

PERFECTION

in the light of the

JUDGMENT

and the

SECOND ADVENT

P E R F E C T I O N

in the light of the

J U D G M E N T

and the

S E C O N D A D V E N T

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Key to Abbreviations

AA	The Acts of the Apostles
AH	The Adventist Home
1BC	The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. (2BC etc., for vols. 2-7)
CD	Counsels on Diet and Foods
CG	Child Guidance
CH	Counsels on Health
COL	Christ's Object Lessons
CS	Counsels on Stewardship
CSW	Counsels on Sabbath School Work
CT	Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students
DA	The Desire of Ages
Ed	Education
Ev	Evangelism
EW	Early Writings
FE	Fundamentals of Christian Education
GC	The Great Controversy
GW	Gospel Workers
HL	Healthful Living
LS	Life Sketches of Ellen G. White
MB	Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing
MH	The Ministry of Healing
ML	My Life Today
MM	Medical Ministry
MYP	Messages to Young People
OHC	Our High Calling
PK	Prophets and Kings
PP	Patriarchs and Prophets
QD	Questions on Doctrine
R&H	Review and Herald
SC	Steps to Christ
SD	Sons and Daughters of God
1SG	Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1
2SG	Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 2
3SG	Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3
4SGa	Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4, part 1
4SGb	Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4, part 2
SL	The Sanctified Life
1SM	Selected Messages, book 1
2SM	Selected Messages, book 2
SR	Story of Redemption
ST	Signs of the Times
1T	Testimonies, Vol. 1 (2T etc., for vols. 2-9)
Te	Temperance
TM	Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers
WM	Welfare Ministry

PERFECTION

in the

Light of the Judgment & the Second Advent

INTRODUCTION

We present hereunder an outline on the subject of perfection in the light of the judgment and the second Advent of Christ. There is such a lot of discussion upon this theme in Adventist circles today, and so much depends upon a correct view of this subject. We feel that some key Bible and Spirit of Prophecy statements will be helpful, not only in throwing light on the matter, but in providing a ready reference source on matters pertaining to the perfecting of the saints.

A. PERFECTION IS THE STANDARD OF THE JUDGMENT

1. Law is the standard.

(a). "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12.

(b). "The law of God is as sacred as Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom." PP 52.

2. Christ's life is the standard.

Christ is the law personified. His life was the righteousness and perfection of the law revealed in human flesh. All men will be judged by the standard of His sinless life, as it is written: ". . . God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ . . ." Rom. 2:16.

3. The standard is always the same.

(a). "The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,--just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,--perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness." SC 62.

(b). "The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell--perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise--harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good." LSM 373.

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

GC 490.

B. CHRIST HAS BEEN MADE OUR PERFECTION

1. Christ took human nature.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14.

2. Human nature is made the very righteousness of God in Christ.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

3. Human nature is reconciled to God in Christ.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity in himself[margin]." Eph. 2:13-16.

4. The old man or sinful nature is abolished in Christ.

(a). "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6.

(b). "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight." Col. 1:20-22.

5. Human nature is forgiven, cleansed in Christ.

(a). "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3.

(b). "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1:13,14.

(c). "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Isa. 44:22,23.

6. Human nature is brought to perfection in Christ.

"In Him you have been brought to completion." Col. 2:10 NEB.

7. Humanity is justified, restored, and redeemed in Christ.

(a). "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 5:18.

(b). "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12.

8. *Christ is our righteousness.*

(a). "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. 23:6.

(b). "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.

9. *In Him the work is complete.*

(a). "The Lord would have His people sound in the faith--not ignorant of the great salvation so abundantly provided for them. They are not to look forward, thinking that at some future time a great work is to be done for them; for the work is now complete. The believer is not called upon to make his peace with God; he never has nor ever can do this. He is to accept Christ as his peace, for with Christ is God and peace." LSM 394-5.

(b). "God himself has the honor of providing a way, and it is so complete, so perfect, that man cannot, by any works he may do, add to its perfection." LSM 184.

C. JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

1. *Faith in Jesus' merit justifies freely.*

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3:20-28.

2. *Faith is the result of the Spirit's work on the heart as He presents to the soul the uplifted Saviour.*

(a). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:14-16.

(b). "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. 12:3.

(c). "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1:13.

(d). "But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . faith." Gal. 5:22.

(e). "And there they preached the gospel. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: the same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed." Acts 14:7-9.

3. *Faith is a heart response to love of God.*

- (a). "When you respond to the drawing of Christ, and join yourself to Him, you manifest saving faith." LSM 334.
- (b). "... faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ..." LSM 391.

