. M. Canright left the church. Both Ratzlaff and Canright held a

¹³²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199. Emphasis his.

¹³²² Dale Ratzlaff, “The Covenants: The Continental Divide of Biblical Interpretation,” *Proclamation* 2, 4 (August, 2001), p. 9.

¹³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 200. Emphasis his.

dispensational model of the covenants. They had a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between the old and the new covenants. No doubt some of this misunderstanding could be attributed to the disarray of contemporary Adventist covenant theology which exhibited many of the same characteristics as were found in Ratzlaff's covenant theology.

Adventists taught that the coming of the Seed was the first advent of Christ rather than the second advent. Some Adventists taught that the "schoolmaster" was the ceremonial law and others taught it was the moral law. The common denominator between many Adventist writers on the covenants and Dale Ratzlaff was an inherent dispensationalism. Until these problems were dealt with in Adventist covenant theology, thinkers like Ratzlaff would follow things out to their natural conclusion and it would lead them right out of the church. This had repeated itself over and over again. The lessons of Adventist church history have not been learned.

Clay Peck, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor of Grace Place Congregation, in Berthoud, Colorado, presented a series of sermons on "New Covenant Christians" from February to March, 1998. Peck was influenced by Ratzlaff's book, *Sabbath in Crisis*, which he acknowledged and recommended in the preface to his book. He taught that God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David were promises. In short, "God's covenant with Abraham was not a law covenant."¹³²⁴

However, he clearly associated the Abrahamic covenant with the old covenant.

God did speak during the old covenant, but it was in summary and shadowy form. For example, the statement made to Abraham, "In you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, NASB) was not fully understood by the forefathers. It would take hundreds of years before it would be fully understood as revealed in Christ.¹³²⁵

¹³²⁴ Clay Peck, *New Covenant Christians* (Berthoud, Colorado: Grace Place Publication, 1998).

¹³²⁵ *Ibid.*

If God spoke in “shadowy form” to Abraham, why did Moses teach that “. . . he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6)? God preached the gospel of Christ to Abraham, “In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8). There was nothing “shadowy” about this gospel.

Again, the covenant model taught by Peck was a contract involving at least two or three parties. He said: “It is interesting to see the structural parallels between the law of the old covenant and the suzerainty treaties of that time. . . . The structure of the ancient covenant treaties can be seen in the covenant given at Sinai.”¹³²⁶ God gave them a covenant which involved His promises in exchange for their promises. “In the old covenant the covenant partners were God and the people of Israel. God made promises to bless the Israelites if they were obedient and the people responded by promising to obey. . . .”¹³²⁷ God would give something if they would come through with their part of the agreement.

The ten commandments were the conditions of obedience laid down by God under the old covenant. Peck said: “What you need to see is that the old covenant was based on the Law and the people’s promise to obey it - the whole Law - the Ten Commandments along with all of the interpretations and expansions.”¹³²⁸ Why would God give them an old covenant? God gave them a law covenant because they were naive children by nature. They needed to be trained.

Interpreting Galatians 3:24, 25, Peck argued:

Whichever word you use, the role of the old covenant was temporary. Its purpose was to educate concerning what sin is and how much we need a Savior. It was for children, not grown-ups.

¹³²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁸ *Ibid.*

Now that we have the full reality of Christ, we no longer need the tutor. That means we no longer need the old covenant. That means we no longer need the law.¹³²⁹

So the bottomline was to get rid of the law and the necessity of observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Christ was the end of the law including the Sabbath rest. The Holy Spirit now replaced the role of the law as the One who convicts of sin.

In Galatians 3:19 Peck limited the duration of the law. He observed:

Please notice the word “until.” The law covenant, which had not existed before Moses, was “added” until the Seed came. The Seed is Christ (according to v.16)-- the promised seed or descendant of Abraham. . . .

The law was not given before Mount Sinai. . . .

The law was 430 years after the time of Abraham and was to be in effect as a covenant UNTIL Christ came. . . .

