“The Way of Life”

“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13

Here is our Dilemma

We make choices in life, that take us down paths of righteousness and peace, or along paths of difficulty. It is a mystery why Lucifer, who was created by God- perfect and noble, with a shining future in eternal realms of glory, chose as he did. It has been a tale of woe ever since, as he has trod amid the ruins of this earth for thousands of years, always scheming and spreading his misery. But we do not have to be victims, for Christ has provided a way of escape, and He guarantees our freedom to choose the path for our life. By His grace we may obtain the higher calling. But we are so easily misled by the distractions along the path leading upward.

This sermon is to remind us that if we do not give up, victory is ours. Christ our Leader did not come in vain. What He starts, He always completes. His will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Individually however, we have the ability to oppose His purpose for our lives; and all Heaven grieves for each of us who is lost.

There are so many distractions in this life. We are truly in the land of the enemy; and so it takes diligent effort, a conscious choice, to keep our heads and our hearts in the right place.

“Look, ~~oh, look.~~ Listen to the voices and powers that prevail in the world. The heavenly Watcher sees the earth filled with violence and crime. Is there any voice of prayer? Do you see any sign that God is recognized? . . . Look, you who are hesitating between obedience and disobedience. Look ~~in imagination~~ at the vast multitudes worshiping at Satan’s altar. Listen to the music, to the language— called higher education. But what has God written upon it? Mystery of iniquity. ~~{CTr 349.4}~~

The working of the power of iniquity seems to have taken the whole world captive. . . ~~Enumerate~~ (Count) the vices of men and women~~, if you can. But it is of no use to try to number them~~. Wealth is obtained by every ~~species~~ (type) of robbery— not robbery of people alone but of God. People are using His means to gratify their selfishness. Everything that they can grasp is made to minister to their greed. Avarice and sensuality prevail.” . . . {CTr 349.5}

~~But they do not see all things. . . . John saw this multitude. This demon worship was revealed to him, and it seemed as though the whole world was standing on the brink of perdition. But as he looked with intense interest, he beheld a company of God’s commandment-keeping people. They had the sign of the living God upon their foreheads, and he exclaimed, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Manuscript 122, 1898.~~

~~We tend to think of temptations such as things that taste good, or things that we seek to surround ourselves with, or things that enhance our self- image.~~

Pitfalls are everywhere, and so we have to rely on the Holy Spirit continually. Christ gave us physical life and being; and we have a spiritual life also. We value our physical being. But greater than that, is the spiritual life. The two are often not in harmony with each other; and we’re not at peace with ourselves.

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:24 and 25. How this conflict wearies us, and causes us to long for a better place- the home of the blessed!

~~Tradition had in a great degree supplanted the Scriptures. True education would lead the youth to "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." Acts 17:27. But the Jewish teachers gave their attention to matters of ceremony. The mind was crowded with material that was worthless to the learner, and that would not be recognized in the higher school of the courts above. The experience which is obtained through a personal acceptance of God's word had no place in the educational system. Absorbed in the round of externals, the students found no quiet hours to spend with God. They did not hear His voice speaking to the heart. In their search after knowledge, they turned away from the Source of wisdom. The great essentials of the service of God were neglected. The principles of the law were obscured. That which was regarded as superior education was the greatest hindrance to real development. Under the training of the rabbis the powers of the youth were repressed. Their minds became cramped and narrow. {DA 69.3}~~

 ~~The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor.~~

We are so influenced by what surrounds us. Have you noticed how it takes awhile to get “into” the word of God, and spiritual things in general? Whereas if we see or think about some person or some thing that we are interested in, immediately our attention is distracted, our thoughts hijacked and we’re very much immersed with those other things in our minds. This, is the pull of the world on our minds and on our hearts- on our lives, on our very souls.

So therefore, we are advised on how to direct our minds. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8

 ~~“The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.” AA page 9~~

 God’s glory is found in the high places, the realms of glory; they are not of this earth, among the artificial things that men contrive.

Romans 1:20- 22 “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools…”

And this is about the life of Christ, who came into this world for our sake, but he was not of this world.

