

Sabbath Afternoon, December 24

Christ's plan is the only safe one. He declares, "Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:5. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Corinthians 5:17. The Saviour gives no encouragement to any to think that He will accept a patchwork religion. Such a religion is of no value in His sight. There may at first seem to be some of self and some of Christ; but it is soon seen that there is none of Christ. The patches of selfishness increase till the entire garment is covered with them. . . .

A religion formed after the divine pattern is the only one that will endure. Only by striving to live the life of Christ here can we prepare ourselves to live with Him through the eternal ages.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 342.

It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He did. Revelation 3:21. Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him when "the meek shall inherit the earth." Psalm 37:11.

The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. "We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. . . .

There is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, I am sick; there are no burial trains, no mourning, no death, no partings, no broken hearts; but Jesus is there, peace is there.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

Before the destruction of the old world by a flood, there were talented men, men who possessed skill and knowledge. But they became corrupt in their imagination, because they left God out of their plans and councils. They were wise to do what God had never told them to do, wise to do evil. The Lord saw that this example would be deleterious to those who should afterwards be born, and He took the matter in hand. For one hundred twenty years He sent them warnings through His servant Noah. But they used the probation so graciously granted them in ridiculing Noah. They caricatured him and criticized him. They laughed at him for his peculiar earnestness and intense feeling in regard to the judgments which he declared God would surely fulfill. They talked of science and of the laws controlling nature. Then they held a carnival over the words of Noah, calling him a crazy fanatic. God's patience was exhausted. He said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth."

—*Ellen G. White Comments, in The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1090.*

Sunday, December 25

A New Heaven and a New Earth

A fear of making the saints' inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon the new earth as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them. Those who accept the teachings of God's Word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet the apostle Paul declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.

—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 430.

The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are, in character and holy service, is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be. . . .

In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew "the riches of the glory of this mystery;" "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 362.

Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. He told them that they were to be the executors of the will in which He bequeathed to the world the treasures of eternal life. You have been witnesses of My life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. . . . And although My people would not come to Me that they might have life, although priests and rulers have done unto Me as they listed, although they have rejected Me, they shall have still another opportunity of accepting the Son of God. You have seen that all who come to Me confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles—to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.

The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 27, 28.

Monday, December 26

In the Temple of God

[This vision describes events to take place at the close of the one thousand years after Christ's second advent.]

With Jesus at our head, we all descended from the city down to this earth, on a great and mighty mountain. . . .

. . . Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly to the top of the mountains, and pluck the never-fading flowers. There were all kinds of trees around the temple to beautify the place—the box, the pine, the fir, the oil, the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the fig tree bowed down with the weight of its timely figs; these made the place all over glorious. And as we were about to enter the temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, “Only the 144,000 enter this place,” and we shouted, “Alleluia!”

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw, I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 67–69.*

Those who enter the city of God will have the golden crown placed upon their heads. That will be a joyful scene, which none of us can afford to miss. We shall cast our crowns at the feet of Jesus, and again and again we will give Him the glory, and praise His holy name. Angels will unite in the songs of triumph. Touching their golden harps, they will fill all heaven with rich music and songs to the Lamb.

—*In Heavenly Places, p. 216.*

The day is coming when the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The nations of the saved will know no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ's righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a tribute of praise and adoration. The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold greater than it is now. The years will move on in gladness. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, “There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death.”

—*The Ministry of Healing, p. 504.*

Tuesday, December 27

In the Presence of God

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have declared unto them Thy name,”—“merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8. Yes, as did Moses, they shall endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. . . .

. . . If you will watch and pray, and make earnest efforts in the right direction, you will be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ. “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:14. . . . If you will heed the instruction given in the word of God you may go forth with a development of intellectual and moral power that will cause even angels to rejoice, and God will joy over you with singing. Under such discipline you will secure the fullest development of your faculties. . . . Day by day put on Christ, and in the brief season of your test and trial here below maintain your dignity in the strength of God, as co-workers with the highest agencies of heaven.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 103.

The Lord purifies the heart very much as we air a room. . . . We open the doors and throw wide the windows and let heaven’s purifying atmosphere flow in. The Lord says, “He that doeth truth cometh to the light.” [John 3:21.] The windows of impulse, of feeling, must be opened up toward heaven, and the dust of selfishness and earthliness must be expelled. The grace of God must sweep through the chambers of the mind, the imagination must have heavenly themes for contemplation, and every element of the nature must be purified and vitalized by the Spirit of God.

—*Manuscript 8c*, July 26, 1891.

Wednesday, December 28

No More Death and Tears

After his expulsion from Eden Adam's life on earth was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every blight upon the fair face of nature, every stain upon man's purity, were fresh reminders of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he beheld iniquity abounding and, in answer to his warnings, met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. . . . Faithfully did he repent of his sin and trust in the merits of the promised Saviour, and he died in the hope of a resurrection. The Son of God redeemed man's failure and fall; and now, through the work of the atonement, Adam is reinstated in his first dominion.

Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight— the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. . . . His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God. Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer. . . .

This reunion is witnessed by the angels who wept at the fall of Adam and rejoiced when Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended to heaven, having opened the grave for all who should believe on His name. Now they behold the work of redemption accomplished, and they unite their voices in the song of praise.

—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 540, 541.

Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand, the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. . . . Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. . . . [He] looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, "I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb.

—*Early Writings*, p. 288.

Thursday, December 29

His Name on Their Foreheads

To enter heaven, a man must have Christ formed within, the hope of glory, and take heaven with him. The Lord Jesus alone can fashion and change the character. For want of patience, kindness, forbearance, unselfishness, and love, the revealings of the traits [of Satan] flash forth involuntarily when off guard, and unchristian words, unchristlikeness of character burst forth sometimes to the ruin of the soul. “Rejoiceth not in iniquity.” Mark it. The apostle meant where there is a cultivation of genuine love for precious souls, it will be exhibited for those most in need of that patience which suffereth long and is kind, and will not be ready to magnify a small indiscretion or direct wrong into large unpardonable offenses, and will not make capital of others’ misdoings.

—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 279.

Our time here is short at best, and we want every move we shall make to tell in the strengthening and the advancement of the cause of God. . . . Let your cry be to God, Convert my inmost soul. Plead with God for the transforming power of His grace. Hold fast to your Saviour as did Jacob, until God shall not only reveal to you yourself, but shall reveal to you Himself, and you shall see in Jesus a strength and support, a brightness and power you have never sensed and realized. . . . If your faith perseveringly grasps the promises, you will prevail. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

—*This Day With God*, p. 334.

All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. “What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:1-5. Therefore there is no occasion for one to glory over another or to grudge against another. No one is privileged above another, nor can anyone claim the reward as a right.

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 401.

Friday, December 30

For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, “Kingdom of Holy Love,” p. 372;

Heaven, “A Call for Us to Be There,” pp. 185–191.