

The Case of Edwin Jones--The Challenge to Balance and Focus
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Background for Letters

It was 18 months after the Minneapolis Conference. Another GC session had been held the fall of 1889, this one in Battle Creek, exactly a year after the Minneapolis one. After the first of the year 1890, a 5-month long ministerial institute ("Bible School") had begun.

O. A. Olsen reported that about fifty were in the Bible school. A. T. Jones taught Bible and history the first two-month term; Uriah Smith and Dr. E. J. Waggoner conducted the Bible classes during the second three-month term. Waggoner also taught church history and Hebrew. Professor McKee gave instruction in civil government a portion of the time. W. A. Colcord, with some members of the Review editorial staff, taught English and rhetoric (*ibid.*) [RH, April 1, 1890]. The first hour of each day was devoted to the spiritual interests of the students. Dan Jones reported:

These meetings were of especial interest the last few weeks of the term. Elder Olsen took charge of them, and Sister White attended many of the meetings, and bore her testimony with much freedom and power.

The restraint which had existed on the part of some connected with the school was removed by explanations that were made, and a tender spirit came in. The subjects of faith and the love of God were largely dwelt upon, greatly to the encouragement of all present.—*Ibid.*¹

As the decade of the 1890s began, within the church and its workers the battle between good and bad principles intensified. The better that this mixed picture is perceived, the better one is able to understand the next ten years. The Minneapolis fallout was continuing to undermine confidence in Ellen White's ministry. In this new year, lengthy meetings and much writing attempted to meet the issues at hand.²

During this spring of 1890 Ellen White's daughter-in-law Mary White was dying of tuberculosis. Ellen traveled to Colorado to see her, then on to California for about two months. She then returned to Colorado, and Mary died June 18.

In this ebb and flow of events, both church and family, Ellen White took time to write of and to a minister who for some very specific reasons had difficulty knowing how to work with others. His methodology as well as his theology was not fostering unity, but rather extremism. His name was Edwin R. Jones (ERJ). Let us consider lessons from his life, by reviewing the following pictures we have of him. These have been found by searching the digitized writings. (The digitized *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* back issues have not been searched.)

The major focus is the burden of Ellen White's May 19, 1890 letter to him.

¹ White, Arthur L., *Ellen G. White: Volume 3, the Lonely Years*, 1984, page 454.

² Many details of the fallout and issues are documented in *The Return of the Latter Rain*, by Ron Duffield.

Contents

Life Events (Birth 1845, Death 1892, Age 36)

Ellen White Letters Regarding and to ERJ:

May 8, 1890 (St. Helena, California): Letter 46 to O. A. Olsen, mentioning Edwin Jones

May 19, 1890 (Crystal Springs, California): Letter 15a to Edwin Jones (main content of this document)

June 9, 1890 (Denver, Colorado): Letter 114 to O. A. Olsen, mentioning Jones

July 4, 1890 (Battle Creek, Michigan): Letter 64 to Edwin Jones

June 11, 1893 (Wellington, New Zealand): Letter 16 to W. F. Calwell, mentioning Jones

*Life Events*³

1845 February 16

ERJ is born in Algansee, Branch County, Michigan (south central Michigan close to the northeast corner of Indiana).

1861

ERJ is converted (age 16).

1869

ERJ is noted to have pledged and paid \$5 for the Book Fund (age 24).⁴

1874

ERJ is ordained to the ministry (age 29).

1886 June 20

Letter from G. I. Butler to E. G. White mentioning ERJ:

Elder J.H. Waggoner was always much opposed to this view ["that law which is the main subject of discussion by the apostle in Galatians is the ceremonial law"], 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.R. 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

³ If no reference is given, the information is taken from the obituary given under "1892 February 23."

⁴ White, James, *Report of the Book Fund*, 1869, page 16.

than the moral law. I think this question ought in some way to be set at 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.⁵

1887 June 2

ERJ working in Sacramento, California:

At Sacramento, Cal., tent-meetings are being conducted by Elder E. R. Jones, with a good interest and steady attendance. The tent is located on the corner of Sixteenth and I Streets.⁶

1888 June 16

ERJ working in Portland, Oregon:

North Pacific Camp-meeting, East Portland, Oregon

Sabbath afternoon, June 16, Brethren H. W. Reed and W. C. Ward were ordained to the gospel ministry. Sermon by Elder E. R. Jones, prayer by Elder Samuel Fulton, and charge by Elder A. T. Jones.⁷