He showed us how to live;

 The childhood and youth of Jesus were spent in a little mountain village. There was no place on earth that would not have been honored by His presence. The palaces of kings would have been privileged in receiving Him as a guest. But He passed by the homes of wealth, the courts of royalty, and the renowned seats of learning, to make His home in obscure and despised Nazareth. {DA 68.1}

 Wonderful in its significance is the brief record of His early life: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." In the sunlight of His Father's countenance, Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52. His mind was active and penetrating, with a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years. Yet His character was beautiful in its symmetry. The powers of mind and body developed gradually, in keeping with the laws of childhood. {DA 68.2}

 As a child, Jesus manifested a peculiar loveliness of disposition. His willing hands were ever ready to serve others. He manifested a patience that nothing could disturb, and a truthfulness that would never sacrifice integrity. In principle firm as a rock, His life revealed the grace of unselfish courtesy. {DA 68.3}

 With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of His powers, and beheld the impress of perfection upon His character. With delight she sought to encourage that bright, receptive mind. Through the Holy Spirit she received wisdom to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child, ~~who could claim only God as His Father.~~ {DA 69.1}

 From the earliest times the faithful in Israel had given much care to the education of the youth. The Lord had directed that even from babyhood the children should be taught of His goodness and His greatness, especially as revealed in His law, and ~~shown~~ in the history of Israel. ~~Song and prayer and lessons from the Scriptures were to be adapted to the opening mind.~~ Fathers and mothers were to instruct their children that the law of God is an expression of His character, and that as they received the principles of the law into the heart, the image of God was traced on mind and soul. ~~Much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings; and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study. {DA 69.2}~~

We can put the image of God on our minds and souls by what we dwell on. God wants to be one with us.

And how did we receive Him? He showed us the way to life eternal, and we showed Him to the crucifixion. Our actions reveal the ugly, face of sin that lives in our hearts unless we consent to be restored.

Selfishness

The most insidious sin, is selfishness. We look to the world, to tell us how we need to improve, it tells us that we need to “watch out for ourselves“, to make ourselves “better” in every way, we need to enhance our appearance, we need to gain new knowledge to help reach our “full potential”, to “move up the (business) ladder”, we need to have a “game plan”, we need to follow a “career path”, we need to take advantage of some new strategy to give us the “edge” on our presumed “competition”. We need to be better than we are, we need to have the “drive” and “determination” if we are to have a “proper” sense of “self- worth”. … this is what the world, the advertising agencies would have us buy into, as they seek to instill in us the idea that we are quite inadequate without “life- changing” innovations. God and **His** will for us are completely out of this picture.

~~Whereas God tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”~~

“ Selfishness and covetousness are at the foundation of all sins, and yet many are not convicted of the sin of selfishness, because it is a part of their nature, and they do not listen to the reprovings of the Holy Spirit.” 13 MR 1044

We routinely think of ourselves first. We are offended when we think someone is looking at us the wrong way, or that we’re being ignored. We feel we need to lift ourselves up; but as Luke 14:10 advises; "Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests.”

A Stable, Godly Temperament

We should not put such weight on the fickleness of others, on how they view us. John said;

“I do not receive glory from men;” John 5:41

“The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, (or) because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ's purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God. ”COL 101

Isn’t that someone you want to associate with?

~~One time, I met this man who seemed to have all the answers, and eventually I took my leave of him. I said, ‘Well, I’m sure glad to meet someone who has all the answers’, and he said, “Yes, I know” Well, I hope he figures it out some day.~~

~~Discouragement is a terrible burden to be saddled down with. “tempted” to be discouraged;~~

“In moments of perplexity, when Satan suggests doubt and discouragement, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up as a standard against him the faithful sayings of Christ, and the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will flash into your mind and soul. When Satan would overwhelm you with despair, the Holy Spirit will point you to the intercession made for you by a living Saviour. Christ is the fragrance, the holy incense, which makes your petitions acceptable to the Father. When the light of Christ's righteousness is fully understood and accepted, love, joy, peace, and inexpressible gratitude will pervade the soul, and the language of him who is blessed will be, "Thy gentleness hath made me great.” ST, August 22, 1892 par. 5}

We need to realize that we’re not as rational as we might think. We cannot trust ourselves. Have you ever done something you promptly regretted? In another sermon, I had mentioned that psychologists have studied how emotions affect our decisions. They say;

“unpredictable emotions play a larger role than we might believe”

<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/emotional-decision-making>

~~For some of the predicaments that we get ourselves into, there are no good answers, such as the heartbreak and confusion that result when someone has an affair. But on an emotional level, anything goes.~~

Therefore, every natural trait of character should be brought under the control of the will, and this must itself be kept in harmony with the will of God. It is one of the greatest deceptions that can come upon the mind to imagine ourselves more merciful or just than God. Man is impulsive and changeable. Even the best acts prompted by the natural heart are faulty. And how true is the testimony of the Sacred Record, that "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Our only safe course is to condemn what God condemns, and cherish what he cherishes. {ST, January 13, 1881 par. 12}

Spoiling kids- we all know how bad thatcan be for their character development. Sometimes we kill people with kindness.

