

A SCRIPTURAL REVIEW
OF THE

INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT DOCTRINE OF 1844

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(Answering the questions)

Did the "Investigative Judgment"
begin October 22, 1844?

Whom is the "Investigative Judgment" to inform: The living? the dead? the angels? God or Christ?

Published By

**CHURCH OF GOD PUBLISHING HOUSE
STANBERRY, MISSOURI**

A STUDY OF THE "INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT" COMPARED WITH THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE

Part One

Most students of the Bible agree that we are living in the "last days" and the "time of the end," very near to the second advent of Christ. In this time the study of the Bible, the Word of God, is of great importance. It is the work of every Christian to help teach the Bible to others and it is important that we know and understand its true teachings.

The subject of the final judgment day is important as it is a part of the work of the Holy Spirit to "reprove (margin, convince) the world...of judgment." John 16:8. While our motive for accepting Christ as our Savior should not be fear, yet the knowledge of judgment to come upon all mankind should cause people to stop and think and to study God's Word.

Thousands of people of all denominations took part in the "Advent Movement," believing that Christ would return to this earth in the fall of 1843, then the spring of 1844 and finally the date of October 22nd, 1844 was set for the return of Christ to the earth. Needless to say these dates all passed without the Savior returning, but the bitter disappointment which followed left its mark on those who so ardently believed that Jesus would return on October 22nd, 1844. After the disappointment, a theory was developed that the "Judgment" began on that date, an "Investigative Judgment" which was to last from then until the sec-

and advent of Christ. It is the purpose of this booklet to investigate and disprove that theory and to show the true teachings of the Bible in regard to the times of God's final judgment. It is our hope that this study will strengthen your faith in His Word and in the assurance of salvation, knowing that our sins have been blotted out and that our names are in the Book of Life.

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

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

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

"Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God, to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man,—to perform the work of investigative judgment, and to make an

atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."

"...So 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, at a later period." Great Controversy, 1939 edition, page 546.

"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." Ibid. Page 549.

(Note: The Latin term "Ibid" means that the reference is to the same book previously quoted.)

"At the time appointed for the judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are judged "out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Ibid. Page 552.

"Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the cases of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Every one must be tested, and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Ibid. Page 556.

"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.” Ibid. Page 556. In the 1884 edition by the same author, Mrs. E. G. White, this reads, “The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. Forty years has this work been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living.” Thus in 1884 the Investigative Judgment had been in progress “forty years.” We are naturally lead to wonder how the word “soon” should be interpreted or what relationship exists between “forty years” and the thought that “soon” to would pass to the cases of the living. “Soon” has stretched out to over one-hundred twelve years (1956) and the end is not yet!

In an earlier chapter of the same book the following statement occurs, “This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of investigative judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above.” Ibid. 1939 edition. Page 489.

From the foregoing statements we extract the following teaching:

1. That the investigative judgment is for the purpose of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God.
2. That it either precedes or coincides with the making of the atonement (or an atonement), for the later is said to be made “for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.”
3. That it pertains to the righteous only.

and began in 1844 with “those who first lived upon the earth.”

4. That no one knows when it will pass to the cases of the living. Let us take these leading features of the teaching in order, and examine them in the light of Scripture.

Number One

“This work . . . of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment.” “Great Controversy.” Page 489. 1939 edition.

The idea thus expressed seems to be in radical conflict with some very plain Bible teaching. If an investigative judgment is necessary to “determine who are prepared for the kingdom of God,” how was it that Christ was able to assure the disciples beforehand that “in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”? Matt. 19:28.

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

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

The apostle Paul was not contemplating the Investigative Judgment, for he wrote, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the right-

eous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

Number Two.

"...in 1844 Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to perform the closing work of atonement, preparatory to His coming." Great Controversy. Page 481. "...to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits." Ibid. Page 546.

This teaches that the atonement began in 1844 and that it continues until just before His coming, and that it is only for those who are "entitled to its benefits." This is not the teaching of Scripture! The Apostle Paul always speaks of the atonement as a finished work. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Romans 5:11. "...when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hebrews 1:3. The Bible further plainly shows that the death of Christ and His atoning work was for those who at that time were not serving the Lord. The atonement was made by Christ and its benefits come to those who accept Him and thus become entitled to those benefits. "Christ died for the ungodly...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us... When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." Romans 5:6, 8, 10.