The old covenant was in effect up until the cross.¹³³⁰
Of course, the assumption behind this interpretation was dispensationalism. Peck taught:

When Christ said “It is finished”--it was! The veil in the Jewish Temple was torn from top to bottom signifying an end to the old, temporary system. The entire old covenant (which became known as a “ministry that condemns,” 2 Corinthians 3:9) was nailed to the cross - the old had passed away, the new had come. . . .

The law applied until Christ came and fulfilled it and established a new covenant.¹³³¹

He said this in so many words repeatedly throughout his sermons.

Of course, this effectively undermined the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath. As for Peck, he could take the Sabbath or leave it. “There were those in the early church as well as today who chose to worship on one day or another. And that is fine. Don’t judge each other. There is room for various opinions within the church as long as there is unity on the main thing -

¹³²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁰ *Ibid.* Emphasis his.

¹³³¹ *Ibid.*

the gospel.¹³³² Dispensationalism was devastating for the law, the Sabbath, the Old Testament, and soteriology.

The next pastor-casualty claimed by Dale Ratzlaff after Clay Peck was Greg Taylor.¹³³³ He was the former pastor of the Foster Seventh-day Adventist Church in Asheville, North Carolina. Taylor was influenced by the covenant theology of Ratzlaff and Peck. Taylor believed God made the old covenant with Israel at Sinai. “This included the Sabbath which was the continuing sign of allegiance to the Old Covenant. . . .”¹³³⁴

Taylor was operating from a dispensational frame of reference. He said: He [Christ] came to fulfill some of the aspects of the Old Covenant or Testament. . . . So I went first to the New Testament (Covenant or Will). . . .”¹³³⁵ He clearly identified the old covenant with the Old Testament and the new covenant with the New Testament. Here was a time-referenced understanding of the covenants.

With this assumption Taylor went on to read Galatians 3:16 as meaning that Abraham was not given the ten commandments. They were added at Sinai and expired at Calvary (Galatians 3:18). Taylor said: “Paul is saying that the law was added well after the promises to Abraham, until Christ. There was a definite BEGINNING and ENDING of the Law.”¹³³⁶ He understood Galatians 3:23 to mean--

What Paul is saying is that the promise of Christ came BEFORE the Law. It is independent of the Law. The Law was ADDED show (*sic.*) us our need of Christ. It was our tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by FAITH. Clearly Paul is pointing out that the Law was a TEMPORARY institution to show

¹³³² *Ibid.*

¹³³³ Greg Taylor, “North Carolina Pastor Studies His Way Out of Adventism,” *Proclamation!* 2, 4 (August, 2001), p. 20.

¹³³⁴ Greg Taylor, “An Open Letter to Friends and Family,” p. 18.
<http://www.ratzlaf.com/news.html>.

¹³³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

¹³³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14. Emphasis his.

us our need of Christ. But when we accept Jesus, we are under the covenant which was pre-circumcision and pre-law, the covenant with Abraham. The Christian now stands with righteous Abraham, an heir of the promise, bypassing the entire Law era!¹³³⁷

Dispensationalism overlayed everything Taylor said about Galatians 3. He believed that Galatians effectively dispatched the seventh-day Sabbath as old covenantism.

In summary, the confusion which prevailed regarding the issues of the law and the covenants within Seventh-day Adventist covenant theology over the course of a century and a half continued to bear the fruit of disaffection and defection. Inherent dispensationalism had impacted the way key passages of Scripture were interpreted. It was always the underlying assumption which caused the abolition of the ten commandments and the Sabbath. Dale Ratzlaff, Clay Peck and Greg Taylor were but several contemporary examples of a growing list of casualties which were the end result of Adventist covenant theology. How many more would have to be sacrificed?

¹³³⁷ Ibid., p. 15. Emphasis his.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study has been to understand the theological development of the law and the covenants in Seventh-day Adventist history from 1850 to 2000. It has been comprehensive in selecting a broad spectrum of Adventist writers over the course of a half century.

This monograph has been primarily a theological study of the motifs of the law and the covenants. Nevertheless, a few words might be appropriate regarding the personalities of the 1888 era. Some personal insights about the characters of individuals have been alluded to throughout the study. While one can never be quite sure about the character of people who have only been studied through research, there was some evidence about a few personalities.

