

Jones and Waggoner – Reformers

(A Thought Paper)

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The “Falling Away”

When we think of the protestant reformation, our minds go back to the time of John Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome, Martin Luther, Zwingli and the protestant princes of Germany. These reformers were men who stood for principle, during a time when such men were few, and taking a stand involved great risk. At that time, the church established by Jesus Christ, had fallen away from many of the truths that had been delivered to her by Christ and the apostles. Among those truths temporarily lost to the church, were fundamentals like, the Bible Sabbath, baptism by immersion, and the doctrine of righteousness by faith, which is the very principle of the gospel. Also lost to the understanding at that time were Bible concepts like the state of the dead, prayer, the priesthood of all believers, and the proper understanding of the second coming of Christ. These truths were replaced with strange concepts, foreign to the Bible, like the natural immortality of the soul, praying to saints, and the concept of purgatory. On the scene of that dark period of superstition and man-made tradition, men arose who were led of the Holy Spirit, to lift up the word of God and point the people back to way of life.

Before the start of the great apostasy, the apostle Paul had prophesied of what was to come in his epistle to the Thessalonian believers. Speaking of the coming of the Lord he wrote,

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. 2:1-4, NKJV).

Evidently, false teachers of Paul’s day had circulated the idea that the day of the Lord had already come. In response, Paul warned the Thessalonian believers that there would be a great apostasy or “falling away” *before* the Day of the Lord would come. This prophecy was literally fulfilled primarily during the 1260 year period of Papal supremacy. During this long dark period of church history, God’s sanctuary was trampled underfoot, and truth was cast to the ground (Dan. 8:12).

The people of that time were deprived of the Bible¹ and with the light of the scriptures thus removed all manner of man-made teachings and requirements proliferated. Conditions in some parts of society became so terrible it is apparent that it was Satan’s purpose to completely annihilate the human race. Had

¹ The Bible was hated, and efforts were made to rid the earth of it. The people were forbidden to read it, on pain of death; and all the copies which could be found were burned (E.G. White, *Early Writings*, 215).

not God intervened, it is clear that he may have succeeded. Into this midnight darkness of the great “falling away,” God raised his standard bearers to give light to the people and point the way back to him.

Lucifer’s Argument Against God

The issues of the great controversy between Christ and Satan are illuminated by the events of the dark ages. In the very beginning of the great controversy, Satan had taken issue with God. He accused him of injustice and suggested by his own course of action that God was unfit to rule the universe. Not only must the government of heaven be reformed, but Satan alleged that God Himself should be dethroned and replaced by another ruler more just than Himself.

We can see these arguments clearly articulated in the thoughts and words of Lucifer recorded in Isaiah 14, where speaking of Lucifer the Bible says,

For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of the congregation on the further sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High’ (Isaiah 14:13-14).

Perhaps, it is possible Lucifer did not fully realize at the outset, that in the thoughts expressed in Isaiah 14, he was charging God with unfitness for office. Perhaps, He did not realize that what he was proposing was to replace the head of the government of heaven with himself. (There can only be *one* “Most High.”) This was the first manifestation of the basic definition of sin, the “unconscious” “will to kill God.”² Thus the devil was “a murderer from the beginning.”³ “Unconscious” though it may have been, this was the necessary conclusion if his plans were they to be realized. And this was a necessary eventually, if his charge against God had any validity at all. Calvary has demonstrated this conclusion.

Satan’s chief point of controversy with God, from the start, has been the law. “He took the position that the law of God was against the heavenly intelligences, and the warfare and controversy between Christ and Satan was started in heaven and is going on in the earth to the present day.”⁴ “From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan’s purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth.”⁵

Satan’s Strategy Unveiled

During the long period of papal supremacy [538 to 1798], Satan, working through the papacy, sought to accomplish his original objective. It appears that he may have thought his objective was reached when he succeeded in inspiring the visible church leadership into “thinking to change” the law of God, by instituting a spurious day of worship in place of the seventh-day Sabbath. From that time, until now, the majority of Christians in the world ignorantly worship on the day which Satan has established in the place of the Lord’s Sabbath. By targeting the fourth commandment, Satan has taken aim at the heart of the law of God. If the one commandment containing the seal of the law, the commandment that specifies God’s name, title, and

