

The Upward Look

The title 'The Upward Look' is rendered in a light gray, serif font. The word 'The' is positioned above 'Upward'. The word 'Look' is significantly larger and features decorative flourishes, including a large, sweeping underline that curves under the 'L' and 'o', and a small floral ornament at the end of the underline. The entire title is centered on the page.

Ellen G. White



REVIEW AND HERALD® PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
Since 1861 | www.reviewandherald.com

Copyright © 1982, 2008,
by Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

Texts credited to NEB are from *The New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

Bible texts credited to Phillips are from J. B. Phillips: *The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition. © J. B. Phillips 1958, 1960, 1972. Used by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co.

Bible texts credited to TEV are from the *Good News Bible*—Old Testament: Copyright © American Bible Society 1976, 1992; New Testament: Copyright © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992.

Cover design copyright © 2008 by Review and Herald® Publishing Association

Cover designed by Trent Truman

Cover photo credits: Aged paper: ©iStockphoto.com/sx70

Sunlight: ©iStockphoto.com/lucwa

Daisies: ©iStockphoto.com/Matthew Dixon

Interior design by Heather Rogers

Typeset: Bembo 11/12.5

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

White, Ellen Gould Harmon, 1827-1915.

The upward look.

Includes index.

Devotional calendars—Seventh-day Adventists.

I. Title.

BV4811.W53 1982 242'.2 81-22729
AACR2

ISBN 978-0-8280-2382-5

January 1

LOOK HEAVENWARD

They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. Heb. 11:16.

I wish you a happy new year. The old year with its burden of record has passed into eternity. Now let every thought, every feeling be that of remembrance of God's love. Let us gather up one token after another.

The evidence we have of God's care and love for us is expressed in the lessons Christ gave to His disciples upon the things in nature. . . . The eye is not to be fastened upon deformity, upon the curse, but upon the riches of the grace of Christ that has been provided so abundantly, that we may live in this world, and act our part in the great web of humanity, and yet not be of the world. As pilgrims, as strangers looking for the bright things of God, the joy that is set before us, seeking a city whose builder and maker is God, and by beholding the provisions made for us, the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for us, talking of the blessed home, we forget the annoyances and the fretting cares of this life. We seem to breathe in the very atmosphere of that better, even the heavenly country. We are soothed, we are comforted; we are more than this, we are joyful in God.

We could not know the gracious purposes of God toward us, but for the promises, for it is from them alone we learn what He has prepared for those who love Him. As the flowers in God's wise economy are constantly drawing the properties from earth and air to develop into the pure and beautiful buds and flowers and give forth their fragrance to delight the senses, so shall it be with us.

We draw from God's promises all that peace, that comfort, that hope that will develop in us the fruits of peace, joy, and faith. And by bringing these promises into our own life we bring them always into the lives of others. Then let us appropriate these promises to ourselves. . . . They are like the precious flowers in the garden of God. They are to awaken our hope and expectation, and lead us to a firm faith and reliance upon God. They are to strengthen us in trouble and teach us precious lessons of trust in God. He in these precious promises draws back from eternity and gives us a glimpse of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let us then be quiet in God. Let us calmly trust in Him and praise Him that He has shown us such revelations of His will and purposes that we shall not build our hopes in this life but keep the eye upward to the inheritance of light and see and sense the amazing love of Jesus.—Letter 27, Jan. 1, 1886, to Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Kellogg.

January 2

THE NEED FOR A REFORMATION

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6:22, 23.

Paul felt that the Lord's requirements must be obeyed, His judgments avoided. Like Paul, we must make every effort to obtain the crown of life, which brings eternal honor to every victor. We must not be content to live useless lives.

What is humility? That sense of sin and unworthiness which leads to repentance. But we must be assured of the malignity of a disease before we feel our need of a cure. Those who do not realize the sinfulness of sin are not able to appreciate the value of the atonement and the necessity of being cleansed from all sin. The sinner measures himself by himself and by those who like himself are sinners. He does not look at the purity and holiness of Christ. But when the law of God brings conviction to his heart, he says with Paul, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9).

God created man for His glory. He will not, cannot endure the presence of sin in His dominion. If there are in the church those who are willfully sinning against God, every possible means should be used to bring them to repentance. If this is not done, God's name is dishonored. He is too pure to look upon iniquity with favor.

