

Third Quarter 2023

EGW Notes - Lesson 8, 12 – 18 August

## ***Christ-Shaped Lives and Spirit-Inspired Speech***

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### **Sabbath Afternoon, August 12**

[Let] us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

It was thus that the early disciples gained their likeness to the dear Saviour. . . . Those disciples were men “subject to like passions as we are.” James 5:17. They had the same battle with sin to fight. They needed the same grace, in order to live a holy life.

Even John, the beloved disciple, the one who most fully reflected the likeness of the Saviour, did not naturally possess that loveliness of character. He was not only self-assertive and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injuries. But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love.

Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious temper was yielded to the molding power of Christ. The regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit renewed his heart.

The power of the love of Christ wrought a transformation of character. This is the sure result of union with Jesus. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ's Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven.

**—*Steps to Christ, pp. 72, 73.***

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17. Through the power of Christ, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have become transformed into the image of God. This change is in itself the miracle of miracles. A change wrought by the Word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the Word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

**—*The Acts of the Apostles, p. 476.***

## **Sunday, August 13 The Downward Spiral of Sin**

It was when the Israelites were in a condition of outward ease and security that they were led into sin. They failed to keep God ever before them, they neglected prayer and cherished a spirit of self-confidence. Ease and self-indulgence left the citadel of the soul unguarded, and debasing thoughts found entrance. It was the traitors within the walls that overthrew the strongholds of principle and betrayed Israel into the power of Satan. It is thus that Satan still seeks to compass the ruin of the soul. A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the heart before the Christian commits open sin. The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will

become pleasant to him. . . .

The mind is educated to familiarity with sin . . . that the once tender conscience . . . becomes hardened, and they dwell upon these things with greedy interest.

**—*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 459.***

To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin and the more decided our disapproval of any deviation from the right. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer, but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust. . . .

He who has blunted his spiritual perceptions by sinful leniency toward those whom God condemns, will ere long commit a greater sin by severity and harshness toward those whom God approves.

By the pride of human wisdom, by contempt for the influence of the Holy Spirit, and by disrelish for the truths of God's word, many who profess to be Christians, and who feel competent to teach others, will be led to turn away from the requirements of God. Paul declared to Timothy, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

**—*The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 503, 504.***

## **Monday, August 14 A Dramatic Change of Clothing**

The apostle admonishes his brethren, in the name and by the authority of the

Lord Jesus, that after having professed the gospel they should not conduct themselves as did the Gentiles, but should show by their daily deportment that they had been truly converted.

“Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Once they were corrupt, degraded, enslaved by lustful passions; they were drugged by worldly opiates, blinded, bewildered, and betrayed by Satan’s devices. Now that they had been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, there must be a decided change in their life and character.

**—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 171, 172.***

It is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this bad habit or that bad habit and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart. . . .

If studied and obeyed, the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us, body, soul, and spirit, to His will.

**—*God’s Amazing Grace, p. 223.***

We are to accept of Christ as our personal Saviour, or we shall fail in our attempt to be overcomers. It will not answer for us to hold ourselves aloof from Him, to believe that our friend or our neighbor may have Him for a personal Saviour, but that we may not experience His pardoning love. We are to believe that we are chosen of God, to be saved by the exercise of faith, through the grace of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit; and we are to praise and glorify

God for such a marvelous manifestation of His unmerited favor. It is the love of God that draws the soul to Christ, to be graciously received, and presented to the Father. Through the work of the Spirit the divine relationship between God and the sinner is renewed. The Father says: “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. I will exercise forgiving love toward them, and bestow upon them my joy. They shall be to me a peculiar treasure; for this people whom I have formed for myself shall show forth my praise.”

