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The Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment Examined and Refuted

**Together with a Study of the True
Biblical Teaching Concerning
The Judgment**

In Three Parts:

Part I: The Doctrine of the
Investigative Judgment Exam-
ined.

Part II.: An Examination of Texts
relied upon to support the
Theory.

Part III.: A Study of the True
Biblical Teaching concerning
the Judgment.

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The doctrine of the Investigative Judgment is not of ancient, but of very modern origin. It began to be taught some years subsequently to 1844 A.D. by a few earnest Christians who were seeking an explanation of the disappointment of the Adventists who had expected Christ to come that year.

In considering the doctrine, and endeavouring to test it by comparison with scripture, it seems necessary to first of all review the outstanding features of the teaching as advocated by its leading exponents.

Mrs. E. G. White describes the Investigative Judgment very simply and clearly in her book, "The Great Controversy." In her chapter on that subject, speaking of an event "that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days, in 1844, she writes:

"Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, and there appears in the presence of God, to engage in the last acts of his ministration in behalf of man,—to perform the work of investigative Judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."

"In the great day of final atonement and investigative Judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God." p. 480.

"Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated." p. 483.

"At the time appointed for the Judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny." p. 486.

"Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Every one must be tested, and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." p. 490.

"The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For more than forty years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living." Ib.

In an earlier chapter of the same book the following statement occurs:

"This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom

of God, is that of the investigative Judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above." p. 428.

From the foregoing statements we extract the following summary of the teaching:

1. That the investigative judgment is for the purpose of, "determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God";
2. That it either precedes or coincides with the making of the atonement (or "an atonement"), for the latter is said to be made "for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits";
3. That it pertains to the righteous only, and began in 1844 with "those who first lived upon the earth";
4. That no one knows when it will pass to the cases of the living.

Let us take these leading features of the teaching in order, and examine them in the light of scripture.

I.

"This work . . . of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative Judgment." "Great Controversy," p. 428.

The idea thus expressed seems to be in radical conflict with some very plain Bible teaching. If an investigative judgment is necessary to "determine who are prepared for the kingdom of God," how was it that Christ was able to assure the disciples beforehand that "in the regeneration when the Son of man should sit

in the throne of his glory," they also would "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"? Matt. 19:28. And how was Christ able to say to the dying thief: "Thou **shalt** be with Me in Paradise"? Luke 23:43.

The truth is that Christ knows right now who are "prepared for the kingdom." "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his.**" 2 Tim. 2:19.

"**I know my sheep,**" declares the good Shepherd, "and am known of mine." John 10:14.

II.

"To make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits . . . In the great day of final atonement and investigative Judgment." "Great Controversy," p. 480.

This plainly teaches that the atonement, or "an atonement," is yet to be made; and that when it is made it will be made for those who are **entitled** to its benefits." But this is not the teaching of scripture. The New Testament always speaks of the atonement as a finished work, accomplished in the past. "**When He had by Himself purged our sins,**" Christ "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3. And then, so far from being done for those who are "**entitled** to its benefits," it is expressly declared to have been accomplished for those **not** so entitled. "**Christ died for the ungodly . . . While**

we were yet sinners, Christ died for us . . . **When we were enemies,** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. 5:6, 8, 10.

Carlyle B. Haynes supports Mrs. E. G. White in the teaching. Writing on the same subject, he says:

"Before the sins of God's people are completely disposed of, our Lord engages in a very close examination of the characters of his people. By this examination, He discloses which of them are worthy to have their sins blotted out. In 1844 Jesus began a work of judgment—not an executive judgment, but an investigative judgment; a work which is plainly necessary before sin can be finally disposed of." "The Hour of God's Judgment," p. 92.

Were the sins of God's people not "completely disposed of" on Calvary's cross, then?

These teachings reflect a grave lack of apprehension of God's method of procedure in dealing with man in regard to sin. God does not conduct an investigation first, and then afterward make an atonement for those whom He finds worthy. He made the atonement first, on behalf of the unworthy (which included the whole human race); and thence-forward has momentarily judged men (as to their standing before Him) according to the attitude they assume toward that atonement. This is not at all in conflict with the truth of a judgment at the end of the age, as will be shown later.