1890 May 8

Ellen White mentions ERJ in a letter to O. A. Olsen. Descriptive phrases:

"can never take a position and hold it sensibly"

"will regard matters in an intense light"

"his naturally extravagant ideas, his fruitful imagination places things of difference in the strongest light which he can put them in, and he leads minds to miscalculate, and carry things in so strong a manner that he does positive harm"

"he buries the simplest and most essential truths by his strong expressions, his extravagant imaginations"

"believe him to be perfectly honest, but there is such a strength of imagination, such wonderfully strong expressions"

See entire paragraph in section "*Ellen White Letters Regarding and to Edwin R. Jones.*"

1890 May 19

Ellen White writes one of two letters to him, this being her major one. Some highlights:

"You put things in a strong light; and your language is not guarded."

"dwell on such subjects as Christ's willingness to forgive sins, to receive the sinner, to save that which is lost, subjects that inspire hope and courage"

"your mind was at times unbalanced from trying very hard to study into and explain the mystery of godliness, which is just as great a mystery after your study and explanations as it was before"

"Lead the people to look to Jesus as their only hope and helper; leave the Lord room to work upon the mind, to speak to the soul, and to impress the understanding. It is not essential for you to know and tell others all the whys and wherefores as to

⁵ *Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis*, 1988, page 18

⁶ *Signs of the Times*, June 2, 1887, page 336

⁷ *Signs of the Times*, June 29, 1888, page 392

what constitutes the new heart, or as to the position they can and must reach so as never to sin. You have no such work to do."

"cease to dwell upon their peculiar ideas with the feeling, 'You must see this point as I do, or you cannot be saved.' Away with this egotism. The great work to be done in every case is to win souls to Christ. Men must see Jesus on the cross, they must look and live. It is not your ideas they must feed upon, but it is the flesh and blood of the Son of God."

"His dying love, manifested on Calvary, is the sinner's assurance of acceptance, peace, and love. Teach these things in the simplest form, that the sin-darkened soul may see the light shining from the cross of Calvary."

"You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy."

"Should many accept the views you advance, and talk and act upon them, we would see one of the greatest fanatical excitements that has ever been witnessed among Seventh-day Adventists. This is what Satan wants."

"There is a time of trouble coming to the people of God, but we are not to keep that constantly before the people, and rein them up to have a time of trouble beforehand. There is to be a shaking among God's people, but this is not the present truth to carry to the churches...."

"You are naturally combative. You do not care much whether you harmonize with your brethren or not. You would like to enter into controversy, would like to fight for your particular ideas; but you should lay this aside...."

"for Christ's sake do not present before them ideas that will discourage them, that will make the way to heaven seem very difficult"

"the completeness of the salvation proffered us from Jesus who loves us and gave Himself that we should not perish but have everlasting life, is to be the theme"

See entire letter in section "*Ellen White Letters Regarding and to Edwin R. Jones.*"

1890 June 9

Ellen White mentions ERJ in a letter to O. A. Olsen, visiting Olsen's dying brother in Colorado with ERJ. One highlight:

"has done his work earnestly, heartily, and devotedly, and he will receive a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away

See several paragraphs from this letter in section "*Ellen White Letters Regarding and to Edwin R. Jones.*"

1890 July 4

Ellen White writes a short letter to ERJ. Some highlights:

"I know that you can be a worker in the Lord's vineyard if you will not seek to be original and use so exaggerated language. You have been in danger always of coloring things."

"there has been and still is danger of your becoming unbalanced in mind and having perverted ideas in following your imaginings. You have a very vivid imagination and it runs at times without a balance wheel"

"Give the people the Bread of Life, the word of God in its simplicity. Repeat with your whole heart the message God has given you. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"Your mind is so constituted that you view everything in an extreme light and you need the help of Jesus to overcome this habit. I believe your heart is in the work and that the Lord will not leave you nor forsake you."

See entire letter in section "*Ellen White Letters Regarding and to Edwin R. Jones.*"

1890 July 19

ERJ writes to Ellen White, a 4-page handwritten letter. (Not digitized as yet.)

1890 August 31

ERJ writes again to Ellen White, a 5-page handwritten letter. (Not digitized as yet.)