4. *Faith unites us to Christ and makes us one with Him.*

- (a). "Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God." DA 347.
- (b). "The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration." LSM 334.
- (c). "So long as we are united to Him by faith . . ." DA 123.
- (d). "So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ." DA 675.
- (e). "This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection . . . As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character." Ibid., 676.
- (f). "Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency." GW 262.
- (g). "... faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ. . . ." 6BC 1073.
- (h). "Sinful men can become righteous only as they have faith in God, and maintain a vital connection with Him." DA 310.
- (i). From the above statements, notice how faith operates: it joins us to Christ, it brings us into vital contact with Him, it unites us to Him, it clasps His hand, it lays hold on His merits, and it makes us one with Him. "... the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind. . . ." COL 312.

5. *Faith is counted for righteousness.*

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. 4:3-5.

Note: In God's sight, faith equals righteousness, yes, even the very righteousness of God (See Rom. 3:21-24). This is not because there is any virtue in faith itself. Faith is not righteousness. It is not a substitute for righteousness. It is not our saviour. But faith joins us to Christ. It makes us one with Him. It embraces His merits. Faith takes hold of Jesus as our Saviour. When we have Christ, we have righteousness.

6. *Righteousness is received by receiving Him.*

"We receive righteousness by receiving Him." MB 34.

Note: The apostle Paul says that we have forgiveness, righteousness, and every spiritual blessing *in Christ*. (See Eph. 1:3,7). Many do not grasp the meaning of this. It does not mean that Christ is like a cupboard that we go to to get things out of to appropriate to ourselves. He does not say that we obtain forgiveness *from* Christ, but *in Christ*. Faith does not take forgiveness from Christ, but it embraces Christ Himself. Then having Christ, the believer has forgiveness *In Him*. We do not receive righteousness from Christ, apart from Him, for righteousness is never an essential part of human nature. The only way to receive right-

eousness is to receive Him. He is our righteousness. When faith accepts Him, it accepts a perfect righteousness in Him. This throws light on the Laodicean message. Here is a people boasting that they are rich with spiritual graces. But Christ is on the outside, and with Him is every spiritual grace. The only way to obtain the gold and the white raiment and the eyesalve is to obtain Him. He is the gold, the white raiment and the eyesalve. We have all these blessings when we have Him. When the Father gave us Christ, He gave all heaven, even all the accumulated wealth and love of eternity. When we receive Christ, we receive all this infinite favor. When we have Christ, we have a perfect righteousness. Faith is counted for righteousness because it embraces the One Who is Righteousness.

7. *Justification by faith gives us sonship.*

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. 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 and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

"Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: 'This is My child. I reprove him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy --eternal life-- because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.' Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God." 6BC 1070.

D. JUSTIFICATION GIVES STANDING OF PERFECT SINLESSNESS

1. *No condemnation to the believer in Jesus.*

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:1,31-39.

2. *Just as if we had not sinned.*

"Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey a holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."

SC 62.

3. *Holiness is fully satisfied.*

"As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new

creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God Himself is 'the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'" COL 163.

4. *Pronounced righteous before universe.*

"The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2Cor. 5:21)." ISM 392.

5. *Clothes us with eternal righteousness.*

"The provision made is complete, and the eternal righteousness of Christ is placed to the account of every believing soul. . . . Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believeth. In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous." ISM 394.

6. *Complete in Him.*

(a). "Every soul may say: 'By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness. He presents me to God in the spotless garment of which no thread was woven by any human agent. All is of Christ, and all the glory, honor, and majesty are to be given to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'" ISM 396.

(b). "Sinful and fallen man may be made complete in Jesus through the forgiveness of sin and the imputed* righteousness of Christ." MYP 137.

7. *Faith makes the righteousness of Christ ours.*

"The moment the sinner believes in Christ, he stands in the sight of God uncondemned; for the righteousness of Christ is his: Christ's perfect obedience is imputed to him." FE 429.

8. *Justified believers are in harmony with the law.*

"Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the sinner may feel that he is pardoned, and may know that the law no more condemns him, because he is in harmony with its precepts." SD 240.

9. *Believers not in Adam but in Christ.*

"Those who . . . accept of Christ are looked upon by God, not as they are in Adam, but as they are in Jesus Christ . . ." FLB 113.

10. *The moment the sinner is justified by faith he has on the wedding garment.*

(a). "Christ's righteousness alone can avail for his salvation, and this is the gift of God. This is the wedding garment in which you may appear as a welcome guest at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let faith take hold of Christ without delay, and you will be a new creature in Jesus, a light to the world.

