

God Wrapped In Flesh

The Gospel Study Group

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When studying or sharing the Gospel, I believe we should always try to find the easiest and clearest verses or quotes we can, in order to make the truth simple to understand. When reading, I watch for words such as: **“ALL,” “ALWAYS,” “NEVER,”** and **“EVERY.”** I believe these words, though simple, are very powerful in their meaning. Am I being naive to believe that these words mean just what they say? Does ALL always mean ALL, or does it mean almost all? Does the word never, never mean never, but really means almost never? I share this with you because sometimes we skip over the simple but clear understanding of God’s word. I ask you to please watch for these words and others like them as we read this paper together.

The thoughts and ideas expressed in this paper are mine and mine alone. Other members of the 1888 Message Study Committee may or may not be in complete harmony with my thoughts, conclusions, or my way of presenting this topic. Being among friends, I feel free to share my honest thoughts and convictions. While some of my thoughts will be straight forward, they are in no way meant to judge those who may believe differently. I ask now for your patience and prayers as we continue pressing together in search of truth.

The subject of “*the humanity of the Son of God*” Ellen White said “*is everything to us*” and “*is to be our study.*”¹ She also said: “*We want to comprehend so far as possible the truly human nature of our Lord.*”² In the last fifty plus years of Adventism no subject has stirred the church and been more problematic than the subject on the nature of Christ. Many books and articles have been written from all views. We have looked at it from every angle, dissected every line, and pulled Ellen White in every direction. How and why has this happened? Is there an answer to our dilemma?

The first book written is still the one that caused the most confusion. Written in 1957, *Questions on Doctrine*, raised more questions than it answered on the nature of Christ. Two years before the book came off the press, meetings were held between General Conference leaders, primarily Elder Leroy Froom, and several evangelical leaders. The two most prominent evangelicals attending the meetings were Dr. Donald Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity Magazine* and Walter Martin, a young researcher who had gained a reputation writing about non-Christian cults. In 1955 Walter Martin asked Elder Froom’s permission to interview Seventh-day Adventist leaders in order to gain a better understanding of what Adventists believe.

A new annotated edition of *Questions on Doctrine* was printed in 2003. George Knight made several interesting comments in the section dealing with the

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Youth Instructor*, Oct. 13, 1896.

² *Letter 69*, 1897, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 447.

humanity of Christ. He was correct when he stated the following: *“We need to examine the history of the topic of the human nature of Christ in the denomination.”*³

Referring to Walter Martin, Dr. Knight said, *“**the question foremost in the mind of Martin** as he began to investigate Adventist theology was whether the denomination held that **Christ ‘partook of man’s sinful fallen nature at the incarnation.’**”*⁴

Walter Martin was concerned regarding this because he had read many statements in our literature that stated clearly, Christ took our “sinful fallen nature.” Elder Froom and others convinced Walter Martin that the church no longer held this belief. Elder Froom went so far as to refer to those holding to the old position as the “lunatic fringe,” even though, as George Knight said: *“Froom himself (in a poll of Adventist leaders) had discovered that **‘nearly all of them’ ‘feel that Christ had our sinful nature.’**”*⁵ Walter Martin eventually removed the Adventist religion from his list of cults. Had he known what most Adventists continued to believe about Christ’s humanity, he would not have done this. In speaking about this time in our history, George Knight was right again when he stated: *“**The result was peace with the evangelicals but trouble within the Adventist camp.**”*⁶ Going on with his comments about Elder Froom, George Knight also said: *“Whether Froom and his colleagues were willing to admit it or not, the view of Christ’s human nature that they set forth was a genuine revision of the position held by the majority of the*

³ *Questions on Doctrine*, annotated edition, p. 518.

⁴ *Questions on Doctrine*, annotated edition, p. 518.

⁵ *Questions on Doctrine*, annotated edition, p. xv.

⁶ George Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 2003 p.

denomination”⁷ and “the non-inclusion of Ellen White’s statements claiming that Christ had a sinful nature were less than straight forward and transparent.”⁸

For the next forty plus years the church continued to promote the idea that Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall. It has only been the last ten or twelve years that the church has finally admitted that Christ took our fallen human nature. Praise the Lord some progress has been made. Admitting that Christ did in fact take our fallen nature was a step in the right direction. However, many in Adventism still want to limit the fallen nature Christ took. The idea now being taught is that Christ only came close enough to humanity in order to partake of our “*innocent infirmities*.” This is the position supported by George Knight and many others. But is this teaching biblical, and can it be supported honestly by Ellen White? We will touch more on the idea of “*innocent infirmities*” later.