1891 March 6

ERJ working in Colorado:

Workers in District Number Five - Southwest
Colorado - Joel R. Palmer, E. R. Jones.⁸

1892 January 3

ERJ's death

1892 February 23

ERJ's Obituary Notice by Uriah Smith in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*:

JONES.—Died in Battle Creek, Mich., Jan. 3, 1892, of internal cancer, Elder Edwin R. Jones, aged 36 years, 10 months, and 17 days, he having been born in Algansee, Branch Co., Mich., Feb. 16, 1845. At the age of 16 he was converted, and began in earnest study of the Bible, feeling a strong drawing towards the work of the ministry. Having become an expert at the lathe, he worked for a while in the shop to earn means to aid in the support of his widowed mother, and to secure for himself a better education. But he did not allow this occupation to interrupt his study of the Bible. On a little shelf, prepared for the purpose, he kept before him an open Bible, from which, while at work, many chapters, and even whole books of the sacred volume, were committed to memory. Ordained in 1874, he labored extensively in Michigan, Colorado, and California, filling for a time the position of president of the Colorado Conference. For several years before his death he seem to be in the enjoyment of a rich experience of the love of God and His sanctifying power. He came to Battle Creek at the time of the General Conference in March, 1891, and from that time till his death, nearly a year, was under the care of the Sanitarium. During this time many visitors had occasion to note his trustful and buoyant spirit in all his affliction. He was perfectly reconciled to the will of God, whether it might be life or death in his case. He leaves a wife and two daughters, his eldest, a promising son of sixteen, having

⁸ *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 6, 1891, page 3

died of diphtheria while they were in California, between two and three years ago. The funeral was largely attended at the Tabernacle, Jan. 6. U.S.

1893 February 24

ERJ mentioned in a resolution at 1893 General Conference Session:

Whereas, Since the last preceding gathering of this body, death has made serious inroads into our ranks, causing us to lament the decease of a number of our prominent members and laborers, among whom may be mentioned Elders R. F. Cottrell, and E. R. Jones, and Capt. J. M. Marsh and J. I. Tay of the "Pitcairn"; therefore,

12. *Resolved*, That while we mourn the loss of these brethren and laborers, we bow in submission to the providence which has removed them from us.

13. *Resolved*, That we extend to the friends immediately connected with these brethren, our sympathy in their bereavement, and that we will cherish with respect and affection their precious memory....

Resolutions 12 and 13, in regard to the death of Elders R. F. Cottrell and E. R. Jones, Captain Marsh and Brother J. I. Tay, called out appropriate and touching remarks from Elders Haskell, Saunders, Lamson, Loughborough, S. H. Lane, and Brother C. H. Jones. The resolutions were passed, the whole congregation, upon request, being permitted to participate in the vote upon them.⁹

1893 June 11

Ellen White in a letter to W. F. Caldwell described ERJ's room "filled with interested people while he was at the hospital at Battle Creek" when he was dying, but added, "Many were deceived, for the man seemed to be inspired.... This work was not of God." See entire paragraph in section "*Ellen White Letters Regarding and to Edwin R. Jones.*"

⁹ *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 26, 1893, pages 375 and 393

Ellen White Letters Regarding and to Edwin R. Jones

1890 May 8 [to O. A. Olsen]

Some ministers like Edwin Jones can never take a position and hold it sensibly. He will regard matters in an intense light. He will gather up little points of seeming difference and act as though he would stake his soul upon their verity and strength. He cannot discern that he can serve God with power and purpose too in dwelling on the large treasures of subjects in God's storehouse and feed the flock of God. All must stand shoulder to shoulder and step by step, keeping rank and file in perfect order. When there is no real variance in ideas, his naturally extravagant ideas, his fruitful imagination places things of difference in the strongest light which he can put them in, and he leads minds to miscalculate, and carry things in so strong a manner that he does positive harm. He confuses minds, he buries the simplest and most essential truths by his strong expressions, his extravagant imaginations so that his labors on this Coast are really a failure. They do more harm than they can possibly do good. Now what to do with cases of this character is a question. I believe him to be perfectly honest, but there is such a strength of imagination, such wonderfully strong expressions that his brethren are really afraid to put him to labor anywhere.¹⁰

1890 May 19 [to E. R. Jones]¹¹

[Crystal Springs]
St. Helena, California
May 19, 1890

Dear Brother K:

I expected ere this to see you and talk with you, or write to you; but I have not been able to do either, neither am I now able; but I feel a deep interest in you and am desirous that you shall not be separated from the work. I have not strength to do justice in conversation with you; your mind is so quick and your tongue so fluent, that I fear I should become very much wearied, and that which I might say would not remain distinct in your mind.

