

The Judging Process

Sabbath Afternoon, December 17

“Hereafter,” said Jesus, “shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” In these words Christ presented the reverse of the scene then taking place. He, the Lord of life and glory, would be seated at God’s right hand. He would be the judge of all the earth, and from His decision there could be no appeal. Then every secret thing would be set in the light of God’s countenance, and judgment be passed upon every man according to his deeds.

The words of Christ startled the high priest. The thought that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, when all would stand at the bar of God, to be rewarded according to their works, was a thought of terror to Caiaphas. He did not wish to believe that in future he would receive sentence according to his works. There rushed before his mind as a panorama the scenes of the final judgment. For a moment he saw the fearful spectacle of the graves giving up their dead, with the secrets he had hoped were forever hidden. For a moment he felt as if standing before the eternal Judge, whose eye, which sees all things, was reading his soul, bringing to light mysteries supposed to be hidden with the dead.

—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 707, 708.

Every man’s work passes in review before God. . . . Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered, with terrible exactness, every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.

If your name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life, then all will be well with you. Be ready and anxious to confess your faults and forsake them, that your mistakes and sins may go beforehand to judgment and be blotted out.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 210.

All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged “out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12.

Said the Judge: “All will be justified by their faith and judged by their works.” . . .

The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition, “Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” Mark 13:33.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 211.

Sunday, December 18

The Final Judgment

Christ is a risen Saviour; for, though He was dead, He has risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. We are to believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. Those who are justified by faith will make confession of Christ. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner’s representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ made satisfaction for the guilt of the whole world, and all who will come to God in faith, will receive the righteousness of Christ, “who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Our sin has been expiated, put away, cast into the depths of the sea. Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust.

—*Selected Messages, book 1, p. 392.*

Paul endeavored to direct the minds of his hearers to the one great Sacrifice for sin. He pointed to the sacrifices that were shadows of good things to come, and then presented Christ as the antitype of all those ceremonies—the object to which they pointed as the only source of life and hope for fallen man. Holy men of old were saved by faith in the blood of Christ. As they saw the dying agonies of the sacrificial victims they looked across the gulf of ages to the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world.

God justly claims the love and obedience of all His creatures. He has given them in His law a perfect standard of right. But many forget their Maker and choose to follow their own way in opposition to His will. They return enmity for love that is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe. God cannot lower the requirements of His law to meet the standard of wicked men; neither can man in his own power meet the demands of the law. Only by faith in Christ can the sinner be cleansed from guilt and be enabled to render obedience to the law of his Maker.

—*The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 424, 425.*

Monday, December 19

The Pre-Advent Judgment

We are each deciding our eternal destiny, and it rests wholly with us whether we shall gain eternal life. Will we live the lessons given in the Word of God, Christ's great lesson book? It is the grandest, and yet the most simply arranged and easily understood book ever prepared for giving an education in proper behaviour, in speech, in manners, in affection. It is the only book that will prepare human beings for the life that measures with the life of God. And those who make this Word their daily study are the only ones who are worthy of receiving a diploma entitling them to educate and train the children for entrance into the higher school, to be crowned as victorious overcomers.

Christ Jesus is the only judge of the fitness of human agents to receive eternal life. The gates of the holy city will open to those who have been humble, meek, lowly followers of His, having learned their lessons from Him, and received from Him their life insurance policy, forming characters after the divine similitude.

—*My Life Today*, p. 339.

In the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. . . . The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment. . . .

The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20. Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, "Whose names are in the book of life." Philippians 4:3. . . .

"A book of remembrance" is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of "them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 210.

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. 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. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Exodus 32:33.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

Tuesday, December 20

The Millennial Judgment

At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants. “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” “The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.” “Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.” Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6.

The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations.

—*Maranatha*, p. 306.

After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened—the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. “Behold ye,” said the angel, “the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.” This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus through the one thousand years in the Holy City before it descends to the earth.

—*Early Writings*, p. 52.

The abundant evidence given by God that He desires the salvation of all, will be the condemnation of those who refuse the gift of heaven. At the last great day, when all will be rewarded or punished according to their obedience or disobedience, the cross of Calvary will appear plainly before those standing before the Judge of all the earth to receive sentence for eternity. They are made capable of comprehending something of the love that God has expressed for fallen human beings. They see how greatly He has been dishonored by those who have continued in transgression, choosing sides with Satan and showing contempt for the law of Jehovah. . . .

God’s law is the transcript of His character, and those only who obey this law will be accepted by Him.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 361.

Wednesday, December 21

The Executive Judgment

Has God, in showing mercy to the sinner, ceased to be just? Has He dishonored His holy law, and will He henceforth pass over the violation of it? God is true. He changes not. The conditions of salvation are ever the same. Life, eternal life, is for all who will obey God's law. Perfect obedience, revealed in thought, word, and deed, is as essential now as when the lawyer asked Christ, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou? . . . this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28).

Under the new covenant the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old—perfect obedience. Under the old covenant there were many offences of a daring, presumptuous character for which there was no atonement specified by law. In the new and better covenant Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors of law if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. . . . Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to take away their sins. In the better covenant we are cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ. . . . The sinner is helpless to atone for one sin. The power is in Christ's free gift, a promise appreciated by those only who are sensible of their sins and who forsake their sins and cast their helpless souls upon Christ, the sin-pardoning Saviour. He will put into their hearts His perfect law, which is "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12), the law of God's own nature.

—*That I May Know Him*, p. 299.

The flames that consumed the cities of the plain shed their warning light down even to our time. We are taught the fearful and solemn lesson that while God's mercy bears long with the transgressor, there is a limit beyond which men may not go on in sin. When that limit is reached, then the offers of mercy are withdrawn, and the ministration of judgment begins. . . .

The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life" is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry "Peace and safety," while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. . . . Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.

—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 53.

Thursday, December 22

The Second Death

The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them.

It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was despised when offered them; but how desirable it now appears. “All this,” cries the lost soul, “I might have had; but I chose to put these things far from me. Oh, strange infatuation! I have exchanged peace, happiness, and honor for wretchedness, infamy, and despair.” All see that their exclusion from heaven is just.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 668.

The wicked saw what they had lost; and fire was breathed from God upon them and consumed them. This was the execution of the judgment. The wicked then received according as the saints, in unison with Jesus, had meted out to them during the one thousand years. The same fire from God that consumed the wicked purified the whole earth. The broken, ragged mountains melted with fervent heat, the atmosphere also, and all the stubble was consumed. Then our inheritance opened before us, glorious and beautiful, and we inherited the whole earth made new. We all shouted with a loud voice, “Glory; Alleluia!”

—*Early Writings*, p. 54.

The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch—Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.

Satan’s work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God’s creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. “The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they [the righteous] break forth into singing.” Isaiah 14:7. And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe. “The voice of a great multitude,” “as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,” is heard, saying: “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Revelation 19:6.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 673.

Friday, December 23

For Further Reading

Early Writings, “The Earth Desolated,” pp. 289–291;

The Great Controversy, “The Controversy Ended,” pp. 662–673.