E. J. Waggoner was an intellectual. He trained to be a physician and changed careers to become a pastor, teacher, writer and editor. He may well have had a posture which conveyed an air of egotism. He could be doggedly persistent and immovable once he set his mind to an idea. These characteristics were not too far afield from many pioneer leaders of the early Advent movement. But Waggoner was also a husband and father of two daughters. He loved teaching whether at the college level or among ministerial colleagues.

George I. Butler was a gifted administrator. In a small organization he had his influence in many diverse aspects of church operations. When he fell ill, it was bound to impact his personality and treatment of others, especially if he thought that others were responsible for his illness. He was a defender of the truth of Seventh-day Adventists. He knew who his opponents were in the larger religious scene. If disunity within the ranks of the church went on public

display, he could become dictatorial and controlling. He did remain loyal to the church until his dying day.

Uriah Smith was a tremendous writer, editor, administrator, and leader of men. There were many likable traits of character about him. He, too, could be unyielding once convictions had taken root. God used him in a mighty way to unify a fledgling, disparate group of believers. If he perceived a weakness in the doctrinal armor of his opponents, he could dismantle their arguments. In the end, if Elder Smith saw error, he could subtly oppose his adversaries without their even knowing what was going on behind the scenes.

The sincerity of these men in their endeavors within the work of the church is not to be questioned. They were utterly loyal to the cause of God and wanted only the best for the work and ministry. It was just a problem for them to know when they had crossed over the line into unjust treatment of others.

Having said that, the primary goal of this endeavor has been to trace a theological paradigm through the 20th century within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The law in Galatians and the covenants were crucial components in the Adventist's defense of the ten commandments and the sabbath. The antinomians charged that the law was abolished with the old covenant at the cross. The one law theory of the old covenant was the strongest argument of antinomians. They argued that the new covenant was instituted and ratified at the cross by Christ's shed blood. Therefore, New Testament believers were released from the law and the sabbath.

The Seventh-day Adventist theology of the law and the covenants developed out of its apology for the commandments and the Sabbath. They insisted on the two laws. God's ten commandments were an eternal law. The ceremonial laws of sacrifices and services in the Old

Testament were the Mosaic law. God's law was His covenant and was the condition upon which He made all other covenants with man.

During the 1850's, some Adventist writers took the position that the "schoolmaster" or "added" law in Galatians 3 was the moral law. Notably, Elder J. H. Waggoner held this position. However, believers in Vermont felt this weakened their argument with the antinomians. They sent Stephen Pierce to Battle Creek in defense of the ceremonial law interpretation of the "schoolmaster." After discussions and a vision from Ellen White, Waggoner's position was pronounced wrong.¹³³⁸ For the most part, this settled the issue that the "added" law was ceremonial.

As Seventh-day Adventist writers developed their law and covenant theology, it took on the dispensational flavor of their rivals, the antinomians. This became apparent very early in the Adventist papers. The pioneers believed that God made the old covenant with Israel in order that they might keep His law. He gave them ordinances to point them to the Saviour who would come and die. When Christ came, the old covenant with its ordinances was abolished. Christ instituted the new covenant with His disciples and the church by ratifying it with His blood at the cross. This covenant contained the same conditions for obedience as the old covenant. The ten commandments were the basis of both covenants. Since the "schoolmaster" law was the ordinances, they were abolished once "faith" came. The faith was understood as the coming of Christ and His teachings.

The Seventh-day Adventist emphasis on the law and the sabbath in their evangelism and debates during the latter part of the 19th century was so pronounced that the gospel took second

¹³³⁸ See chapter two of this study "The Covenants in Early Adventist Theology," pp. 7, 8.

place. There was a need for a more balanced message that was in harmony with the three angels' messages, which Adventists had been commissioned to proclaim to the world.

