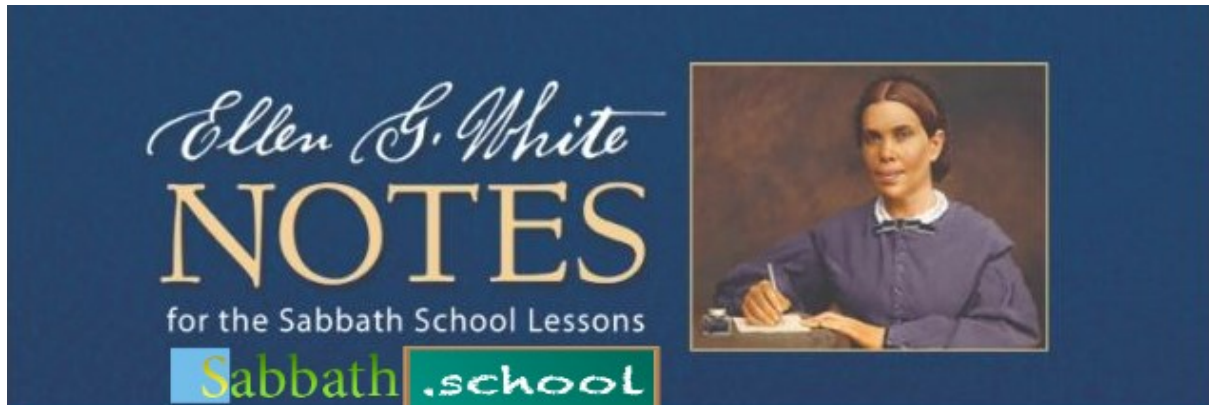


# EGW Notes - Lesson 5

## Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land



### Sabbath Afternoon, January 27

When difficulties and trials surround us, we should flee to God, and confidently expect help from Him who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. We must ask for God's blessing if we would receive it. Prayer is a duty and a necessity; but do we not neglect praise? Should we not oftener render thanksgiving to the Giver of all our blessings? We need to cultivate gratitude. We should frequently contemplate and recount the mercies of God, and laud and glorify His holy name, even when we are passing through sorrow and affliction.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 268.

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, . . . and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with

grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:15, 16). This was Christ’s practice. He was often assailed by temptation, but in place of yielding or being provoked, He sang God’s praises. With spiritual songs He stopped the fluent speech of those whom Satan was using to create strife.

When those who love God are tempted, let them sing the praises of their Creator rather than speak words of accusing or faultfinding. The Lord will bless those who thus try to make peace. Trust in God. Be careful not to give the enemy any advantage by your unguarded words. Keep looking to Jesus. He is your strength.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 185.

When we seem to doubt God’s love and distrust His promises we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit. . . .

When Satan tempts you, breathe not a word of doubt or darkness. If you choose to open the door to his suggestions, your mind will be filled with distrust and rebellious questioning. If you talk out your feelings, every doubt you express not only reacts upon yourself, but it is a seed that will germinate and bear fruit in the life of others, and it may be impossible to counteract the influence of your words. You yourself may be able to recover from the season of temptation and from the snare of Satan, but others who have been swayed by your influence may not be able to escape from the unbelief you have suggested. How important that we speak only those things that will give spiritual strength and life!

All have trials; griefs hard to bear, temptations hard to resist. Do not tell your troubles to your fellow mortals, but carry everything to God in prayer. Make it a rule never to utter one word of doubt or discouragement. You can do much to brighten the life of others and strengthen their efforts, by words of hope and holy cheer.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 118, 119.

**Sunday, January 28**

## **The Days of Evil**

To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's word and essential to salvation. There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties . . . and seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. . . .

Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is

mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. . . . [I]t is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 492.

In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of “the Watcher and the Holy One.” While the nations rejected God’s principles, and in this rejection wrought their own ruin, it was still manifest that the divine, overruling purpose was working through all their movements.—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 50.

The Lord’s merciful kindness is great toward us. He will never leave nor forsake those who trust in Him. If we would think and talk less of our trials, and more of the mercy and goodness of God, we would find ourselves raised above much of our gloom and perplexity. My brethren and sisters, you who feel that you are entering upon a dark path, and like the captives in Babylon must hang your harps upon the willows, let us make trial of

cheerful song. You may say, How can I sing, with this dark prospect before me, with this burden of sorrow and bereavement upon my soul? But have earthly sorrows deprived us of the all-powerful Friend we have in Jesus? . . . As long as our Saviour lives, we have cause for unceasing gratitude and praise.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 268.

**Monday, January 29**

## **At Death's Door**

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted,” Matthew 5:4. . . .

The Saviour's words have a message of comfort to those also who are suffering affliction or bereavement. Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Lamentations 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is “for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.” Hebrews 12:10. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple.

Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 10.

Now the Lord of glory was dying, a ransom for the race. In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help.

Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of

supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 752, 753.