Adam's sin would be regarded by the churches of today as a simple mistake, to be at once forgiven and no more thought of. But God's standard is high and His word immutable, and all selfish, covetous practices are an abomination in His sight. The hearts of believers need to be purified, sanctified, refined, ennobled.

Look up, my brethren. Has the gospel lost its power to impress hearts? Is it because the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ has died away that hearts are not purified, sanctified, and prepared for the Holy Spirit? No; the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of the living God, is with us yet; but it must be wielded with earnestness. Let us use it as did God's sanctified ones of old. By its living, quickening power it will cut its way to hearts. . . .

The Lord calls for a reformation all through our ranks. . . . When the church is awakened, decided changes will be made. Men and women will be converted, and so filled will they be by the Spirit of God that they will pass from country to country, from city to city, proclaiming the message of truth. With hearts filled with earnest love for souls, they will open their Bibles and present the Word.—Manuscript 2, Jan. 2, 1900, "The Need of a Reformation."

January 3

VICTORS THROUGH CHRIST

*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:
and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 1 John 5:4.*

We need to draw near to our Helper, the One who is infinite in wisdom. He is our Minister and our great Medical Missionary, and He knows the straits through which His believers on this earth will pass.

He has been tempted in all points like as we are tempted. Let us not forget that Christ had the tempter to meet in every form, and that when He met him, He, our Savior, was bearing the likeness of humanity. He is our Restorer, the Perfecter of His covenant with the human agencies who depend upon Him as their Prince and their Redeemer.

Christ conquered as the sinless, unfallen, perfect Man. As the Messiah He has won the victory over the temptations of the enemy, making it possible for us to overcome as He overcame. We are to overcome in every encounter with the enemy. We are to be victors by becoming partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Each victory that He gained in His humanity makes it possible for us, through receiving and believing in Him, to gain the victory. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Each victory that He gained in humanity secures for us its genuine fruits. Each assault of Satan overcome marks the occasion of a victory for humanity.

The deliverance of the people of God and His mercies to them in past trials are to be called to mind as an assurance of that which, if we trust in God, He will do for us in present and future emergencies. Whatever may have been their experience, if they will surrender to God with full purpose of heart, with humility and contrition, He will receive them. To all who by faith receive Christ as their personal Savior, He will give power to become overcomers—sons and daughters of God. They become partakers of the divine nature, and fully realize His mercy and the grace of His Holy Spirit. . . .

Let our prayers ascend to God in all humility. Let us through the grace Christ came to the world to impart confess and forsake our sins, with humble, contrite hearts. The Lord understands, for all secret things are known to Him. Not one mean action can be performed without God understanding every phase of temptation. . . .

Throughout the gospels, Christ made frequent reference to the great conflict that He had with Satan at the beginning of His ministry. He makes constant reference to Satan's kingdom as opposed to the kingdom of God. Let us be sure that we are on the Lord's side.—Letter 14, Jan. 3, 1906, to Dr. and Mrs. D. H. Kress.

January 4

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

*The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.
2 Tim. 2:19.*

Pray for the impartation of the Holy Spirit and believe that it is for you. . . . Search your own hearts, and prepare the vessel for the reception of the Holy Spirit. Do not be satisfied with your present experience. Sink the shaft deeper and still deeper into the mine of truth.

It is the privilege of every believer in Christ to possess Christ's nature, a nature far above that which Adam forfeited by transgression. He who sees the Son by faith and believes in Him, is obedient to the commandments of God, and in this obedience he finds everlasting life.

You will not have a firm religious experience unless you dig deep, and build your house upon the Rock.

Satan works through men who will be worked, blinding the perceptive faculties, paralyzing the senses with selfish ease and love of the world, and unless a special message direct from heaven comes to them they will not discern their peril.

Human nature is vacillating. Men grasp the truth with their perceptive powers, but they refuse to separate themselves from the world. Men will not consent to be God's peculiar people. They know the truth of the Bible, but they do not want to obey, and they turn from the truth. They act out their unbelief, and darkness comes upon their souls. Choosing their own way they are left to be filled with their own devices. Truth is insulted, Christ ignored, and perdition will be their portion unless they turn and repent.

