

XXVII

"WE MUST ALL APPEAR": THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT THEME IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

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Seventh-day Adventism is in many ways a reflection of the thought of Ellen G. White. As a theological system, it is concerned with the widest possible context for Christ's ministry. It begins with the structure of Ellen White's thinking about atonement/judgment.

While Ellen White's interests and writings seem wide-ranging and sometimes unrelated, it is important to note that there is indeed a system in her thought. As we noted previously,¹ that system or structure is properly described as the "great controversy" concept. This concept to Ellen White is more than merely a thematic model or extended metaphor. For her, the great controversy is the historical facts about the development, history, and resolution of sin.

While the controversy is complex and subtle, as Ellen White describes it, it revolves around three basic issues that are fairly simple to state. Like the laws of motion, however, the simplicity of the statements is misleading; behind the simplicity is complexity and depth. These three central ideas are arguments raised by Lucifer against the way the government of God is run. At bottom, they are attacks on the nature of God. They develop chronologically and logically as the basis of cosmic rebellion.

To Adventism, these three issues are present in the history of man. They are especially present in the life of Christ. They are the basis for the three temptations of Christ. They are, to Ellen White, represented by the three cosmic beasts of Rev 12 and 13 which form mystic Babylon. They are intimately connected with the varying work of the three members of the Trinity. They are answered, finally and fully, by the threefold composite message of the three angels of Rev 14.

What these issues are and how they are answered in the ongoing plan of atonement is, in Ellen White's thought, the basis for a doctrine unique to Adventism, a concept loosely defined by James

White, about 1853, as the "investigative judgment."² This teaching is not the *basis* for Ellen White's theological system but an important, indeed a requisite, element of it.

For Adventism, the "investigative judgment" is an historical reality, defining the present work of the ascended Lord. At first glance, the idea seems simple. Beginning in the fall of 1844 A.D.,³ the ascended, glorified Christ began a new work of priesthood in heaven, the last work before His second advent to this earth. The work involves going over "books" of record, studying the lives of professed believers and passing judgment on each individually, and appropriately retaining either in the book of life or in the book of death. If the result is a good one, sins are blotted out of the books of record, and thus the heavenly temple is finally "cleansed" of the scourge and defilement of sin.

Certain obvious questions arise immediately. The picture of the infinite God (or the Son of God) poring over record books of the lives of mankind suggests a rather crude concept of God. And 1844, as a date for prophetic fulfillment and the beginning of the priestly intercession of Christ, strikes one as late by approximately two millenia!

But simplicity and complexity are here present in an aesthetic relation. In order to perceive the issue correctly, we must begin with those central deceptions and work forward by stages through Ellen White's great controversy concept to make sense of the investigative judgment doctrine. It is imperative to note Ellen White's anthropology and what she believes the death of Christ did and did not do in and for the sinner, for it is out of her theory of atonement that the investigative judgment arises.

The idea comes from the earliest period of post-Millerite development in Adventism and is present as a necessary *element* in the soteriology of Ellen White until its latest presentation. Ellen White claims both divine revelation through the authentic gift of prophecy and the clear teaching of Scripture as authority for the doctrine. However, she does *not* claim originality in developing the concept; certainly much of its development is derived from others, most notably her own husband. Since it is, as we shall see, necessary to her system and unique to Adventism, its importance is considerable indeed.

The Great Controversy as Structure

The first element of our study must necessarily be the three clusters of ideas which, for Ellen White, form the cord of the great controversy.⁵ The arguments of Lucifer are portrayed thus:

1. God is a harsh, arbitrary, absolute, unjust, unfair tyrant. (Of course, Ellen White never uses all these adjectives in a single sentence, but they are all present in her writings.) The basis for such a view is that God has arbitrarily imposed an absolute law, which He had no intrinsic right to do. For, above all, Lucifer claims equality of essence, or intrinsic being, with God. God is a more advanced creature who can actually be overcome by force. The creation of mankind undermines the argument, but it is continued.

For Ellen White, this view of God is the key to man's rebellion. Wherever it is held, there is no barrier against sin. Only the knowledge of the gospel undermines it.

2. God cannot (or will not) forgive. That is, justice destroys mercy. Even if God did have a right to impose an absolute law (and the creation of life on earth suggested that He did), and even if the divine law was just (here Lucifer is pictured as being forced to admit error), there is still a dilemma. Justice and mercy are, by nature, incompatible opposites, Lucifer argues. The unforgiving God becomes the basis for all pagan appeasement, all legalism, which are attempts to meet the infinite God's justice apart from mercy.

3. The two arguments having collapsed at the cross, Lucifer then attacks the law by arguing that mercy has now destroyed justice, that the law has been abrogated. To Ellen White, this is *the* eschatological issue. The very purpose of Christianity is being argued here.

In Adventism, the spurious norm or guide that replaces the law and overthrows the authority of God can be one of two types: (1) external, such as the state, the church, societal/cultural pressure, etc., or (2) internal, a kind of existential claim. Any system, whether appealing to logic or emotion, that does not accept the absolute authority of the Godhead as expressed in the law is potentially an agency for the third deception.

This is especially true of Christendom, when the deception finally becomes political compulsion. "It is the sophistry of Satan that the death of Christ brought in grace to take the place of the law. . . . God's moral government and His grace are inseparable."⁶ False presentations of grace that effectively do not require conformity of character (again, not nature) to the law are part of this deception. Hence Ellen White writes that "a wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and the obligation of the divine law has led to errors in relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church."⁷

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"It is not the work of the gospel to weaken the claims of God's holy law, but to bring men up where they can keep its precepts." She continues, "The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. 'Believe, believe,' is their cry; 'only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do. While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works."⁸ *RH 5, 1886*

Ellen White's comment that "Christ saves men not in sin from sin" represents for her two views of Christianity--one that sees a sinner largely unchanged but forgiven and one that sees a sinner both forgiven and radically changed in character. For her the latter state is the genuine goal of Christianity.

Heavenly Mediation

Conforming the repentant believer's character to the law is the object of the heavenly mediation of Christ. Naturally, therefore, that mediation begins at the ascension. There has been a marked tendency here to misunderstand Ellen White by running together two phases of Christ's work in her thought--mediation and final atonement. "After His ascension our Saviour began His work as our high priest. Says Paul: 'Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' Heb 9:24."⁹

While it is of no real significance, it is interesting to note that Ellen White's use of the two "compartments" of the earthly sanctuary as analogies for these two phases of ministry does not deny the biblical view of Christ's immediate presence with the Father.