² Donald K. Short, *Then Shall the Sanctuary be Cleansed*, p. 35

³ John 8:44

⁴ E. G. White, Ms 11, 1886

⁵ E. G. White, *Darkness Before Dawn*, p.29

territory, could be changed, the change would virtually prove the entire law subject to change. Thus by his attempt to change the fourth commandment of the moral law, Satan has sought to in effect overthrow all of the authority behind the law and the government of heaven. Thus we see the dark ages as a period during which Satan struggled quite directly against the government of heaven, intensifying his assault in the great controversy.

The Spirit of Prophecy reveals more about Satan's strategy in the controversy:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven (E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.4).

Here we find expression of the very heart of Satan's argument against heaven. It appears the human race has never been his ultimate objective. Satan has always had a greater objective in mind. His claim is: God's law cannot be kept. If this claim is true, there is fault with the Law-giver. Satan has prematurely claimed victory on this point, by claiming that Adam's sin proved that the law could not be kept. This claim has been disproven by the perfect obedience of Christ. Nevertheless, the claim exposes Satan's line of reasoning.

Satan has further claimed that justice is inconsistent with mercy, and pardon is impossible for the sinner. Apparently, Satan is really arguing that pardon is tantamount to "injustice". It appears he could not see how God could possibly maintain his claim to be just, and at the same time give the appearance of ignoring the just demands of the law by pardoning the transgressor of the law. If, he claimed, God should remit the punishment of sin He would by that act commit "injustice," for He would not be upholding the demands of his own law.

Justice and mercy are the concepts that needed to be understood by both men and angels.

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.⁶

⁶ E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 764

In these treasonous and rebellious deeds enacted by Satan, the plotting and manipulating of important circumstances during the dark ages, the important issues of the controversy were exposed and the need for a deep and profound reformation was clearly established. The enemy has established his line of thinking even in the minds of many who may have thought they were God's people. Yet, they are following Satan's program and helping to establish his argument against heaven.

The Protestant Reformation

John Wycliffe was one of the earliest of the reformers. He fearlessly exposed the evils of the monks and friars, and with a holy boldness exposed the evils of the pope himself. Before reaching the age of sixty he fell ill, worn out by a life of unceasing toil, study, and assaults. Yet his greatest work and contribution to the reformation lay ahead. "He lived to place in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful of all weapons against Rome—to give them the Bible. . ."⁷

After Wycliffe, other men arose inspired by the Spirit of God to restore to the people, step by step many of the Bible doctrines that had been taken away during the dark ages. Bible study, prayer, baptism by immersion, the priesthood of believers, Christian witnessing, and other Bible concepts, were all restored as the reformers worked relentlessly to point the people back to the Word of God.

Martin Luther would arise after Wycliffe to restore that important Bible doctrine, justification by faith. Martin was an excellent student but it may have been his prayer life that gave him his ultimate advantage. Martin often said, "To pray well, is the better half of study."⁸ He would often spend hours in prayer. Martin would later declare that "Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures."⁹ In that statement we hear one of the fundamental principles of the Protestant Reformation, in which Luther would reluctantly become a champion.

We are all familiar with the primary event that precipitated Martin Luther 95 Thesis. He was ascending "Pilate's staircase," on his knees "when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him: 'The just shall live by faith.' Romans 1:17. He sprang to his feet and hastened from the place in shame and horror."¹⁰

It is believed that this was the primary experience that enabled him to correctly identify the Bible's definition of justification by faith, as far as he was able to define it. Later refinements of these concepts would be facilitated by an understanding of the truth about heavenly sanctuary and the third angel's message. Yet, justification by faith as understood and taught by Luther, became one of the cardinal doctrines of the Protestant Reformation.

