

OUR HIGH CALLING

ELLEN G. WHITE

The Morning Watch texts with appropriate selections compiled from the writings of Ellen G. White

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ; and what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him?—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere.

The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 365.



J a n u a r y 1

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Ps. 90:12.

Another year of life is now in the past. A new year is opening before us. What will be its record? What will we each inscribe upon its spotless pages? The manner in which we spend each passing day will decide this question. . . .

Let us enter upon the new year with our hearts cleansed from the defilement of selfishness and pride. Let us put away every sinful indulgence, and seek to become faithful, diligent learners in the school of Christ. A new year opens its unsullied pages before us. What shall we write upon them? . . .

Seek to begin this year with right purposes and pure motives, as beings who are accountable to God. Ever bear in mind that your acts are daily passing into history by the pen of the recording angel. You must meet them again when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened. . . .

If we connect with God, the source of peace, and light, and truth, His Spirit will flow through us as a channel, to refresh and bless all around us. This may be the last year of life to us. Shall we not enter upon it with thoughtful consideration? Shall not sincerity, respect, benevolence, mark our deportment toward all?

Let us withhold nothing from Him who gave His precious life for us. . . . Let us all consecrate to God the property He has entrusted to us. Above all, let us give Him ourselves, a freewill offering.¹

May the beginning of this year be a time that shall never be forgotten—a time when Christ shall come in among us, and say, “Peace be unto you.” John 20:19. Brethren and sisters, I wish you, one and all, a happy new year.

*“We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.”²*

J a n u a r y 2

WHICH WAY?

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matt. 7:13, 14.

Before you are two ways—the broad road of self-indulgence and the narrow path of self-sacrifice. Into the broad road you can take selfishness, pride, love of the world; but those who walk in the narrow way must lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset. Which road have you chosen—the road which leads to everlasting death, or the road which leads to glory and immortality?³

There never was a more solemn time in the history of the world than the time in which we are now living. Our eternal interests are at stake, and we should arouse to the importance of making our calling and election sure. We dare not risk our eternal interests on mere probabilities. We must be in earnest. What we are, what we are doing, what is to be our course of action in the future, are all questions of untold moment, and we cannot afford to be listless, indifferent, unconcerned. It becomes each one of us to inquire, “What is eternity to me?” Are our feet in the path that leads to heaven, or in the broad road that leads to perdition? . . .

Those who make a success of the Christian life will count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Only those who are abiding in Christ can know what true life is. They realize the value of true religion. They have brought their talents of influence and means and ability to the altar of consecration, seeking only to know and do the will of Him who has died to redeem them. They know that the path they must travel is strait and narrow, and that they will have to meet many obstacles and temptations, as they resist the enticements of the broader road that leads to ruin; but they will discern the footsteps of Jesus, and press onward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in their Lord and Saviour. They will choose the royal way that leads to heaven.⁴

COMPASSED WITH GOD'S MERCY

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Ps. 32:10.

We often think that those who serve God have more trials than the unbeliever, and that the path marked out for them to travel in is rugged. . . . But does the sinner enjoy his worldly pleasure and enjoyment unalloyed? Oh, no. There are times when the sinner is fearfully troubled. He fears God but does not love Him.

Are the wicked free from disappointment, perplexity, earthly losses, poverty, and distress? Many of them suffer a lingering sickness, yet have no strong and mighty One to lean upon, no strengthening grace from a higher power to support them in their weakness. They lean upon their own strength. They obtain no consolation by looking forward to the future, but a fearful uncertainty torments them; and thus they close their eyes in death, not finding any pleasure in looking forward to the resurrection morn, for they have no cheering hope that they shall have part in the first resurrection. . . .

The Christian is subject to sickness, disappointment, poverty, reproach, and distress. Yet amid all this he loves God, he chooses to do His will, and prizes nothing so highly as His approbation. In the conflicting trials and changing scenes of this life, he knows that there is One who knows it all, One who will bend His ear low to the cry of the sorrowful and distressed, One who can sympathize with every sorrow and soothe the keen anguish of every heart. . . .

Amid all his affliction, the Christian has strong consolation. And if God permits him to suffer a lingering, distressing sickness before he closes his eyes in death, he can with cheerfulness bear it all. . . . He contemplates the future with heavenly satisfaction. A short rest in the grave, and then the Life-giver will break the fetters of the tomb, release the captive, and bring him from his dusty bed immortal, never more to know pain, sorrow, or death. Oh, what a hope is the Christian's! Let this hope of the Christian be mine. Let it be yours.⁵

BLESSINGS TO CHEER US

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Ps. 31:19.