Since this mediation makes effective the victory of the cross, it is equally essential to the effectiveness of the plan of salvation. "By His death [Christ] began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."¹⁰ This work is one of "keeping us" for "Satan stands ready to destroy."¹¹

Ellen White pictures man, even in a repentant state, as wholly undeserving of God's favor. Because man possesses a sinful nature, even his prayers are polluted by double motivations. Even with the best of intentions, man cannot escape the selfishness of nature that colors all his acts. The presence of the wholly-deserving Christ wins for man the forgiveness He requests: "[Christ] places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. Christ pleads for man, and man, in need of divine help, pleads for

himself in the presence of God, using the power of the influence of the One who gave His life for the world. As we acknowledge before God our appreciation of Christ's merits, fragrance is given to our intercessions."¹²

The prayer of John 17 is presented as a model of just the type of high priestly intercession Christ began at His ascension.¹³ While it is His own blood He is pleading, for He is still both Priest and Victim,¹⁴ the Spirit is intimately connected with the work, Himself interceding for man.¹⁵ (As we have noted, Ellen White makes a non-mediate identification of essence, or ontological relationship, between the members of the Trinity.)

This intercession is "His self-appointed work"¹⁶ which is a continuation of the divine self-determination to save man. Christ is under no moral obligation to save repentant sinners as the only perfect intercessor. Since the Father continues to represent--as at Calvary--infinite justice, Christ is presented as "pleading" (in the court scene sense) in behalf of repentant sinners. However, Christ having fully met the demands of infinite justice on the cross, the Father Himself delights to honor the Godhead's commitment to infinite mercy. It is not in any sense, then, a divine favor to Christ for the Father to forgive. "And now, not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a conqueror claiming His victory."¹⁷ SF FEB 14, 1900

Since our earlier study showed that, in one sense, all men were saved in Christ's death, so also Christ "stands before God as the representative of our race." All men are candidates for His heavenly mediation. In another sense, "Christ is pleading for His church--pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood."¹⁸ Again, the opposites, universal and particular, are present.

As we noted earlier, this heavenly work of Christ is immediate to Calvary, not only in time and purpose, but also in quality. It is the continuation of Christ's sacrifice on the cross in an historical and non-metaphorical sense. It is "immortalized Calvary," necessitated by the continual commission of sin and the continual need for atonement.¹⁹

Obviously then, Christ's mediation continues as long as there are sinners committing sins and, subsequently, truly repenting. This is not, however, in disagreement with Ellen White's consistent view that sinners must eventually be conformed to the law of God. "Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and claiming for them forgiveness, . . . Note that Christ claims *for them* forgiveness while exhibiting their own penitence and faith. Man has an essential part to act, but that part does

not earn merit or make man deserving of the requested forgiveness. "Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. . . . All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation. 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary. Thus the cross, in earnest appeals, continually proffers to the sinner a thorough expiation."²¹

Thus we see that it is in the province of the human will and its freedom of choice that man's activity in his salvation is carried out. It is precisely because of this Arminian position that Adventism continues sacrifice and atonement into the present. "Sacrifice" here refers to the suffering of God in the presence of sin and His self-abnegation and self-limitation solve the problem.

Nor does the heavenly intercession of Christ hold the potential for endless continuation of sin. For Ellen White, its object is to bring the sinner into a *state* of repentance in which his character takes on likeness to Christ and he ceases to commit sin as an act of the will. To this is added, therefore, the concept of an *eschatological phase* of Christ's heavenly work which brings every living person to a final choice about the authority of God--to a resolution of the conflict over the third deception.

"Investigative" Judgment

Operating under the principle of type and antitype, Ellen White makes the last phase of Christ's heavenly work a special judgment/atonement activity. In line with biblical thought, the activity of God toward sinners is always an aesthetic whole, containing in it the opposites of judgment/atonement, wrath/salvation, and justice/mercy.

For this reason, "investigative judgment" could just as easily be translated "investigative atonement" and be true to Adventist thought. "Intercession and atonement" are sometimes used in just this way to represent the two phases of Christ's heavenly work.²² The later phase begins in 1844 by interpreting Dan 8:14 on historicist principles and equating the Jerusalem temple with the heavenly.²³

Ellen White is careful not to replace intercession by judgment. The eschatological phase of work is *added to* the prior phase. "So Christ had only completed one part of His work as our intercessor to enter upon another portion of the work, and He still pleaded His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners."²⁴

The death of Christ, His post-ascension mediation, and the investigative judgment are "phases" likened to the work at the altar of sacrifice in the first room and the inner shrine of the ancient Hebrew temples, which are types of Christ's activity. The heavenly ministry, then, is in two parts: "As Christ's ministration was to consist of two great divisions, each occupying a period of time and having a distinctive place in the heavenly sanctuary, so the typical ministration consisted of two divisions, the daily and the yearly service, and to each a department of the tabernacle was devoted. As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf."²⁵

The yet-future, post-millennial execution of God's wrath, where Christ presides as judge, is compared to the priest's actions upon exiting from the holy of holies on the day of atonement.²⁶

Speaking in these terms, Ellen White writes of the first phase of Christ's heavenly ministry: "For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father; yet their sins still remained upon the books of record."²⁷ This matter of the record of sin remaining to be blotted out we will examine below at some length, as it is crucial to the concept.

The investigative judgment itself is general as well as specific, and proceeds chronologically. "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."²⁸

It will be necessary to treat in some detail the basis on which this acceptance or rejection occurs. For now, it is sufficient to say that it is a "work of examination of character," a "weighing of moral worth," of "determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God."²⁹

The work is efficacious in that it has eschatological dimensions for believers in answering the last deception of Satan that the law is not/cannot be an absolute norm for man's experience-- that it cannot be kept. Rather, the law is demonstrated to be just and its performance within the capabilities of man; this is demonstrated by the investigative judgment. The new covenant promise is fulfilled; believers have the law written in their hearts. Hence character judgment is a basis for analyzing genuine faith.