III.

"Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation . . . Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated." "Great Controversy," p. 483.

Carlyle B. Haynes further elucidates the teaching in the following paragraph:

"The judgment opened with the cases of those who are dead. When, in 1844, the book of life was opened, the name of Abel, the first man who ever died, appeared. His life's record was carefully examined, every act, word, and thought being investigated. This was done not in order to discover character, but to manifest it, to disclose it. Whether his sins had been all confessed and forgiven was noted in the record." "The Hour of God's Judgment," p. 102.

Let us turn now to the Book of God, and see what the Bible has to say in Abel's case:

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, GOD testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Heb. 11:4.

Can it be possible that "every act, word, and thought" of Abel needed to be investigated in 1844 A.D. in order to "disclose" or "manifest" his righteousness, when the Bible speaks of "GOD testifying" "that he was righteous" at the time of his martyrdom?

"The Page was Turned"

"Following the decision made in this case," writes C. B. Haynes, "the page was turned, and there came up in the judgment another case, that of the next man who died; and this case was similarly weighed and examined, and decided." *Ib.*

But let us now turn another page of Holy Writ, and see what **that** record will tell us. We come now to the case of Enoch. While not "the next man who died," this saint is the next in the list of worthies spoken of in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and his case will serve just as well by way of illustration.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." v. 5.

Is it conceivable that the salvation of this man, translated in the first millennium of earth's history, came up for reconsideration in heaven near the close of the last millennium of time? When it is written in the Bible, for men to read, that Enoch "**had this testimony, that he pleased God,**" is it reasonable to teach that God and the angels needed, in 1844 A.D., to conduct an investigation to "disclose" the standing of that saint?

"Again the Page was Turned"

"Again the page was turned," C. B. Haynes continues, "and in this way through the years that have elapsed since 1844, this work has been carried forward." *Ib.* p. 103.

But when we continue to turn the pages of the epistle to the Hebrews, what do we find? First, that Noah "became heir of the righteousness that is by faith." v. 7. Next, of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, that "God hath prepared for them a city." v. 16. Now if God had already prepared for them a city in the first century of our era, how can it be that their cases must be investigated in the nineteenth century?

The writer of the epistle continues to call the roll of the Old Testament worthies. He speaks "of Gideon and Barak . . . and of the prophets," and a host of others "of whom the world was not worthy," and concludes that "these all . . . **obtained a good report through faith,**" vv. 32, 38, 39. How dare any man qualify that good report, recorded of those saints in the Bible itself, by suggesting that it is subject to confirmation in an investigative judgment!

Christ Himself has spoken on this subject. He warned the unbelieving Jews that they would "see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, **and all the prophets,** in the kingdom of God," and themselves thrust out. Luke 13:28. According to Christ, therefore, these cases were already settled, "beginning with those who first lived upon the earth."

Saints in the Christian Dispensation Secure Also

As he drew near the close of his life of toilsome labour, the apostle Paul spoke with confidence concerning his eternal future:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: **henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,** which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give to me at that day, **and not only**

to me, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, R.V.

There is no investigation needed in Paul's case. The crown was laid up for him from the moment he had finished the course. That is the meaning of the word "henceforth." Neither is there any investigation needed to decide the cases of all those who throughout the Christian dispensation have died in the faith. The apostle testifies that the crown of righteousness is just as sure for them as for himself.

As for the other apostles, their names are written in the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:14. Do the names so gloriously emblazoned there come up for review in the investigative judgment? They must, if "all who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny." But no, reader, the apostles' names will never be considered in that way. The investigative judgment theory is entirely out of harmony with scripture. There is a true Biblical teaching concerning the judgment, and that we will consider later.

IV.

"For more than forty years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living." "Great Controversy," p. 490.