God scatters blessings all along our path to brighten our journey and lead our hearts out to love and praise Him, and He wants us to draw water from the well of salvation that our hearts may be refreshed. We may sing the songs of Zion, we may cheer our own hearts, and we may cheer the hearts of others; hope may be strengthened, darkness turned to light. God has not left us in a dark world—as pilgrims and strangers seeking a better country, even an heavenly—without giving us precious promises to lighten every burden. The borders of our path are strewn with fair flowers of promise. They blossom all around, sending forth rich fragrance.⁶

How many blessings we lose because we slight and overlook the blessings we daily receive, yearning for that which we have not. Common mercies which thickly strew our pathway are forgotten and undervalued. We may learn lessons from the humble things of God in nature. The flower in dark and humble places responds to all the rays of light it can get, and puts forth its leaves. The caged bird sings in the prison cage, in the sunless tenement, as if in the lordly, sunny dwelling. God knows whether we will make a wise and saving use of His blessings; He will never give them to us to abuse. God loves the thankful heart, trusting implicitly in His words of promise, gathering comfort and hope and peace from them; and He will reveal to us still greater depths of His love.⁷

If we praised God's holy name as we should, the flame of love would be kindled in many hearts. . . . The praise of God should continually be in our hearts and on our lips. This is the very best way to resist the temptation to indulge in idle, frivolous conversation.⁸

The Lord would have us look up, and be grateful to Him that there is a heaven. . . . Let us grasp by living faith the rich promises of God, and be thankful from morning till night.⁹

J a n u a r y 5

PERILS TO SHUN

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Jer. 10:23.

The road through Knight's Canyon, always perilous to the inexperienced traveler, is often impassable in the rainy season.* We were very thankful for a pilot in this part of our journey. I dared not look either to the right or left to view the scenery, but, holding the lines firmly, and guiding my horse in the narrow passage, I followed our leader. Carelessness here would have been fatal. Had our horse turned out of the right path, we should have plunged down a steep precipice, into the ravine below.

As we rode along in almost breathless silence, I could but think how forcibly this dangerous ride illustrates the Christian's experience. We are making life's journey amid the perils of the last days. We need to watch carefully every step, and to be sure that we are following our great Leader. Skepticism, infidelity, dissipation, and crime are on every hand. It would be an easy matter to let go the reins of self-control, and plunge over the precipice to sure destruction. . . .

Infinite Love has cast up a pathway upon which the ransomed of the Lord may pass from earth to heaven. That path is the Son of God. Angel guides are sent to direct our erring feet. Heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every man's path, barring his way to vice and folly. He must trample upon a crucified Redeemer ere he can pass onward to a life of sin. Our heavenly Father's voice is calling us, Come up hither. . . . The humble, trusting ones are guided and protected in the way of peace. But He who is infinite in wisdom compels none to accept Heaven's most precious gift—compels none to walk in the path which has been cast up at such a cost. Every one is permitted to choose for himself the narrow, shining steep that leads to heaven, or that broader and easier way which ends in death.¹⁰

* Account of a journey from Healdsburg to St. Helena, California, made by Mrs. White and a friend in December 1881. Friends drove ahead to guide them through a dangerous pass.

THE BRIDGE LOVE BUILT

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10.

God's love for the world was not manifest because He sent His Son, but because He loved the world He sent His Son into the world that divinity clothed with humanity might touch humanity, while divinity lays hold of divinity. Though sin had produced a gulf between man and his God, a divine benevolence provided a plan to bridge that gulf. And what material did He use? A part of Himself. The brightness of the Father's glory came to a world all seared and marred with the curse, and in His own divine character, in His own divine body, bridged the gulf. . . . The windows of heaven were opened and the showers of heavenly grace in healing streams came to our benighted world. . . .

Had God given us less we could not have been saved. But He gave to our world so abundantly that it could not be said that He could love us more. Then how foolish is the position taken that there is to be a second probation after the first is exhausted. God has exhausted His benevolence . . . in pouring out all heaven to man in one great gift. Only in comprehending the value of this offering can we comprehend infinity. O the breadth and height and depth of the love of God! Who of finite beings can comprehend it? . . .

God claims the whole of the affections of man, the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind, the whole strength. He lays claim to all that there is of man, because He has poured out the whole treasure of heaven by giving us His all at once, reserving nothing greater that heaven can do. . . .