I see your danger; you can readily put your thoughts into words. You put things in a strong light; and your language is not guarded. Your views on some points are so expressed that you make your brethren afraid of you. This need not be. You should not try to get as far from your brethren as you can, making it appear that you do not see alike.

¹⁰ *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, page 646

¹¹ This first of Ellen White's letters to him is largely published in 1SM176-184 as footnoted. The bracketed portions at the ellipses are the remaining parts of the letter. The subheadings in 1SM, included here, are not in the original letter.

I have been shown that your influence for good is greatly lessened because you feel it your duty to express your ideas on certain points which you do not fully comprehend yourself, and which, with all your efforts, you cannot make others comprehend. I have been shown that it was not necessary for you to feel that you must dwell upon these points. Some of your ideas are correct, others incorrect and erroneous.

If you would dwell on such subjects as Christ's willingness to forgive sins, to receive the sinner, to save that which is lost, subjects that inspire hope and courage, you would be a blessing. But while you strive to be original and take such extreme views, and use such strong language in presenting them, there is danger of doing much harm. Some may grasp your thought and seem to be benefited, but when tempted and overcome, they lose courage to fight the good fight of faith.

If you will dwell less on these ideas, which seem to you so important, and will restrain your extravagant expressions, you yourself will have more faith. I saw that your mind was at times unbalanced from trying very hard to study into and explain the mystery of godliness, which is just as great a mystery after your study and explanations as it was before.

Differing Experiences in Conversion

Lead the people to look to Jesus as their only hope and helper; leave the Lord room to work upon the mind, to speak to the soul, and to impress the understanding. It is not essential for you to know and tell others all the whys and wherefores as to what constitutes the new heart, or as to the position they can and must reach so as never to sin. You have no such work to do.

All are not constituted alike. Conversions are not all alike. Jesus impresses the heart, and the sinner is born again to new life. Often souls have been drawn to Christ when there was no violent conviction, no soul rending, no remorseful terrors. They looked upon an uplifted Saviour, they lived. They saw the soul's need, they saw the Saviour's sufficiency, and His claims, they heard His voice saying, "Follow Me," and they rose up and followed Him. This conversion was genuine, and the religious life was just as decided as was that of others who suffered all the agony of a violent process.

Our ministers must cease to dwell upon their peculiar ideas with the feeling, "You must see this point as I do, or you cannot be saved." Away with this egotism. The great work to be done in every case is to win souls to Christ. Men must see Jesus on the cross, they must look and live. It is not your ideas they must feed upon, but it is the flesh and blood of the Son of God. He says, "My flesh is meat indeed" (John 6:55). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

Leave Christ Room to Work

The soul that accepts Jesus places himself under the care of the Great Physician, and let men be careful how they come between the patient and the Physician who discerns all the needs of the soul. Christ, the physician of the soul, understands its defects and its maladies, and knows how to heal with the purchase of His own blood. What the soul lacks, He can best supply. But men are so officious, they want to do so much, that they overdo the matter, leaving Christ no room to work.

Whatever molding and fashioning needs to be wrought in the soul, Christ can best do. The conviction may not be deep, but if the sinner comes to Christ, viewing Him upon the cross, the just dying from the unjust, the sight will break every barrier down. Christ has undertaken the work of saving all who trust in Him for salvation. He sees the wrongs that need to be righted, the evils that need to be repressed. He came to seek and save that which was lost. "Him that cometh to me," He says, "I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

Through the goodness and mercy of Christ the sinner is to be restored to the divine favor. God in Christ is daily beseeching men to be reconciled to God. With outstretched arms He is ready to receive and welcome not only the sinner but the prodigal. His dying love, manifested on Calvary, is the sinner's assurance of acceptance, peace, and love. Teach these things in the simplest form, that the sin-darkened soul may see the light shining from the cross of Calvary.

Satan is working in many ways, that the very men who ought to preach the message may be occupied with fine-drawn theories which he will cause to appear of such magnitude and importance as to fill the whole mind; and while they think they are making wonderful strides in experience, they are idolizing a few ideas, and their influence is injured, and tells but little on the Lord's side.