Additional Reforms Essential

Yet, with all that was accomplished by the Protestant reformers in the recovery of true Christianity and true Bible doctrine from the trash heap to which they had been consigned by the "little horn" and his confederates, the full glory of the gospel and its full power to completely vanquish the arguments of Satan

⁷ E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 89

⁸ D'Aubigne, b. 2, ch.2

⁹ E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 127

¹⁰ Ibid. 126

against the character of God remained to be revealed. Although the conflict over many of the issues of the great controversy was well underway, we as Seventh-day Adventists should realized that Satan's primary argument¹¹ against God had even at the end of the 18th century, remained untouched. And this argument would in fact proliferate and strengthen through the inaccurate understanding of the gospel actively proclaimed by many of the spiritual descendants of the reformers.

In the years since the start of the reformation several of the true Bible doctrines embraced by the reformers have actually been rolled back and old errors have again come to the forefront. The counter-reformation has succeeded in many respects in its mission to suppress the truth about God through a distortion of the gospel that sustains Satan's original charges against God. This prevents the vindication of his character, which must take place, before the end to conflict between Michael and Satan can take place. We shall focus on Satan's original primary argument, cited above: "if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice." It was to establish God in "error" on this point that the human race was brought into the controversy.

Implicit in this brief statement are many of the elements of Satan's primary argument. He has claimed God must execute the sinner because that is what the law requires. Pardon or "mercy," he has declared to be incompatible with justice. From a certain narrow perspective the Bible itself can be interpreted to support this argument. The Bible says, "The wage of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). It also says, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15:56). An interpretation of these texts can be made which suggests that pardon is against the law. Satan's argument is: if God pardons the sinner, He must do so by setting aside, ignoring, violating, or abolishing his own law. In other words, "God cannot be both just and merciful at the same time." This is in essence exactly what some of the "protestant" churches inadvertently imply, when they teach that at the cross God abolished the law. They seem to understand that this was necessary if we were to be pardoned. This claim is exactly Satan's argument against God in the great controversy. Thus his argument logically concludes that the law cannot be kept, not even by God Himself.

Reformers Among the Remnant

Shortly after the Papacy received its deadly wound (1798), God raised the Seventh-day Adventist movement to complete the Protestant Reformation. Over the course of its history, Adventism has gathered together all of the Bible truths recovered by the various Protestant Reformers. Adventism has also gone beyond the accomplishments of the Reformers by placing the capstone on the Reformation in the presentation of the third angel's message in verity. Unfortunately, Adventists have not fully realized God's purpose for the movement, nor have they recognized the genius of what the movement has in fact already accomplished.

In 1888 God raised two young men, reformers in every sense of the word, to recover to the church and help to present to the world, a clarified understanding of the most important Bible doctrine recovered by the Protestant reformers, "justification by faith." This doctrine is what Paul called "the truth of the gospel."¹² It is the most fundamental principle of the gospel. Jones and Waggoner presented a clarified

¹¹ "The law cannot be kept, and pardon is tantamount to injustice" is appears to be Satan's primary argument.

¹² Gal. 2:5, 14, Eph. 1:13, Col. 1:5

understanding of this fundamental principle, by expanding our understanding of the concept of “justification” as taught in the Bible.

They saw the Bible concept of justification as including more than a forensic justification credited to the believers in Christ, as many Protestant churches have understood and taught. Jones and Waggoner understood that the Bible presents two distinct and unique phases of the process of justification. They saw the first phase as a legal or forensic justification of all mankind by virtue of Christ’s atonement accomplished at the cross of Calvary.¹³ The second phase of justification as presented in the Jones and Waggoner view is a heart transformation accompanied by a new understanding and appreciation of God’s law, all of which takes place when one understands and accepts what was accomplished at the cross for all mankind. The first phase of the process of justification has been called “legal justification” or “corporate justification” by some. The second phase of the process of justification is identified in the language of scripture as “justification by faith.”

Legal justification was ratified when Christ paid the legal penalty for sin on behalf of all mankind. As has been seen above, according to scripture “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). The Bible also declares, “the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Eze. 18:4, KJV). The reason this is true is because the law of God demands the death of the sinner. This principle is expressed in the following text: “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor. 15:56). (This death is not the inevitable outworking of a natural result of sin. “Natural” reactions or natural results cannot be suspended until other needful issues are addressed. They “naturally” follow immediately upon the fulfillment or presentation of the conditions necessitating them. However, in man’s case as well as Satan’s, the execution of the penalty of sin was delayed by God’s intervention, until other issues necessary to the understanding of the universe could be revealed and understood.) The history of the controversy reveals that death is a result of sin. Yet, the Bible declares that the death spoken of as the penalty for sin has been “abolished” by the death of Christ for all mankind (2 Tim. 1:10).