When I commence writing on this subject, I go on and on, and try to get beyond the outer edge, but I fail. When we shall reach the mansions above, Jesus will Himself lead the white-robed ones, made white in the blood of the Lamb, to the Father. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Rev. 7:15.¹¹

J a n u a r y 7

THE ONE VAST GIFT OF GOD

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. 2 Cor. 9:15.

Those who receive Christ by faith will be looked upon by Heaven as precious pearls for which the merchantman has paid an infinite price, and the human agents who find Christ will realize that they have found a heavenly treasure. They will be anxious to sell all that they have in order to buy the field which contains this treasure. As they contemplate the love of God, as the plan of salvation opens to their view, as the mystery of Christ's condescension becomes plainer to them, as they see the sacrifice that He made for them, they count nothing too dear to give up for His sake. The more they dwell upon the wonderful love of God, the vaster becomes its proportions, and the brightness of the glory of God becomes too glorious for mortal vision.

The Lord God of heaven collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to purchase the pearl of lost humanity. The Father gave all His divine resources into the hands of Christ in order that the richest blessings of heaven might be poured out upon a fallen race. God could not express greater love than He has expressed in giving the Son of His bosom to this world. This gift was given to man to convince him that God had left nothing undone that He could do, that there is nothing held in reserve, but that all heaven has been poured out in one vast gift. The present and eternal happiness of man consists in receiving God's love, and in keeping God's commandments.

Christ is our redeemer. He is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. He is the fountain in which we may be washed and cleansed from all impurity. He is the costly sacrifice that has been given for the reconciliation of man. The universe of heaven, the worlds unfallen, the fallen world, and the confederacy of evil cannot say that God could do more for the salvation of man than He has done. Never can His gift be surpassed, never can He display a richer depth of love. Calvary represents His crowning work. . . . The Lord would have His followers enraptured with God through the knowledge of His paternal character.¹²

J a n u a r y 8

CALLING ALL YOUTH!

For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. Ps. 71:5.

Jesus calls to every wanderer, "My son, give me thine heart." Prov. 23:26. . . . The youth cannot be happy without the love of Jesus. He is waiting with pitying tenderness to hear the confessions of the wayward, and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. The great God teaches us to call Him Father. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us in all our trials and temptations. . . .

The young should be constantly growing in grace, and in a knowledge of the truth. The Creator of all things, with whom are all the treasures of wisdom, has promised to be the guide of their youth. He who has conquered in their behalf all the powers of evil asks for their homage. There can be no higher knowledge than the knowledge of Him whom to know aright is life and peace; no purer, deeper affection than the love of our Saviour. . . .

There are temptations on every hand to ensnare the feet of the unwary. Ungodly, corrupt youth exert a strong influence to lead others into forbidden paths. These are among the most successful agents of Satan. . . . The lovers of the world will often approach under a garb of friendship, and attempt to introduce its customs and practices. Let every true soldier stand ready to resist these allurements. . . .

Satan attacks us at our weak points; but we need not be overcome. The assault may be severe and protracted, but God has promised help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. . . . The precepts and promises of God's word will arm you with divine power to resist the enemy. . . . Satan will be baffled and defeated when he finds the heart preoccupied with the truth of God. We need also to be often found at the throne of grace. Earnest, persevering prayer, uniting our human weakness to Omnipotence, will give us the victory.¹³

MINE TO CHOOSE

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15.

In our world there are two classes. One is made up of those who behold a crucified and risen Saviour. The other includes all who have chosen to look away from the cross, and to follow the leadings of satanic influences. The latter class are busily engaged in putting stumbling blocks before God's people, to cause them to fall, and turn from the path of obedience into the broad way of disobedience and death.

Many choose unrighteousness because Satan presents it in such a way that it seems attractive to those who are not on guard against his wiles. And he works in a special manner through unsanctified men and women who profess to be children of God. In some way or other the enemy will seek to deceive all, even the very elect. Only as we are partakers of the divine nature can we escape the corrupting influences that are brought to bear upon us by the enemy of our souls.

As Satan seeks to break down the barriers of the soul, by tempting us to indulge in sin, we must by living faith retain our connection with God, and have confidence in His strength to enable us to overcome every besetment. We are to flee from evil, and seek righteousness, meekness, and holiness. . . .

It is time for every one of us to decide whose side we are on. The agencies of Satan will work with every mind that will allow itself to be worked by him. But there are also heavenly agencies waiting to communicate the bright rays of the glory of God to all who are willing to receive Him.¹⁴

It is ours to choose whether we will be numbered with the servants of Christ or the servants of Satan. Every day we show by our conduct whose service we have chosen. . . .

Dear young reader, what choice have you made? What is the record of your daily life?¹⁵