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

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

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

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

Number Three

"Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation... Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated." Great Controversy by Mrs. E. G. White, 1939 edition, page 549.

Elder Carlyle B. Haynes further eluci-

dates the teaching in the following paragraph.

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

Let us turn to the Book of God, and see what the Bible has to say in Abel's case: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Hebrews 11:4.

Can it be possible that "every act, word, and thought" of Abel needed to be investigated on October 22nd, 1844 A.D. in order to "disclose" or "manifest" his righteousness, when the Bible speaks of "God testifying of his gifts" and that "he was righteous" at the time of his martyrdom?

"The Page Was Turned"

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

But let us now turn another page of Holy Writ, and see what that record will tell us. We come now to the case of Enoch.

While not "the next man who died," this saint is the next in the list of worthies spoken of in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and his case will serve just as well by way of illustration.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Hebrews 11:5.

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

"Again the Page Was Turned"

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

But when we continue to turn the pages of the epistle to the Hebrews, what do we find? First, that Noah "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Hebrews 11:7. Next, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that "God hath prepared for them a city." Verse 16. Now if God had already prepared for them a city in the first century of our era, how can it be that their cases

must be investigated in the nineteenth century?

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

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

Saints in the Christian Dispensation Secure Also

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

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

There is no investigation needed in Paul's case. The crown was laid up for him from the moment he had finished his course! That is the meaning of the word "hence-

forth." Neither is there any investigation needed to decide the cases of all those who throughout the Christian dispensation have died in the flesh. The apostle testifies that the crown of righteousness is just as sure for them as for himself.

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

Number Four

"Forty years has this work been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living." Great Controversy, page 315, edition of 1884.

First, let me point out that this quotation has been changed to read, "For many years this work has been in progress," in the 1911 and 1939 editions of "The Great Controversy."

The foregoing statement (s) invites attention to a very important feature of the doctrine of the investigative judgment. The original proponents of the theory had no idea that the supposed judgment would continue so long. When Mrs. E. G. White wrote this paragraph she spoke of the work

having been in progress for "forty years." But now those upon whom falls the burden of continuing the teaching are confronted with the fact that not forty years but well over a century has elapsed since October 22, 1844. And still no one **knows** if the judgment has passed to the cases of the living! This being the case, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has been preaching for two generations, to living men, a judgment-hour message that referred (so far as they know) to the cases of the dead only, and not as yet to the case of one man living upon the earth! This is a startling consideration!

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

The Time Occupied in the Investigative Judgment Extends to Unexpected Lengths

In the year 1850 Mrs. E. G. White wrote: "I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished, and that time can last but very little longer." Early Writings, page 58. On the same page

she writes, "The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over." Again, on page 67, of the same book she writes, "But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months."

This was written in the middle of the year 1850. The pioneers, especially Captain Bates, were teaching that the seven times that blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:14), represented seven years which would be occupied by Christ making atonement in the most holy place. This period would terminate October 22, 1851, at which time they confidently expected that Christ would return. They had been nearly six years arriving at their conclusions, but the Laodiceans that came in after this, would have to learn in a "few months" what they had been six years learning.

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

"When the Next Page is Turned"

Thus the period of the Investigative Judgment has been extended to unexpected

lengths. As late as 1926 we find Elder Carlyle B. Haynes still publishing such a statement as the following:

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

Apparently these teachers are not yet prepared to say that the page has been turned that will bring up the name of "a person who is still living on the earth." This is a sad situation. Ought not Christians to be preaching of living issues to living men?

Part Two

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

The passages of Scripture relied upon to justify the teachings under consideration are by no means numerous. And a careful examination of the few that are relied upon will reveal that these passages either entirely disprove the theory, or else provide for it no support whatever. One such text is as follows, and it can readily be seen to have no reference to the 1844 Investigative Judgment doctrine.

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

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

"The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ." "Great Controversy," page 551, 1939 edition.

Elder Carlyle B. Haynes maintains that Peter "undoubtedly referred to this time" (1844) when he made the statement recorded in Acts 3:19. "Hour of God's Judgment," pp. 65, 66.