"Christ is called 'the Lord our righteousness,' and through faith each one should say, 'The Lord my righteousness.' When faith lays hold upon this gift of God, the praise of God will be upon our lips, and we shall be able to say to others, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which

*--"Impute" means to "reckon", "to credit", or "to account".

taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29)." LSM 331.

(b). Note: The whole chapter, *Come and Seek and Find*, shows that the wedding garment can be obtained the moment Christ is received by faith.

(c). "Give to God the most precious offering that it is possible for you to make; give Him your heart. He speaks to you saying, 'My son, My daughter, give Me thine heart. Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow; for I will cleanse you with My own blood. I will make you members of My family--children of the heavenly King. Take My forgiveness, My peace which I freely give you. I will clothe you with My own righteousness,--the wedding garment,--and make you fit for the marriage supper of the Lamb. When clothed in My righteousness, through prayer, through watchfulness, through diligent study of My Word, you will be able to reach a high standard. You will understand the truth, and your character will be molded by a divine influence.'" SD 98.

(d). "When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us, He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah." COL 312.

(e). "When we are clothed with the wedding garment of His righteousness, we become one with Him." 7BC 925.

(f). "The wedding garment, provided at infinite cost, is freely offered to every soul. By the messengers of God are presented to us the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's word, free access to the Father by Christ, the comfort of the Spirit, the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God." COL 317.

Conclusion: Justification by faith, the wedding garment, gives us the *standing* of sinless perfection before God and before His law. God Himself declares that the believer who relies on the merits of Christ is without fault. The eternal, absolute righteousness of God Himself is imputed to him, and he is pronounced perfectly righteous before the universe. As long as he maintains justification by faith, nothing past, present, or future can separate him from the love of God. Moreover, the believer, possessing the eternal righteousness of Christ, could never, in any subsequent experience, become more righteous in the sight of God. He has reached, in Christ, the highest point to which man can attain. We repeat: the experience of justification by faith gives the believer the *standing* of sinless perfection.

E. STANDING OF SINLESS PERFECTION NOT STATE OF SINLESS PERFECTION

Note: A careful distinction must be made between a *standing* of sinless perfection and a *state* of sinless perfection. Some souls, through a very superficial and perverted reading of the plan of salvation, have gotten themselves into foolish error by a failure to notice the distinction between the *standing of perfection* and the *state of perfection*. We have already seen that a justified believer has a standing of sinless perfection before God and His law. But he does not in that same moment of time experience a *state of sinless perfection*. The Bible writers knew nothing of any sudden attainment to a state of perfect sinlessness. There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification.

1. *Paul, having a standing of perfection, was seeking that state of perfection.*

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as

be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Phil. 3:10-15.

2. *The worthies, having a standing of perfection, did not attain to a state of perfection.*

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. . . . God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:13,40.

3. *The justified believer is not entirely freed from a state of depravity.*

(a). "Every Christian will have a hard battle to fight with wrong habits. He must overcome his unbelief, his deformity of character, his inclination to self-indulgence. His long resistance of light, warnings, and appeals has left its mark upon his life. . . ."

RH Jan. 13, 1891.

(b). "Paul was ever on the watch lest evil propensities should get the better of him. He guarded well his appetites and passions and evil propensities." 6BC 1089.

(c). "The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, 'I die daily.' His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature." MH 453.

(d). ". . . gird on the armor for a life-conflict with hereditary tendencies." 4T 439.

(e). "Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies." COL 331.

(f). "A constant battle must be kept up with the selfishness and corruption of the human heart." 5T 397.

(g). "We must strive daily against outward evil and inward sin . . ." RH May 30, 1882.

(h). "In the human heart there is natural selfishness and corruption, which can only be overcome by most thorough discipline and severe restraint; and even then it will require years of patient effort and earnest resistance." 4T 496.

(i). "There is a wrestling with inbred sin; there is warfare against outward wrong." RH Nov. 29, 1887.

(j). "Constant war against the carnal mind must be maintained . . ." 2T 479.

(k). "Everyone has undiscovered traits of character that must come to light through trial." 7T 210-211.

(l). "The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

"No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ." SC 64-65.

(m). "None of the apostles and prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ." AA 561.