In the mid-1880's a young theologian and writer began publishing articles on righteousness by faith and the law. His name was E. J. Waggoner, the son of J. H. Waggoner, the editor of the *Signs*. By 1886, E. J. Waggoner was writing articles on Galatians 3-4. His position on the moral law as the "schoolmaster" was reminiscent of his father's, but there was a pronounced difference.

E. J. Waggoner viewed the relationship of the law and the covenants as the key theme around which the doctrine of justification by faith was organized. He came to this conclusion through the study of the Pauline writings. In short, Waggoner taught that God's new or everlasting covenant was the glad tidings of the everlasting gospel. In it were contained two chief benefits to meet the needs of the sinner. There were forgiveness of sins and divine aid for overcoming sin through God's righteousness by means of the Spirit of Christ. Thus, justification, or divine pardon, as well as justification by faith, or sanctification, was the fulfillment of the new covenant.

For Waggoner, the new covenant was all about the promise of God to be received by faith alone. This was God's plan for saving mankind ever since Adam fell into sin. God renewed the same covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All of the patriarchs believed God's promise and He accounted them righteous by faith. In effect, the plan of salvation in the new covenant was the same for sinners in any age whether before the cross or after. The new covenant between God and Abraham was all about how the conditions of God's law might be met. Believing in Christ, Abraham fulfilled the only condition for salvation. Christ was his

righteousness. Such genuine faith, founded upon the love of God for sinners, always manifested itself in genuine obedience. Christ in the life was the living law in the heart.

The old covenant was formally instituted at Sinai with Israel. It, too, was all about meeting the conditions of the ten commandments. However, God's intention at Sinai was to renew with the descendants of Abraham the same covenant which He had made with their faithful father. Had they believed as their progenitor, they, too, would have experienced the blessings of divine pardon and aid. Unfortunately, they did not sense their sinfulness or need and announced their decision to obey everything God placed before them. Their promise, then, became the old covenant. Basically, this principle of the old covenant had always existed since the inception of sin for anyone who approached God with the attitude of pride and self-reliance.

E. J. Waggoner's view of the two covenants was that they were two dispensations descriptive of the human condition of the heart in relationship to God. Both the old and the new covenants ran on parallel tracks down through the history of time. The sinner's belief or unbelief determined which track he was on in life. Thus, Waggoner's view of covenant dispensations was not bound by time barriers.

His view about the law in Galatians was related to his model of the covenants. Waggoner was a staunch defender of the perpetuity of the law for all time and eternity. However, the law without Christ was the old covenant. The law with Christ was the new covenant. Christ was offered to Israel at Mount Sinai. Through unbelief they rejected Him. The law without Christ was a curse for anyone seeking to obey it. The fault was with the sinner. Human promises were worthless when it came to obeying the ten commandments.

So then, why did God make the old covenant with Israel? Because they did not recognize their sinfulness. They boasted in their ability to keep their promise. If righteousness must come

by obedience, then God set before them a magnificent display of His awesome holy law and set it down in stone by His own finger. They must know what was required of them. They were completely ignorant of God's righteousness. This was God's purpose in giving the law. It was because of transgressions. The law defined sin. It locked up the violator for punishment like a correctional officer. The penalty was eternal death. The first use of the law was to convict sinners of their guilt. The second use of the law was to drive sinners to the only open door from that prison; that door was Christ. But the law could save no one because of the weakness of the flesh. This was how Waggoner understood Galatians 3.

His maverick position on the law in Galatians was published in the *Signs* and taught at Healdsburg College. It was this which catapulted him into the limelight of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The law question was a sensitive issue for the church leadership in Battle Creek. It became the focus of attention from 1885 to 1891. During this time, the process of attempting to resolve it was never successful. The results were an abundance of ill will and underhanded dealings at the highest levels of the church organization.

What was the real issue at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference? Elders George Butler, Uriah Smith, Dan Jones, and others believed it was the law in Galatians. The extant evidence from the 1888 Minneapolis conference indicated that the law question was a pronounced matter of consequence, but it was not the primary issue. Justification by faith and the gospel of the everlasting covenant were the keystone issues. But since the church leadership rejected the law question, they in turn misunderstood the message of righteousness by faith brought to the conference. Thus, both the law and the gospel were fatalities of the Minneapolis experience. In subsequent years, for those who rejected the light, it would become a more intense experience of legalism and covert subversion of their opponents.