With some other Adventist writers a degree of restraint is manifested in appealing to this passage as a proof text. Possibly some have been influenced by the fact that the American Revised Version rendering shows it to be entirely out of harmony with

the accepted theory. Uriah Smith cautiously asks, in speaking of the investigative judgment: "Is not this the same time mentioned by Peter in Acts 3:19? "Daniel and Revelation," page 394.

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

"Repent ye,
and be baptized every one of you in
the name of Jesus Christ
unto the remission of your sins;
and ye shall receive the gift of the
Holy Ghost."

"Repent ye therefore,
and turn again,
that your sins may be blotted out;
that so there may come seasons of re-
freshing from the presence of the Lord."
Acts 2:38; 3:19, R.V.

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

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

"It is clearly stated in the Scripture that this blotting out of sins is to take place

just before the return of Jesus. Thus Peter declares: 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus...since the world began.'" Acts 3:19-21, W. H. Branson, in "Reply to Canright," page 240.

Here is unimpeachable evidence that Peter promised his hearers the blotting out of their sins there and then, when they believed on the Lord; and, immediately following, "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" for each believer.

The apostle continues, "And that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old." Acts 3:20, 21, American Revised Version.

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

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

This prophecy is thought to refer to the investigative judgment because it is presumed, (1) that the cleansing of the sanctu-

ary spoken of coincides with the services of the day of atonement; and (2) that the ceremonies of that day represented a work of investigative judgment. Let us examine these two suppositions in order.

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

The cleansing of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 has no connection with the services of the day of atonement. In order to understand what is contemplated by a cleansing, it is necessary to give consideration to the sense in which the object referred to has become defiled. How was the sanctuary defiled, according to Daniel's prophecy? Verses 9 to 12 declare that "the host" was "trampled upon" and the sanctuary "cast down" by a desolating power represented by the "little horn." Such desolations as these would not be corrected by the services of the day of atonement. There would be no connection between the two.

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

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

nacle in the wilderness by Moses. See Exodus 40:17.

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

Restoration After a Period of Defilement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An Inconsistent Interpretation

In his comments on Daniel 8:9-12, Uriah Smith, a leading Adventist exponent of the prophecy, writes: "Pagan Rome was remodeled into Papal Rome. And the place of his sanctuary, or worship, the city of Rome, was cast down." "Daniel and the Revelation," page 177. Now if this be the casting down of the sanctuary according to verses 9-12 of the prophecy, how could an investigation of the cases of the saints, from 1844 A.D. onwards, in heaven, constitute the cleansing of the sanctuary according to verse 14 of the same prophecy?

The Day of Atonement

There was a crisis of judgment represented by the services of the day of atonement; but it was the crisis of the Cross. Sinners are either saved or condemned as a result of that great act; saved if they believe, and condemned if they disbelieve. God judged sin on the head of His own Son. Christ Himself plainly taught that the Cross would mark the judgment of Satan, or this present world, and of unbelieving

men. Here are His solemn words, all having direct application to the great crisis of Calvary:

"The prince of this world is judged." "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" "Now is the judgment of this world." "He that believeth not hath been judged already." John 16:11; 12:31; 3:18.

To weaken the forces of such solemn truths as these by referring the day of atonement services to a supposed investigation of the cases of the saints from 1844 onward is a deplorable error. What was there in those services to represent such an investigation? Nothing at all! No term or expression equivalent to "investigative judgment" is to be found anywhere in the Bible.

"I beheld till...the ancient of days did sit...The judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10.

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

It is a well-defined feature of the theory, that in the investigative judgment "the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God." This being so, how is it that in the judgment described by Daniel it is the "little horn" that comes up for sentence (?) that his dominion is taken away (?) and that "the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the

burning flame"? Verses 11, 12, 26.

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

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come..."

Revelation 14:7.

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

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

We are now in the period of "distress of nations" which Christ predicted would follow "the times of the Gentiles." Luke 21:24, 26. Heaven's judgments are already falling upon a world in departure from God. But even at such a time as this there is still "good news" ("eternal good tidings," A.R.V.) for "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The terrible things that are "coming on the earth" are, for all who believe the gospel, but the

heralds of a better day now about to dawn. "When these things begin to come to pass," said the Lord Jesus, "then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Verse 28.