**—*Our High Calling, p. 77.***

## **Tuesday, August 15 Unity-Building, Grace-Filled Speech**

[Jesus] is our example, not only in His spotless purity, but in His patience, gentleness, and winsomeness of disposition. His life is an illustration of true courtesy. He had ever a kind look and a word of comfort for the needy and the oppressed. . . . As He saw men weary, and compelled to bear heavy burdens, He shared their burdens, and repeated to them the lessons He had learned from nature, of the love, the kindness, the goodness of God. He sought to inspire with hope the most rough and unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might attain such a character as would make them manifest as children of God.

**—*Gospels Workers, p. 121.***

The religion of Jesus softens whatever is hard and rough in the temper, and smooths whatever is rugged and sharp in the manners. It makes the words gentle and the demeanor winning. Let us learn from Christ how to combine a high sense of purity and integrity with sunniness of disposition. A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity.

Kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. The Scripture says of Christ, that grace was poured into His lips, that He might “know how to speak a

word in season to him that is weary.” [Isaiah 50:4.] And the Lord bids us, “Let your speech be always with grace” “that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” [Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29.]

**—*Gospel Workers, p. 122.***

The apostle, seeing the inclination to abuse the gift of speech, gives direction concerning its use. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,” he says, “but that which is good to the use of edifying.” The word “corrupt” means here any word that would make an impression detrimental to holy principles and undefiled religion, any communication that would eclipse the view of Christ, and blot from the mind true sympathy and love. It includes impure hints, which, unless instantly resisted, lead to great sin. . . .

In all His teaching Christ presented pure, unadulterated principles. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Constantly there flowed from His lips holy, ennobling truths. He spoke as never man spoke, with a pathos that touched the heart. . . .

Cultivate a prayerful frame of mind and educate the tongue to speak right words, that will bless in the place of discouraging. Talk of the goodness, the mercy, and the love of God. Put away all unbelieving words and all that is cheap and common. Let the words be sound words, that cannot be condemned, and the peace of God will surely come to the soul.

**—*In Heavenly Places, p. 175.***

### **Wednesday, August 16 The Holy Spirit in the Believer’s Life**

The Holy Spirit was promised to be with those who were wrestling for victory, in demonstration of all mightiness, endowing the human agent with supernatural powers, and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. That the Holy Spirit is to be the grand helper, is a wonderful promise. Of what avail would it have been to us that the only begotten Son of God had humbled

Himself, endured the temptations of the wily foe, and wrestled with him during his entire life on earth, and died the Just for the unjust that humanity might not perish, if the Spirit had not been given as a constant, working, regenerating agent to make effectual in our cases what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer?

The imparted Holy Spirit enabled his disciples, the apostles, to stand firmly against every species of idolatry and to exalt the Lord and Him alone. Who, but Jesus Christ by his Spirit and divine power, guided the pens of the sacred historians that to the world might be presented the precious record of the sayings and works of Jesus Christ?

**—*Selected Messages, book 3, p. 137.***

In the work that was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, we may see what can be done by the exercise of faith. Those who believed in Christ were sealed by the Holy Spirit. As the disciples were assembled together, “there came a sound . . . as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” And Peter stood up among them and spoke with mighty power. Among those who listened to him were devout Jews, who were sincere in their belief. But the power that accompanied the words of the speaker convinced them that Christ was indeed the Messiah. What a mighty work was accomplished! Three thousand were converted in one day. . . .

More were converted by one sermon on the day of Pentecost than were converted during all the years of Christ's ministry. So mightily will God work when men give themselves to the control of the Spirit.

**—*Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1055.***

The promised Holy Spirit, whom he would send after he ascended to his Father,

is constantly at work to draw the attention to the great official sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary, and to unfold to the world the love of God to man, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things in the Scriptures, and to open to darkened minds the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the truths that make their hearts burn within them with the awakened intelligence of the truths of eternity.

**—*Selected Messages, book 3, p. 137.***

### **Thursday, August 17 Kindness (Not Bitterness)**

Satan claims the world. He claims us as his. Then shall we give him that which he claims? No. I am somebody else's property. I have been bought with a price, and my business is to glorify God in my body and spirit. I have no time to talk unbelief. It is faith that I must talk. I must strengthen faith by exercise. And then my faith grows as I venture upon the promises of God, and I can grasp more and more. . . .

