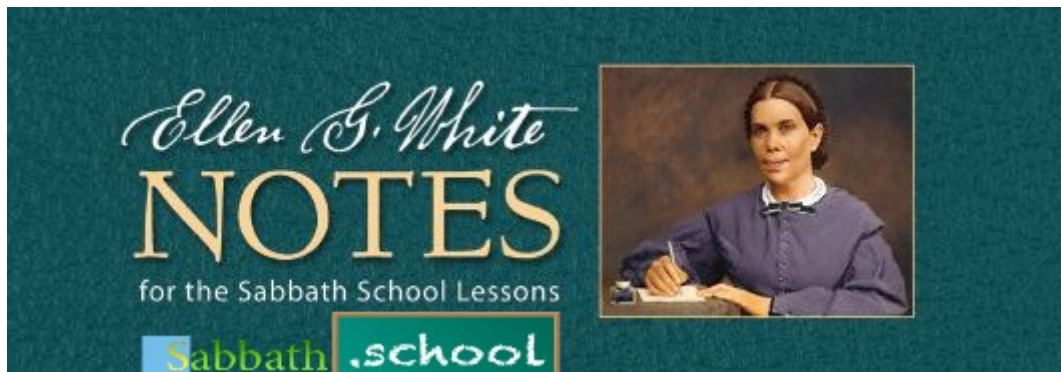


EGW Notes - Lesson 5

Faith Against All Odds



Sabbath Afternoon, April 27

Through centuries of persecution, conflict, and darkness, God has sustained His church. Not one cloud has fallen upon it that He has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork His work, that He has not foreseen. All has taken place as He predicted. He has not left His church forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and that which His Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell has been brought about. All His purposes will be fulfilled. His law is linked with His throne, and no power of evil can destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; and it will triumph over all opposition.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

God calls for men and women of stability, of firm purpose, who can be relied upon in seasons of danger and trial, who are as firmly rooted and grounded in the

truth as the eternal hills, who cannot be swayed to the right or to the left, but who move straight onward and are always found on the right side. . . .

We must come nearer to God, place ourselves in closer connection with heaven, and carry out the principles of the law in the minutest actions of our everyday lives in order to be spiritually whole.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 75.

Reformers are not destroyers. They will never seek to ruin those who do not harmonize with their plans and assimilate to them. Reformers must advance, not retreat. They must be decided, firm, resolute, unflinching; but firmness must not degenerate into a domineering spirit. God desires to have all who serve Him firm as a rock where principle is concerned, but meek and lowly of heart, as was Christ. Then, abiding in Christ, they can do the work He would do were He in their place. A rude, condemnatory spirit is not essential to heroism in the reforms for this time. All selfish methods in the service of God are an abomination in His sight.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 151.

We must not ask whether we are appreciated or unappreciated. With this we have naught to do. Look at the way in which Christ worked. . . .

Take the Word. Live the Word. Preach the Word, as you have done in the past. The Lord Jesus has given you the promise of His Presence. Take it; appreciate it. It is not for you or me to measure the appreciation shown for the self-denial and self-sacrifice made.

The work of reform will call for all the faith and tears and prayers that human intelligence can bear. Our commission is, Lift the cross, and bear it after Jesus, striving ever for the same spirit that led Jesus to yearn for His anticipated baptism of suffering upon the cross.—*This Day With God*, p. 49.

Sunday, April 28

God's Word Alone

When the noble and eloquent Stephen was stoned to death at the instigation of the Sanhedrin council, there was no loss to the cause of the gospel. The light of heaven that glorified his face, the divine compassion breathed in his dying prayer, were as a sharp arrow of conviction to the bigoted Sanhedrist who stood by, and Saul, the persecuting Pharisee, became a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. . . . By the efforts of Satan to destroy it, the “incorruptible” seed of the word of God, “which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23), is sown in the hearts of men; through the reproach and persecution of His children the name of Christ is magnified and souls are saved.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 33.

The grand principle maintained by [the] Reformers—the same that had been held by the Waldenses, by Wycliffe, by John Huss, by Luther, Zwingli, and those who united with them—was the infallible authority of the Holy Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice. . . . The

Bible was their authority, and by its teaching they tested all doctrines and all claims. Faith in God and His word sustained these holy men as they yielded up their lives at the stake. “Be of good comfort,” exclaimed Latimer to his fellow martyr as the flames were about to silence their voices, “we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”—Works of Hugh Latimer 1:8.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 249.

We all need a guide through the many straight places of life, as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river.

The sailor who has in his possession chart and compass, and yet neglects to use them, is responsible for placing the lives of those on board his vessel in peril. The vessel may be lost by his neglect. We have a Guidebook, the Word of God, and we are inexcusable if we miss the way to heaven, for plain directions have been given us.

The Bible presents a perfect standard of character; it is an infallible guide under all circumstances, even to the end of the journey of life.—*My Life Today*, p. 25.

Jesus said of the Old Testament Scriptures,—and how much more is it true of the New,—“They are they which testify of Me,” the Redeemer, Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. John 5:39. Yes, the whole Bible tells of Christ. From the first record of creation . . . to the closing promise, “Behold, I come quickly,” we are reading of His works and listening to His voice.

