

Third Quarter 2023

EGW Notes - Lesson 14, 23 – 29 September

Ephesians in the Heart



Sabbath Afternoon, September 23

In every soul two powers are struggling earnestly for the victory. Unbelief marshals its forces, led by Satan, to cut us off from the Source of our strength. Faith marshals its forces, led by Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Hour by hour, in the sight of the heavenly universe, the conflict goes forward. This is a hand-to-hand fight, and the great question is, Which shall obtain the mastery? This question each must decide for himself. In this warfare all must take a part, fighting on one side or the other. From the conflict there is no release. We are urged to prepare for this conflict. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." . . .

He to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given, will come to the help of those who trust in Him.

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 328.

The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life. The darkest chapters of history are burdened with the record of

crimes committed by bigoted religionists. . . .

The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.

— *The Desire of Ages*, p. 309.

Let the prayer go up to God, “Create in me a clean heart;” for a pure, cleansed soul has Christ abiding therein, and out of the abundance of the heart are the issues of life. The human will is to be yielded to Christ. Instead of passing on, closing the heart in selfishness, there is need of opening the heart to the sweet influences of the Spirit of God. Practical religion breathes its fragrance everywhere. It is a savor of life unto life.

— *Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p. 1157.*

Sunday, September 24 We Are Blessed in Christ

The dangers that would assail the church at Ephesus were revealed to the apostle. “I know this,” he said, “that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” Paul trembled for the church as, looking into the future, he saw the attacks which she must suffer from both external and internal foes. With solemn earnestness he bade his brethren guard vigilantly their sacred trusts. . . .

“And now, brethren,” he continued, “I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all

them which are sanctified.” . . .

“And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”

– *The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 395, 396.*

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Ephesians 1:4, 5.

In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only begotten Son to pay man’s ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus. . . . That which will make a man acceptable to God is the imparted grace of Christ through faith in His name. . . . [For] the elect are chosen through Christ.

– *Our High Calling, p. 78.*

Our sanctification is God’s object in all his dealing with us. He has chosen us from eternity that we may be holy. Christ gave Himself for our redemption, that through our faith in his power to save from sin, we might be made complete in Him. In giving us his Word, he has given us bread from heaven. . . .

Desire the fullness of the grace of Christ; yea, long—hunger and thirst—after righteousness. The promise is, “Ye shall be filled.” Let your heart be filled with an intense longing for this righteousness, the work of which God’s Word declares is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance forever.

– ***Selected Messages, book 3, p. 202.***

Monday, September 25 We Are Redeemed for Community

Our Lord says, Under conviction of sin, remember that I died for you. . . . When your heart shrinks from the trying ordeal, remember that your Redeemer liveth to make intercession for you. . . .

These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. . . . There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus. And nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love efficacious for us. It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the center of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith.

– ***The Desire of Ages, pp. 659, 660.***

Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin.

The powers of darkness stand a poor chance against believers who love one another as Christ has loved them, who refuse to create alienation and strife, who stand together, who are kind, courteous, and tender-hearted, cherishing the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. We must have the Spirit of Christ, or we are none of His. . . .

The closer our union with Christ, the closer will be our union with one another.

– ***Sons and Daughters of God, p. 286.***

The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ

by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace. . . .

The sinner cannot depend upon his own good works as a means of justification. He must come to the point where he will renounce all his sin, and embrace one degree of light after another as it shines upon his pathway. He simply grasps by faith the free and ample provision made in the blood of Christ. He believes the promises of God, which through Christ are made unto him sanctification and righteousness and redemption. And if he follows Jesus, he will walk humbly in the light, rejoicing in the light and diffusing that light to others. Being justified by faith, he carries cheerfulness with him in his obedience in all his life. Peace with God is the result of what Christ is to him.

–Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1071.

Tuesday, September 26 We Are the Church of the Living God

God has instructed me to say to His people, ministers and lay members, "Take your stand on higher ground. Move steadily onward and upward in the path that Jesus trod. Do not trust in your own opinions. Sanctification through the truth is your only safety." The Lord God of Israel would have His people stand in His strength, and in His might, receiving to impart. He will uphold and sustain those who serve Him with mind and heart and strength. . . .

Speaking of the mystery "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," Paul says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. . . . Not only to those living in this world, but to the principalities and powers in heavenly places is the church on this earth to reveal the glory of God.

God chose from among the Gentiles a people for Himself, and gave to them the name of Christian. This is a royal name, given to those who join themselves to

Christ.

–Lift Him Up, p. 291.

The purpose which God seeks to accomplish through His people today is the same that He desired to accomplish through Israel when He brought them forth out of Egypt. By beholding the goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in the church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people on the earth. The Lord has His eye upon every one of His people; He has His plans concerning each. It is His purpose that those who practice His holy precepts shall be a distinguished people. To the people of God today as well as to ancient Israel belong the words written by Moses through the Spirit of Inspiration: “Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 7:6. . . .

Even these words fail of expressing the greatness and the glory of God’s purpose to be accomplished through His people. Not to this world only but to the universe are we to make manifest the principles of His kingdom.

–Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 12, 13.

Wednesday, September 27 The Unity of Faith

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians the plan of God is so plainly and simply revealed that all His children may lay hold upon the truth. Here the means which He has appointed to keep unity in His church, that its members may reveal to the world a healthy religious experience, is plainly declared. . . .

Holiness is the gift of God through Christ. Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are His spiritual children, born again, renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed. With clearer vision

they behold eternal realities. . . .

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.