When we do fall into dire trouble and cannot dig ourselves out, we need to humble ourselves and admit we’ve done wrong, and sincerely pray for guidance, and He will save us from ourselves. There may still be natural consequences we don’t like; but that’s only just and appropriate, but peace and reconciliation with God and man can still be obtained, and we can be at peace.

Another example of our willfullness is how we generally don’t like to be told what to do, but shouldn’t we welcome good advice, so we don’t make some regrettable mistake? For example, if we were looking for somewhere in an unfamiliar town, would we not want to have some directions, and an address? Of course we would want that… but we don’t like being told about our faulty behavior, that would help us be better people. When I first came to this area, I drove for more than a half- hour the wrong way, rather than stopping and getting directions. How could you do that, right?

How would life go for us, if our relationship with the Lord was like this; “And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 1 Samuel 3:10. What would it be like, if every rebuke was received as it should be, as coming from a loving God who always has our best interests in mind? “ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Revelation 3:19

How can anything bad come from a loving God? But rather, it’s how we interpret it, withour human nature. We can fall back on that one.

Let’s Look at God’s Relationship With Man

Genesis 1:27and 28 “So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:…”

Fresh from the hand of the Creator, Adam and Eve were two unique beings created in His image. They were like Him, yet individual. Their love for God was pure, they loved Him supremely; and God loved them, and He blessed them. Can you imagine what that was like? Pure love, without wavering, without uncertainty, without conflict. Isn’t that what we all want?

How close can we be with our God? He says “…Abide in me, and I in you…” John 15:4. To be of the same mind, and of the same heart, beating as one…

“If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in the heart, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God. ” AA 56 This defines us as children of God, heirs of the promise, and says how we can be (one with the great Creator). What do we need to do? “Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [**duty**] of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13. This is the purpose of our creation.

How close will the Lord come to us? “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [ye] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and [your] joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and **he** shall lift you up.”

James 4:7-10

We like sheep, have wandered from our Creator, and the confusion and distress of life has been the sure result. Christs’ condescension to this earth was the supreme effort of heaven, expended on our behalf, to save us in spite of our common efforts at self- destruction.

Christ our Saviour came to us

~~“It will baffle the keenest intellect to interpret the divine manifestation of the burning bush. It was not a dream; it was not a vision; it was a living reality,--something that Moses saw with his eyes. He heard the voice of God calling to him out of the bush, and he covered his face, realizing that he stood in the immediate presence of God. God was conversing with humanity. Never could Moses describe the impression made upon his mind by the sight he then saw, and by the sound of the voice that spoke to him; but this impression was never effaced. Heaven came very near to him as, with reverent awe, he listened to the words, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." What wondrous condescension for God to leave the heavenly courts, and manifest himself to Moses, talking with him face to face, "as a man speaketh unto his friend." {YI, December 20, 1900 par. 1}~~

 ~~This lesson contains instruction that is profitable for all. Here is revealed a symbol radiant with the glory of Christ, the Great Teacher. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was not a cedar of Lebanon, but a lowly bush, that seemingly had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded his glory in a most humble type, that Moses might look upon it, and live. God declared: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." All the manifestations of God's glory have been shrouded, that man might behold it, and not be consumed. Veiled in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, God could honor finite man by communicating to him his will, and imparting to him his grace. God's glory must be subdued, and his majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite man may look upon it. {YI, December 20, 1900 par. 2}~~

  ~~This symbol, obscuring the manifestation of God's glory, foreshadowed Christ's appearance in our world, his~~ (Christ, is) divinity clothed with humanity. ~~Surely in the eyes of the world~~ Christ possessed no beauty that they should desire him, yet he was the incarnate God. This is the mystery of godliness. ~~Human science, even though it be of the highest order, can not explain it. Men may think that they possess superior qualities, represented by the noble oak, or the stately cedar.~~ Mark the humble birth of Christ, his condescending grace, his infinite humility, the depths to which he descended. He is the eternal Word. Yet he was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

{YI, December 20, 1900 par. 3}

 Before Christ came in the likeness of men, he existed in the express image of the Father. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Nevertheless he voluntarily emptied himself, and took the form of a servant. He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ~~Yet he was born in a stable, in Bethlehem of Judea. He was the son of Mary, supposed to be the son of Joseph, and he grew up as any other child.~~ His earthly life was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice. "The foxes have holes," he said, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