The role that Ellen White played between the two sides was an interesting one. She did not have the light on the law question or the covenants at the time of the 1888 conference. Yet, she recognized light in the message of justification by faith brought by E. J. Waggoner. She supported the message of righteousness by faith wholeheartedly both at the conference and in subsequent venues for years to come.

Her role of authority within the Seventh-day Adventist Church was questioned during this period by the leading ecclesiastical authorities. She was suspected of being influenced by Waggoner, as well as her son, and of biasing the delegates at the conference. The evidence of her counsels at the meeting indicated that she sought to create a spirit of openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit through the study of the Scriptures. Church leadership did not have a right to dictate doctrine. No man was an oracle of truth. Sadly, the delegates were more in line with thinking as a group with their leader, Elder George I. Butler. They missed the Holy Spirit's blessing.

Specifically, the ceremonial law in Galatians became a "landmark" issue for them. They believed that, if they said "Amen" to justification by faith, they would have to say "Amen" to the covenants. And if they said "Amen" to the covenants, then they would have to say "Amen" to the moral law in Galatians 3. This they refused to do because the ceremonial law had become their spiritual idol. If they conceded the ceremonial law as the "schoolmaster," then they would be left with the moral law. And the problem for them was their dispensational model of the old and the new covenants. Since the old covenant was abolished at the cross with its ordinances, then the ten commandments would be abolished, too. They would have yielded every argument to their antinomian opponents. If the commandments went, then so did the sabbath. Then where would Seventh-day Adventists be?

The fate of the issues of justification, the covenants, the law and the Holy Spirit would be played out over the course of the next decade. Since some church leaders believed in justification already, they saw no need of the light on the law and the covenants. But these issues would not go away. They had to be revisited all over again in 1890 at the ministers' Bible school.

If the issue at Minneapolis was over the law, then the issue for the 1890 Bible school was the covenants. Again, the matter of the gospel in the covenants was to be placed at the top of the church's agenda. During this institute, Ellen White received divine confirmation, on March 6, 1890, of the truth regarding the covenants as E. J. Waggoner had presented it. She announced this revelation immediately through letters and in a public meeting.

There were some admissions on the part of church leaders as to bad feelings during arguments over the law and covenants. This institute of 1890 was often looked back to as a turning point in the aftermath of what took place in 1888. However, it has been documented, both from leadership records as well as Ellen White's writings, that there was no real reconciliation either to the message of the law and the covenants or to the healing of interpersonal relationships with the messengers of God: E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, and Ellen White.

It has been meticulously documented that official church papers blatantly opposed the Waggoner position on the law and the covenants. They continued to promote dispensationalism to the Adventist and non-Adventist readership. As a consequence, there was a rejection of the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide of the church in terms of doctrine and experience. That which could have been a blessing to the experience and mission of the church became a blight on its fellowship and teachings.

Ellen White said that some Adventist church leaders chose the devil over the Spirit of God. In doing this, they were just like the Jews and Pharisees who clung to their favorite interpretations of the Scriptures. When Jesus questioned them on their interpretations, they turned vengeful. In the end, the Pharisees murdered the Son of God, who had brought them the truth, because the truth had not come to them through acceptable channels.¹³³⁹ Likewise, some of the Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders were dangerously close to repeating the same mistake.

There were a few notable exceptions. A few confessed their error at Minneapolis. For example, W. W. Prescott, S. N. Haskell, D. T. Bourdeau and others seemed to have a grasp of the truth.

The pattern of opposition to the law question and the covenants continued through the decade of the 1890's until the turn of the century. Ellen White made statements as early as 1890 in relation to the law in Galatians. Her strongest endorsement of Waggoner's position on the moral law as the "schoolmaster" came in 1896. That vision was sent to Uriah Smith, one of the key leaders in the opposition movement.