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-10).

By the execution of the death penalty (second death) in Christ, on behalf of the entire human race, the just demand of the law was actually fully satisfied. Therefore, the death penalty had to be “abolished” on behalf of the human race, unless God deals in double jeopardy. The law of God no longer demands the death of any man (except those who commit the unpardonable sin). In other words all mankind was legally justified (i.e. set right) before the moral law by the just claim of the law having been completely satisfied at

¹³ The seal of Heaven has been affixed to Christ’s atonement. His sacrifice is in every way satisfactory (E. G. White, *The Bible Echo*, May 22, 1899). And the Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ by receiving and welcoming Christ’s friends as His friends. He is satisfied with the atonement made (E. G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 15).

Calvary. This, the Bible's definition of the first phase of justification, was seen, understood, and proclaimed, by both A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner.

Waggoner wrote:

By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given himself for all. Nay, he has given himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift (Waggoner on Romans, p. 101).

Here, Waggoner speaks of the first phase of justification. It comes upon "every man." No special qualification is required, not even faith. The free gift comes upon all. Again, Waggoner said,

Christ died for all men; all men were under the condemnation of the law of God; and so he was made under its condemnation. By the grace of God he tasted death for every man [Heb.2:9] (The Gospel in the Book of Galatians, p. 293).

This will suffice to demonstrate Waggoner's understanding of the first phase of the process of justification, unilaterally accomplished for all mankind, though much more might be presented. However, this is not all that Waggoner believed on the subject of justification. He also wrote:

The will of God is our sanctification. 1 Thess. 4:3. He wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2:4 and He 'accomplishes all things according to the counsel of His will.' Eph. 1:11. "Do you mean to teach universal salvation?" someone may ask. We mean to teach just what the Word of God teaches—that 'the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men.' Titus 2:11, RV. God has wrought out salvation for every man, and has given it to him; but the majority spurn it and throw it away. The judgment will reveal the fact that full salvation was given to every man and that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright possession (*Glad Tidings*, p. 13, 14).

It can be demonstrated that Jones taught the same understanding of justification, though it appears that perhaps Waggoner may have used more precise language. We see in these quotation that Waggoner understood the process of justification include first of all an unconditional component, and then a conditional component. The conditional component depends upon faith and it can be nullified or voided by the choice to remain in unbelief by an individual. The free will of the individual is not violated by this process.

Completion of Reformation Delayed

This proclamation of the good news brought by Jones and Waggoner was controversial when it came to us in 1888 and the years after. There was much discussion and several attempts to refute and to deny the new perspective on justification presented by these two young ministers. Several individuals wrote letters to Ellen White asking if these things were true. It is apparent that they wanted to know whether Jones and Waggoner were on the right track. In response to these inquiries, Ellen White wrote:

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity."-- Review and Herald, April 1, 1890.

Evidently, there were some among us who understood that our message (i.e. the Adventist message) is the third angel's message of Revelation 14. The third angel appears in the context of the three angels of Revelation 14. Thus we should see that the third angel's message appears in a context defined by the first angel's message. The first angel says with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come" (Rev. 14:7). The "hour of his judgment" is the time when God is to be exonerated vis a vis the charges that have been brought against him by the adversary. We have examined these charges above.

Thus, we understand that when Ellen White said the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message in verity, she was saying the message brought to us by Jones and Waggoner is the message that vindicates God in the hour of His judgment. It is the message which answers the adversary's charges, especially the most prominent charge which we have described above. That is, his claim that God cannot be just and merciful at the same time. He implies that if God shows mercy by pardoning the sinner, He does so by breaking his own law which demands that justice must be satisfied.

The understanding of justification uncovered by Jones and Waggoner reveals that God has already addressed the issue of Satan's primary argument. It was addressed in His plan from the foundation of the world. This we see expressed in the verse which speaks of "the lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world."¹⁴ God's plan of salvation as revealed in scripture has satisfied the just demands of the law on behalf of all mankind by the death of Christ. The entire human race *was* legally justified. This was the only way that the law could be fully satisfied and it is the only way that God be just in allowing human beings to live after sin had entered the experience of the human race. This is the clear teaching of scripture:

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life (Rom 5:18).