{YI, December 20, 1900 par. 4}

 "We see Jesus," writes Paul, "who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." ~~Thus will the testimony appear in clear lines in that day when all must hear the final decision of a righteous Judge, when every case will be decided, and every man rewarded according to his works. The loyal and believing children of God will then be separated from the children of the wicked one, as the sheep are divided from the goats. The righteous will be placed on the right hand of God, while the transgressors will be placed on his left hand. {YI, December 20, 1900 par. 5}~~

 Prophecy foretold that Christ was to appear as a root out of dry ground. "He hath no form nor comeliness," wrote Isaiah, "and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." This chapter should be studied. It presents Christ as the Lamb of God. Those who are lifted up with pride, whose souls are filled with vanity, should look upon this picture of their Redeemer, and humble themselves in the dust. ~~The entire chapter should be committed to memory. Its influence~~ (This fact) will subdue and humble the soul defiled by sin and uplifted by self-exaltation. {YI, December 20, 1900 par. 6}

 ~~Think of~~ Christ~~'s humiliation. He~~ took upon himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. He took our sorrows, ~~bearing~~ our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations of mankind wherewith man is beset. He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. ~~He united himself with the temple.~~ "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," ~~because by so doing~~ By doing so he could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam.

{YI, December 20, 1900 par. 7} That’s the only way it could’ve been done.

 The glory of Christ was veiled, that the majesty and beauty of his outward form might not become an object of attraction. ~~In this is a lesson for all humanity~~. This is a lesson for all of us. "Verily man at his best state is altogether vanity." Christ came with no outward display. Finding himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, showing that fallen man must ever walk humbly before God. Riches, worldly honor, human greatness, can never save a soul from death. ~~"To this man will I look," declares the Lord, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."~~

 Mrs. E. G. White. {YI, December 20, 1900 par. 8} ”

~~The rules of grammer say that we need to capitalize the word “I”, but as we are told in Romans 12:3 ”For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”~~

~~Have you noticed how male turkeys like to strut around, with their feathers fanned out and calling out, “Look at me! Look at me!”. I wonder if that’s how the angels look at us, with amusement, but actually I think they feel sorrow because we have missed the mark.~~

What Do Some Men Think of the Human Condition?

People who believe in God, and those who don’t, know thatwe’re not in a good way, especially these days. Contrast these with the Hope that we have in Christ our surety.

Here are a couple of quotations from famous people about the human condition- I don’t necessarily agree with them. Here’s one by [Paul Tillich](https://izquotes.com/author/paul-tillich). He was one of the most influential Protestant theologians of the 20th century;

“[The character of human life, like the character of the human condition, like the character of all life, is ambiguity : the inseparable mixture of good and evil, the true and false, the creative and destructive forces — both individual and social.](https://izquotes.com/quote/paul-tillich/the-character-of-human-life-like-the-character-of-the-human-condition-like-the-character-of-all-315734)”
 Ambiguity is defined as the quality of being open to more than one interpretation; inexactness.

I do not understand how a theologian can say that life is inexact and open to more than one interpretation. That does not make sense. But it reinforces the need for each of us to study to show ourselves approved.

Then here is a quotation from Stephen Hawking;

“The human race is just a chemical scum on a moderate-sized planet, orbiting around a very average star in the outer suburb of one among a hundred billion galaxies. We are so insignificant that I can’t believe the whole universe exists for our benefit. That would be like saying that you would disappear if I closed my eyes. ”

So it’s no wonder that some people commit suicide. That’s all they think there is.

~~Romans 1:20-22 “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,…”~~

When we rely on our own understanding, we are left floundering with our imaginations.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For **now** we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. Some day, all men will know the truth, and God will be vindicated.