4. *State of depravity is inherited and cultivated.*

- (a). "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5.
- (b). "Men do not know their own hearts; for 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' But God understands the tendencies of the depraved nature of man." PP 688.
- (c). "Natural tendencies of the carnal heart." 8T 315.
- (d). "Evil tendencies of the heart." Ed 111.
- (e). "Hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong [in the] . . . character." 7BC 943.
- (f). "Thus it is with those whose hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are not purged from them. Their hearts are not cleansed from defilement." 4BC 1160.
- (g). "Because of sin his [Adam's] posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience." 5BC 1128.
- (h). "Selfishness is the essence of depravity." CS 24.
- (i). "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars." Jer. 17:1.
- (j). "Every impure thought defiles the soul, impairs the moral sense, and tends to obliterate the impressions of the Holy Spirit. It dims the spiritual vision, so that men cannot behold God. The Lord may and does forgive the repenting sinner; but though forgiven, the soul is marred." DA 302.
- (k). "Now it may be you can repent. But even if pardon is written against your names, you will sustain terrible loss; for the scars you have made upon your souls will remain." TM 447.
- (l). "Every mistake, every error, unimportant though it may be regarded, leaves a scar in this life and a blot on the heavenly records." OHC 227.
- (m). "A wrong action, by frequent repetition, leaves a permanent impression upon the mind of the actor, and also on the minds of those who are connected with him in any relation, either spiritual or temporal." CG 201.
- (n). "Those who take the lead in these things [amusements] bring upon the cause a stain not easily effaced. They wound their own souls, and through their lifetime will carry the scars. The evildoer may see his sins and repent; God may pardon the transgressor; but the powers of discernment, which ought ever to be kept keen and sensitive to distinguish between the sacred and the common, are in a great measure destroyed." 8T 66.
- (o). "Every Christian will have a hard battle to fight with wrong habits. He must overcome his unbelief, his deformity of character, his inclination to self-indulgence. His long resistance of light, warnings, and appeals has left its mark upon his life; and although God has forgiven him, he feels that he cannot forgive himself." RH Jan. 13, 1891.
- (p). "He may be converted; he may see the wickedness of his injustice to his fellow-men, and as far as possible, make restitution; but the scars of a wounded conscience will ever remain." 3BC 1158.
- (q). "Our thoughts are to be strictly guarded; for one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul. An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind." MYP 144.

Conclusion: "Man has fallen; and it will be the work of a lifetime, be it longer or shorter, to recover from that fall, and regain, through Christ, the image of the divine, which he lost by sin and continued transgression." 2T 448.

This work of a *lifetime* means probationary time (See statement 4T 367 quoted in the next section). It may be said that at conversion the sinful nature is crucified. While this is true, we must consider conversion in the light of this statement:

"None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God, and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality." 2T 505.

5. *State of perfection is not obtained before death or the judgment.*

"Man may grow up into Christ, his living head. It is not the work of a moment, but that of a lifetime. By growing daily in the divine life, he will not attain to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ until his probation ceases." 4T 367.

Note: This statement should settle forever any notions about coming up to the judgment in a supposed state of perfection. Man will *not* attain to this *until* his probation ceases. According to the dictionary, the word *until*, when associated with a negative as it is in this statement, means *before*. Therefore a believer will not attain to a state of perfection before his probation ceases. Now a man's probation closes at death or at the judgment of the living. Believers will not attain to a state of perfection before either time.

This statement is also important because it throws light on what the writer means by *lifetime*. Statements abound from the Spirit of Prophecy which point out how believers have to contend with their depraved natures for a *lifetime*. For one group of Christians this means until they die. For the other group it means until their probation ceases. As we will see later, it does not mean until they are translated.

6. *Prayers, praise, good works pass through corrupt channels.*

(a). "The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ." 1SM 344.

Note: This *corrupt channel* does not refer to the degenerate human organism which we call the body, but it refers to the inherited and cultivated Adamic taint. The following statement throws light on it:

(b). "Jesus bears tenderly with them, not rebuking their selfishness in seeking preference above their brethren. He reads their hearts, He knows the depth of their attachment to Him. Their love is not a mere human affection; though defiled by the earthliness of its human channel, it is an outflowing from the fountain of His own redeeming love. He will not rebuke, but deepen and purify." DA 548.

F. CONSTANT NEED OF CHRIST'S IMPUTED MERITS

Note: It is the imputed merits of Christ that justifies the believer and gives him a standing of perfection before God. The believer's need of the imputed righteousness of Christ is constant. Only as he continues to rely *wholly* on the merits of Christ can he make any advancement in the Christian way.

1. *Must advance as we began.*

(a). "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Col 2:6.