The foregoing statement invites attention to a very important feature of the

doctrine of the investigative judgment. **The original proponents of the theory had no idea that the supposed judgment would continue so long.** When Mrs. E. G. White wrote this paragraph, she spoke of the work having been in progress for "more than forty years." But now those upon whom falls the burden of continuing the teaching are confronted with the fact that not forty years but well-nigh a century has elapsed since 1844! And still no one knows when the judgment will pass to the living! This being the case, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has been preaching for two generations, to living men, a judgment-hour message that referred to the cases of the dead only, and not as yet to the case of one man living upon the earth! This is a startling consideration.

Furthermore, inasmuch as "the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God," it follows that the judgment hour message preached all these years has not directly concerned unconverted men. To them, it could only mean that if they would "take on themselves the name of Christ," they would eventually have to meet the issues of the investigative judgment. If they could "pass its searching scrutiny," and thus be "shown to be entitled to its benefits" Christ would then "make an atonement" for them! This is, indeed, far removed from "the gospel of the grace of God."

The Time Occupied in the Judgment Extends to Unexpected Lengths

In the year 1850 Mrs. E. G. White

wrote:—

"I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished, and that time can last but very little longer." "Early Writings," p. 58.

Inasmuch as, according to the teaching, Christ had at that time been in the most holy place for only six years, and the time for Him to be in that place was then nearly finished, how is it that He has continued there well on toward a century longer. A period is not "nearly finished" when only six years have passed away out of almost a hundred. If Mrs. White had said in 1850 that time was nearly finished, that would have been different; but she did not say that. It was "the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place" that was "nearly finished."

"When the Next Page is Turned"

Thus the period of the investigative judgment has been extended to unexpected lengths. As late as 1926 we find Carlyle B. Haynes still publishing such a statement as the following:

"When the time comes in the work of judgment that the names of all God's people who are dead shall have been examined and their cases decided, the judgment will then pass from the dead to the living. When the next page is turned, there will appear on it the name of a person who is still living on the earth. No one knows to-day when his own name will come up in review before God in the judgment work in heaven." "Hour of God's Judgment," p. 105.

Apparently these teachers are not yet prepared to say that the page has been turned that will bring up the name of "a person who is still living on the

earth." This is a sad situation. Ought not Christians to be preaching of living issues to living men?

PART TWO

An Examination of Texts Relied Upon to Support the Investigative Judgment Theory.

The passages of scripture relied upon to justify the teaching under consideration are by no means numerous. And a careful examination of the few that are relied upon will reveal that these passages either entirely disprove the theory, or else provide for it no support whatever.

"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19.

It is reasoned from Acts 3:19 that while men were called on by the apostle Peter to repent at the time of the preaching, the blotting out of sins would not take place until the "times of refreshing" or "latter rain," expected subsequent to 1844, and just prior to the second advent of Christ. Mrs. E. G. White quotes the passage with that in mind. Thus she writes:

"The apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out, 'when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ'." "Great Controversy," p. 485.

Carlyle B. Haynes maintains that Peter "undoubtedly referred to this time" (1844), when he made the statement re-

corded in Acts 3:19. "Hour of God's Judgment," pp. 65, 66.

With some other Adventist writers a degree of restraint is manifested in appealing to this passage as a proof text. Possibly some have been influenced by the fact that the R.V. rendering shows it to be entirely out of harmony with the accepted theory. Uriah Smith cautiously asks, in speaking of the investigative judgment: "Is not this the same time mentioned by Peter in Acts 3:19?" "Daniel and the Revelation," p. 365.

The editor of the current edition of "Bible Readings" has excluded all reference to this text from the studies on the judgment appearing in that volume.

By comparing the R.V. rendering of Acts 3:19 with Ch. 2:38 of the same book, the reader will see clearly that Peter had no thought of teaching that the blotting out of sins was to take place in the distant future. In the American R.V. the passage is the same as in the English, word for word. Here are the two statements set off in four divisions, each exactly corresponding:

"Repent ye,	"Repent ye therefore,
and be baptised	and turn again,
every one of you in	
the name of Jesus	
Christ	
unto the remission	that your sins may
of your sins;	be blotted out,
and ye shall receive	that so there may
the gift of the Holy	come seasons of re-
Ghost."	freshing from the
	presence of the Lord."