Some have encouraged us to set aside talking about the nature of Christ for the sake of unity. I believe unity will never be achieved, God’s work will never be finished, and God’s people will never go home, until we, as a people, come into harmony on the nature of Christ. I believe the ongoing controversy on this subject is the direct result of the rejection of the messengers and the message that “*the*

⁷ George Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 2003 p. xvii.

⁸ George Knight, *Questions on Doctrine*, 2003 p. 517.

*Lord in His great mercy sent”*⁹ to His people over 123 years ago. To a great degree, a resistance on the part of many today has continued to perpetuate this confusion.

One area of confusion that I think we should look at first is whether Christ could have dwelled in our sinful flesh without being contaminated. Without knowing the answer to this, the truth on the nature of Christ becomes impossible to understand. In Adventism we have been told for many years that Christ could not have taken our fallen nature. Our nature, we are told, is sin, full of corruption, and if Christ had been born with our nature, He would have been a sinner in need of a Savior, the same as us. Is this what the Bible teaches? Paul asked the Corinthians: *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that **the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?** If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; **for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.**”*¹⁰ Here, Paul was talking to the believers, those who had surrendered to Christ. Notice what Paul said, “If any man defile the temple”. Defiling the temple was a choice, not a state of being. Before we are born again, the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in us. But the very moment we are born again, the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and our bodies instantly become holy temples for the Lord. Only by an active choice of defilement (sin) on our part would God withdraw from His dwelling place. There never was a time in Christ’s earthly life when He was not

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, p. 91.

¹⁰ *1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.*

surrendered to His Father's will. Christ, referring to Himself, said: "*Destroy **this temple**, and in three days I will raise it up.*" ¹¹

Without violating the law of His being, when Christ came to this earth as a baby, He had every right to wrap Himself in the flesh of humanity and dwell in the body His Father had prepared for Him. Christ was not defiled by taking sinful flesh any more than the Holy Spirit is defiled when He dwells in the heart and mind of the born again believer. *Ellen White complements the scriptures by saying: "If those who have light will open the **chambers of the mind**, they will see as the Lord sees; ... they will open the door of **the heart of Jesus**, and will welcome Him in as an honored guest. **Then the soul will be a temple where Christ can dwell.**"* ¹²

Christ can and will dwell in a surrendered heart. When by faith our minds are surrendered, the door of our heart will automatically swing open wide to receive Christ. And He will come in because He sees the reflection of Himself and knows He is home (in His temple). The new heart is softened, it over flows with His love, flowing forth with Christ's life-sustaining righteousness.

¹¹ *John 2:19.*

¹² *Review and Herald, May 24, 1898.*

*A message of Righteousness by Faith came to the Adventist church in 1888. Ellen White said it revealed "the matchless charms of Christ."*¹³ She told us it was given to us directly from God, through His messengers, Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. A year and a half after the meetings, she informed us that these two men were presenting "*the third angel's message in verity,*"¹⁴ that "*the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with His glory.*"¹⁵ She also said: "*The third angel's message [is] the last message of mercy to a perishing world.*"¹⁶ I have often times wondered, if the message is "*the third angel's message*" in all its fullness, if it is "*the last message of mercy to a perishing world,*" and if it is going to "*lighten the whole earth with His glory,*" why is the entire church not studying this message and preparing themselves and the world for Christ's soon return? Is it possible that the answer to our dilemma is still hidden in that message?

One important aspect of the message was the nature of Christ. Jones and Waggoner wrote often about the love of our heavenly Father, and what He went through in giving up His son to die. They also showed, how near to us our Savior came, in order to be a perfect sacrifice for our sins, and how much Christ longs to reproduce His perfect life of righteousness in us.

¹³ Sermon, Rome, New York, June 19, 1889.

¹⁴ *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

¹⁵ *The Great Controversy*, p. 611.

¹⁶ *Review and Herald*, April 22, 1909.

There are several questions I hope we can answer relating to our human nature and the human nature Christ took:

- (1) While living here on earth, can we, in sinful flesh, live without sinning?
- (2) Could Christ dwell in our sinful flesh and still be called “that Holy Thing”?
- (3) Can we become holy in sinful flesh?
- (4) Does the Bible teach this and does Ellen White clearly support it?
- (5) If the answer is yes, than what does it mean to be holy?