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

Is the Investigative Judgment necessary in order to "determine who are prepared for the kingdom of God"?

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

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

"The event which will introduce the Judgment day, will be the coming of the Son of Man, to raise the sleeping saints, and to change those that are alive at that time." Ibid, page 24.

What scripture would you bring in support of that teaching?

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at (not before) his ap-

pearing and his kingdom..." 2 Timothy 4:1. Parenthesis inserted thus by J. White in "Advent Review," August, 1850.

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

"Daniel, in the night visions saw that judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, but not to mortal saints—not until the Ancient of days came, and the little horn ceased prevailing, which will not be until he is destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming." James White, *Ibid.*

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

"The advent angel (Rev. 14:6, 7) saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come, does not prove that the day of judgment came in 1840, or 1844, or that it will come prior to the second advent." James White, *Ibid.*

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

"Some have contended that the day of judgment was prior to the second advent. This view is certainly without foundation in the Word of God..." James White, *Ibid.*

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

In that early period (1849), Mrs. White related a vision which placed the judgment just where her husband had placed it—at the second coming of Christ, after the pouring out of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues. Referring to Revelation 11:18, she said:

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

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

"Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged." Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 14, Pub., 1900.

It will be noticed that in this latter passage the clause, "and thy wrath is come" (firmly insisted on by this writer in 1849 as in its proper place and order) is entirely omitted from reference. Why is this? Because Ellen G. White had now long since been teaching that "the time of the dead" had come, that they should be judged; whereas in 1849 she taught that "the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other."

Lest the reader miss the point we are making we quote the entire paragraph of this vision as found on page 36 of Early Writings.

"At the commencement of the holy Sabbath, January 5, 1849, we engaged in prayer with Brother Belden's family at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and the Holy Ghost fell upon us. I was taken off in vision to the most holy place, where I saw Jesus still interceding for Israel. On the bottom of His

garment was a bell and a pomegranate. Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance. Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and man, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His truth. I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other, also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out."

In the above quotation she plainly states the "wrath of God" is the seven last plagues. This is further confirmed on page 64 of the same work by the same author, "I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God."

Therefore it is correct to insert the phrase, "the seven last plagues" into the quotation where it reads, "the wrath of God." The true meaning is therefore, "I saw that the anger of the nations, the seven last plagues, and the time to judge the

dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other, . . ."

This places the seven last plagues before the time to judge the dead, all of which is very confusing for the teaching is that the judgment of the dead began on October 22nd, 1844. Does any Seventh-Day Adventist believe the seven last plagues fell upon the wicked prior to Oct. 22nd, 1844?

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

Part Three

A Study of the True Biblical Teaching Concerning the Judgment

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

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

God's punitive judgments fall upon men and nations prior to the second advent, as described in many prophecies; but there is no excuse for confusing these with the great day of judgment that follows the advent.

The Judgment Follows the Second Advent

The apostle Paul states this very emphatically in his epistle to Timothy: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." 2 Timothy 4:1.

Christians are exhorted to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God." 1st Corinthians 4:5.

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

These three are the same:

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

And these other three are also the same:

1. "Until the Lord come."
2. "The day when God shall judge."
3. "The day of wrath."

There is no mistake about this. We know

when "the day of wrath comes." It is at the second advent. "Hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne...for the great day of his wrath is come." Rev. 6:16, 17.

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

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

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

Christ:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory...then...before him shall be gathered all nations." Matt. 25:31, 32.

Paul:

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

Christ taught the same truth in another parable. The wheat and the tares, of Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, corresponds exactly with the sheep and the goats of chapter 25:31-46.

The action of the Shepherd in separating the sheep from the goats is the same as that of the reapers in gathering the tares to be burned, and the wheat to be garnered.

And when, according to the parable, is the latter action to take place? "So shall it be in the end of the world," declares the Lord Jesus, chapter 13:40.

Again, there is the parable of the net, cast into the sea, gathered fish both good and bad, which were afterward separated; the good being kept, and the bad cast away. What is the significance of this? "The angels shall come forth," Christ explains, "and sever the wicked from among the just." And when will this be done? "So shall it be at the end of the world," is again the Lord's reply, chapter 13:47-50.