~~Great Controversy Chap. 28~~ Facing Life's Record

 "I beheld," says the prophet Daniel, "till thrones were placed, and One that was Ancient of Days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10, R.V. {GC 479.1}

 ~~Thus was presented to the prophet's vision~~ (This is ) the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered "according to his works." ~~The Ancient of Days is God the Father. Says the psalmist: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Psalm 90:2.~~ It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels ~~as ministers and witnesses, in number~~ "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," attend this great tribunal. {GC 479.2}

 "And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, ~~and they brought Him near before Him.~~ And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: ~~His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away." Daniel 7:13, 14. The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844.~~ 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. {GC 479.3}~~

 ~~In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. 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, and takes place at a later period. "Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?" 1 Peter 4:17. {GC 480.1}~~

 The books of record in heaven, ~~in which the names and the deeds of men are registered,~~ are to determine the decisions of the judgment. ~~Says the prophet Daniel: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." The revelator, describing the same scene, adds: "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 20:12. {GC 480.2}~~

 ~~The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples: "Rejoice,~~

~~because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20. Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, "whose names are in the book of life." Philippians 4:3. Daniel, looking down to "a time of trouble, such as never was," declares that God's people shall be delivered, "everyone that shall be found written in the book." And the revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names "are written in the Lamb's book of life." Daniel 12:1; Revelation 21:27. {GC 480.3}~~

 "A book of remembrance" is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of "them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. ~~Nehemiah refers to this when he says: "Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God." Nehemiah 13:14.~~ In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. ~~There~~ every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of  pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded. ~~Says the psalmist: "Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?" Psalm 56:8. {GC 481.1}~~

 There is a record also of the sins of men. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." ~~Says the Saviour: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37.~~ The secret purposes and motives appear in the unerring register; for God "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." ~~1 Corinthians 4:5. "Behold, it is written before Me, . . . your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord." Isaiah 65:6, 7. {GC 481.2}~~

 Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, ~~with every artful dissembling~~. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel. ~~{GC 482.1}~~

 The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment." Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. The apostle James ~~admonishes his brethren~~ says: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12 {GC 482.2}

 Those who in the judgment are "accounted worthy" will have a part in the resurrection of the just. Jesus said: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, . . . are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke 20:35, 36. And again He declares that "they that have done good" shall come forth "unto the resurrection of life." John 5:29. ~~The righteous dead will not be raised until after the judgment at which they are accounted worthy of "the resurrection of life." Hence they will not be present in person at the tribunal when their records are examined and their cases decided. {GC 482.3}~~

 Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. ~~"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. "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."~~ "Wherefore He (Christ) is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 9:24; 7:25. {GC 482.4}

 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,~~ (and) every case (is) closely investigated. ~~Names are accepted, names rejected.~~ When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased ~~from the book of God's remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Exodus 32:33. And says the prophet Ezekiel: "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, . . . all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned." Ezekiel 18:24. {GC 483.1}~~

 All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. ~~The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43:25.~~ Said Jesus: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name ~~out of~~ from the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." Revelation 3:5; Matthew 10:32, 33. {GC 483.2}

 ~~The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest~~

~~evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth.~~ The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to "the first dominion." Micah 4:8. ~~Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man's creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen.~~ He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory ~~and a seat upon His throne.~~  {GC 483.3}

 ~~While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors. The great deceiver has sought to lead them into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from His love, and to break His law. Now he~~ (Satan) points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, ~~which has dishonored their Redeemer,~~ to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and ~~because of these~~ he claims them as his ~~subjects~~. {GC 484.1}

 Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17. And to the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zechariah 3:2. ~~Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness, that He may present them to His Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Ephesians 5:27.~~ Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Revelation 3:4.

 ~~Thus will be realized the complete fulfillment of the new-covenant promise: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." Jeremiah 31:34; 50:20.~~ "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 everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Isaiah 4:2, 3. {GC 485.1}

 ~~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." Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be. {GC 485.2}~~

 ~~In the typical service the high priest, having made the atonement for Israel, came forth and blessed the congregation. So Christ, at the close of His work as mediator, will appear, "without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28), to bless His waiting people with eternal life. As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so~~ Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin. ~~The scapegoat, bearing the sins of Israel, was sent away "unto a land not inhabited" (Leviticus 16:22); so Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit, will be for a thousand years confined to the earth, which will then be desolate, without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked.~~ Thus the great plan of redemption will reach its accomplishment in the final eradication of sin and the deliverance of all who have been willing to renounce evil. {GC 485.3}

 ~~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 to be judged "out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." {GC 486.1}~~

 Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner ~~in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records.~~ Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The ~~darkness of the~~ darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. ~~Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life. {GC 486.2}~~

 How solemn is the thought! Day after day, passing into eternity, bears its burden of records for the books of heaven. Words once spoken, deeds once done, can never be recalled. ~~Angels have registered both the good and the evil.~~ ~~The mightiest conqueror upon the earth cannot call back the record of even a single day.~~ Our acts, our words, ~~even~~ our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny ~~for weal or woe.~~ ~~Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn. {GC 486.3}~~

