

THIS DAY WITH GOD

Ellen G. White



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FOREWORD

The Bible record of men and women of ancient times presents backgrounds so broad and diverse that every modern person may identify with someone portrayed therein. All who are wise will gain from a study of this record that which will direct, enrich, and guard their own personal life. They will draw courage from those who triumphed, learn from the mistakes of others, and hopefully will be spared the heartaches of those who made unwise choices.

The Word of God treats only briefly the exploits, failures, and successes of the characters it portrays. More detailed accounts are given to us by Ellen G. White in her inspired writings. In a rare manner she catches and applies, with sensitive, divinely guided insight, relevant lessons from the lives of saints and sinners depicted in sacred history. From this voluminous and rich source of materials the 365 brief sketches that comprise this devotional volume have been selected. Obviously there could not be reproduced here full biographies of the many characters mentioned in the Bible. These may be pursued in the five volumes of the Conflict of the Ages series, the Testimonies, other Ellen G. White books, and in the Ellen G. White supplement to the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. Rather, the lessons from their lives have been set forth here by incidents, in their biographical setting. They appear in roughly chronological order, but without a tight sequence of events; nor has it been possible to be exhaustive even in this selective area.

The Scripture reference at the top of many of the pages will guide to the Bible account of the experience from which the lesson has been drawn.

Credit is given for each item appearing in these pages. A close look at the listing at the back of this volume will reveal that the prime source has been the familiar books of the Conflict series, which in general present the fullest and richest accounts.

The task of selecting and arranging these sketches has been undertaken in the office of the Ellen G. White Estate. May they accomplish the purpose for which they are intended—to bring courage to God's people for the trials of earth's closing days.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

PROMISE OF PEACE

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Isa. 26:3, 4.

I wish you a happy new year. Let us put away everything like distrust and want of faith in Jesus forever. Let us commence a life of simple childlike trust, not relying upon feeling but upon faith.

Do not dishonor Jesus by doubting His precious promises. He wants us to believe in Him with unwavering faith. There is a class who say, "I believe, I believe," and claim all the promises which are given on condition of obedience. While they claim everything in the promises of God, they do not the works of Christ. God is not honored by any such faith, it is a spurious faith. Then we see a people trying to keep all of God's commandments, but there are many of these who do not come up to their exalted privileges and claim nothing. God's promises are to those who keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. . . .

I have to fight the good fight of faith everyday. I have to put to the stretch the powers of faith and not rely upon feeling, and act as though I knew the Lord heard me, and would answer me and bless me. Faith is not a happy flight of feeling, it is simply taking God at His word and believing, because God said He would do this. . . .

I hope you will not become in any way discouraged . . .

God wants you to be free, He wants you to be believing, to be trustful, and just cease to doubt and believe. May God help you. . . . A new year has opened upon us. Let it be a happy New Year. . . . Nestle in the sheltering arms of Jesus, and do not wrestle yourself out of His arms. Just believe and praise God and go forward. We are almost home.

The Lord is coming. Look up and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh. I see in Jesus a compassionate, loving Redeemer, One who can save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. Bear your whole weight on the promises of God. Believe it is your privilege to believe.—Letter 31, Jan. 1, 1887, to Martha Bourdeau, wife of an early minister in Europe.

WITH ONE ACCORD

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6.

Many are on the enchanted ground of the enemy. Things of the least importance—foolish social parties, singing, jesting, joking—engross their minds and they serve God with a divided heart. In these things you have one unseen in your midst, helping you—Satan is present, full of hellish exultation. The declaration of Christ, “No man can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:24), is unheeded.

After the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit did not immediately descend. There were ten days after His ascension before the Holy Spirit was given. This time was devoted by the disciples to most earnest preparation for receiving so precious an endowment. The rich treasures of heaven were poured out to them after they had searched their own hearts diligently and had sacrificed every idol. They were before God, humbling their souls, strengthening their faith, confessing their sins. And their hearts were in harmony with one another. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1, 2). The church needs a similar experience right here at the great heart of the work.* Are we searching our hearts, preparing for the heavenly grace to be received? The Lord is waiting to be gracious.

The Lord will reveal Himself to His people, but they must be unitedly engaged in the work of seeking the Lord. . . . The work which is to be carried forward at this time is a most important one. It is a life and death question. . . .

Shall the enemy [be allowed], right at this solemn time, to bring in a condition of things—of diversion and pleasure—to absorb the mind and fill it with vain, trifling thoughts that have no place for God, eternity, or heaven?—Manuscript 38, 1890, diary, Battle Creek, Michigan, Jan. 2, 1890.

*Battle Creek, Michigan, denominational headquarters from 1855 to 1903.

NEXT DOOR TO HEAVEN

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18:20.