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

The Judgment to Follow His Second Advent

Notice that this is plainly taught in the following scriptures:

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

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

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

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

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body... whether

it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10.

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

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

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

An Interval of One Thousand Years Between the Judgments

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

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

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

This is a very ordinary use of the word "judgment"; one with which we are fa-

miliar through its constant recurrence in the daily newspapers. The reports of law-court proceedings frequently announce that "judgment was given for the plaintiff," or "judgment was entered for the appellant."

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

Not an Investigative Judgment

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

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

The Scriptures plainly teach that men are judged, momentarily, as to their standing with God, right here in this present life, according to their relation to Jesus Christ. John 3:18. Speaking of the Jews, Christ said: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." John 5:24. American Standard Version.

This does not mean that believers will not have to "appear before the judgment seat of Christ," for, we are taught else-

where that the saints will appear before Christ. This gathering to Him will not be in judgment as to whether we are to be saved or lost, but rather to receive our rewards. Jesus has promised "my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

This is wonderfully brought out in the following, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." John 5:28, 29. American Standard Version.

The righteous, coming up as they do in the resurrection of life, appear before the judgment seat of Christ when rewards are given to the saints; but they will never come into judgment to determine their ownership, for they were purchased by the precious blood of the Lamb of God, as He died in their place on the Cross. Those who face the judgment of that day are those who judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, and so rejected the offering made in their behalf.

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

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

The Books of the Judgment

The opening of the books in the judg-

ment does not imply an investigation. God does not need such an investigation.

"And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13, A.R.V.

The angels will not benefit from an Investigative Judgment, for they already know what is "written in the books," as the following by Mrs. E. G. White clearly states:

"Heavenly angels are acquainted with our words and actions, and even with the thoughts and intents of the heart." Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, page 544.

"Did you forget that angels of God were in attendance, and that their pure eyes were reading your thoughts, the intents and purposes of the heart and taking cognizance of every act, and delineating your true frivolous character?" Testimonies For the Church, Vol. 2, page 181.

Elder James White defines the Investigative Judgment thus, "The investigative judgment takes place prior to the second advent and the resurrection of the just, that it may be known who are worthy of the first resurrection." "Life Incidents," page 323.

Mrs. E. G. White also describes it in the same manner, "This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above." Great Controversy, page 489.

An editorial in the Review and Herald,

the Seventh-day Adventist official church paper, affirms that the investigative judgment is not to inform God, because He knows, "because He is infinite; but men and angels do not know because they, both men and angels are finite. The reason for a judgment, then, is that finite beings may not only believe that God is just, but that they may know both the perfection of His justice and the depth of His mercy." Review and Herald, October 29, 1931.

In this statement the denominational paper places itself squarely against their own prophetess in two points. First, Mrs. White and all the denominational literature teach that the investigative judgment is for the purpose of informing God; and second, Mrs. White repeatedly stated the angels do know as well as God.

The Bible teaches that the dead are unconscious until the resurrection, therefore no "investigative judgment" can inform the dead till after the resurrection, in which they take part. Also we of the living know nothing of the procedure or workings of an "investigative judgment" which by now must be including the living of this generation. Since God already knows His own, we are assured of this when we read, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19), and the angels know "the thoughts and intents of the heart," the dead are dead and "know not anything," and since the living know nothing of what is going on, even if their name was under scrutiny, may we ask just who is obtaining any benefit from

this "investigative judgment"?

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

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

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

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

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

The White Throne Judgment

"And I saw a great white throne, and

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

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

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

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15.

It will not be so with the saints. Their names are written in the book of life. Their

sins have all been blotted out, with the blessed assurance from God. "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 10:17. There will be nothing, for those who are saved, to prompt memory regarding sins of the past. "The former things," so far as they would bring sorrow," shall not be remembered nor come into mind." Isaiah 65:17, A.M.V.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7:17. These are but a few of the promises the redeemed of earth will enjoy when Jesus comes to claim His own. Dear reader, do you know Him as your personal Redeemer and Friend? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3:20.

Conclusion

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

How is it with you, reader?

"How will you stand in that great day?

Will you be found before Him, wanting?

Or with your sins all washed away?"