Satan said the answer to the first question is no. *“Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God.”*¹⁷ If he is correct, then answers to the other questions would also have to be no. Tragically, many in the church today agree with Satan on this point. They do not believe that we can, by faith, become holy and live without sin before the second coming of Christ. I have heard students in the seminary mock the idea of overcoming all sin in this lifetime. A professor at Andrews University (I was told by seminarians), would ask his class if any of them had stopped sinning today. When he received no responses, he asked, “Do you know anyone who has stopped sinning?” The classroom usually became very quite as the students would drop there heads and look away. The professor would then ridicule the idea of Christians overcoming all sin. Sometimes there would be laughter, but no one would challenge his comments. The question is not whether we have, or if we know someone who has overcome

¹⁷ *Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1896.

all sin. The question is, do we know a Savior who is able to keep us from falling through the power of His indwelling Spirit?

Again, it was Satan who declared it impossible for fallen man to keep the law. Ellen White informs us: "*Christ kept the law, proving **beyond controversy** that man also can keep it.*"¹⁸ If Christ proved "*beyond controversy*" that fallen man can keep the law, how did he prove it, and, if He proved it, why is it still a prominent controversy in Adventism today?

The debate as to whether we can overcome all sin, and which human nature Christ took, are directly related. Those who believe that Christ took only a limited fallen human nature and also believe that we can have complete victory over sin are part of a small minority within the church. The majority of those who believe Christ took our fallen human nature, was tempted in all points, but was limited mostly to the physical discomforts (innocent infirmities) of becoming tired, hungry, thirsty, and of course, being able to die, do not believe we can have victory over all sin. As stated earlier, they believe if Christ truly took our fallen nature then He himself would have been a sinner in need of a Savior.

¹⁸ *Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901.

When speaking years ago with Morris Venden, he said, ***“If Christ had taken our nature, He would have had to sin.”*** I asked, ***“Even though Christ came with a surrendered will, and was born of the Holy Spirit?”*** Elder Venden replied, ***“Even then, if He had taken our nature, He would have had to sin.”*** If what Elder Venden said is true then when we surrender our will fully to Christ, are born again, and are being lead by the Holy Spirit, we too will have to go on sinning until Christ returns. I submit to you, this is not the message of Righteousness by Faith. The message God originally sent through Elders Jones and Waggoner and supported by Ellen White and others was a message that was to awaken the church to righteousness and be sent forth to the world with power.

A few weeks after speaking with Elder Venden, I found the following statement from Ellen White written just over a year after the 1888 conference. People had been writing to her, questioning whether Christ could have taken our fallen nature without Himself becoming a sinner. They were raising this question because both Jones and Waggoner were speaking and writing, telling the people Christ had taken our fallen nature. She responded: *“If He (Christ) did not have man’s nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it was not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the*

battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature." ¹⁹

In harmony with the scripture and with Jones and Waggoner she told the people that in order for Christ to be "**our example,**" "**our helper,**" and to be tempted as we are, He had to take "**our nature.**" Two years later, in 1892, she said, "*If Christ had a **special power,** which it is not the privilege of man to have, Satan would have made capital of this matter.*" ²⁰ In order for Christ to be our example, He had to fight the battle without any "*special power*" that is not available to you and me. Christ taking a human nature (lower nature) that had limited or "*innocent infirmities*" would have been an advantage over us and given Christ a "**special power**" that we can never have. Ellen White never wavered from the idea that Christ had to take our nature with "*all the infirmities*" ²¹ and without "**special power.**" In 1899 she penned these words: "*Every advantage that Christ had in the conflict He has made possible for man to have.*" ²² How can the pen of inspiration be any clearer? Christ had no "**special power,**" took "**all the infirmities,**" and made it possible for us to have "**every advantage**" that He had! Did she mean "**all** the infirmities" or just innocent infirmities? Are we to have "**every advantage**" Christ had or just some of the advantages?

¹⁹ *Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

²⁰ *The Signs of The Times*, April 10, 1893

²¹ *Bible Echo*, May 1, 1890.

²² *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 16. P. 88.