Acts 2:38; 3:19 R.V.

There can be no doubt as to the entire mutual agreement of these two passages. Peter was setting forth precisely the same gospel truth on both occasions.

Despite the indisputable evidence of this, in a work published in 1933 the following claim is made:

"It is clearly stated in the scriptures that this blotting out of sins is to take place just before the return of Jesus. Thus Peter declares" W. H. Branson, in "Reply to Can-right," p. 240.

A still bolder misuse of the passage appeared in the official denominational organ in Australia, in 1932, as follows:

"That some ceremony similar to that carried out on the day of atonement is to be performed just before the second advent is made clear in Peter's sermon recorded in Acts 3." (Acts 3:19-21 is then quoted, and the writer continues): "Surely there can be no question concerning the meaning of this passage of scripture. Peter exhorted his hearers to repent that their 'sins may be blotted out'—not on the cross, but when the times of refreshing shall come—a period then far in the future. Here Peter was evidently referring to the time of the latter rain, or time of refreshing just before the second advent. That, he says, is the time of the blotting out of sin." A. W. Anderson, in the "Australasian Record," October 3, 1932.

This bold claim that "it was made clear in Peter's sermon" that "sins may be blotted out" at "a period then far in the future," provokes some serious reflections. One recalls the unimpeachable evidence that Peter promised his hearers the blotting out of their sins there and then, when they believed on the Lord; and, immediately following, "seasons of

refreshing from the presence of the Lord" for each believer.

The apostle continued thus:

"And that he may send the Christ, who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things." Acts 3:20, 21, R.V.

An endeavour is made by these writers to connect the blotting out of sins and seasons of refreshing with the second advent, rather than with the repentance and conversion of the believers. This is a gross mis-application of scripture. Both the forgiveness or blotting out of sins and the seasons of refreshing were promised to the people for immediate realization, and were indeed immediately realized by those who believed.

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Dan. 8:14.

This prophecy is thought to refer to the investigative judgment, because it is presumed (1) that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of coincides with the services of the day of atonement; and (2) that the ceremonies of that day represented a work of investigative judgment. Let us examine these two suppositions in order.

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

The cleansing of the sanctuary of Dan. 8:14 has no connection with the services of the day of atonement. In order to understand what is contemplated by a cleansing, it is necessary to give consid-

eration to the sense in which the object referred to has become **defiled**. How was the sanctuary defiled, according to Daniel's prophecy? Verses 9 to 12 declare that "the host" was "trampled upon" and the sanctuary "cast down" by a desolating power represented by the "little horn." Such desolations as these would not be corrected by the services of the day of atonement. There would be no connection between the two.

There is direct scripture evidence to support the view that a cleansing of the sanctuary would be called for either at its original dedication, or to restore it after a period of desecration.

Thus Ezekiel was instructed concerning his mystic temple—"In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt . . . cleanse the sanctuary." Eze. 45:18. This had no connection with the day of atonement, as the time designated for its observance shows. The day of atonement fell in the seventh month, whereas Ezekiel was to "cleanse the sanctuary" on "the first day of the first month." This accords with the time of the setting up of the tabernacle in the wilderness by Moses. See Ex. 40:17.

The prophecy of Daniel, however, does not refer to a cleansing of the sanctuary at the time of its original dedication, but to a cleansing made necessary by the defilements of a desolating power. We cite the instance from Ezekiel simply to show that the Adventist idea that the cleansing of the sanctuary necessarily refers to the services of the day of atone-

ment is entirely unwarranted by scripture.

Restoration after a Period of Defilement

An instance of the cleansing of the temple after a period of defilement is given in 2 Chron. 29. See verses 5, 15, 16, and 18.