Let every minister make earnest efforts to ascertain what is the mind of Christ. Unless your mind becomes better balanced in regard to some things, your course will separate you from the work, and you will not know at what you stumble. You will advance ideas which you might better never have originated.

There are those who pick out from the Word of God, and also from the Testimonies, detached paragraphs or sentences that may be interpreted to suit their ideas, and they dwell upon these, and build themselves up in their own positions, when God is not leading them. Here is your danger.

You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy. We should not needlessly take a course that will make differences or create dissension. We should not give the impression that if our particular ideas are not followed, it is because the ministers are lacking in comprehension and in faith, and are walking in darkness.

Your mind has been on an unnatural strain for a long time. You have much truth, precious truth, but mingled with suppositions. Your extreme ideas and strong language often destroy the effect of your best efforts. Should many accept the views you advance, and talk and act upon them, we would see one of the greatest fanatical excitements that has ever been witnessed among Seventh-day Adventists. This is what Satan wants.

Leave Mysteries Alone

Now there are in the lessons of Christ, subjects in abundance that you can speak upon. And mysteries which neither you nor your hearers can understand or explain might better be left alone. Give the Lord Jesus Christ room Himself to teach; let Him by the influence of His Spirit open to the understanding the wonderful plan of salvation.

There is a time of trouble coming to the people of God, but we are not to keep that constantly before the people, and rein them up to have a time of trouble beforehand.

There is to be a shaking among God's people, but this is not the present truth to carry to the churches.... [original finishes sentence with "but results of decisions made to refuse to receive the truth presented."]

The ministers should not feel that they have some wonderful advanced ideas, and unless all receive these, they will be shaken out and a people will arise to go forward and upward to the victory. Some of those who are resisting the very principles of the message God has sent for this time, present just such cases as yourself. They point to your extreme views and teachings as an excuse for their neglect of receiving the Lord's messages.

Satan's object is accomplished just as surely when men run ahead of Christ and do the work He has never entrusted to their hand, as when they remain in the Laodicean state, lukewarm, feeling rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing. The two classes are equally stumbling blocks.

Some zealous ones who are aiming and straining every energy for originality have made a grave mistake in trying to get something startling, wonderful, entrancing before the people, something that they think others do not comprehend; but they do not themselves know what they are talking about. They speculate upon God's Word, advancing ideas that are not a whit of help to themselves or to the churches. For the time being they may excite the imagination, but there is a reaction, and these very ideas become a hindrance. Faith is confounded with fancy, and their views may bias the mind in a wrong direction.

Let the plain, simple statements of the Word of God be food for the mind; this speculating upon ideas that are not clearly presented there[,] is dangerous business.

You are naturally combative. You do not care much whether you harmonize with your brethren or not. You would like to enter into controversy, would like to fight for your particular ideas; but you should lay this aside, for this is not developing the Christian graces. Work with all your power to answer the prayer of Christ, that His disciples may be one, as He is one with the Father.

Not a soul of us is safe unless we learn of Jesus daily, His meekness, His lowliness of heart. When you go to any place to labor, do not be dictatorial, do not be severe, do not be antagonistic. Preach the love of Christ, and this will melt and subdue hearts. Seek to be of one mind and of one judgment, coming close in harmony with your brethren, and to speak the same things.

Talk Not of Divisions

This talking about divisions because all do not have the same ideas as present themselves to your mind, is not the work of God, but of the enemy. Talk the simple truths wherein you can agree. Talk of unity; do not become narrow and conceited; let your mind broaden.

Christ does not weigh character in scales of human judgment. He says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Every soul who responds to this drawing will turn from iniquity. Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. He who comes to Jesus is setting his feet upon a ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. Teach it by pen, by voice, that God is above the ladder; the bright rays of His glory are shining upon every round of the ladder. He is looking graciously upon all who are climbing painfully upward, that He may send them help, divine help,

when the hand seems to be relaxing and the foot trembling. Yes, tell it, tell it in words that will melt the heart, that not one who shall perseveringly climb the ladder will fail of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; those who believe in Christ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

Tell the people in clear, hopeful language how they may escape the heritage of shame which is our deserved portion. But for Christ's sake do not present before them ideas that will discourage them, that will make the way to heaven seem very difficult. Keep all these overstrained ideas to yourself.

While we must often impress the mind with the fact that the Christian life is a life of warfare, that we must watch and pray and toil, that there is peril to the soul in relaxing the spiritual vigilance for one moment, the completeness of the salvation proffered us from Jesus who loves us and gave Himself that we should not perish but have everlasting life, is to be the theme.