(b). "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. 3:1-3.

2. *Salt of imputed righteousness must be added to all our service.*

(a). "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Mark 9:49.

(b). "In the ritual service, salt was added to every sacrifice. This, like the offering of incense, signified that only the righteousness of Christ could make the service acceptable to God. Referring to this practice, Jesus said, 'Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' 'Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.' All who would present themselves 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God' (Rom. 12:1), must receive the saving salt, the righteousness of our Saviour." DA 439.

3. *All good works must have the added merit of Christ.*

(a). "Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience." AA 532.

(b). "Through the merits of Christ's imputed righteousness, the fragrance of such words and deeds is forever preserved." SD 270.

(c). "Could they look into the censer of the angel that stands at the golden altar before the rainbow-circled throne, they would see that the merit of Jesus must be mingled with our prayers and efforts, or they are as worthless as was the offering of Cain. Could we see all the activity of human instrumentality, as it appears before God, we would see that only the work accomplished by much prayer, which is sanctified by the merit of Christ, will stand the test of the judgment. When the grand review shall take place, then shall ye return and discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." ChS 263.

(d). "Our acceptance with God is sure only through His beloved Son, and good works are but the result of the working of His sin-pardoning love. They are no credit to us, and we have nothing accorded to us for our good works by which we may claim a part in the salvation of our souls. Salvation is God's free gift to the believer, given to him for Christ's sake alone. The troubled soul may find peace through faith in Christ, and his peace will be in proportion to his faith and trust. He cannot present his good works as a plea for the salvation of his soul.

"But are good works of no real value? Is the sinner who commits sin every day with impunity, regarded of God with the same favor as the one who through faith in Christ tries to work in his integrity? The Scripture answers, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' In His divine arrangement, through His unmerited favor, the Lord has ordained that good works shall be rewarded. We are accepted through Christ's merit alone; and the acts of mercy, the deeds of charity, which we perform, are the fruits of faith; and they become a blessing to us; for men are to be rewarded according to their works. It is the fragrance of the merit of Christ that makes our good works acceptable to God, and it is grace that enables us to do the works for which He rewards us. Our works in and of themselves have no merit. When we have done all that it is possible for us to do, we are to count ourselves as unprofitable servants. We deserve no thanks from God. We have only done what it was our duty to do, and our works could not have been performed in the strength of our own sinful natures." 5BC 1122.

(e). "The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient: He made a whole, efficacious offering to God; and human effort without the merit of Christ, is worthless. . . ." Ev 192.

Note: A good work is that which a believer performs under the unction of the Spirit and by the grace of Christ. Yet even then it is not acceptable to God unless Jesus adds the fragrance of His merit to it. His righteousness must be imputed to every act of obedience. This is how perfect obedience to the law is possible.

4. *Perfect obedience only possible through imputed merits of Christ.*

(a). "But that which God required of Adam in paradise before the fall, He requires in this age of the world from those who would follow Him,--perfect obedience to His law. But righteousness without a blemish can be obtained only through the imputed righteousness of Christ." RH Sept. 3, 1901.

(b). "Under the covenant of grace God requires from man just what He required in Eden--perfect obedience. The believing sinner, through his divine Substitute and Surety, renders obedience to the law of God." ST Sept. 5, 1892.

(c). "Jesus is our great High Priest in heaven. And what is He doing? He is making intercession and atonement for His people who believe in Him. Through His imputed righteousness, they are accepted of God as those who are manifesting to the world that they acknowledge allegiance to God, keeping all His commandments." TM 37.

(d). "However weak and compassed with infirmity the people of God may be, those who turn from disloyalty to God in this wicked and perverse generation, and come back to their allegiance, standing to vindicate the holy law of God, making up the breach made by the man of sin under the direction of Satan, will be accounted the children of God, and through the righteousness of Christ will stand perfect before God." TM 41.

5. *Our need of the imputed righteousness of Jesus' merits is constant.*

Note: This was clearly taught in the tabernacle ritual. God could only be approached, at all times, by blood and by incense. Every sacrifice had to be salted with salt, otherwise it was of no worth.

(a). "The incense, ascending with the prayers of Israel, represents the merits and intercession of Christ, His perfect righteousness, which through faith is imputed to His people, and which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God." PP 353.

(b). "In the service of the Jewish priesthood we are continually reminded of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. 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. Our need of Christ's intercession is constant." QD 686-687.

(c). ". . . freedom and light can be retained only through self-denial and constant watchfulness and prayer, with a continual reliance upon the merits of the blood of Christ." 4T 625.