–*Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, pp. 1117, 1118.*

It is not a small matter to transform an earthly, sin-loving mind and bring it to understand the unspeakable love of Christ, the charms of His grace, and the excellency of God, so that the soul shall be imbued with divine love and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. . . . He has a new mind, new affections, new interest, new will; his sorrows, and desires, and love are all new. Heaven, which once possessed no charms, is now viewed in its riches and glory; and he contemplates it as his future home, where he shall see, love, and praise the One who hath redeemed him by His precious blood.

–*The Faith I Live By, p. 139.*

Christian unity is a mighty agency. It tells in a powerful manner that those who possess it are children of God. It has an irresistible influence upon the world, showing that man in his humanity may be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We are to be one with our fellow men and with Christ, and in Christ one with God. Then of us can be spoken the words, “Ye are complete in Him.”

. . . [E]ach one is to take the place assigned him and do the work appointed him. God calls upon the members of His church to receive the Holy Spirit, to come together in unity and brotherly sympathy, to bind their interests together in love.

Nothing so manifestly weakens a church as disunion and strife. Nothing so wars against Christ and the truth as this spirit.

–My Life Today, p. 276.

Thursday, September 28 We Are Recipients and Givers of Grace

It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.

–Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 75.

The conduct of Christians is like that of their Lord. He erected the standard, and it is left for us to say whether or not we will rally around it. Our Lord and Saviour laid aside His dominion, His riches and glory, and sought after us, that He might save us from misery and make us like Himself. He humbled Himself and took our nature that we might be able to learn of Him and, imitating His life of benevolence and self-denial, follow Him step by step to heaven. You cannot equal the copy; but you can resemble it and, according to your ability, do likewise. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Such love must dwell in your hearts, that you will be ready to give the treasures and honors of this world if thereby you may influence one soul to engage in the service of Christ.

–Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 169.

Who of us is faithfully following the Pattern? Who of us has instituted and continued the warfare against pride of heart? Who of us has, in good earnest, brought himself to wrestle with selfishness until it should no longer dwell in the heart and be revealed in the life? Would to God the lessons given us, as we view

the cross of Christ and see the signs fulfilling which bring us near to the judgment, might be so impressed upon our hearts as to render us more humble, more self-denying, more kind to one another, less self-caring, less critical, and more willing to bear one another's burdens than we are today.

I have been shown that, as a people, we are departing from the simplicity of the faith and from the purity of the gospel. Many are in great peril. Unless they change their course, they will be severed from the True Vine as useless branches. Brethren and sisters, I have been shown that we are standing upon the threshold of the eternal world. We need now to gain victories at every step.

– *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 18.*

Friday, September 29 – For Further Reading

Our High Calling, “Which Captain?” p. 80;

Sons and Daughters of God, “To Resist Temptation,” p. 79.

Which Captain?

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.

Psalm 48:14. {OHC 80.1}

We are all under one or the other of two great captains. One, the Creator of man and of the world, is the greatest of all. All owe Him the allegiance of their whole being, the devotion of their entire affection. If the mind is given to His control, and if God has the molding and developing of the powers of the mind, new moral power will be received daily from the Source of all wisdom and all strength. Moral blessings and divine beauties will reward the efforts of everyone whose mind is heaven bent. We may grasp revelations—heavenly beauties—that lie beyond the short vision of the worldling, that outshine the imagination of the greatest mind....

{OHC 80.2}

Satan is the leader of the worldly.... His highest aim is to gather under his banner the majority of the world, that numbers may stand against the power of righteousness and eternal truth. Talent and ability given of God to be devoted to His service, are laid at the feet of the great rebel of God's government.... {OHC 80.3}

While the worldly wise is skimming along the surface, grasping the things of sight and sense, the one who fears and reveres God is reaching into eternity, penetrating the deepest recesses and gathering the knowledge and riches that are as enduring as eternity. Justice, honor, love, and truth are the attributes of God's throne. They are the principles of His government.... These are jewels to be sought after and cherished for time and for eternity.... {OHC 80.4}

To walk the world a pure man of untarnished morals, bearing the sacred principles of truth in your heart, its influence seen in the acts of your life; to live uncorrupted by the baseness, falsity, and dishonesty of a world which must soon be purified of its moral corruption by the fires of God's retributive justice, is to be a man whose record is immortalized in heaven, honored among the pure angels who weigh and appreciate moral worth. This is what it is to be a man of God. {OHC

80.5}

To Resist Temptation

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:7. {SD 79.1}

Satan still comes with his temptations to the children of men. He employs every means at his command to conceal himself from view, and this is why so many are ignorant of his devices. A few days since, the question was asked me, "Do you believe in a personal devil?" "I do," was the answer. "Well," rejoined the questioner, "I do not believe that there is any such being; our evil thoughts and impulses are all the devil we know anything about!" "But," I asked, "who suggests these thoughts? Whence do they originate, if not from Satan?" ... {SD 79.2}

Just as surely as we have a personal Saviour, we have also a personal adversary, cruel and cunning, whoever watches our steps, and plots to lead us astray. He can work most effectually in disguise. Wherever the opinion is entertained that he does not exist, there he is most busy. When we least suspect his presence, he is gaining advantage over us. I feel alarmed as I see so many of the youth yielding to his power while they know it not. Did they but see their danger, they would flee to Christ, the sinner's refuge. {SD 79.3}

Aim to be faithful students in the school of Christ, learning daily to conform your life to the divine Pattern. Set your faces heavenward, and press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus. Run the Christian race with patience, and rise superior to every temptation, however grievous it may be, that shall come to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God; and if you are desirous of taking the first upward step, you will find His hand stretched out to help you. It remains with you, individually, as to whether you walk in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, or in the darkness of error. The truth of God can be a blessing to you only as you permit its influence to purify and refine **YOUR SOU**. {SD 79.4}