Day by day we may walk with God, day by day following on to know the Lord, entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, laying hold on the hope set before us. If we reach heaven it must be by binding the soul to the Mediator, becoming partakers of the divine nature. Leaning on Christ, your life being hid with Christ in God and led by His Spirit, you have the genuine faith.

Believing fully in the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, we shall be laborers together with God. Trusting in His merits, we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Always keeping hold of Christ, we are coming nearer and nearer to God. Jesus desires us to keep this always prominent. Do not arouse your combative spirit; the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. . . .

Harmonize With Your Brethren

[My brother, do not, by your extreme views and unguarded words lessen the confidence of your brethren in you.¹²] Do not think that you must make prominent every idea your imagination receives. Jesus said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). How much more should we, who are constantly liable to err, beware of urging upon others that which they are not prepared to receive. Constantly looking unto Jesus, restrain your strong, extravagant expressions. But while you should be cautious as to your words and ideas, it is not necessary that your labors should entirely cease. Seek to be in harmony with your brethren, and there will be plenty for you to do in the vineyard of the Lord. But exalt Christ, not your ideas and views. Put on the armor, [Bro. Jones,] and keep step with God's workers, shoulder to shoulder; press the battle against the enemy. Hide in Jesus. Dwell on the simple lessons of Christ, feed the flock of God, and you will become settled, strengthened, established; you will work to build up others in the most holy faith.

If you differ with your brethren as to your understanding of the grace of Christ and the operations of His Spirit, you should not make these differences prominent. You view the matter from one point; another, just as devoted to God, views the same question from

¹² This sentence can be found in *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 6, page 222.

another point, and speaks of the things that make the deepest impression on his mind; another viewing it from a still different point, presents another phase; and how foolish it is to get into contention over these things, when there is really nothing to contend about. Let God work on the mind and impress the heart.

The Lord is constantly at work to open the understanding, to quicken the perceptions, that man may have a right sense of sin and of the far-reaching claims of God's law. The unconverted man thinks of God as unloving, as severe, and even revengeful; His presence is thought to be a constant restraint, His character an expression of "Thou shalt not." His service is regarded as full of gloom and hard requirements. But when Jesus is seen upon the cross, as the gift of God because He loved man, the eyes are opened to see things in a new light. God as revealed in Christ is not a severe judge, an avenging tyrant, but a merciful and loving Father.

As we see Jesus dying upon the cross to save lost man, the heart echoes the words of John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1). There is nothing that more decidedly distinguishes the Christian from the worldly man than the estimate he has of God.

Some workers in the cause of God have been too ready to hurl denunciations against the sinner; the grace and love of the Father in giving His Son to die for the sinful race have been put in the background. The teacher needs the grace of Christ upon his own soul, in order to make known to the sinner what God really is--a Father waiting with yearning love to receive the returning prodigal, not hurling at him accusations in wrath, but preparing a festival of joy to welcome his return (Zeph. 3:14-17).

O that we might all learn the way of the Lord in winning souls to Christ! We should learn and teach the precious lessons in the light that shineth from the sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary. There is but one way that leads from ruin, and continuously ascends, faith all the time reaching beyond the darkness into the light, until it rests upon the throne of God. All who have learned this lesson have accepted the light which has come to their understanding. To them this upward way is not a dark, uncertain passage; it is not the way of finite minds, not a path cut out by human device, a path in which toll is exacted from every traveler.

You cannot gain an entrance by penance nor by any works that you can do. No, God Himself has the honor of providing a way, and it is so complete, so perfect, that man cannot, by any works he may do, add to its perfection. It is broad enough to receive the greatest sinner if he repents, and it is so narrow, so holy, lifted up so high, that sin cannot be admitted there.

When God is seen as He is, the blessed truth shines with a new and clearer light. That which kept the mind in perplexity is cleared away by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. And yet there are many things we shall not comprehend; but we have the blessed assurance that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.¹³

1890 June 9 [to O. A. Olsen]

¹³ *Selected Message, Book 1*, pages 176-184 (Letter 15a, 1890)

We left Oakland Sunday, June 1, for Battle Creek by the way of Boulder, Colorado, desirous to see Mary once more before she sleeps in death.