Yes, it's true! Christ did have an advantage over us when He was born. This is not bad news. It's not just good news—this is **GREAT NEWS!** “Every advantage” Christ had in His conflict with Satan—we, too, may have! Some have said that Christ had no advantage and He must be just like us (except sin) in order to be a perfect example. This way of thinking has not been helpful in settling the issue. What we must understand is that **Christ did not come to this earth to give a living demonstration of what unfallen Adam could have been had He never sinned. He did not come to show us what a sinner is. He came to show us what all sinners may become in Christ Jesus!** Christ was “born again” in his mother’s womb, having surrendered His will before He left heaven. He was lead by the Holy Spirit from the moment He came into the world and spent His life in complete surrender to the will of His heavenly Father. Christ tells us in Scripture, *“I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.”*²³

*Ellen White complemented this scripture when she wrote: [Christ] “rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the “Master of earth and sea and sky” that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” John 5:30. He trusted in the **Father's** might. It was in faith—faith in God's love and care—that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which*

²³ John 12:49.

stilled the storm was **the power of God.**"²⁴

[Christ] was able to resist the temptations of Satan through His dependence upon the divine power of His heavenly father.²⁵ Jesus chose to "lay down" His "almighty power" before He came to the earth. "Christ received" "divine power" "and overcame in the strength given Him of God." It was "by faith alone" "He trusted in the Father's might" and "by faith alone" "in God's love and care that Jesus rested." It is to be no different for us when we are truly born again. We will receive "the same divine power which Christ received" when we rest by faith alone in Jesus. The Bible and Sister White reassure every believer of this amazing truth!

It's important for us to remember that Christ **inherited** sinful flesh, but **never cultivated** the things of the flesh. He took our fallen nature, but not our fallen performance (acts of sinning). He came to show us what we *may become*, not what we *already are* in sinful flesh.

The following is a list showing the different ways Ellen White expressed to us how fully human Christ became when He wrapped Himself in the fallen flesh of man. She tells us Christ experienced:

ALL our temptations

Review and Herald, March 9, 1905

²⁴ *Desire of Ages*, p. 336.

²⁵ *Manuscript 141*, 1901.

ALL our difficulties	<i>Review and Herald</i> , October 1, 1889
ALL our afflictions	<i>Manuscript Release</i> , Number 1405
ALL our experiences	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , November 24, 1897
ALL things like His brethren	<i>Review and Herald</i> , May 1, 1892
All that pertains to human life	<i>Review and Herald</i> , December 24, 1889
ALL points tempted	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , April 17, 1894
ALL the ills	<i>Manuscript 99</i> , 1908
ALL its attended ills	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , January 4, 1877
ALL its liabilities	<i>The Faith I Live By</i> , p. 48
All its possibilities	<i>Sigh of the Times</i> , December 3, 1902
ALL our trials	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , April 18, 1892
ALL our weaknesses	<i>Upward Look</i> , p. 139
ALL our necessities	<i>Manuscript Release</i> , Number 878
ALL our sorrows	<i>That I May Know Him</i> , p. 53
ALL our battles	<i>Bible Echo</i> , December 1, 1892
ALL our griefs	<i>That I May Know Him</i> , p. 53
ALL the infirmities	<i>Bible Echo</i> , May 21, 1900
ALL the strength of passion	<i>In Heavenly Places</i> , p. 155
ALL points like His brethren	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , May 16, 1895
ALL points except sin	<i>Review and Herald</i> , January 7, 1904

Ellen White kept using the word “**all**” over and over again, in order to show us how fully human Christ really was. As I stated in the beginning of this paper, I believe when she uses words like “ALL”, she really means ALL! Notice on the list that I bolded “**All the infirmities.**” Here is a quote:

*“He who knew no sin was made sin for fallen man. ... He clothed His divinity with humanity, that He might bear **all the infirmities** and endure **all the temptations** of humanity ... **All** that God could do has been done to save sinners.”²⁶*

Another quote:

[Christ] *“who took upon Himself our nature and **all the infirmities** of humanity.”²⁷*

The first time Ellen White, in referring to Christ, used the phrase “*all the infirmities*” was the first quote I shared. The date was June 27, 1900. Notice how closely her statement mirrored what E. J. Waggoner said 11 years earlier in 1889:

*“If He was made in **all** things like unto His brethren, then He must have suffered **all the infirmities** and been subject to **all the temptations** of His brethren.”²⁸*

Why is this particular statement where Ellen White says, “*all the infirmities,*” of any more importance than any of the others on the list? It is important to note Ellen White never used the term “innocent infirmities.” But for over twelve years now, we have been told that Christ took only the “innocent infirmities” of fallen man. If we can take liberty with Ellen White’s writings to change the word **all** to mean

²⁶ *Bible Echo*, May 21, 1900.

