

To Be Pleasing to God

Sabbath Afternoon, January 11

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man's uplifting. Here is love—the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! —*Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

In order to strengthen our confidence in God, Christ teaches us to address Him by a new name, a name entwined with the dearest associations of the human heart. He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite God our Father. This name, spoken to Him and of Him, is a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us. Spoken when asking His favor or blessing, it is as music in His ears. . . .

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 141, 142.

Be ambitious, for the Master's glory, to cultivate every grace of character. In every phase of your character building you are to please God. This you may do; for Enoch pleased Him though living in a degenerate age. And there are Enochs in this our day.

Stand like Daniel, that faithful statesman, a man whom no temptation could corrupt. Do not disappoint Him who so loved you that He gave His own life to cancel your sins. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Remember this. If you have made mistakes, you certainly gain a victory if you see these mistakes and regard them as beacons of warning. Thus you turn defeat into victory, disappointing the enemy and honoring your Redeemer. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 332.

Sunday, January 12

More Valuable Than You Can Imagine

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. . . . Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul.

Your heavenly Father will take from you the garments defiled by sin. . . . Even so God will clothe you with "the garments of salvation," and cover you with "the robe of righteousness." Isaiah 61:10. . . .

He will bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love. (Song of Solomon 2:4.) "If thou wilt walk in My ways," He declares, "I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by"—even among the holy angels that surround His throne. (Zechariah 3:7.). —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 206, 207.

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 97.

When the father comes out to remonstrate with [his eldest son], the pride and malignity of his nature are revealed. He dwells upon his own life in his father's house as a round of unrequited service. . . . When he should have found an abiding joy in his father's presence, his mind has rested upon the profit to accrue from his circumspect life. His words show that it is for this he has foregone the pleasures of sin. . . .

Yet the father deals tenderly with him. "Son," he says, "thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Through all these years of your brother's outcast life, have you not had the privilege of companionship with me? . . .

Was the elder brother brought to see his own mean, ungrateful spirit? Did he come to see that though his brother had done wickedly, he was his brother still? Did the elder brother repent of his jealousy and hardheartedness? Concerning this, Christ was silent. For the parable was still enacting, and it rested with His hearers to determine what the outcome should be. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 207–209.

Monday, January 13

Rejoicing With Gladness

"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Isaiah 62:5. "He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing." Zephaniah 3:17. And heaven and earth shall unite in the Father's song of rejoicing: "For this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 207.

In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father's house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; . . . but thou shalt be called My Delight; . . . for the Lord delighteth in thee." "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Isaiah 62:5, 4, margin; Zephaniah 3:17.

When the vision of heavenly things was granted to John the apostle, he wrote: "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Revelation 19:6, 7, 9. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 151.

It should be our aim to bring all the pleasantness possible into our lives, and to do all the kindness possible to those around us. Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit.

"Christ also hath loved us," writes Paul, "and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." This is the oblation of a life-gift in our behalf, that we may be all that He desires us to be—representatives of Him, expressing the fragrance of His character, His own pure thoughts, His divine attributes as manifested in His sanctified human life, in order that others may behold Him in His human form, and, comprehending God's wonderful design, be led to desire to be like Christ—pure, undefiled, wholly acceptable to God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. —*Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1118.

Tuesday, January 14

Pleasing God?

We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit "maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20.

Christ has said, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13. And the beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks with great plainness and assurance: "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." 1 John 5:14, 15. Then press your petition to the Father in the name of Jesus. God will honor that name. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 147.

What is needed in this, our time of danger, is fervent prayer, mingled with earnest faith, a reliance upon God when Satan casts his shadow over God's people. Let everyone bear in mind that God delights to listen to the supplications of His people; for the prevailing iniquity calls for more earnest prayer, and God has promised that He will avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them. . . .

I am so thankful at this time that we can have our minds taken off from the difficulties that surround us, and the oppression that is to come upon the people of God, and can look up to the heaven of light and power. If we place ourselves on the side of God, of Christ and the heavenly intelligences, the broad shield of Omnipotence is over us, the mighty God of Israel is our helper, and we need not fear. Those who touch the people of God, touch the apple of His eye. —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 372, 373.

Jesus is the great light which lights up every man that comes into the world. All heaven is interested in the conflict that is going on in this world between truth and error, light and darkness. The great Source of all light is constantly shining, and those who will catch His rays, and will reflect them upon others, will be light-bearers in this darkened world. We are not pleasing God when we permit our minds to dwell upon our imperfections, mourning constantly over our condition, with our eyes directed continually upon our mistakes and errors. Come to Jesus; He is the light of the world. Take hold of His strength by faith and make peace with Him. Shall you talk of your weakness?—No; no: for that pleases the enemy. Dwell upon the great help that has been provided for you in Jesus, your Redeemer. —*"Are You Light-bearers?" Australasian Union Conference Record*, May 6, 1907.

Wednesday, January 15

Living Stones

There is no encouragement given for unbelief. The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust [Hebrews 3:12 quoted].

The Lord works in cooperation with the will and action of the human agent. It is the privilege and duty of every man to take God at His word, to believe in Jesus as his personal Saviour, and to respond eagerly, immediately, to the gracious propositions which He makes. He is to study to believe and obey the divine instruction in the Scriptures. He is to base his faith not on feeling but upon the evidence and the Word of God. —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 924.

Everything that God could do, He has done to manifest His great love and mercy. . . . He “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Then rest in the assurance of the love of God. Not because we first loved Him did God love us; but “while we were yet sinners,” Christ died for us, making full and abundant provision for our redemption. Although by our disobedience we have merited God’s displeasure and condemnation, yet He has not forsaken us, leaving us to grapple with the power of the enemy in our own finite strength. Heavenly angels fight our battles for us, and cooperating with them, we may be victorious over the powers of evil. As we draw nigh to Him by faith, He draws nigh to us, adopting us into His family, and making us His sons and daughters. —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 53.

[Christ] knew from the beginning, of the apostasy of Satan and of the fall of Adam through the deceptive power of the apostate. The plan of salvation was designed to redeem the fallen race, to give them another trial. Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety. Before the world was made, it was arranged that the divinity of Christ should be enshrouded in humanity. “A body,” said Christ, “hast thou prepared me” (Hebrews 10:5). . . .

To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption. Christ took human nature that men might be one with Him as He is one with the Father, that God may love man as He loves His only-begotten Son, that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete in Him. —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 250.

Thursday, January 16

A Worthy Goal

The word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells us of the power of prayer,—how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. By sin, earth was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 113.

"If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." How many a sin-burdened soul has echoed that prayer. And to all, the pitying Saviour's answer is, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." It is faith that connects us with heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." You can never perish while you do this—never. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 428, 429.

In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty. . . . It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.

The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus. Oh, what rays of softness and beauty shone forth in the daily life of our Saviour! What sweetness flowed from His very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. . . . Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet. —*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 134, 135.

Friday, January 17

For Further Reading

The Desire of Ages, "Who Are My Brethren?" pp. 321–327;
My Life Today, "Partakers Through God's Promises," p. 274.