6. *We bear fruit only in proportion to our trust in Christ's merits.*

(a). "Jesus says, 'Abide in Me.' These words convey the idea of rest, stability, confidence. Again He invites, 'Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest.' Matt. 11:28. The words of the Psalmist express the same thought: 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.' And Isaiah gives the assurance, 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.' Ps. 37:7; Isa. 30:15. This rest is not found in inactivity; for in the Saviour's invitation the promise of rest is united with the call to labor: 'Take My yoke upon you, . . . and ye shall find rest.' Matt. 11:29. The heart that rests most fully upon Christ will be most earnest and active in labor for Him." SC 71.

(b). "Through faith in His name, He imputes unto us His righteousness, and it becomes a living principle in our life." COR 98.

(c). ". . . good works are but the result of the working of His sin-pardoning love." 5BC 1122.

G. NEED OF CHRIST'S IMPUTED MERITS IN THE JUDGMENT

1. *Reliance on Christ's merit was taught in the ancient ritual.*

"And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord,

and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: and he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. . . . And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you." Lev. 16:12-14,29.

Note: It is important to notice that God could be approached on the typical judgment day only in the same way as He was approached in the daily service. Even though the people had previously put away every known sin, they did not present themselves as being righteous in themselves, but they humbled their souls and relied on the merits of their Redeemer which was typified by the High Priest standing in God's presence for them, by the blood which had to be offered for them, and by the cloud of incense that was to make them acceptable to God. Aaron was to take both hands full of incense. This illustrates that the only way to enter the judgment is to bring nothing in our hands but the merits of Christ. If both hands are full of incense, you cannot be holding on to anything else. We repeat again, it was only the blood, the incense, and the intercession of the high priest that caused Israel to be accepted before God.

2. *The blood of Christ, His perfect and consecrated life in our flesh, and His priesthood alone gives us boldness to enter the holiest.*

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised). Hebrews 10:19-23.

Note: It is most essential to see that the ministry of the incense extends to the judgment. Incense represents Christ's imputed righteousness.

3. *Christ stands in God's presence for us.*

(a). "For 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.

(b). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

Note: We do not, cannot, stand in the judgment in our own righteousness. We do not present ourselves to the judgment and be accepted, but Christ presents the believer, and when He presents the believer, he is faultless, since he is presented in Christ. Paul's words are applicable:

(c). "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3:9.

(d). "Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy, and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith."

7BC 933.

4. *Must rest in the merits of Christ.*

"We are living in the great Day of Atonement, and it is now time that everyone should repent before God, confess his sins, and by living faith rest upon the merit of a crucified and living Saviour." TM 224-225.

5. *All judged by works.*

"All will be justified by their faith, and judged by their works." 4T 386.

Note: The only work that can meet the test of the judgment is a perfect work. The only perfect work is that which is not only done by the unction of God's Spirit and by the grace of Christ, but that which has added to it the merits of Christ. (See F-3). Further, our works reveal whether we are trusting in the merits of Jesus. We must remember that "His righteousness is imputed only to the obedient." 6BC 1072.

6. *A description of the experience of the judgment of the living.*

Note: The following passage is the clearest and most explicit description that has been given by inspiration concerning the judgment of the living. As this passage is carefully read, notice these important points:

- (1). The people described are the faithful and loyal people of God.
- (2). They have confessed and put away their sins, and trusting only in Christ they have a *standing* of sinless perfection.
- (3). They have not reached a *state* of perfection, but are in process of regaining that lost nobility of character.
- (4). They are afflicting their souls and pleading for purity of heart (spotless perfection) when Christ takes up their names.

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control even of many professing Christians. But here is a little company who are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. Men will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law.

"Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be 'betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends,' even unto death. (Luke 21:16). Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and unfaltering faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness; and they are ready to despair.

"The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer. He endeavors to affright them with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God.

"Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God's people to commit, and he urges his accusations against them, declaring that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection, and claiming that he has the right to destroy them. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. 'Are these,' he says, 'the people who are to take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me? They profess to obey the law of God; but have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than lovers of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins that have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred of one another. Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them.'

"But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins, and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition; and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them.'

"The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed.

"At times the Lord may seem to have forgotten the perils of His church, and the injury done her by her enemies. But God has not forgotten. Nothing in this world is so dear to the heart of God as His church. It is not His will that worldly policy shall corrupt her record. He does not leave His people to be overcome by Satan's temptations. He will punish those who misrepresent Him, but He will be gracious to all who sincerely repent. To those who call upon Him for strength for the development of Christian character, He will give all needed help.