On a later occasion the sanctuary at Jerusalem was literally defiled by the Greek king, Antiochus Epiphanes, in the second century B.C. Notice the expressions the writer of the book of Maccabees uses in describing the work of restoration:

"Then Judas said . . . Let us go up and **cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary.**"

"Then Judas appointed certain men to fight . . . until he had **cleansed the sanctuary.**"

"So he chose priests of blameless conversation . . . who **cleansed the sanctuary.**"

"Then they . . . built a new altar . . . and **made up the sanctuary.**"

"Now **on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month . . .** they rose up betimes . . . and offered sacrifice . . . upon the new altar." 1 Macc. 4:36, 41-43, 52, 53.

In this passage the cleansing of the sanctuary is referred to thrice, and its restoration once; and the work is said to have been completed on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, and **not** on the tenth day of the seventh month. This proves to a demonstration that the idea that the cleansing of the sanctuary necessarily refers to the day of atonement services is a fallacy.

An Inconsistent Interpretation

In his comments on Dan. 8:9-12, Uriah Smith, a leading Adventist exponent of the

prophecy, writes: "Pagan Rome was remodelled into Papal Rome. And the place of his sanctuary, or worship, the city of Rome, was cast down." "**Daniel and the Revelation**," p. 155. Now if this be the casting down of the sanctuary according to v. 9-12 of the prophecy, how could an investigation of the cases of the saints, from 1844 A.D. onwards, in heaven, constitute the cleansing of the sanctuary according to verse 14 of the same prophecy?

The Day of Atonement

There was a crisis of judgment represented by the services of the day of atonement; but it was **the crisis of the cross**. Sinners are either saved or condemned as a result of that great act; saved if they believe, and condemned if they disbelieve. God judged sin on the head of His own dear Son. Christ Himself plainly taught that the cross would mark the judgment of Satan, of this present evil world, and of unbelieving men. Here are His solemn words, all having direct application to the great crisis of Calvary:

"The prince of this world is judged."

"Now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

"Now is the judgment of this world."

"He that believeth not hath been judged already."

John 16:11; 12:31; 3:18.

To weaken the force of such solemn truths as these by referring the day of atonement services to a supposed investigation of the cases of the saints from

1844 onward is a deplorable error. What was there in those services to represent such an investigation? **Nothing at all!** No term or expression equivalent to "investigative judgment" is to be found anywhere in the Bible.

"I beheld till . . . the Ancient of days did sit . . . The Judgment was set, and the books were opened."
Dan. 7:9, 10.

A careful reading of the 7th chapter of Daniel reveals the fact that the judgment there described is not a judgment of the saints, but of the power symbolized by the Little Horn. The decision is against the Little Horn, and in favour of the saints. The Little Horn's dominion is taken away (v. 26), and "judgment" or justice is meted out to the saints. v. 22.

It is a well-defined feature of the theory, that in the investigative judgment "the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God." This being so, how is it that in the judgment described by Daniel it is the **Little Horn** that comes up for sentence? that **his** dominion is taken away? that "**the beast** was slain, and **his** body destroyed, and given to the burning flame"? vv. 11, 12, 26.

There is no support in this prophecy for the supposed investigation of the cases of the saints.

"Fear God, and give glory to Him for the hour of his judgment is come." Rev. 14:7.

What is the nature of the judgment here contemplated? For long centuries great persecuting powers held dominion over the earth. The saints were done to death. When they cried to the Lord for justice and judgment, they were told that they must "rest yet for a little season." Rev. 6:9, 11. But with the expiry of the times allotted to the persecuting powers, a great change came about. The hour of God's judgment, long deferred, is now come. God's retributive judgments have already begun to fall.

The announcement of the hour of God's judgment in Rev. 14:7 is followed by a long train of judgments, reaching its climax in the latter part of the 20th chapter. See Ch. 16:5, 7; 17:1; 18:8, 10, 20; 19:2, 11; 20:11-15.