"All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life."³⁰

Understanding the issues and the purpose God has in mind for believers through His last phase of Christ's ministration becomes crucial for the accomplishment of its purpose. "The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill."³¹

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Hermeneutical Considerations

Before expanding these themes in detail, we need to pause to analyze the hermeneutics (or principles of interpretation) necessary to be fair and accurate to Ellen White's thought about the investigative judgment. To misunderstand how and why she uses the ancient Hebrew temples, and sanctuary/temple language, would be to miss her meaning completely.

There are three possible ways of approaching the matter: (1) Ellen White, in visionary experiences and in line with clear biblical thought, saw a heavenly temple. While all these visionary reports were of symbols only, she--like other inspired writers--wrote *as if* they were literal; (2) there is a temple in heaven, viewed by Ellen White, of which the Hebrew sanctuary/temples were exact replications; (3) the heavenly temple, as described by Ellen White, actually exists as a greater reality than can be perceived in the ancient holy buildings alone. Ellen White is precise on how she wishes to be understood here.

The first view (visionary symbols mistaken for reality) founders on the historical development of Ellen White's thought. She considered it and rejected it explicitly. She felt strongly that her visions of the heavenly sanctuary represented not metaphor merely, but also physical reality; the question came up repeatedly in discussions with Dr. J. H. Kellogg.

The second view (earthly and heavenly sanctuaries are identical) collapses under numerous difficulties; no two Hebrew temples--

the desert sanctuary, temple-sites reported in the judges period, Solomon's temple, other monarchical temples, the proposed temple of Ezekiel, or the second commonwealth temple--were exactly alike. We are left with the preposterous difficulty of determining which one is exactly like the heavenly temple, and ultimately, with difficulties over sizes, shapes, and furnishings of (rather small!) heavenly rooms.

Adventism has in sanctuary/temple language the richest, most direct, and yet most subtle way of getting at heavenly realities. In an important sense, Adventism shifted the concentration on Christ from His earthly ministry alone to the far vaster theological structure, which gives meaning to that ministry.

Since the hermeneutic of Ellen White's use of the heavenly temple is crucial to Adventism, it has aroused considerable concern. We therefore begin with a somewhat less theologically-loaded matter--Ellen White on the tree of life. To Ellen White, the tree of life is "Christ" (Himself), or "the preserving care of Christ," or the "Scriptures" as the Word of God. Hence the tree also is allegorical. "After the entrance of sin, the heavenly Husbandman transplanted the tree of life to the Paradise above; but its branches hang over the wall to the lower world. Through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, we may still eat of its life-giving fruit."³²

One might get the impression from these various usages that Ellen White intends the tree to be understood in an allegorical sense only, but simple reference to her historical narratives show that she believes that a literal tree did verily grow historically upon the earth. The larger meaning of the tree was not apparent to the original pair who could learn much more from studying it further. Just so the sanctuary.

A commonly observed mistake is apparent in the question, "Is this literal or symbolic?" In all but the crudest conceptions, larger possibilities are suggested by literal things. This is the nature of poetry, of biblical thought generally, and, indeed, of all reality. Literal and symbolic are in no sense automatically exclusive. Among many literal symbols is the great heavenly temple.

The unfortunate dichotomy, literal versus symbolic, has led to the occasional tendency to disclaim too much in Ellen White. The temple is literally, spacio-temporally present in heaven, where all attention is focused on what the Godhead is doing for the salvation of man, *for it is in the context of man's redemption that all the creatures of the universe best understand their own existence and relation to God.*

So, for Ellen White, the temple is as truly a part of finite reality, as truly present, as were the ancient earthly temples. She sees the matter as being of great import: "God forbid that the clatter of words coming from human lips should lessen the belief of our people in the truth that there is a sanctuary in heaven, and that a pattern of this sanctuary was once built on this earth. God desires His people to become familiar with this pattern, keeping ever before their minds the heavenly sanctuary, where God is all and in all."³³ QOD 686

Concern for this reality is marked, but Ellen White never equated the earthly temples with the heavenly, for they were but small suggestions of a larger reality. As we have noted, the heavenly temple itself is a symbol of the larger reality of the infinite God's activity in behalf of His creatures. The heavenly temple is at once a building and a poem.

"The abiding place of the King of kings, where thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him (Dan 7:10); that temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration, could find, in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands, but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory."³⁴

So Ellen White can speak of what was done "in type" occurring "in reality" in the heavens. In the new covenant, sins are "in fact" present there, and "the actual cleansing" must take place.³⁵

Finally, it should be noted that Ellen White never imagined that the doctrine of an investigative judgment in the heavenly temple rested on her authority. She assumed, and her handling of scores of texts illustrates, that the doctrine is both implicit and explicit in Scripture, resting on "sound principles of interpretation" and "biblical research."³⁶

Spiritual Implications

To Ellen White, the cleansing of the heavenly temple directly affects believers on earth because the temple itself suggests a dual theme--the infinite, holy God, and Israel as His dwelling-place. The temple imagery therefore automatically suggests atonement. In line with biblical thought, the ancient temples themselves represent *Israel* as well as *God*. The giving of the Decalogue to Israel and the pattern of the sanctuary to Moses are parallel acts, the one illuminating the other. Thus, "So to Israel, whom He desired to make His dwelling place, He revealed

His glorious ideal of character . . . and they were to co-operate also in the preparation of the spiritual building--God's temple in the soul."³⁷

Christ "builds the temple of the Lord" by His work for the church, and believers are to unite with Him in this work.³⁸ Solomon's temple, to the building of which Nathan's prophecy originally referred, is representative of that spiritual temple gathered from all the people of the earth. It also represents the perfection of God which Israel was to illustrate to the world in its character. Believers today are likewise to "build the temple" by character development.³⁹ Again the duality of meaning is clear--the temple represents both God and human beings individually and collectively.

Christ is the priest of the temple--continually standing before the altar (before the veil), momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is also in the holy place: "The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary." The believers themselves are earthly tabernacles, for Ellen White continues, "All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, . . . He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of his people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness."⁴⁰

Just as Christ's vestments are signs of His high-priestly ministry, they become the believers': "As we approach God through the virtue of Christ's merits, we are clothed with His priestly vestments." His human and divine qualities encircle man.⁴¹ "All who come to Christ today are to remember that His merit is the incense that mingles with the prayers of those who repent of their sins and receive pardon and mercy and grace."⁴² But also, "He puts His merits, as sweet incense, in a censer in our hands, in order to encourage our petitions. He promises to hear and answer our supplications."⁴³ The aesthetic oneness of the opposites--bringing together the holy God/sinful man--is present throughout Ellen White's explanation of the heavenly work of Christ.