In the meantime, E. J. Waggoner's ministry of writing and teaching shifted from the early years at the Pacific Press to London and the International Tract Society, where he served as editor of *The Present Truth*. Some of his more productive efforts, in writing his view of the law and the covenants, were done through this paper. His series on "The Everlasting Gospel" in 1896-97 was later published by the title *The Everlasting Covenant* in 1900. His "Studies on Galatians" were serialized through the columns of the *Signs* from November 24, 1898-May 17, 1899. They were later republished as *The Glad Tidings* in 1900. These later productions were the fuller development of concepts which were clearly evident back in 1884-1886. The preferred

¹³³⁹ E. G. White, Sermon, March 8, 1890, Battle Creek, Michigan. *EGW 1888*, pp. 595, 596.

source of information as to what Waggoner presented at the 1888 conference was these earlier writings. His “Comments on Galatians 3” series, during the late summer of 1886 in the *Signs*, was a good source of information about what was said at the Minneapolis Conference. Waggoner’s *The Gospel in Galatians* is perhaps the key document in order to determine what Waggoner argued during the discussions of 1888. This was not to say that later writings were of no importance for determining the 1888 message, for these reflect the same concepts with little or no variation from the earlier writings of Waggoner.

It has been comprehensively demonstrated that throughout the twentieth century the faith and works covenant theology of George Butler and Uriah Smith was perpetuated. This included dispensationalism. Undoubtedly many of the writers during this period were oblivious to their legalism and periodization of the covenants.

The recitation of the long list of writers was not meant as a criticism on them personally. Whenever writers have published their covenant theology for a readership, it entered the public domain and thus had a formative impact on the minds of others. The search for truth regarding the plan of salvation in the covenant has vital bearing on the message and mission of the church. Therefore, interaction with these writers was fully justified.

The conclusion of this study is that the contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Church has, for the most part, been raised on old covenant theology. In both its evangelism and in its theological training of the leadership, the predominate influence has been faith and obedience for salvation. In this respect it resembled the Roman Catholic dispensational covenant model.

In addition, Adventist covenant theology which sees the old and the new covenants as one everlasting covenant has more resemblance to Roman Catholic ecumenical covenant theology than what God gave His church in 1888. Norbert Lohfink was one example:

The “new covenant” of the book of Jeremiah is the renewal and new institution of the covenant of Sinai. It includes the same torah. The “new covenant” of the New Testament is the eschatological fullness of this “new covenant” which has already begun with the return of the exiles from Babylon; it is in this that contemporaneous Jews also stand who do not believe in Christ.

I lean therefore to a one covenant theory which however embraces Jews and Christians, whatever their differences in the one covenant, and that means Jews and Christians of today. This is “ecumenism” at its most basic. . . .¹³⁴⁰

Why would Adventists want to build on a theological model which would facilitate the ecumenical covenant theology?

Many who call themselves Adventists do not love and cherish the imminent return of Christ. Could it be that they do not have the faith and righteousness necessary to be prepared to see Him come? Few desire translation and prefer going to heaven by the underground route. They are afraid they will not be able to stand before God when there is no Mediator. This will be a time when there will be no more forgiveness of sins after probationary time closes. It does not mean that the sealed ones have no Saviour. But they will not be sending any more sins into the heavenly sanctuary to be forgiven because they will not choose to sin. All unbelievers will stand alone without a Mediator. They would not choose to resort to Him for the forgiveness of their sins because they have rejected His gift by persistent unbelief.

Christ’s return may well be delayed for decades unless this problem is addressed. Only the pure message of the new covenant which is justification by faith, the third angel’s message in verity, can remedy the problem. The faith of Jesus is the gold tried in the fire. The white raiment is Christ’s righteousness. And the eyesalve is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the form of the latter rain.

¹³⁴⁰ Norbert Lohfink, *The Covenant Never Revoked: Biblical Reflections on Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991), p. 84.

Although some progress has been made with regard to the problem of dispensationalism among church leadership, it has not been adequately dealt with among the laity and some leaders. Dispensationalism continues to be taught in a very subtle, unwitting fashion through various publications.