We are now in the period of "distress of nations" which Christ predicted would follow "the times of the Gentiles." Luke 21:24, 26. Heaven's judgments are already falling upon a world in departure from God. But even at such a time as this there is still "good news" ("eternal good tidings," A.R.V.) for "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The terrible things that are "coming on the earth" are, for all who believe the gospel, but the heralds of a better day now about to dawn. "When these things begin to come to pass," said the Lord Jesus, "then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." v. 28.

In the early days of the Seventh-Day Adventist movement, Joseph Bates advocated the theory of the investigative judgment; but James White, husband of Ellen G. White, for a number of years opposed that view. In order to place the matter clearly and briefly before the reader, we will ask some questions, and supply the answers from James White's own statements, as published in the early documents.

Is an investigative judgment necessary in order to "determine who are prepared for the kingdom of God"?

"It is not necessary that the final sentence should be given before the first resurrection, as some have taught; for the names of the saints are written in heaven, and Jesus, and the angels will certainly know who to raise, and gather to the New Jerusalem." J.W. in "A Word to the Little Flock," published in 1847, p. 24.

What event will mark the beginning of the great judgment day?

"The event which will introduce the Judgment Day, will be the coming of the Son of man, to raise the sleeping saints, and to change those that are alive at that time . . ." J.W. Ib.

What scripture would you bring in support of that teaching?

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at [not before] his appearing and his kingdom." 2 Tim. 4:1." Parenthesis inserted thus by J. W. in "Advent Review," August, 1850.

At what time do you expect the judgment of Daniel 7 to take place?

"Daniel, 'in the night visions' saw that 'judgment was given to the Saints of the Most High,' but not to mortal saints—not 'an-

til the Ancient of days came,' and the 'little horn' ceased prevailing, which will not be until he is destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming." J.W., Ib.

But did not "the hour of God's judgment begin in 1844?

"The advent angel [Rev. 14:6, 7] 'saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come,' does not prove that the day of judgment came in 1840, or in 1844, nor that it will come prior to the second advent." J.W., Ib.

What, then, is your opinion about the teaching that the investigative judgment must precede the second coming of Christ?

"Some have contended that the day of judgment was prior to the second advent. This view is certainly without foundation in the word of God . . ." J.W., Ib.

Mrs. E. G. White's Comments on Rev. 11:18

In that early period (1847), Mrs. E. G. White related a vision which placed the judgment just where her husband had placed it—at the second coming of Christ, after the pouring out of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues. Referring to Rev. 11:18, she said:

"I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other." "Early Writings," p. 36.

Both James and Ellen G. White, however, afterward changed their views, and accepted the investigative judgment theory advocated by Joseph Bates. In later years Mrs. White wrote the following paragraph:

"Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumours of wars. The

nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged." Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 14. pub. 1900.

It will be noticed that in this latter passage the clause "and thy wrath is come" (firmly insisted on by this writer in 1847 as in its proper place and order) is entirely omitted from reference. Why is this? Because Ellen G. White had now long since been teaching that the time of the dead **had** come, that they should be judged; whereas in 1847 she taught that "the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other."

Let the reader decide in the fear of God as to the consistency of all this, and learn once more to rely for the true teaching upon "the Bible and the Bible only."

PART THREE

A Study of the True Biblical Teaching Concerning the Judgment.

In the Bible the true doctrine of the judgment is taught with great clearness. As with all gospel teaching, the most essential points are made to stand out with such prominence, stated so positively, and explained with such simplicity, that even a child may understand.

The unanimous testimony of scripture is, that the great judgment day, in all its phases, is ushered in by the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's **punitive** judgments fall upon men and nations prior to the second advent, as described in many prophecies; but there is no excuse for confusing these

with the great day of judgment that follows the advent.

The Judgment Follows the Second Advent

The apostle Paul states this very emphatically in his epistle to Timothy:

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." 2 Tim. 4:1.

Christians are exhorted to "judge nothing before the time, **until the Lord come**, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." 1 Cor. 4:5.