In line with this concept of the antitypical day-of-atonement cleansing, Jesus is standing before the ark of the covenant: "The original (Decalogue) is kept in the ark of God in heaven; and on the cover of this ark, right above that law, is the mercy seat. Jesus stands there right before that ark to mediate for man."⁴⁴

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"The ark of the earthly sanctuary was the pattern of the true ark in heaven. There, beside the heavenly ark, stand living angels."⁴⁵

Obviously, since the ark contains the broken law but is covered by the mercy seat, it represents "the union of justice and mercy in the plan of heavenly redemption." The rainbow, too, circling the throne, "represents the combined power of mercy and justice." As we noted in earlier studies, the oneness of justice and mercy is one of the central theological concerns of Ellen White in her explanation of the great controversy. "This union infinite wisdom alone could devise and infinite power accomplish; it is a union that fills all heaven with wonder and adoration."⁴⁶

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As in every part of the cosmic temple the scriptural "books of record" are a living reality. Here Ellen White is most interesting. She describes in some detail the books of life, of remembrance, of sin and death, where both sins and obedience are meticulously recorded. The figure of a photographer's plate or glass recording human features is used to represent God (or angels), who "daily places upon the books of heaven an exact representation of the character of every individual."⁴⁸ *The investigative judgment is the examination of these books "to determine who, through repentance and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of the atonement."*⁴⁹

These books are also pictured as being used in later phases of the judgment where sinners themselves are involved. They are a "panorama" where biographies appear as a real-life picture.⁵⁰ In the description of the post-millennial judgment of Rev 20; after noting that "the books of record are opened," she immediately interprets this activity. It is a "panoramic view" of the entire great controversy *from God's viewpoint*, with "scenes," "an awful spectacle," which to sinners is "the picture of their own work."⁵¹ Since sinners come to view themselves as God sees them, the books are also rich in atonement implications. There is no wooden crudeness here in the use of a biblical image, but rather a suggestion of the infinite God's ability always to hold history as actually and accurately present before Him.

Heavenly and Earthly Cleansing

While the imagery for the investigative judgment is clear and reflects the structure of the controversy theme, it is out of the Adventist concept of anthropology (nature of man) and soteriology (nature of the atonement) that the need for such an investigation arises. *There is no need for the infinite God to get information* suggested by this doctrine. Rather, it is out of the flow of the great controversy that the necessity for an investigative judgment arises.

In the Adventist concept, what happens in the lives of believers must uphold both the mercy of God, exhibited in His forgiveness, and the justice of God in His impartation of power to overcome sin. "Atonement" is always subjective/objective. The "twin sisters"⁵² mercy/justice must meet each other: "It is the mingling of justice and mercy that makes salvation full and complete. . . . Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is sacrificed to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King."⁵³

This is why justification (or forensic atonement) is essentially incomplete. It is an act of mercy overthrowing justice. *To stop here would be to agree to Satan's third deception.* Since God is not unjust, the legal declaration of righteousness should be accompanied by a change in character and motivation. *It is the business of the investigative judgment to manifest whether or not this has occurred.* The quote continues immediately: "If we were defective in character, we could not pass the gates that mercy has opened to the obedient; for justice stands at the entrance, and demands holiness, purity, in all who would see God. Were justice extinct, and were it possible for divine mercy to open the gates to the whole race, irrespective of character, there would be a worse condition of disaffection and rebellion in heaven than before Satan was expelled. The peace, happiness, and harmony of heaven would be broken up."⁵⁴

To Ellen White, "justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. *The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith,* that moment he is pardoned."⁵⁵ "Christ imputes His perfection and righteousness to the believing sinner when he does not continue in sin, but turns from transgression to obedience of the commandments."⁵⁶ It is because of the act of the will on man's part, his discernment and acceptance, his exercise of faith--which itself has no merit whatever--that it can be called "justification by faith." She continues, "Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer."⁵⁷ *6BC 1078*

The act of the will is determinative for Jesus' intercession in the sinner's behalf.⁵⁸ Because of his sinful nature, man himself has no power whatever to obey God. Neither is the right action of his will a righteous merit-earning quality. But the heavenly mediation of Christ brings to "every one who will humble himself. . . through faith, repentance, and conversion" power "to become partakers of the divine nature and thus escape the corruption that is in the world through lust."⁵⁹

This latter Petrine phrase is frequently introduced in Ellen White to refer not merely to sexual lust, but the "lusts" or natural responses of the sinful nature. That nature, the biological or genetic entity, is not annihilated until Christ's second coming. Despite its lifelong presence, it is to be subdued, its lusts overcome, and the character perfected. This victorious Christian life is the evidence of Christ's heavenly cleansing. It is no work or capability of man. "Let us come into the presence of Christ. He is cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. . . . Provision has been made for our cleansing."⁶¹ R# APRIL 8, 1850

"While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshippers on earth should carefully review their lives, and compare their characters with the standard of righteousness . . . (and) seek the aid of the Spirit of God to enable them . . . to reach the perfection of the standard."⁶²

To Ellen White, "legalism" is the counterfeit of genuine faith, an attempt to meet the standard apart from faith in the heavenly cleansing of Jesus. It is one form of counterfeit to Christ's ministry. It is the mistaken alternative to the third deception; it is based on the just-but-not-merciful view of God. The goal is the same--obedience to the law. It is the method, not the goal, that is spurious and fruitless.

Christ's death placed man on "vantage ground"⁶³ where he can receive the imparted power of Christ, receive the present atonement and Christ's merit.⁶⁴ He can say with Christ, though still a sinner by nature, "the devil has nothing in me."⁶⁵ In answer to the sinner's humility, confession, and petitions, Christ takes on Himself the guilt and promises to cleanse from sin.⁶⁶ Justice and mercy become one in the sinner's experience of the present atonement.⁶⁷

"Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. . . . When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing."⁶⁸

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Here the concept has taken on a definite eschatological flavor. Ellen White believes that eventually "every character will be fully developed" for good or evil due to increasing spiritual pressure on man and his own moral decline.⁶⁹ Therefore failure to cooperate with the heavenly cleansing is disastrous: "We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ's work in cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. . . . Those who . . . do not cleanse the soul temple of every defilement, but who engage in some enterprise not in harmony with this work, are joining the enemy."⁷⁰ *RH Jan 21, 1890*

"Through faith in Christ obedience to every principle of the law is made possible."⁷¹ "Faith and works will keep us evenly *68/107* balanced and make us successful in the work of perfecting Christian character."⁷² These are typical Ellen White statements. They are part and parcel of her investigative-judgment concept. Ellen White is not a perfectionist, for she vehemently denies the perfectibility of the nature.⁷³ She is occasionally made to argue with herself by commentators who do not distinguish between the perfecting of character and of nature.