Finally, it cannot be emphasized too strongly, that the 1888 message was a package of motifs which could be characterized as the third angel's message in verity. It was the light that was necessary in order to bring the church and the world into a position of readiness for the return of Christ. That package included: justification by faith, the covenants, the law, and the beginning of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit in the context of the sanctuary message. Any one component left out would leave the picture incomplete and thus distort the truth.

The door of the heavenly sanctuary has been flung open to reveal the holiest of all in the Book of Revelation. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament. . . ." (Revelation 11:19). This is none other than the ark of the everlasting covenant. It contains the mercy seat and the ten commandments. Here is where the climactic work of the final atonement is now in progress.

The complete sacrifice for sin was made at Calvary. Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary has been making the final atonement since 1844. His work is to cleanse the sanctuary of sin. In order to do that sin must be cleansed at its source which is in the lives of His people. God has made Himself responsible for the sins of the world in His sanctuary. However, sin cannot continue indefinitely. Those who choose to participate in the cleansing work of their lives will be in harmony with their High Priest. The source of sin must be removed in order that the heavenly sanctuary may be cleansed.

God's purpose in the cleansing is to bring about atonement between Himself and the people. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). This is the goal of the final atonement. God shall tabernacle in the midst of His people--in their hearts and in their minds.

Christ's ministry in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary accomplishes the goals of the new covenant. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10). The new covenant brings about a heart and mind reconciliation with our God so that we become His temple.

Furthermore, ". . . I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). Sin will be completely removed from their lives. There will be no sin remaining in God's universe. The atonement is finished.

The priesthood of Christ and the covenant are intimately related. The Epistle to the Hebrews particularly brings this to the forefront. "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament . . . But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:22, 24, 25). His priesthood is rooted in the everlasting covenant. Christ as High Priest is "able to save perfectly those who come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25). The new covenant priesthood perfects those who come to God through Him.

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not teach perfectionism. Holy flesh is completely foreign to Scripture. Perfectionism teaches that before Christ's return the redeemed will attain holy flesh. They cannot be tempted.

However, the perfection which is taught in the new covenant has to do with the heart and the mind (Hebrews 8:10). "Let this *mind* be in you which was in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Perfection of the mind or character is attainable through the ministry of Christ. This has to do with the will or choice of man. If the believer chooses to have the mind of Christ, nothing can cause him to succumb to the temptation of sin. But this does not mean that the believer is beyond being tempted. The mind of Christ condemns sin in carnal flesh. Even the converted man who is a new creature in Christ resides in sinful flesh and is therefore subject to temptation. The Apostle taught the power of the gospel to cleanse the mind of sin.¹³⁴¹ "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament. . . . (Hebrews 9:14, 15). The conscience (mind) is purged of sin. This is the work of the "eternal Spirit" by means of the "blood of Christ." This is the gift of Christ the Mediator of the new covenant. Perfection is not something required of the believer. It is the High Priest's gift of the new covenant to the believer. Character perfection is His work.

What are "dead works"? The penalty for sin is death. So "dead works" are sin which result in death. But the Mediator's gift cleanses the mind of sin. Hence, the believer does not choose to sin. His mind is purged from sin which results in perfect love and righteousness.

¹³⁴¹ I am indebted to A. T. Jones for the following thoughts. A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* (Boise Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988), pp. 57-63.

The aim of the law under the old covenant was to accomplish this work of purging the conscience. But note what the Apostle taught. “For the law having a shadow of good things to come. . . can never with those sacrifices. . . make the comers thereunto perfect. . . For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins” (Hebrews 10:1, 2). Perfection of the conscience from sins was the unattainable goal of the old covenant. But what was unattainable under the first covenant has become a reality through the new covenant ministry of Christ, namely, perfection of conscience. As LaRondelle observed:

But Christ by His single offering has brought about the purification of sins and the cleansing of the conscience of the worshipper. The forgiveness of sins through Christ brings the reality of a cleansed or perfect conscience, i.e., a conscience free from divine condemnation and the defiling power of sin.¹³⁴²

A perfect conscience is a mind that chooses not to sin because it has been purified by the sacrifice of Christ.