One word of doubt, one word of evil thinking and evil speaking, makes room for more of the same kind. It is seed-sowing that will prepare for a harvest that few will care to garner.

Those who are troubled with doubts and have difficulties which they cannot solve should not throw other weak minds into the same perplexity. Some have hinted or talked their unbelief and have passed on, little dreaming of the effect produced. In some instances the seeds of unbelief have taken immediate effect, while in others they have lain buried quite a length of time, until the individual has taken a wrong course and given place to the enemy, and the light of God has been withdrawn from him and he has fallen under the powerful temptations of Satan. Then the seeds of infidelity which were sown so long ago spring up. Satan nourishes them, and they bear fruit.

**—*Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 2, p. 676.***



Remember that your brethren are fallible creatures like yourself, and regard their mistakes and errors with the same mercy and forbearance that you wish them to exercise toward you. They should not be watched and their defects paraded to the front for the world to exult over. Those who dare to do this have climbed upon the judgment seat and made themselves judges, while they have neglected the garden of their own hearts and have allowed poisonous weeds to obtain a rank growth.

We individually have a case pending in the court of heaven. Character is being weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and it should be the earnest desire of all to walk humbly and carefully, lest, neglecting to let their light shine forth to the world, they fail of the grace of God and lose everything that is valuable. All dissension, all differences and fault finding, should be put away, with all evil speaking and bitterness; kindness, love, and compassion for one another should be cherished, that the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father may be answered. The harmony and unity of the church are the credentials that they present to the world that Jesus is the Son of God. Genuine conversion will ever lead to genuine love for Jesus and for all those for whom He died.

**– *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 278, 279.***

## **Friday, August 18 For Further Reading**

*In Heavenly Places*, “Don’t Retaliate!” p. 176;

*The Upward Look*, “Light Versus Darkness,” p. 20.

### ***Don’t Retaliate!***

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:9. {HP

Be determined not to please the enemy by allowing words of unfavorable criticism to lead you to retaliate or to depress you. Make the enemy's efforts a failure so far as you are concerned. Then the Lord will draw near to you and will give you a rich measure of love and peace and joy so deep and full that even in the midst of the trial of your faith you can bear triumphant witness to the truth of the word of promise. You will have a sense of the divine presence. The eyes of your understanding will be enlightened, and the truth that at times you have seen but dimly you will then see clearly. You will be able to tell the story of the cross with a deep appreciation of the Saviour's love, for this love will have melted your heart. You will bear about with you in the daily life the witness that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. {HP 176.2}

Look constantly to Jesus. Take all your troubles to Him. He will never misunderstand you. He is the refuge of His people. Under the shadow of His protection they can pass unharmed. Believe in Him and trust in Him. He will not give you up to the spoiler. {HP 176.3}

Let the atmosphere surrounding your soul be sweet and fragrant. If you will battle against selfish human nature, you will go steadily forward in the work of overcoming hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. By patience, long-suffering, and forbearance you will accomplish much. Remember that you cannot be humiliated by the unwise speeches of someone else, but that when you speak unwisely you humiliate yourself and lose a victory that you might have gained.... {HP 176.4}

Keep yourselves where the three great powers of heaven—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—can be your efficiency. These powers work with the one who gives himself unreservedly to God. The strength of heaven is at the command of God's believing ones. The man who makes God his trust is barricaded by an impregnable wall. {HP 176.5}

## *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. Ephesians 4:31, 32. {UL 20.1}

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.... {UL 20.2}

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.... {UL 20.3}

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 Saviour. In His tender love, a forgiving Father brings forth His best robe in which to array His returning child.... {UL 20.4}

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.... {UL 20.5}

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 65, January 6, 1894, to the ship’s crew on board the *Pitcairn*. {UL 20.6}