"In the time of the end, the people of God will sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. With tears they will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross.

"God's faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with Him. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could the eyes of God's children be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see angels of God encamped about them, holding in check the hosts of darkness.

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments,' and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A 'fair miter' is set upon their heads.

"While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. 'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.'" PK 587-591. (Compare also 5T 472-475 where this section is repeated almost word for word, but with some interesting variations.)

Note: God's people come to the judgment with a *standing* of perfection; but they do not come to the judgment with a *state* of perfection. No believer enters the judgment with a state of perfection. "... he *will not attain* to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ until his probation ceases." 4T 367.

H. FINAL ATONEMENT-LATTER RAIN BRINGS TO STATE OF PERFECTION

1. The judgment is pre-eminently a Day of Atonement.

"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Lev. 23:27-29.

Note: According to the type, the emphasis is on the work of atonement. Hence it was not just a day when Israel was to be judged and acquitted, but a day when the greatest blessing of the year was to be granted. Many think of the judgment as an ordeal in which, at best, they can be acquitted. Let us now consider the judgment as a time when final atonement is made for the people of God. In this light the judgment becomes good news, for it is the time when the blessing of the ages is granted to the saints of God.

2. The final atonement follows the investigation of each case.

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

". . . in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God." GC 480.

3. The final atonement is for the people of God and not just a judicial act in heaven to wipe out records in a book.

(a). "And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. . . . For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. . . . And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation."

Lev. 16:16,17,30,33.

(b). "And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God." Lev. 23:28.

(c). "As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary." EW 253.

(d). "Jesus sent His angels to direct the minds of the disappointed ones to the most holy place, where He had gone to cleanse the sanctuary and make a special atonement for Israel." EW 251.

4. The final atonement is for the dead and living.

"This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living. It includes all who died trusting in Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God's commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts." EW 254.

5. The living will enter into the experience of it.

See *"Joshua and the Angel"* quoted under G-6. Note: "the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement."

6. *The filthy garment is removed, the saints are sealed.*

See also *"Joshua and the Angel"* quoted under G-6.

Note: Some are confused as to why God's people are represented as coming into the judgment with a filthy garment, when it is clear from Matthew 22 that they enter the judgment with the wedding garment upon them. The wedding garment is received at justification, and is maintained as the believer abides in Christ. It gives the people of God a *standing* of sinless perfection. The wedding garment represents the saints as they appear in Christ. Yet the same saints do not enter the judgment having attained a *state* of perfection. This is not possible before their probation ceases (See 4T 367). Thus the filthy garment would represent their Adamic taint received through inheritance and cultivation.

7. *The final atonement is the blotting out of sins.*

"Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be freed, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the day of atonement,--the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin-offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.

"As in the final atonement the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven, no more to be remembered or come into mind, so in the type they were borne away into the wilderness, forever separated from the congregation." PP 357-358.

8. *Sin is not only blotted from the records of heaven, but from the record of the mind.*

(a). "Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance." GC 620.

(b). ". . . in the final atonement the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven, no more to be remembered or come into mind. . . ." PP 358.

(c). "But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins will have been blotted out by the atoning blood of Christ, and they cannot bring them to remembrance." PP 202.

(d). "They cannot bring to mind any particular sins, but in their whole life they can see but little good. Their sins had gone beforehand to judgment, and pardon had been written. Their sins had been borne away into the land of forgetfulness . . ." 3SG p. 135.

Note: We should take these statements for just what they say. They do not say that God's people have an amnesia to past events connected with sin, but that the sin itself will be gone from the mind. Sin is not an event, it is not history, but it is a condition of thoughts and emotions. When sin is blotted out, there will be no record of the sin itself found in the mind. The wrong thoughts and feelings will be utterly blotted from the memory.

9. *A state of perfection is impossible while the consciousness and remembrance of sin remains.*

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." Heb. 10:1-3.

10. *The saints are sealed when their sins are blotted out.*

See statement *"Joshua and the Angel."*

Note: The seal is said to be placed in the forehead (Rev. 7:2; 14:1). This shows that it is a work of grace in the mind. This final seal cannot be fixed until the sin is blotted out of the mind's remembrance. Both the blotting out of sins and the seal is a work of grace in the mind of man.

11. The sealing signifies a state of perfection attained.

(a). "Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, 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 will declare, 'It is finished.'" 6BC 1118.

(b). "Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God's commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts." 6BC 1118.