Since Christ has satisfied the claims of the law of God, for every human soul, the just *penalty* for every sin ever committed by every human being that has ever lived, has been fully paid by Christ. Thus every human being has a right to temporal life, but only through the cross of Christ.¹⁵ This is mercy that is fully compliant with justice. Jones and Waggoner's message demonstrates that it was not necessary for God to abolish his law at the cross. Instead He fulfilled the law at the cross on behalf of every human soul. This justified every human soul to life but it did not confer the gift of eternal life. Justification unto eternal life is the outcome of justification by faith. This message, which fully vindicates God vis a vis the accusations of Satan in the great controversy, must be preached, in all the world, to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, before the end can come.

¹⁴ Rev. 13:8; also Rev. 17:8, Eph. 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20

¹⁵ E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 660

It is critically important and must be seen, (if God is to be vindicated) that it was absolutely necessary that every soul that has ever lived was fully legally justified, else Satan's argument stands when he charges God with injustice in showing mercy and allowing sinners to live. In order to perceive the potential validity of Satan's argument against God, we must see that the law of God does demand the *immediate* death of the sinner. Consider the following:

The moment the workmanship of God refused obedience to the laws of God's kingdom, that *moment* he became disloyal to the government of God and he made himself entirely unworthy of all the blessings wherewith God had favored him.

This was the position of the human race after man divorced himself from God by transgression. Then he was no longer entitled to a breath of air, a ray of sunshine, or a particle of food. And the reason why man was not annihilated was because God so loved him that He made the gift of His dear Son that He should suffer the penalty of his transgression (E. G. White, *Faith and Works*, p. 21, 22, emphasis supplied)

This statement articulates what scripture means when it describes God's warning to Adam, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."¹⁶ The very day that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, he should have died. He remained alive, because of "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world." When it is seen that God, through the gift of his Son has satisfied the demand of his law on behalf of all mankind (legal justification), the primary argument of Satan in the great controversy comes crashing to the ground. Then God stands vindicated before the universe, exonerated of all of the charges that Satan has brought against him. He is both just and merciful at the same time.

This is one of the fundamental issues of the great controversy and it is also one of the issues of the great Protestant Reformation. The gospel proclaimed by the many of the Christian churches today, contains a fatal weakness. It actually sustains one of Satan's charges against God. As long as the adversary's charges stand unanswered the great controversy must continue. As long as the issues of the great controversy have not been clearly understood and questions remain regarding God's conduct in the great controversy, the universe is not safe.

The Seventh-day Adventists movement has been raised to bring the end to the great controversy by completing the unfinished Protestant Reformation, the restoration of the true gospel to the world. Satan has already had ample opportunity to present his case against God, and he has presented his best argument. God's gospel properly understood as presented in the Bible has answered every one of Satan's arguments. God is revealed to be just in his dealings with the sin problem and in his governance of the universe. Yet, this truth is not well known.

The deceiver still has most of the world even the Christian world deceived and confused about God's character, about his conduct, and about his gospel. As long as the full truth is not known, the adversary must be allowed to continue to live, lest God be served out of fear rather than love.¹⁷ Until these great

¹⁶ Gen. 2:17

¹⁷ E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 23

issues are clearly understood the great controversy must go on. And they can only be clearly understood in the light of the gospel that came to us clearly in 1888.

Perhaps the saddest feature of the great controversy is the history of the movement represented by the third angel. This movement has itself become confused dare I say perhaps intoxicated by the wine of Babylon? We have in many respects accepted some of the same distortions of the gospel proclaimed by various elements of Babylon and failed to understand and appreciate the absolutely essential clarifications of the gospel that the reformers within our own midst have presented.

I believe this is why Ellen White wrote so long ago:

The true religion, the only religion of the Bible, that teaches forgiveness only through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, that advocates righteousness by the faith of the Son of God, has been slighted, spoken against, ridiculed, and rejected. It has been denounced as leading to enthusiasm and fanaticism (E. G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 469).