 ~~As the features of the countenance are reproduced with unerring accuracy on the polished plate of the artist, so~~ the character is faithfully delineated in the books ~~above~~. Yet how little solicitude is felt concerning that record which is to meet the gaze of heavenly beings. Could the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world be swept back, and the children of men behold an angel recording every word and deed, which they must meet again in the judgment, how many words that are daily uttered would remain unspoken, how many deeds would remain undone. {GC 487.1}

 In the judgment the use made of every talent will be scrutinized. How have we employed the capital lent us ~~of~~ (from) Heaven? Will the Lord at His coming receive His own with usury? Have we improved the powers entrusted us, in hand and heart and brain, to the glory of God and the blessing of the world? How have we used our time, our pen, our voice, our money, our influence? What have we done for Christ, in the person of the poor, the afflicted, the orphan, or the widow? God has made us the depositaries of His holy word; what have we done with the light and truth given us to make men wise unto salvation? No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is ~~counted~~ genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value. Whatever is done from love, however small it may appear in the estimation of men, is accepted and rewarded of God. {GC 487.2}

God is love, so when we have love, tha shows our kinship with Him.

The hidden selfishness of men stands revealed in the books of heaven. ~~There~~ (This) is the record of unfulfilled duties to their fellow men, of forgetfulness of the Saviour's claims. ~~There~~ they will see how often were given to Satan the time, thought, and strength that belonged to Christ. ~~Sad is the record which angels bear to heaven.~~ Intelligent beings, professed followers of Christ, are absorbed in the acquirement of worldly possessions or the enjoyment of earthly pleasures. Money, time, and strength are sacrificed for display and self-indulgence; but few are the moments devoted to prayer, to the searching of the Scriptures, to humiliation of soul and confession of sin. {GC 487.3}

 Satan ~~invents~~ (has invented) unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. ~~The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth. {GC 488.1}~~

 Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. ~~The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God.~~ All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. ~~Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face.~~ How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, ~~with Daniel,~~ every individual must stand ~~in his lot,~~ at the end of the days. {GC 488.2}

 ~~All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them. {GC 488.3}~~

 ~~The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption.~~ The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the ~~broadest~~ demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God. ~~{GC 489.1}~~

 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would ~~make haste~~ hurry to confess their sins and to put them away. Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control ~~of~~ (over) the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome. But Jesus pleads in their behalf ~~His wounded hands, His bruised body; and He declares to all who would follow Him:~~ "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:29, 30. Let none, ~~then,~~ regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them. {GC 489.2}

 Has that been your experience, when you learn the Lord’s direction, you find that He is there to help you? We don’t want to forget that.

 We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making ~~the~~ atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should ~~now~~, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. ~~There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. 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.~~ Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. {GC 489.3}

 Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved ~~therein~~. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. ~~For many years this work has been in progress.~~ Soon--~~none know how soon--~~ it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives ~~are to~~ (will) come up in review. ~~At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: "Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33.~~ "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Revelation 3:3. {GC 490.1}

 When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking for~~ward to~~ that time, declares: ~~"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And,~~ behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12. {GC 490.2}

 ~~The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state--men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. "So," says the Saviour, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39.~~ Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men. {GC 491.1}

 ~~"Watch ye therefore: . . . lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." Mark 13:35, 36. Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world.~~ While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments--it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Daniel 5:27. {GC 491.2}

How shall we regard this, the great and terrible day of the Lord? We witness the absolute standard of love and goodness of our good and perfect God, we recognize our total inability to save ourselves, we are painfully aware of our failures that are revealed on that day. Lord, what shall we do? As we see what sin has done, and witness what cost that Christ paid, we are grateful, eternally grateful to Him.

Our God is Love. His Love is demonstrated in all His works and deeds. Into our own homes, would we invite destructive influences, to jeopardize the safety of our family? Of course not, and so it is with God’s Holy City. We wouldn’t want to be there, if we’re not of the same mind.

God has made every provision for our success. Because-- He loves us.

“Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without [are] dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

Revelation 22:14-15

 ~~‘Our Relation to Mistakes~~

 ~~Do all in your power to gain perfection; but do not think that because you make mistakes you are excluded from God's service. The Lord knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As you use faithfully the talents God has given you, you will gain knowledge that will make you dissatisfied with self. You will see the need of sifting away harmful habits, lest by a wrong example you injure others. ’ MYP 226~~

 Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

 22:14 Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen.

It would be a hopeless message- but that’s just what points to our great need, and our only hope- and it’s a glorious hope.