"Blotting Out" of Sin

Perfecting of character is a process. It is always relational to God. It is the opposite of the concept of the "unpardonable" sin. To Ellen White, either process, while initially tentative, can become fixed.

Since man's sinning and repenting are tentative, and in line with sanctuary types, the record of sin is not immediately blotted out of the heavenly biographies. "The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement."⁷⁴

Ellen White notes the "blotting out" of Acts 3:19 and says the "times of refreshing" mentioned there just precede the advent.⁷⁵ The blotting out of sins after the investigation is a form of present atonement.⁷⁶ "We are complete in [Christ], accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith."⁷⁷ The blotting out of sin is the just and merciful reaction of God to the voluntary self-willed rejection of sin in believers. No cherished sins remain in the eschatological believers, for all their sins "have gone beforehand to judgment."⁷⁸

The cases of the righteous are successfully closed; no further mention is made of their specific acts of sin. The living redeemed now live in faith through the final tribulation, with "sin at its height." Despite the terrible ordeal and the presence of temptations within from their sinful natures, they do not commit sins.⁷⁹ At this time the "righteous" are both sinners and without sin. Definitions are important here.

In Ellen White's vibrant description of the post-millennial judgment, no mention is ever made of the sins of the righteous. The "books" now reveal only the panorama of the wicked.⁸⁰

In the investigative judgment only those who have responded to the work of Christ are considered. But not every candidate for salvation remains faithful: "The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. If any of these depart from Him, and by stubborn persistence in sin become finally hardened against the influences of His Holy Spirit, their names will in the judgment be blotted from the book of life, and they themselves will be devoted to destruction."⁸¹

Accordingly, a different type of blotting out is described. "If in that day it shall appear that all our wicked deeds have not been fully repented of, our names will be blotted from the book of life, and our sins will stand against us."⁸² The sins themselves remain recorded, awaiting the rescreening of human history in the post-millennial judgment: "Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God."⁸³

"No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value."⁸⁴ To Ellen White, the judgment of man's works really involves an inner and outer judgment. Act and motive--appearance and reality--both are in view. Only the infinite God could accurately and adequately make such a judgment.

Ellen White reserves the investigative judgment to those who have made a profession of faith in Christ. The judgment of the willfully unregenerate is saved for the millennial and post-millennial phase. This, by the way, is one of the telling reasons why it is apparent that she is not picturing God as seeking evidence. Those who have responded to God's act in Christ are inscribed in the "book of life" and all their deeds in the "book of remembrance." The review has quite other ultimate purposes.

However, the reservation of this phase to candidates for salvation does not necessarily mean only those who have responded to Christianity per se, for Ellen White believes that some non-Christians will finally find entrance into Christ's kingdom.⁸⁵ It is a question of motivation and response to the Spirit. The consistency in this is that while Ellen White views the law of God as the absolute norm for judgment, "(God) has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given each is to be judged."⁸⁶ There is obvious relation to the Pauline concept here.

Ignorance alone, of course, does not save. "Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision for willful blindness."⁸⁷

For Christians, with the evidence of the Scripture before them, there is a definite work to do; the heavenly temple must be "entered" with Christ: "Unless we enter the sanctuary above, and unite with Christ in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and shall be pronounced wanting."⁸⁸

Since Ellen White views the investigation as essentially chronological, it is to be expected that the work eventually reaches living persons. She can therefore say, "Now when the great work of judging the living is about to begin. . . ." The immediate eschatological issue is "whether we shall receive the mark of the beast or his image, or the seal of the living God."⁸⁹ The beast and image are, to Ellen White, external political-economic-religious authority apart from God which stand in opposition to the eschatological sealing of character.

Eschatological Vindication

A position widely attributed to Ellen White, which seems superficially to be an accurate conclusion of her thought, is that the investigative judgment's primary purpose is to convince unfallen creatures that God's government is just and they should give allegiance to it. In this idea the investigative judgment constitutes a turning point for free moral creatures, who, it will be remembered, are also involved in the plan of salvation.

While this view has the correct concept of the need for such vindication, it is erroneous in certain respects. As has been pointed out elsewhere in this volume,⁹⁰ the unfallen universe, if passing the wrong judgment, would be executing themselves. But much more telling is the fact that no such doubt exists among unfallen creatures. In the flow of the great controversy, a final

decision, so deep as to be irrevocable, was made by unfallen creatures *at the death of Christ*. It was at the cross, not during the investigative judgment, that the crisis was passed.⁹¹

If "vindication" is taken to mean only a demonstration that the decisions made at the cross were effective, then vindication might be appropriately used. For it is in the area of deepening the atonement for unfallen creatures that the investigative judgment functions. A number of related things happened at the death of Christ. Satan was unmasked, and he introduced a final series of arguments--that the law was cancelled or altered, that man could be saved by grace apart from being conformed to the law, that final authority is therefore within the creature, etc.

The investigative judgment is a demonstrative answer to these arguments. It reviews the history of sin in the light of the clearer understanding of God's purposes present after the cross. It shows the continuity and consistency of God's requirements. It shows that by grace God has constantly conformed believers to His law. It develops a group of believers (the earthly temple which is cleansed) who can live through the worst period of earth's history without sinning. Hence the law and God's grace are at once upheld.

It is in this area of further knowledge that Ellen White had explained the continuance of sin beyond Christ's death. As for man, it was necessary that he, like everyone else, make a final decision over God's authority. It is this concluding of human history that unfallen creatures watch with such intensity, rather than God Himself: "The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. At such a time as this, just as the great work of judging the living is to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart?"⁹²

Another position unfairly attributed to Ellen White is the idea of a final-generation "perfection" that is *qualitatively* different from anything preceding it. Ellen White teaches the necessity of perfection of character in the last generation of the redeemed, as we have seen. She did not, to repeat, ever teach the perfectibility of nature in this life. Nor did she teach that finite creatures can ever, in eternity, reach that ontological perfection that alone exists in the infinite God.