While these opposing influences are at work to lead away from the truth, away from conviction, away from heaven into the broad path of self-gratification, the agents of God are to work to save souls that are ready to perish. After wrestling with God in prayer, put on the armor, and engage in earnest labor for the conversion of souls. Let men see that with you truth is not a jest, but an eternal reality. You are to deal with principles as you have never dealt with them before. Scatter the seeds of truth with no sparing hand. Sow beside all waters. Have no prescribed limits which you will not pass, but [work] with all the powers that God has given you. Then the people will know you as a man who believes the truth, and to whom truth is a reality. Let not your faith fail. Bring your mind to the point of decision or shake yourself free from all slothfulness and inaction. . . . Hold fast. Leave no means untried. Work, and watch, and pray, and walk humbly with God.—Letter 6½, Jan. 4, 1900, to a college Bible teacher and his wife.

January 5

THE HOLY SPIRIT AGREES WITH THE WORD

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. John 15:26.

Those who have Jesus abiding in the heart by faith, have actually received the Holy Spirit. Every individual who receives Jesus as his personal Savior, just as surely receives the Holy Spirit, to be his Counselor, Sanctifier, Guide, and Witness. The more closely the believer walks with God, the clearer his witness, and, as a sure result, the more powerful will be the influence of his testimony upon others of a Savior's love; the more he will give evidence that he prizes the Word of God. It is his meat, it is his drink, to satisfy the thirsty soul. He prizes the privilege of learning the will of God from His Word.

Some souls who claim to be believers have slighted, and turned from, *the Word* of God. They have neglected the Bible, the wonderful Guidebook, the true Tester of all ideas, and claim that they have the Spirit to teach them, that this renders searching the Scriptures unnecessary. All such are heeding the sophistry of Satan, for the Spirit and the Word agree, say the Scriptures, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). He only is a free man whom the truth makes free.

The Lord loves you, and His guardian angels are round about you. If you are doers of the Word you will obey the instructions of Jesus Christ.

In our own strength we are perfect weakness, but, when we put our whole trust in Jesus Christ, we are kept by His power, for He is fully able to keep every soul that puts his trust in Him. The peril to which every soul is exposed is very great.

The great adversary of God, and the enemy of man, is watching to find an opportunity to take us when we are off our guard. Jesus has told us of our danger and warned us against the wily foe. He has repeatedly enjoined upon us the duty of always watching and praying, lest we enter into temptation. Believe in Jesus, trust in Jesus with living, constant faith, and rely without doubt upon Jesus to keep and save you. One mighty to save has hold upon you, and as long as you will submit to be led by Him, to learn of Him, to confide in Him, He will keep you from falling. And, when God engages to keep you, He is a sure defense.—Manuscript 1, Jan. 5, 1894, "The Holy Spirit Agrees With the Word."

January 6

LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another . . . even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Eph. 4:31, 32.

The great controversy going on in the world is waging more sharply today than at any period of this world's history between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. Bear the fact in mind that, wherever there are plans set in operation to advance the cause of God in the world, Satan will be on hand to counteract, if possible, the workings of our merciful heavenly Father. . . . He will use every possible advantage you give him to control minds. . . .

God's people, rescued from the fire by Jesus Christ, have a sense of their sin, feel humbled and ashamed. God sees and recognizes their repentance, and notes their sorrow for sin, which they cannot remove or cancel themselves. But as they pray their prayers are heard, and this is the reason that Satan stands by to resist Christ; because He hears their prayers, He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He regenerates the sinner, and pardon is written off against his name. This stirs Satan up to resistance. He steps in between the repenting, believing soul and Christ. He seeks to cast his hellish shadow before that soul, to dampen faith, and to make of none effect the words of God. . . .

If Satan stands between the soul and Jesus Christ, then the love and acceptance and pardon of Christ are eclipsed—man will be constantly striving to prepare a robe of righteousness to cover his deformity and sin, when Christ wants him to come to Him just as he is, and believe in Him as his personal Savior. In His tender love, a forgiving Father brings forth His best robe in which to array His returning child.

Satan is a vigilant, untiring foe, and he sleeps not. He knows that his time is short, and he will work until the end with every species of deception to draw souls into his snare and ruin them. I have a message for you—"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Give no place to the devil to stand between you and Christ, lest you savor of the things that be of men and not of God. If your faith is genuine, it must and will produce obedience. God commands us to do nothing which we cannot do. He will give strength to every believing, trusting soul.

Cherish the love of Jesus in the heart, respect each other, for Christ has given His life for you. Every soul is precious in the sight of God. It is a wonderful thing to be remembered and cared for every hour by God.—Letter 7, Jan. 6, 1894, to the ship's crew on board the *Pitcairn*.