This passage unmistakably identifies the time of judgment with the coming of the Lord. The apostle speaks here of Christ, at his coming, "bringing to light the **hidden things** of darkness." In Rom. 2:16 he speaks of "the day when God shall judge the **secrets** of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel"; and again in verse five of the same chapter he refers to "the day of wrath and **revelation** of the righteous judgment of God."

These three are the same:

1. "Bringing to light the hidden things of darkness";
2. "Judging the secrets of men"; and
3. "The revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

And these other three are also the same:

1. "Until the Lord come";
2. "The day when God shall judge"; and

3. "The day of wrath."

There can be no mistake about this. We know when "the day of wrath comes." It is at the second advent. "Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne . . . for the great day of his wrath is come." Rev. 6:16, 17.

Christ Himself places the judgment scenes after his own second coming. Here are the solemn words with which he introduces his great parable of the judgment:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations." Matt. 25:31, 32.

It is sufficient for the present to notice **the time** assigned to the judgment in this parable. Place the statement of Christ and that of the apostle Paul side by side, thus:

CHRIST

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . then . . . before Him shall be gathered all nations."

PAUL

"The Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

Christ taught the same truth in another parable. The wheat and the tares, of Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, correspond exactly with the sheep and the goats of Ch. 25:31-46. The action of the Shepherd in separating the sheep from the goats is the same as that of the reapers in gathering the tares to be burned, and the wheat to be garnered. And when, according to the parable, is the latter action to take place? "**SO SHALL IT BE**

IN THE END OF THE WORLD," declares the Lord Jesus. Ch. 13:40.

Again, there is the parable of the net, cast into the sea, gathering fish both good and bad, which were afterward separated; the good being kept, and the bad cast away. What is the significance of this? "The angels shall come forth," Christ explains, "and sever the wicked from among the just." And when will this be done? **"SO SHALL IT BE AT THE END OF THE WORLD,"** is again the Lord's reply. Ch. 13:47-50.

On the solemn occasion of his last public appeal to the Jewish people, "Jesus cried and said....He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him **IN THE LAST DAY,"** John 12:44, 48.

The Judgment, following the Second Advent of Christ, will pertain to both dead and living, and to both righteous and unrighteous.

Notice that this is plainly taught in the following scriptures:

"The quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." See also Acts 10:42; 1 Pet. 4:5.

"The sheep" and "the goats," "when the Son of man shall come in his glory."

"The wheat" and "the tares," "in the end of this world."

"The good" fish, and "the bad," "at the end of the world."

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body . . . whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. 5:10.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," Rom. 14:10-12.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it," 1 Cor. 3:13.

This is also the teaching of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, "The righteous judgment of God," for both saints and sinners, will be manifested "in that day," "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." See Ch. 1:5-10.

There will be an interval of one thousand years between the judgment of rewards for the saved, and the final judgment of condemnation for the lost.

In the book of Revelation, a period of one thousand years transpires between the giving of judgment to the saints, and the concluding judgment, when "the dead, small and great, stand before God."

As regards the saints, "judgment is given unto them" at the beginning of the millennium. The judgment of the "great white throne" takes place at the close of that period. Rev. 20:4, 11-15.

When it is said concerning the saints that "judgment was given unto them," this indicates primarily that justice, vindication, or reward, is meted out to them. It is true also that the saints are to judge the world, and even angels. 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. But the first step in the judgment is the vindication and exaltation of the saints themselves. This is accomplished when "judgment" is "given unto them."

This is a very ordinary use of the word "judgment"; one with which we are familiar through its constant recurrence in the daily newspapers. The reports of law-court proceedings frequently announce that "judgment was given for the plaintiff," or "judgment was entered for the appellant."

Judgment is spoken of in this sense in Dan. 7:22, where it is said that "judgment was given to the saints," or, as rendered in the R.V. margin, "for the saints."

Not an Investigative Judgment

Let it be noted that in no stage of the judgment are God and the angels represented as conducting an investigation. God's judgment is in all cases **announced**, or **revealed**, and his vindication or disapprobation **manifested**.