What she did do was refer to biblical personalities, like Daniel, John, or Paul, as examples of that character perfection or daily sanctification which all the saved will possess at the eschaton.⁹³ There is no *qualitative difference*; no higher standard

is now set. As usual, however, there is difference as well as sameness in the experience of the last generation.

They are a group from every background. The purpose of having people from every thought/personality group, racial and economic unit, perfect Christian characters, is to demonstrate that the law can be kept. That is, it can be kept by anyone. The group appears at the height of sin, and the nadir of man's moral capacities, and passes through socio-political, theological, and psychological trauma as great as anything in history. Ellen White's eschatology makes this group--as a group--the great historical example that the third deception is false.⁹⁴

So far from being abrogated, the law is placed in the heart--both logically and emotionally. The group would die rather than risk challenging God's authority. This moral state does not supercede the development of representative individuals in prior centuries. The uniqueness is in the historical sequence and the role of the group in the controversy theme.

This evidence is necessary before human history is ended. It is one of the purposes of the investigative judgment to present just such a group and exhibit its moral state. The "blotting out of sin" therefore has various connotations--sin is cancelled legally in the justification of the believer; it is blotted out existentially in sanctification; it is blotted out eschatologically in the heavenly record and in the characters of eschatological believers.

Final Judgment

When the investigative judgment ends, every character has been fully developed.⁹⁵ The "ministry of wrath," the next phase of Christ's work, begins.⁹⁶ The second advent, millennial, and post-millennial work are all a part of this phase. Here Christ is presented as Judge rather than as Priest. Note the judgment aspect of the advent. "Christ would have all understand the events of His second appearing. The judgment scene will take place in the presence of all the worlds; for in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and His law will stand forth as 'holy, and just, and good.' Then every case will be decided, and sentence will be passed upon all. Sin will not then appear attractive, but will be seen in all its hideous magnitude. All will see the relation in which they stand to God and to one another."⁹⁷

The concern of unfallen creatures is not, as occasionally suggested, to make decisions as to their own loyalty. The "vindication" has to do with the unrepentant. Since, in Adventist

doctrine, the dead are in an unconscious state, that which began at the advent naturally continues at the close of the millenium in a seemingly unbroken continuum.

Ellen White takes very seriously the eschatological parable in which the Son of man is portrayed as Judge. For the ascended Lord--at first sacrifice and then mediating priest--to become Judge is the completion of the theme of opposites in Christ. "The Father is not the Judge. The angels are not. He who took humanity upon Himself, and in this world lived a perfect life, is to judge us. He only can be our Judge. . . . Christ took humanity that He might be our Judge.⁹⁸ . . . In His superadded humanity consists the reason of Christ's appointment. God has committed all judgment unto the Son, for without controversy He is God manifest in the flesh. God designed that the Prince of sufferers in humanity should be judge of the whole world."⁹⁹

The role of Christ as judge begins immediately upon the cessation of the investigative judgment.¹⁰⁰ There are two classes. One will never repent, and the other is deeply repentant but not committing sins; the "cleansing" of the temple is complete. Neither historical record in heaven nor experience of saints on earth calls for the type of mediation that has been conducted there. In quite another sense, of course, Jesus is forever human, forever the living symbol of mediation between Creator and creature.¹⁰¹

In Adventism, the millenium is treated as an age of judgment in which the redeemed take part. It is an examination of the lives of the lost. This time the redeemed of humanity enter into judgment. Again the matter has to do with demonstrating the justice and mercy of God. Atonement here is more a matter of seeing as God sees, of understanding more fully what God has done.

A post-millennial judgment, with the lost present and entering into judgment, follows. They especially must see the justice and mercy of God. As we observed earlier, Ellen White sees the last judgment of Rev 20 as a "panorama"--played one more time with feeling--of the great controversy.¹⁰² The purpose is similar to the investigative judgment.

Oddly, or perhaps predictably, the demonstration of God's love and accuracy does not lead the wicked to repent. A universe of free moral agents reaffirm their prior choices. Perhaps nothing else could so aptly demonstrate the eminent fairness and freedom which the Creator has built into the universe. "[T]he final judgment . . . is to be held in the presence of the world. . . . This is not the judgment of one person, nor of a nation, but of a whole world of intelligent beings, of all orders, of all characters. The judgment takes place first upon the dead, then

upon the living, then the whole universe will be assembled to hear the sentence.¹⁰³

Here Ellen White's concept of phases and widening inclusiveness in judgment is obvious. A number of elements are striking about this view of judgment:

(1) God's judgment actions, at once revelations and self-limitations, are undertaken entirely for moral purposes. Revenge is no part of the concept. In Adventism, God is sublime but also meticulously, scrupulously interested in the individual. "Though all nations are to pass in judgment before Him, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being on earth."¹⁰⁴

(2) "Judgment," like "atonement," is, in Adventism, a progression of historical events. The process is intimately bound up with the issues of the great controversy. The God who acts in history is also involved in supra-historical revelations of Himself in a way related to lives of individuals on earth.

(3) The presence of "books" of record and a heavenly temple are wide-ranging biblical metaphors that ought not be cast aside lightly, for they are descriptions of a supernatural reality. And biblical judgment scenes, court scenes, and sanctuary-temple language are interdependent and should be exegeted with this in mind.

(4) God is at once arbitrary and absolute as to the justice of His law and requirements and overflowing with grace to the repentant creature trapped in his own circumstances. The law is an absolute norm and yet the circumstances of each life are considered in assessment.¹⁰⁵ We see here a perfect blend of those qualities that can only exist in God.

The investigative judgment doctrine has in it all the beauty of an infinite God willing to work with creatures in their struggle to overcome and to help other creatures to understand His actions. "Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of His wrath on our world, to destroy those who are filled with hatred of God. He might wipe this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help."¹⁰⁶

REFERENCES AND NOTES

¹See in this volume, "The Mighty Opposites: The Atonement in the Writings of Ellen G. White." The same concept of all reality as a "oneness" of essentially opposite elements which are nevertheless complementary used in the earlier studies will be used here. See Eli Segel, "Is Beauty the Making One of Opposites?" (New York, 195-).

²Whether White coined the term or it developed elsewhere among Sabbatarian Adventists is of no import to our study.