²⁷ *Review and Herald*, January 19, 1905.

²⁸ E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 6, 1889.

only **innocent**, then we could change everything on the above list. Suddenly Christ only had innocent weaknesses, innocent trials, innocent afflictions, etc. I believe the reason this is happening is because after all these years of controversy on the nature of Christ, many in the church have had to admit, *because of the weight of evidence*, that Christ did in fact take *our fallen nature*. *But some are still wanting to make Christ just enough unlike us in His fallen nature to satisfy either their lack of understanding or because of unbelief.*

One of the biggest stones of stumbling in regard to the human nature Christ took is caused by our misunderstanding of what sin is, what it affects, how God look's at it, and how He chose to deal with it. Through no fault of our own, we are born into this world separated from eternal life, but at the same time, God has already reconciled Himself to us through His Son. ***"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."***²⁹ Christ's life and death reconciled God to the whole world. If God has reconciled Himself to us before we are born, then why do we remain separated from Him and in need of a Savior? Sin is a separator. In the judgment, those who have chosen not to be cleansed from sin will be separated from God for all eternity.

²⁹ John 3:16.

We are born into this world having two distinct parts to our being. The law of heredity affected both. As long as we live in this world, the first one will never change. It will, in fact, try to harass us all the days of our lives. It is the avenue through which we are tempted. The Bible calls this the “flesh.” Ellen White refers to the flesh as *“the lower nature,” “sinful flesh,” “fallen nature,”* etc. The second one, the mind of man, must change if we want to leave this world alive. Ellen White refers to man’s mind before conversion as the *“carnal mind,” “natural mind,” “finite mind,” “mind of man,” “darkened mind.”* The converted mind she refers to as the *“mind of God,” “mind of Christ,”* partaker of *“divine nature,”* and a *“willing mind.”* It is through this channel, the mind, in which we chose to either yield or resist the temptation to sin. We all understand that it is not a sin to be tempted. This being true, how could it be possible for the vehicle (fallen nature) through which we are tempted, to actually be sin? We do not need a Savior because of our lower nature, we need a Savior because we are born with a *carnal, darkened mind,* a mind that before conversion will always chose to sin. A mind that at birth, is at “enmity” with God. This is why we are told that we are sinners from birth, and this is why Christ did not have the mind of man. Sin is a choice of the mind not the flesh. Ellen White makes a very strong point about this. *“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words “flesh” or “fleshly” or “carnal lusts” embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with*

*the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to **the higher powers** of the soul. The love of God must reign supreme; Christ must occupy an **undivided throne**.*"³⁰

"The apostle Paul understood this relationship between the mind and the sinful flesh. He said:

*"For they that are after the flesh (lower nature) do mind the things of the flesh; But they that are after the spirit (mind of Christ), the things of the spirit."*³¹

A.T. Jones agreed with the Apostle Paul and Sister White when he told us where our temptations get their start:

*"Where does he [Satan] start the temptation? In the flesh. Satan reaches the mind through the flesh; God reaches the flesh through the mind....The battlefield is right upon the line between the flesh and the mind."*³² He went on to say:

*"Our minds have consented to sin. We have felt the enticements (temptation) of the flesh, and our minds yielded, our minds consented, and did the wills and the desires of the flesh and the mind. The flesh leads, the mind follows. When the mind can lead (mind of Christ), the law of god is served."*³³

³⁰ In Heavenly Places, p. 198

³¹ Romans 8:5

³² 1895 General Conference Bulletin, p. 328.

³³ 1895 General Conference Bulletin, p. 328.