**Tuesday, January 30**

## **Where Is God?**

The path that leads to eternal day is not the easiest to travel, and at times it will seem dark and thorny. But you have the assurance that God's everlasting arms encircle you, to protect you from evil. He wants you to exercise earnest faith in Him, and learn to trust Him in the shadow as well as in the sunshine.

In her endeavors to reach her home, the eagle is often beaten down by the tempest to the narrow defiles of the mountains. The clouds, in black, angry masses sweep between her and the sunny heights where she secures her nest. For a while she seems bewildered, and dashes this way and that, beating her strong wings as if to sweep back the dense clouds. At last she dashes upward into the blackness, and gives a shrill scream of triumph as she emerges, a moment later, in the calm sunshine above. The darkness and tempest are all below her, and the light of heaven is shining about her. She reaches her loved home in the lofty crag, and is satisfied. It was through darkness that she reached the light. It cost her an effort to do this, but she is rewarded in gaining the object which she sought.

This is the only course we can pursue as followers of Christ. We must exercise that living faith which will

penetrate the clouds that, like a thick wall, separate us from heaven's light. We have heights of faith to reach, where all is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 323.

God is the eternal, uncreated Fountain of all good. All who trust in Him will find Him to be this. To those who serve Him, looking to Him as their heavenly Father, He gives the assurance that He will fulfil His promises. His joy will be in their hearts, and their joy will be full.

It is our privilege to open our hearts, and let the sunshine of Christ's presence in. My brother, my sister, face the light. Come into actual, personal contact with Christ, that you may exert an influence that is uplifting and reviving. Let your faith be strong and pure and steadfast. Let gratitude to God fill your hearts. When you rise in the morning, kneel at your bedside, and ask God to give you strength to fulfil the duties of the day, and to meet its temptations. Ask Him to help you to bring into your work Christ's sweetness of character. Ask Him to help you to speak words that will inspire those around you with hope and courage, and draw you nearer to the Saviour.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 199.



**Wednesday, January 31**

## **Has His Promise Failed Forevermore?**

The psalmist David in his experience had many changes of mind. At times, as he obtained views of God's will and ways, he was highly exalted. Then as he caught sight of the reverse of God's mercy and changeless love, everything seemed to be shrouded in a cloud of darkness. But through the darkness he obtained a view of the attributes of God, which gave him confidence and strengthened his faith. But when he meditated upon the difficulties and danger of life, they looked so forbidding that he thought himself abandoned by God because of his sins. He viewed his sin in such a strong light that he exclaimed, "Will the Lord cast off forever? will he be favorable no more?"

But as he wept and prayed, he obtained a clearer view of the character and attributes of God. . . .

His faith laid hold of God, and he was strengthened and encouraged; although he recognized God's ways as mysterious, yet he knew they were merciful and good; for this was His character as revealed to Moses. . . .

As David appropriated these promises and privileges to himself he decided that he would no longer be hasty in judgment, becoming discouraged, and casting himself down in helpless despair. His soul took courage as he contemplated the general character of God as displayed in His teaching, His forbearance, His surpassing greatness and mercy, and he saw that the works and

wonders of God are to have no confined application.—  
Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist  
Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1149.

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.

How many blessings we lose because we slight and overlook the blessings we daily receive, yearning for that which we have not. . . . 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 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. . . .

Let us grasp by living faith the rich promises of God, and be thankful from morning till night.—*Our High Calling*, p. 10.

**Thursday, February 1**

## **Lest the Righteous Be Tempted**

Many seek to make a heaven for themselves by obtaining riches and power. They “speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily” (Psalm 73:8), trampling upon human rights and disregarding divine authority. The proud may be for a time in great power, and may see success in all that they undertake; but in the end they will find only disappointment and wretchedness.

The time of God’s investigation is at hand. The Most High will come down to see that which the children of men have builded. His sovereign power will be revealed; the works of human pride will be laid low. “The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.” “The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.” Psalm 33:13, 14, 10, 11.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 124.

Great things are before us, and we want to call the people from their indifference, to get ready for that day. We are not now to cast away our confidence, but to have firm assurance, firmer than ever before. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and He will help us to the end. We will look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord hath done for us, to comfort and to save us

from the hand of the destroyer. We want to have fresh in our memory every tear the Lord has wiped from our eyes, every pain He has soothed, every anxiety removed, every fear dispelled, every want supplied, every mercy bestowed, and strengthen ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage.—*This Day With God*, p. 58.

From the manger to the cross, the life of Jesus was a call to self-surrender, and to fellowship in suffering. It unveiled the purposes of men. Jesus came with the truth of heaven, and all who were listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit were drawn to Him. The worshipers of self belonged to Satan's kingdom. In their attitude toward Christ, all would show on which side they stood. And thus everyone passes judgment on himself.

In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of his own rejection of truth. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 57, 58.

**Friday, February 2**

## **For Further Reading**

*The Desire of Ages*, “The Divine Shepherd,” pp. 480–484;

*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, “The Seal of God,” p. 209.