Note: *Condition* of sinlessness means *state* of sinlessness. (See Dictionary).

(c). "Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully." EW 71.

Conclusion: The final atonement, bringing to God's people the experience of blotting out of sins and sealing, is the final work of Christ that perfects the saints.

12. The Holy Spirit under the latter rain brings to a state of perfection.

"The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain, and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.

"The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection." TM 506.

13. The latter rain is associated with the sealing of the 144,000.

(a). "Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: and, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face." Ezek. 43:1-3. (This refers us to the sealing of the 144,000 in Ezekiel 9).

(b). "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea." Rev. 7:2.

(c). "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Rev. 18:1.

14. The latter rain is associated with the blotting out of sins.

(a). "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.

Note: Acts 3:19 is derived from Joel 2. Here it shows that God's people must gather and afflict their souls for the antitypical Day of Atonement. Then the latter rain will fall.

(b). "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen. . . . And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. . . . And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Joel 2:15-19,25,28.

15. *The victory is given to God's people in the judgment.*

Note: Since the final atonement is made for God's people in the judgment, and since this brings them the perfecting latter rain, the judgment becomes a time of unparalleled victory and deliverance for God's people.

(a). "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Isa. 4:2-4.

(b). "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3:1-3.

(c). "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Dan. 7:26.

(d). "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. . . . He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. . . . For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Ps. 72:2,4,6,12,13.

(e). See *Joshua and the Angel* quoted under G-6.

(f). "Said the angel, 'List ye!' Soon I heard a voice that sounded like many musical instruments, all in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard. It seemed to be so full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel, 'Look ye!' My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying with agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, firmly, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of Heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy.

"The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out, and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind

in darkness, but their numbers were immediately made up by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Still the evil angels pressed around them, but they could have no power over them.

"I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth in great power. It had effect. I saw those who had been bound; some wives had been bound by their husbands, and some children had been bound by their parents. The honest who had been held or prevented from hearing the truth, now eagerly laid hold of it. All fear of their relatives was gone. The truth alone was exalted to them. It was dearer and more precious than life. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, 'It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.'" 1T 181-183. (This passage is very important as it cites Joel 2:15-17 in the footnote, thus referring us to the victory of the judgment.)

16. The latter rain strengthens God's people to stand through the time of trouble.

(a). "At that time the 'latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out." EW 86.

(b). "They had neglected the needful preparation, therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God." EW 71.

(c). "It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel." 1T 353.

17. Only those who have been brought to that state of sinlessness can stand during the time without a Mediator in the sanctuary.

(a). "But Christ declared of Himself: 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble." GC 623.

(b). "Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully." EW 71.

18. Like Enoch, the translated saints will reach a state of holiness in this life.

(a). "In the midst of a world by its iniquity doomed to destruction, Enoch lived a life of such close communion with God that he was not permitted to fall under the power of death. The godly character of this prophet represents the state of holiness which must be attained by those who shall be 'redeemed from the earth' (Rev. 14:3) at the time of Christ's second advent." PP 88-89.

(b). "Enoch and Elijah are the correct representatives of what the race might be through faith in Jesus Christ if they chose to be. Satan was greatly disturbed because these noble, holy men stood untainted amid the moral pollution surrounding them, perfected righteous characters, and were accounted worthy for translation to Heaven. As they had stood forth in moral power in noble uprightness, overcoming Satan's temptations, he could not bring them under the dominion of death." RH March 3, 1874.

(c). "Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God's commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts." 6BC 1118.

19. No moral change wrought in God's people when Christ comes.

(a). "When Christ comes, our characters will not be changed. These vile bodies will be changed, and fashioned after the likeness of His glorious body; but there will not be a moral change wrought in us then." RH Aug. 7, 1888.

(b). "The transformation of character must take place before His coming. Our natures must be pure and holy . . ." OHC 278.

Note: If the saints were changed into a *state* of sinlessness at the coming of Christ, that would constitute a moral change.

Question: How did Enoch and Elijah reach a *state* of holiness before the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary?

Answer: The same way as Moses and the twenty-four elders were resurrected before the time of the resurrection of the just. If God granted these the resurrection experience before the time of the second Advent when the righteous dead are to be resurrected, could He not grant to Enoch and Elijah the final atonement experience before the rest of the translated saints receive it?

The experience of these two men illustrates to us that if God's people of past ages had been ready to receive all that God had for them, the experiment of sin need not have dragged on so long. However, we live in the time when "there should be no more delay." Rev. 10:6 RSV.