It is not a sin to be born with a fallen nature, nor is this a definition of what sin is. We are told to **“put to death the temptation to sin.”** How do we do it? By expelling **“the corrupt thought”** through the power of the Holy Spirit the moment it passes before the mind. We are never to let the corrupt thoughts linger or dwell in our minds. If the temptation is put to death it is impossible for sin to occur. Ellen White, quoting Scripture, told us: *“Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation.”* **So it may be with us.** *Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us **partakers of the divine nature (mind of Christ)**. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us.”*³⁴

When faith is all we know, sin has no dominion; it has no authority; it has lost all its power; it has no more right to exist in us. In the book *“The Adventist Home”* she writes: *“The strongest temptation is **no excuse for sin**. No matter how severe the pressure brought to bear upon you, **sin is your own act.**”*³⁵ James 1:15 in God’s Word Translation, 1995 says: *“When desire becomes pregnant and gives birth to sin; When sin grows up, it gives birth to death.”* Ellen White commenting on this, said: *“If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very **beginnings** (conception). Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. ... No man can be forced to transgress. His*

³⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, 123 (1898)

³⁵ *The Adventist Home*, p. 331.

own **consent** must be first gained; the soul must **purpose** the sinful act **before passion can dominate** over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,"... **He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart, and He will help in every time of temptation.** " ³⁶

Much is in this quote. Sin is to be shunned in the beginning, before it gives birth. The conscience and reasoning of the mind is to be the contraception against our passions and iniquity of our flesh (lower nature). Christ knows how strong the inclinations of the flesh are, because He had "**all the strength of Passion of humanity**"³⁷ in the flesh. But by never having yielded to these inherited passions, Christ never possessed the cultivated "**like passions**"³⁸ of fallen man. His divine nature (mind of Christ) recoiled from the "**evil passions**" that the unconverted man continues to cultivate all the days of his life or until the moment of conversion. The born again Christian, armed with the mind of Christ, also will recoil from "**evil passions**". The mind of Christ is the life changing factor. When we are armed with the mind of Christ, Ellen tells us: "**we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain (mind) one sinful propensity**" ³⁹ It's "**The carnal mind [that] is enmity against God**" not the fallen flesh Christ took. We are born with a

³⁶ 5 Testimonies For The Church, p. 177.

³⁷ Heavenly Places, p. 155.

³⁸ 3 Testimonies for the Church, p. 187.

³⁹ Gods Amazing Grace p. 235

mind that loves self, and if kept apart (our choice) from God, there will be a natural growing hatred towards God. Through the power of divine grace, the mind of Christ destroys the mind filled with enmity, and all things become new.

John the Beloved said, ***“sin is the transgression of the law.”***⁴⁰ Many people believe this is a legal definition and that there are several other definitions for sin. During the time when the message of righteousness by faith was most prominently being taught, over twelve times (references below) in her writings from 1886-1897 Ellen White used the term **“only definition”**⁴¹ when describing to us what sin is. Here are two of her statements: *“Now, we want to understand what sin is—that it is the transgression of God’s law. This is the only definition given in the Scriptures.”*⁴² and, *“It is the privilege of every sinner to ask his teacher what sin really is. Give me a*

⁴⁰ 1 John 3:4.

⁴¹ 9 Manuscript Releases, p. 249 [Sermon, September 21, 1886].
Signs of the Times, November 24, 1887.
Review and Herald, April 3, 1888.
Signs of the Times, March 3, 1890.
Review and Herald, June 10, 1890.
Review and Herald, July 15, 1890.
The Great Controversy, 1892.
Review and Herald, July 5, 1892.
Signs of the Times, January 8, 1894.
SAT, Vol. 1 p. 228 [Sermon Feb. 11, 1894].
Bible Echo, June 11, 1894.
General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 2, 1897.
“Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, N. S. W. Jan. 11, 1897.

⁴² *Review and Herald*, April 3, 1888.

*definition of sin. We have one in 1 John 3:4 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' **Now this is the only definition of sin in the whole Bible.**"*⁴³

While these next two statements do not use the word **only** in talking about the definition of sin, they are very strong:

"The apostle gives us the true definition of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law."⁴⁴

"Ministers who exhort sinners to be converted should distinctly define what sin is and what conversion from sin is. Sin is the transgression of the law."⁴⁵

If there is "**only**" one "**true**" definition for sin given "**in the whole Bible,**" that being "**transgression of the law,**" then our fallen lower nature can only be the faulty equipment we are born with and nothing more. Many have rejected the truth regarding the nature of Christ because they believe that having a fallen lower nature is sin itself. We will not be judged because of our fallen nature, but only whether we surrendered our minds to Christ, or continued to serve self and Satan.

There was no excuse for sin when it originated with Lucifer. There was no excuse for Adam and Eve to have sinned in the garden. But do you and I have an excuse for

⁴³ Sermon at Williamstown (a suburb of Melbourne), February 11, 1894.