³The arrival at the date through long-held historicist principles is of no interest here.

⁴It is necessary again to insist that originality is no test of inspiration. Such a presumption cannot be demonstrated from within the canon itself, and if applied to it *a priori* would reserve much of its material from the "inspired" category.

⁵For a fuller treatment of this theme see J. W. Wood, "I Saw Three Angels: Central Issues of the Great Controversy Schema of Ellen G. White" (South Lancaster, MA, Unpublished manuscript, 1979) and now, in a related area, A. L. Moore, *The Theology Crisis* (Corpus Christi, TX, Life Seminars, 1979).

⁶FW 30. Abbreviation of sources is keyed to the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA, 1962-63). FW = *Faith and Works* (1979).

⁷GC 465.

⁸RH October 5, 1886.

⁹GC 420.

¹⁰GC 489.

¹¹*Questions on Doctrine* (Wash. D.C., 1957), p. 681 (Ms. 73, 1893). Hereafter referred to as QOD. See also 6BC 1078.

¹²Letter 22, 1898 (6BC 1078).

¹³Ms. 29, 1906 (5BC 1145).

¹⁴For instance, among a host of others, Ms. 92, 1899 (QOD 688-689); Letter 192, 1906 (7BC 933); AA 552-553; FCE 370; YI April 16, 1903.

¹⁵Ms. 50, 1900 (6BC 1078); *EV* 187.

¹⁶*ST* February 14, 1900.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*YI* October 28, 1897; cf *AA* 552-553.

¹⁹*YI* April 26, 1903; Ms. 50, 1900 (*QOD* 689); Ms. 50, 1900 (6BC 107:

²⁰*GC* 484.

²¹Ms. 50, 1900 (6BC 1071).

²²*TM* 37.

²³It is outside the scope of the present study to examine why it is consistent with ancient perceptions of time to equate days, months and years; see note 9. The equation of the earthly temple with heavenly events is certainly implicit in Daniel, especially if one is concerned with the common elements between Deuteronomic theology about the Jerusalem temple in the Deuteronomic history and the book of Daniel. The correspondence of the fate of the temple, the nation, and the monarchy is a favorite Deuteronomic theme. The figure of Daniel is primarily of a Davidic prince, a continuation of the righteous (Deuteronomic-David) king like Josiah and the coming of the Messianic figure of Dan 10-12. Ellen White is well within the bounds of the theology of Daniel in noting the presence of open books in the Dan 7 heavenly assize and seeing in the presence of the heavenly Son of man a crisis (judgment) for or against the saints. The fate of the people based on the mediation of the king is to be expected in Daniel. Presuppositions based on the late dating of Daniel cause the standard commentaries to miss the connections to Deuteronomic theological processes in the book; however, conservative dating places the composition squarely at, or only slightly later than the exilic editing of the Deuteronomic history. We hope to develop this theme extensively in the future.

²⁴*GC* 429.

²⁵Ms. 42, 1901 (*QOD* 683); *PP* 357 .

²⁶*AA* 33; cf Ms. 113, 1899. An unfortunate attempt has been made to equate the Christian dispensation with the day of atonement on the basis of this passage. No such Ellen White interpretation is present. Ellen White has simply dealt with the first and last phases as analogous to Christ's activity without reference

to her other quite lengthy applications of the period between the ascension and 1844 as comparable to the work in the sanctuary's first apartment. On this matter she is both emphatic and consistent in her application. See note 25 above and discussion following in text.

²⁷GC 421.

²⁸Ibid., 483; LSM 124-125.

²⁹GC 428; TM 448.

³⁰GC 483.

³¹Ibid., 488.

³²Ms. 95, 1898 (7BC 989); RH January 26, 1897; Letter 3, 1898 (7BC 989); ST March 31, 1909.

³³Letter 233, 1904 (QOD 686). It is noteworthy that Ellen White connects Dr. Kellogg's denial of the *personality of God* with his increasing tendency to metaphorize away the heavenly temple. See, for instance, EV 224-225; CW 53-54.

³⁴GC 414. Ellen White is fully aware of and in agreement with the status of the heavenly temple--"not of this creation" or "not of this reality" (Heb 9:11), lit. *ou tantās tās ktiseōs*.

³⁵Ibid., 420.

³⁶Ibid., 411. The modern critic, we suggest, should show that Ellen White's interpretation of a passage is *incorrect*. For instance, it would be necessary to show that the vindication of the temple in Dan 8 cannot be related to the Yom Kipper services in Lev 16. Such a task is difficult, for negative evidence assumes that the modern researcher knows; (a) all the implications present in a passage and can exclude those not present, and, (b) all the larger implications present in the unfolding process of revelation. See further note 23 above.

³⁷Ed 35, 37.

³⁸GC 416; Ms. 168, 1898 (7BC 933-934).

³⁹Ms. 18, 1905 (2BC 1030); cf. HS 136-137.

⁴⁰Ms. 50, 1900 (6BC 1077-78); PP 353.

- ⁴¹Letter 22, 1898 (6BC 1078).
- ⁴²Ms. 14, 1901 (6BC 1078).
- ⁴³Letter 22, 1898 (6BC 1078).
- ⁴⁴Ms. 6a, 1886 (1BC 1109).
- ⁴⁵ST March 21, 1911.
- ⁴⁶GC 415; Letter 11, 1890 (6BC 1072).
- ⁴⁷GC 480-481.
- ⁴⁸Among many references, RH September 22, 1891; ST May 27, 1880; Ms. 105, 1901 (4BC 1171), cf. GC 487.
- ⁴⁹GC 422. Emphasis supplied.
- ⁵⁰RH January 13, 1891.
- ⁵¹GC 666; RH November 4, 1884.
- ⁵²Letter 18e, 1890 (3BC 1149).
- ⁵³Letter 11, 1890 (6BC 1072).
- ⁵⁴Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ST May 19, 1898. Emphasis supplied.
- ⁵⁶RH May 23, 1899.
- ⁵⁷Ms. 21, 1891 (6BC 1070).
- ⁵⁸Ms. 43, 1907 (1BC 1118).
- ⁵⁹Ms. 29, 1906 (QOD 681-682). See also Letter 87, 1894.
- ⁶⁰RH May 29, 1889.
- ⁶¹RH April 8, 1890.
- ⁶²Letter 68, 1899 (6BC 1074); FW 118; ST 575; 6T 363-364.
- ⁶³Letter 68, 1899 (6BC 1074).