That day will be "the day . . . of **revelation** of the righteous judgment of God." Rom. 2:5. God will **bring to light** the hidden things of darkness, and **make manifest** the counsels of the heart." 1 Cor. 4:5. "For we must all **be made manifest** before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:10. R.V.

The scriptures plainly teach that men are judged, momentarily, as to their standing with God, right here in this present life, according to their relation to Jesus Christ. John 3:18. Speaking to the Jews, Christ said:

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." John 5:24, R.V.

This does not mean that believers will

not have to "appear before the judgment seat of Christ," for, as we have already seen, it is taught elsewhere that **the saints will** appear before that tribunal. It does mean, however, that the saints will not come into judgment in the sense of coming into condemnation. The word rendered "judgment" in the R.V. of John 5:24 is translated "condemnation" in the A.V. The meaning is much the same.

The "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of judgment" (R.V.) are spoken of in the 29th verse of the same chapter.

The righteous, coming up as they do in the resurrection of life, appear before the judgment seat of Christ when rewards are given to the saints; but they will never "come into condemnation." That sad lot is for those who rise at the "resurrection unto judgment."

Righteousness and eternal life come as a gift from God to all who believe, without distinction, but in other respects rewards will be according to works; and these rewards will be revealed or announced at the judgment seat of Christ.

"**Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.**" Luke 14:14.

The Books of the Judgment

The opening of the books in the judgment does not imply an investigation. God does not need such an investigation.

"There is no creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13, R.V.

The angels do not need an investiga-

tion, for they already know what is "written in the books."

The confession, or rejection and removal of names from the book of life by Christ, referred to in Rev. 3:5, is a work carried on throughout the Christian dispensation. For evidence of this, see Matt. 10:32, 33, and Luke 12:8, 9.

The books are opened at the last day as a witness to the justice of heaven's judgment, or as a witness against the transgressors, and not for investigation.

We are not to think of the books of heaven as similar to those with which we are acquainted. What the prophets called "books" were scrolls of parchment. Our modern books are very different. The books of heaven are doubtless life-records of a much more searching character than we could possibly imagine.

It is said that King Edward VII. commanded records to be made of the singing of Dame Nellie Melba, and of the recital of passages from Shakespeare by Sir Henry Irving; the records were to be sealed, placed in the British Museum, and not opened for one hundred years. The king's intention was that a generation yet unborn should listen to the singing of the queen of song of his reign, and to the matchless speaking of the great actor.

Memory will play an active part in the judgment of the lost. God will have a way of causing the scenes of a man's life to pass before him with a vividness of which we cannot now conceive.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him

that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. 20:11, 12.

This is the dread scene that will be enacted at the close of the millennium. The books will be opened, not for investigation by God and the angels; but for a witness against those who are lost. What will a man be able to say, when the sinful scenes of his own wasted life pass rapidly before him? What will he say, when he hears wrathful, unholy words, and recognizes the tones of his own voice? What will he say when he sees the testimony of the gospel spurned, and the convictions of the Holy Spirit disregarded and rejected, and realizes that he is tracing the course of his own life, now fixed and unchangeable forever?

Ah, reader, "there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 25:30, R.V.

A poignant part of the punishment of the wicked will be this anguish of individual memory, sharpened and quickened by the opening of the heavenly records. With the scenes of life thus opened before them, every mouth will be stopped, and all the world of lost men be found guilty before God.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20, v. 15.

It will not be so with the saints. Their

names are written in the book of life. **Their** sins have all been blotted out, with the blessed assurance from God, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 10:17. There will be nothing, for those who are saved, to prompt memory regarding the sins of the past. "The former things," so far as they would bring sorrow, "shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isa. 65:17, R.V. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7:17.

Conclusion

And now, with the thought of these blessed promises, we draw this solemn review of the judgment scenes to a close.

How is it with you, reader?

"How will you stand in that great day?

Will you be found before Him, wanting?

Or with your sins all washed away?"

W. W. FLETCHER

* * *

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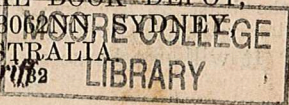
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