Note how the inspired writer developed his argument. “. . . Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” (Hebrews 10:8, 9). Removed is the “first,” i.e., sacrifice, burnt offerings, and offering for sin. The “second” is established, i.e., God’s will.

What is God’s will? “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). The will of God is our sanctification. Sanctification is manifested in the keeping of all the commandments of God. Indeed, this is what

¹³⁴² H. K. La Rondelle, *Perfection and Perfectionism: A Dogmatic-Ethical Study of Biblical Perfection and Phenomenal Perfectionism* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1971), pp. 194, 195.

the Apostle had in mind. “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16, 17). The whole purpose of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and His high priestly ministry is the perfection of the church. “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). Sanctification is the means by which the church can be translated to see her heavenly Bridegroom.

But what is the consecrated way to the beatific vision?

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. . . .¹³⁴³

What is the consecrated way to the holiest of all? What is the way to a cleansed heart? What is the way to a cleansed “evil conscience”? Sin is the cause of mental illness. All humanity is mentally ill. Only the Heavenly Psychiatrist, Jesus, can heal the mind and conscience of sin.

The consecrated way to Christian perfection is through the veil of his flesh. Christ took the common sinful flesh of humanity. He united His divinity with our humanity. He took our will, our heart enmity, and alienation from God. He was tempted. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). “Our infirmities” were our moral weaknesses. Temptation had access to Him through our weaknesses. And, yet, He was “without sin.”

As the prototype He demonstrated that Satan had not invented something over which God was powerless. He took post-lapsarian human flesh exactly where sin had taken up residence

¹³⁴³ Hebrews 10:19-22.

and reigned and proved that it had no reason to exist there. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:3, 4). And if one perfect prototype could be produced, such as Christ, then many more models could be made from it.

The whole purpose of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is to stop the stream of sin which flows from the people. It is to prepare a perfect people ready for translation to see their heavenly Bridegroom. This people will have their “evil conscience” cleansed of all heart alienation from their Redeemer. They will love the thought of the imminent return of Christ. The law of God, His righteousness, and love will transform their hearts and minds. All human generated fear will be cast out and replaced by divine love. They will overcome Laodicean lukewarmness which manifests itself in an unknown and unrecognized sin of heart alienation from God.

All of this is included within the new covenant ministry of Christ’s work in the sanctuary. It can now be seen that the message of the everlasting covenant is the all-encompassing theme of the Bible. It is the thread which unites the Old and the New Testaments. The covenant in its end-time setting is the third angel’s message which is joined by that mighty fourth angel of Revelation 18:1. It is the loud cry message that will be empowered by the latter rain of the Holy Spirit.

The application of this study for contemporary use is of great significance. The Seventh-day Adventist Church of the 21st century is facing the same issues regarding the law and the covenants as did our late 19th century church leaders. Writings on the web and through

publications are challenging the integrity of the Adventist message of justification by faith, the ten commandments, and the Sabbath. It is claimed that Adventists are legalistic old covenant

Christians who need to come into the light of the new covenant.¹³⁴⁴ Unsuspecting members of the church need to have the light on these vital truths for their experience. Otherwise, they can become easy prey to articulate opponents with a message that seems reassuring.

The message of 1888 needs to be revived among God's remnant people. It will provide the key which will give new meaning, purpose, and identity to a church that it is in danger of losing its sense of message and mission.

¹³⁴⁴ Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis* (Applegate, California: Life Assurance Ministries, 1989). Gulley recognized the inherent dispensationalism of Ratzlaff and D. A. Carson. "Behind their thesis, the Carson and Ratzlaff books posit a radical difference between the old covenant and its Sabbath and the new covenant and Christ. But does not such a distinction between the two covenants question the unity of the Old and New Testaments and the unity of the plan of salvation? Does God change? Is He different in the New Testament and its covenant from what He was in the Old Testament and its covenant?" Norman R. Gulley, *Christ Is Coming!: A Christ-centered Approach to Last-day Events* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), p. 336.

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