Work, and watch, and pray for souls as they that must give an account. This year, try the Lord's prescribed remedy for evil. Let every man do that which the Lord requires him to do, looking unto Jesus, who is the owner of every soul. . . .

Let small companies assemble together in the evening or early morning to study the Bible for themselves. Let them have a season of prayer that they may be strengthened and enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. . . .

If you will do this, a great blessing will come to you from the One who gave His whole life to service, the One who redeemed you by His own life. You must have the power of the Holy Spirit, else you cannot be an overcomer. What testimonies you should bear of the loving acquaintance you have made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God. Let each tell his experience in simple words. . . .

The work of every believer is aggressive. It is a daily warfare. Christ is saying . . . “Ye are my witnesses” (Isa. 43:10). Think it; speak it; act it. Heaven is just next door. Open the door heavenward and close the door earthward. . . . Will you hear His voice and open the door of the heart to Jesus? Will you love Him who gave His life for you?

Let little companies meet together to study the Scriptures. You will lose nothing by this, but will gain much. Angels of God will be in your gathering, and as you feed upon the Bread of Life, you will receive spiritual sinew and muscle. You will be feeding, as it were, upon the leaves of the tree of life. By this means only can you maintain your integrity. Fidelity to Jesus Christ will ensure a most precious reward. Let each soul strive for eternal life, acknowledging Christ in word and spirit. He has pledged His word that He will acknowledge you and me, gladly, heartily, joyously, before His heavenly Father. Is not this worth striving for? See what you can do personally to be true to principle, to maintain uncorruptness in every phase of your life; and you will behold His glory.—Letter 2, Jan. 3, 1900, to Brother and Sister Sisley.

CULTIVATING THE SOIL

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations. Isa. 61:11.

The living oracles of God, "It is written," are the leaves of the tree of life, which human beings are to eat in order to gain spiritual life. As we eat the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, they become unto us eternal life. "The words that I speak unto you," He said, "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The restoring, vital current from Christ heals the wounds that sin has made.

"What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer."

Whatever course others pursue, we are individually to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Why? Because it is God that worketh in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. Yes, for His own name's glory, He works upon the minds and hearts of human beings, who are of great value in His sight, if they will allow Him to work.

When man fell, God commenced to work to defeat the plans of Satan. God works in man. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9). In the beginning the Lord enjoined upon man the cultivation of the earth. This work was made much harder because of the transgression of the law of God. By transgressing, man worked against his own present and eternal good. The earth was cursed because through disobedience man gave Satan opportunity to sow in the human heart the seeds of evil. The ground that in the beginning produced only good began to produce tares, and their growth called for continual warfare.

The cultivation of the soil is a school in which man may learn spiritual lessons. As he cultivates the soil, man is to see reflected as in a mirror the work of God upon the human soul. Divine culture brings perfection. If in connection with God the work is carried forward, the human agent, through Christ, will day by day gain victory and honor in the battle. Through the grace given, he will overcome, and will be placed on vantage ground.—Letter 5, Jan. 4, 1900, to Brother Colcord.

THOU GOD SEEST ME

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Heb. 4:13.

The triumph of the truth is possible only when the workers carry with them an abiding consciousness of the presence of God. They should ever realize that there is a faithful witness to every word, every transaction, in the home life or among the people. In every plan devised, in every effort made, Christ is to direct. In every council the members should speak and act as if the curtain were withdrawn, and they saw themselves transacting business in the presence of the heavenly universe. For this is the fact in the case; all heaven is looking upon the workers. In planning for aggressive warfare, let not self be made prominent; it must be hidden, wholly hidden, in Christ. . . .

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, and those things that cannot be shaken will remain.

The Lord requires our undivided affections. If men are not whole-hearted, they will fail in the day of test and proving and trial. When the enemy shall put his forces in array against him, and the battle seems to go hard, at the very time when all the strength of intellect and capability, and all the tact of wise generalship, is needed to repulse the enemy, those who are half-hearted will turn their weapons against their own soldiers; they weaken the hands that should be strong for warfare. God is testing all who have a knowledge of the truth to see if they can be depended on to fight the battles of the Lord when hard pressed by principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world and wicked spirits in high places. Perilous times are before us, and our only safety is in having the converting power of God every day—yielding ourselves fully to Him to do His will, and walk in the light of His countenance (see 1 Peter 2:9).

Now when we are just on the borders of the promised land, let none repeat the sin of the unfaithful spies. They acknowledged that the land they went up to see was a good land, but they declared that the inhabitants were strong, the giants were there, and that they themselves were in comparison as grasshoppers in the sight of the people and in their own sight. All the difficulties were magnified into insurmountable obstacles. . . . Thus they leavened the whole congregation with their unbelief.—Manuscript 6, Jan. 5, 1892, "Work in Christ's Lines."