⁶⁴*6T* 363-364; *FW* 118.

⁶⁵*GC* 623.

⁶⁶*Ms.* 168, 1898 (*7BC* 933).

⁶⁷*Ms.* 29, 1906 (*QOD* 683).

⁶⁸*GC* 425.

⁶⁹*DA* 763.

⁷⁰*RH* January 21, 1890.

⁷¹*Ms.* 122, 1901 (*6BC* 1077).

⁷²*FW* 48.

⁷³See, for instance, *SL* 7; *SC* 82; *ST* March 23, 1888; *RH* August 7, 1888; *AA* 561; *2SM* 32-33. Pantheism, with its inevitable tendency toward perfectionism was a major concern to Ellen White in the 1880s and 90s as even Seventh-day Adventism experienced strong tendencies toward it.

⁷⁴*PP* 357.

⁷⁵*GC* 485.

⁷⁶*Ms.* 21, 1895 (*QOD* 685).

⁷⁷*ST* July 4, 1892.

⁷⁸*GC* 620.

⁷⁹*GC* 618-623. The entire eschatological section of this book is written under the assumption that the redeemed have perfected Christian characters and (though still sinners) no longer commit sins. To deny the obvious here makes nonsense of Ellen White's portrayal. Attempts to deny character perfection as an essential element in Adventist eschatology consistently fail to consider the flow of the great controversy theme.

⁸⁰*GC* 665-673. Cf. note 102.

⁸¹*PP* 326.

⁸²*ST* August 6, 1885.

⁸³GC 486.

⁸⁴GC 487.

⁸⁵DA 638.

⁸⁶DA 210.

⁸⁷RH April 25, 1893: "We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused."

⁸⁸Ms. 168, 1898 (7BC 933-34).

⁸⁹6T 130. See also 5T 526. The *eschatological* seal in Ellen White is God's approval of the character developed: "Are we seeking for His fulness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us--the perfection of His character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ and the recording angel shall declare, 'It is finished.'" RH June 10, 1902.

⁹⁰Fritz Guy, "The Ultimate Triumph of Love: An Adventist Understanding of Atonement."

⁹¹DA 758-761. See discussion in "The Mighty Opposites" in this volume.

⁹²5T 526.

⁹³Reference to the RH articles published between January 18, 1881 and May 31, 1881 now published as LS makes this abundantly clear. See LS 237.

⁹⁴Thus COL 69.

⁹⁵See 91 above.

⁹⁶5T 207 ff.

⁹⁷RH September 20, 1898.

⁹⁸9T 185. See also RH January 19, 1905.

⁹⁹RH November 22, 1898.

¹⁰⁰RH January 1, 1889.

¹⁰¹*RH* March 9, 1905.

¹⁰²*4T* 383; *RH* November 4, 1884.

¹⁰³Letter 109, 1898.

¹⁰⁴*RH* January 19, 1886.

¹⁰⁵*DA* 568.

¹⁰⁶*ibid.*

-TEXT- RH 6-4-89

In the time of the Saviour, the Jews had so covered over the precious jewels of truth with the rubbish of tradition and fable, that it was impossible to distinguish the true from the false. The Saviour came to clear away the rubbish of superstition and long-cherished errors, and to set the jewels of God's word in the frame-work of truth. What would the Saviour do if he should come to us now as he did to the Jews? He would have to do a similar work in clearing away the rubbish of tradition and ceremony. The Jews were greatly disturbed when he did this work. They had lost sight of the original truth of God, but Christ brought it again to view. It is our work to free the precious truths of God from superstition and error. What a work is committed to us in the gospel! An angel's pen could not portray all the glory of the revealed plan of redemption. The Bible tells how Christ bore our sins, and carried our sorrows. Here is revealed how mercy and truth have met together at the cross of Calvary, how righteousness and peace have kissed each other, how the righteousness of Christ may be imparted to fallen man. There infinite wisdom, infinite justice, infinite mercy, and infinite love were displayed. Depths, heights, lengths, and breadths of love and wisdom, all passing knowledge, are made known in the plan of salvation.

-TEXT- ST 6-18-96

Shall any of us be as unappreciative as were the Jews, or shall we look upon Christ as a perfect specimen of our perfected humanity uniting in himself the attributes of Deity with our human nature? The only-begotten Son of God made manifest what humanity may become. In his sanctified human nature he revealed what man must be. Through him mercy was enabled to deal justly in punishing the transgressor of the law, and justice was enabled to forgive without losing its dignity or purity. At the cross mercy and truth embraced each other, righteousness and peace kissed each other. O, what a wonderful provision was made for man! How is it that we do not appreciate the heavenly gift? By the course that we individually pursue, we testify as to what value we place upon the golden privileges that are granted to us.

-TEXT- ST 4-7-98

We may all rest in the assurance that whatever the love of God has devised in man's behalf will be executed. Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne; mercy and truth go before His face. In the cross of Christ mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other.

-TEXT- ST 12-25-01

The gulf made by sin has been bridged. All may come boldly to the throne of grace, seeking help in every time of need. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He took the place of the sinner, that He might present the repentant sinner to the Father, saying, "Lay his guilt on Me. I have espoused his cause." Holding out His hands, bearing the marks of the crucifixion, the Saviour says, "I have graven that sinner on the palms of My hands. No longer look upon him as guilty. Let him stand before Thee guiltless; for I have borne his iniquity." At the cross, justice and mercy met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. God bowed His head in recognition of the completeness of the offering made for sin, and said, "It is enough."

-TEXT- RH 6-25-08

The gulf made by sin has been bridged. All may come boldly to the throne of grace, seeking help in every time of need. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He took the place of the sinner, that he might present the repentant sinner to the Father, saying, "Lay his guilt on me. I have espoused his cause." Holding out his hands, bearing the marks of his crucifixion, the Saviour says, "I have graven that sinner upon the palms of my hands. No longer look upon him as guilty. Let him stand before thee guiltless; for I have borne his iniquity." At the cross, justice and mercy met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. God bowed his head in recognition of the completeness of the offering made for sin, and said, "It is enough."

-TEXT-

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10).

-BC- AG
-TI- God's Amazing Gr
-CN- 66
-CT- Established in Jus
-PR- 03
-PG- 74