⁴⁴ *Confrontation*, p. 75.

⁴⁵ *Confrontation*, p. 75.

sin? If being born with a fallen human nature is a definition for sin, then Christ could not have had our nature, and you and I *would* have an excuse for sin.

Christ wrapped Himself in the fallen flesh of man. The flesh was not consumed by the presence of God, neither was Christ polluted by the fallen flesh He assumed. One example of this is the story in scripture where the Leper comes into contact with Jesus. In *Desire of Ages* she tells it like this:

*“The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was “full of leprosy.” Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, **Jesus received no defilement.** His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin, — deep-rooted, (in the mind and heart) deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.” **But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution.** His presence has healing virtue for the sinner.”⁴⁶*

⁴⁶ *Desire of Ages*, p. 266.

Christ was able to touch and cleanse the leper, and instead of being defiled, healing and life went out from Him. When He wrapped Himself in sinful flesh, the Son of God “received no pollution” from the humanity He assumed. Instead, life-giving power flowed through Him like rivers of water, to all who would receive Him. He came with a surrendered will, and was born of the Holy Spirit. The only way Christ could have been polluted by the leprosy of sin was not by finding Himself in the fashion of a man, but only if He yielded His mind to the temptations that came to Him through the fallen flesh He assumed. Christ’s mind never wavered and His flesh never won!

We are not saved or lost because of our sinful nature (lower nature). It is our chosen acts of willful, persistent disobedience that will condemn us in the judgment. When Christ said to the women caught in adultery, “neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.”, He was not concerned with the sinful flesh she was born with or even the temptations Satan would bring to her through the flesh. He was concerned with her keeping her mind fixed upon Him. He longed for her to surrender all of her heart (mind) and become a partaker of His divine nature, filled with His love and grace, and become a Holy temple through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

*“Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God. He clothed His divinity with humanity, He associated with the human race, that with His long human arm He might **encircle humanity**, and with His **divine arm** grasp the throne of Divinity.” (Why?) “That He might restore to man **the original mind** which he lost in Eden through Satan’s alluring temptation;”...*

When God implants His mind in us what will be the result?

Mrs. White finished her statement by saying:

*“We shall be His chosen ones on earth, to enjoy the kingdom of His grace; we shall be with Him in the heavenly world, to share in the kingdom of His glory. We shall be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; for He is our portion and our inheritance. We shall be **partakers of His divine nature, and one with Him in His perfection**. We shall have the same life as Jesus; for we are sons and daughters of God.”⁴⁷*

There is one thing we all agree on concerning the General Conference Session in Minneapolis, in 1888. We all believe that it was “The Third Angel’s Message” of **“Righteousness by Faith.”**⁴⁸ But what does “Righteousness by faith” mean? Ellen White has a simple definition for the word Righteousness: **“Righteousness is Holiness.”**⁴⁹ So the message of Righteousness by Faith that we are to take to the world is a message of **Holiness by Faith**. And what is Holiness? God’s servant tells

⁴⁷ *Signs of the Times*, October 14, 1897.

⁴⁸ W. C. White, April 7, 1889.

⁴⁹ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p.18

us: ***“Holiness is constant agreement with God.”***⁵⁰ This was the experience Christ had with His Father while here on earth, and it is to be our experience when we too partake of His divine mind by faith alone.

Christ came to save us from sin, by revealing the love of His Father to the world, and to restore in us ***“the original mind, the image of God, which man lost in Eden”***⁵¹ Thus, we are to have the same mind which Adam had before he fell. Christ conquered sin by taking Adam’s sinful nature and uniting it with His divine mind, the same mind He had given to Adam at creation. Christ’s final act in man’s salvation, was to take Adam’s fallen nature to the cross, where it was put to death. On Sunday morning, Christ united once again the original mind He had given to Adam, with the glorified body Adam had before the fall. And Christ the Son of God, returned to heaven as God and man fully restored. All of God’s children are to receive, by faith, the original mind Adam had before the fall, now! At Christ’s second coming, the original mind like Adam before the fall, will be united with the glorified body of Adam before the fall. Adam (Mankind), fully restored, will be returned to his original home, and once again commune face to face with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

⁵⁰ *In Heavenly Places*, p. 33

⁵¹ *The Signs of the Times*, October 14, 1897,