This statement is a succinct summary of what has happened to Adventism over the last 125 years. We have not heeded the messages sent us of heaven. We have rejected a clear, “thus saith the Lord,” and we have become entangled in a cesspool of confusion. This detour was not God’s will or his plan.

An Appeal

Elder Taylor G. Bunch was without doubt correct when he said, “What is known as the message of 1888 brought the Advent Movement to the very borders of the heavenly kingdom where was enacted the scenes which constitute the antitype of the Kadesh-Barnea experience of ancient Israel”.¹⁸ We know that it was not God’s plan that Israel should turn back at Kadesh-Barnea and wander in the wilderness for 40 years before the next generation finally entered the promise land.

It was not His good pleasure that they should wander so long in the wilderness; He would have brought them immediately to the Promised Land had they submitted and loved to be led by Him; but because they so often grieved Him in the desert, He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, save two who wholly followed Him. God required His people to trust in Him alone. He did not wish them to receive help from those who did not serve Him.¹⁹

We also know that it has not been God’s will that we, modern Israel, should remain here in this world for so many years²⁰. “So we see that they [ancient Israel] could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:19). “The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan.”²¹

How long will it be before we shall embrace the truths brought by the Lord’s reformers? How long before we believe the good news of the message they have brought us? How long shall we study, and analyze, and

¹⁸ Taylor G. Bunch, *Exodus and Advent Movements in Type and Antitype*, p. 127, (Teach Services edition)

¹⁹ E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 281.1

²⁰ RH 10-6-96; 6T450; DA 633-634; GCB 3-30-03; EV695; 8T115; 4SP292

²¹ E. G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 696

“prove all things,” before we shall acknowledge and receive the truth that the Lord has sent to us? Those who take the slow, cautious approach to truth should consider the warning:

There are those who have prided themselves on their great caution in receiving ‘new light,’ as they term it; but they are blinded by the enemy, and cannot discern the works and ways of God (E. G. White, *Special Testimony*, “*To Brethren in Responsible Positions*”, p. 12).

How long will it be, my brethren, before we shall cast aside our concern for the approval, understanding, and approbation of the world? How long before we are willing to sacrifice reputation, worldly honors, and worldly advancement, recognizing that this world is passing away, and lean upon and cling to Christ alone?

Conclusion

Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner may not have had the recognition, accreditation or imprimatur of the world’s great schools of theological thought. They may not have been accomplished Bible scholars. They did not have the degrees or the honors which this world has to offer. Yet, we have been told that they had, “heavenly credentials.”²² They were the Lord’s messengers²³ sent to bring us a “most precious message,”²⁴ which continues to be treated with suspicion and incredulity, some 125 years later. Jones and Waggoner were reformers in our midst. And it is becoming evident that their message will be urgently needed in the conflict that lies before us.

“The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.”²⁵ The issues of the great controversy have not changed. The enemy has not yet yielded his argument against the government of heaven. The accusations of the enemy will someday have to be finally, fully, and conclusively met. The Lord has given us, in the message that came to us in 1888, an understanding of the gospel that answers Satan’s argument and refutes his accusation against God. It vindicates God in the great controversy with evil. It is the answer that the world is waiting to hear.

“It is on the law of God that the last great struggle of the controversy between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels will come, and it will be decisive for all the world. . . .”²⁶ Can it be that this last “struggle,” this decisive crisis, has not yet fully come, because we have not yet embraced the understanding of justification in two phases that will prepare us to meet the issues of the conflict?

Adventism can never escape the charge that has been given of heaven. “For the gifts and calling of God *are without repentance*.”²⁷ When we shall in faith finally choose to rise to the challenge before us, when shall with deep repentance acknowledge our “offence,”²⁸ and take hold of the message the Lord has sent, we shall find heaven ready, willing, and more than able, to give us the victory.

²² E. G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 546

²³ Ibid., p. 1024

²⁴ E.G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 92

²⁵ E.G. White, *Conflict and Courage*, p. 204

²⁶ E.G. White, *Southern Watchman*, June 28, 1904

²⁷ Romans 11:29

²⁸ Hosea 5:15