I received a letter which stated her condition. I knew that condition meant speedy dissolution. Sara and I ventured to take the journey, although I was weak. Sara, Brother Edwin Jones and his wife, May Walling and I, and two passengers besides us were all that were in the car. We were favored in being the only ones. We had feared oppressive heat and dust, but we had no heat and but little dust. The first two days I was so exhausted it was a question if I could go through to the first stopping point, Boulder. But the third day I was able to sit up a very little. The faint, exhausted condition left me, and I grew somewhat stronger....

Sunday I called on your brother again. Brother Edwin Jones accompanied me. We had a season of prayer for the sick, and the blessing of the Lord came to your brother. I tried to lay out clearly before him the strength he might obtain by simply trusting in God, and not going back to hunt up his mistakes and defections of the past. This, you know, is natural to do when the soul is letting loose its grasp of this life and looking into the eternal world. If anyone ever has a distinct view of his own imperfections, it is at this point in his experience. But the Lord blessed the words spoken and he said he could now better understand that his business was "to look and to live," to take the robe woven by Christ Himself in the heavenly loom, and rejoice in the worthiness and righteousness of Christ. He wept and he rejoiced.

The case of your brother, I fear, is beyond human skill. God alone can heal him. I feel sad to see so many of our workers going down. Oh, that the work would be taken up by a larger number who will consecrate soul, body, and spirit to the Lord's vineyard so that a few will not work themselves to death because so many are idling.

Edwin has done his work earnestly, heartily, and devotedly, and he will receive a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away in that day when the Lord makes up His jewels. But may the prayer ascend to heaven that God will raise up laborers, for we need them so much in every branch of the work. Here, right here in Colorado, one hundred workers are not enough to go out into the byways and broad ways to proclaim the message of truth.

Oh, cannot we pray in faith for a mighty movement in this direction-- converted men and women to take hold of the work and carry it forward and upward? ...¹⁴

1890 July 4 [to E. R. Jones]¹⁵

Battle Creek, Mich.
July 4, 1890

Dear Brother E. R. Jones:

I have been trying to feel well enough to write you some things to go with this article which was written St. Helena, but I have not been feeling well and have hoped to feel

¹⁴ *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 18, pages 374, 376, 377

¹⁵ This is the second of only two letters on record that Ellen White wrote to Edwin Jones.

better. But I dared not wait any longer. I want you to read this, then send it back to me for I wish to retain a copy after I put it in the copy book. Will send to you again.

I've been hoping to hear from you. I know that you can be a worker in the Lord's vineyard if you will not seek to be original and use so exaggerated language. You have been in danger always of coloring things. You relate a common place incident and use such strong exaggerated language about small things that this trait has been cultivated by you rather than repressed. I have had your case vividly presented before me, as in danger. If you will keep closely now to the lessons of Christ, you are safe and the flock of God will not be misled.

I feel deeply in your case for I greatly desire that you shall be a calm, level-headed thinker, but there has been and still is danger of your becoming unbalanced in mind and having perverted ideas in following your imaginings. You have a very vivid imagination and it runs at times without a balance wheel.

Now if you labor any in Colorado, be careful what you say. Give the people the Bread of Life, the word of God in its simplicity. Repeat with your whole heart the message God has given you. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." John 5:24. We have a message of peace, of love and mercy from the Prince of peace.

Brother Jones, I beg of you feed the flock of God with pure truth. Do not mix in errors but the truth plain, simple, easy to be understood. Educate your tongue to bind about your words; make no extravagant expressions, not one word of exaggeration, for it is this that is killing your influence. Your mind is so constituted that you view everything in an extreme light and you need the help of Jesus to overcome this habit. I believe your heart is in the work and that the Lord will not leave you nor forsake you.

Will you please write to us. We want to hear how you are getting along. Much love to yourself and wife.

The children are well and happy. They seem to enjoy themselves. Mary makes an excellent hand to care for the children. All are with us at the present time.

Ellen G. White.¹⁶

1893 June 11 [to W. F. Caldwell]

Elder Edwin Jones, a dying man, had his room filled with interested people while he was at the hospital at Battle Creek. Many were deceived, for the man seemed to be inspired. But the light that was given me was, "This work is not of God. Believe not the message."¹⁷

¹⁶ Letter 64, 1890. This letter was unpublished until 2015.

¹⁷ Letter 16, 1893. This was published in *Selected Messages Book 2*, page 64, with ERJ identified as "Elder K."