Revelation 22:12. If you would become acquainted with the Saviour, study the Holy Scriptures.

Fill the whole heart with the words of God. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 88.

Monday, April 29

Passing on God's Word

The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Acts 5:28.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach. While the people are looking for earthly good, Jesus points them to a heavenly reward. But He does not place it all in the future life; it begins here. The Lord appeared of old time to Abraham and said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Genesis 15:1. This is the reward of all who follow Christ. Jehovah Immanuel—He "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in whom dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:3, 9)—to be brought into sympathy with Him, to know Him, to possess Him, as the heart opens more and more to receive His attributes; to

know His love and power, to possess the unsearchable riches of Christ, to comprehend more and more “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:18, 19)—“this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 54:17.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 34.

“It was in the language of Israel,” said [Tyndale], “that the psalms were sung in the temple of Jehovah; and shall not the gospel speak the language of England among us? Ought the church to have less light at noonday than at the dawn? Christians must read the New Testament in their mother tongue.” . . .

Driven from his home by persecution, he went to London, and there for a time pursued his labors undisturbed. But again the violence of the papists forced him to flee. All England seemed closed against him, and he resolved to seek shelter in Germany. Here he began the printing of the English New Testament. Twice the work was stopped; but when forbidden to print in one city, he went to another. At last he made his way to Worms, where, a few years before, Luther had defended the gospel before the Diet. In that ancient city were many friends of the Reformation, and Tyndale there prosecuted his work without further hindrance. Three thousand copies of the New Testament were soon finished, and another edition followed in the same year.

With great earnestness and perseverance he continued his labors. Notwithstanding the English authorities had guarded their ports with the strictest vigilance, the word of God was in various ways secretly conveyed to London and thence circulated throughout the country. The papists attempted to suppress the truth, but in vain.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 246, 247.

Tuesday, April 30

Enlightened by the Spirit

The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says.

A true knowledge of the Bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given. And in order to gain this knowledge we must live by it. All that God's word commands, we are to obey. All that it promises, we may claim. The life which it enjoins is the life that, through its power, we are to live. Only as the Bible is thus held can it be studied effectively.—*Education*, p. 189.

God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven.

Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scripture plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better cover their faces, as Elijah when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels, who for ages have communicated to men light and knowledge, telling them what to do and what not to do, unfolding before them scenes of thrilling interest, waymark by waymark in symbols and signs and illustrations. . . .

. . . [L]et not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible. It is a work that Satan delights to have any of you do, but it is not a work the Lord has pointed out for you to do.

Men should let God take care of His own Book, His living oracles, as He has done for ages.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 16, 17.

The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the co-operation of the Spirit of God.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

Wednesday, May 1

Christ Alone . . . Grace Alone

In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ suffered in man's stead, and the human nature of the Son of God staggered under the terrible horror of the guilt of sin, until from His pale and quivering lips was forced the agonizing cry, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:" but if there is no other way by which the salvation of fallen man may be accomplished, then "not as I will, but as thou wilt." Human nature would then and there have died under the horror of the sense of sin, had not an angel from heaven strengthened Him to bear the agony.

The power that inflicted retributive justice upon man's substitute and surety, was the power that sustained and upheld the suffering One under the tremendous weight of wrath that would have fallen upon a sinful world. Christ was suffering the death that was pronounced upon the transgressors of God's law.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1103.

The gift of God is eternal life. The Lord desires all who receive His grace to trust entirely in Him. He calls upon us to exercise pure, simple faith, trusting in Him, without a question as to what recompense we shall receive. We are to work heartily in His service, showing that we have perfect confidence that He will judge righteously.

In the account of the judgment scene, when the reward is given to the righteous, and sentence is passed on the wicked, the righteous are represented as wondering

what they have done that they should receive such reward. But they cherished an abiding faith in Christ. They were imbued with His Spirit, and, without conscious effort, they performed for Christ, in the person of His saints, those services that bring a sure reward. But their motive in working was not to receive compensation. They regarded it as the highest honor to be allowed to work as Christ worked. What they did was done from love to Christ and to their fellowmen, and He who has identified Himself with suffering humanity accredited these acts of compassion and love as though done to Himself.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 343.

By the wedding garment . . . is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. . . . This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 311.

Thursday, May 2

Obedience: The Fruit of Faith

Because the law of the Lord is perfect, and therefore changeless, it is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of its requirement. This was why

Jesus came as our Redeemer. It was His mission, by making men partakers of the divine nature, to bring them into harmony with the principles of the law of heaven. When we forsake our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, the law is exalted. The apostle Paul asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31.

The new-covenant promise is, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. While the system of types which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world was to pass away at His death, the principles of righteousness embodied in the Decalogue are as immutable as the eternal throne. Not one command has been annulled, not a jot or tittle has been changed. Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the great law of life will exist unchanged in Paradise restored. When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's law of love will be obeyed by all beneath the sun.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 50.

The purity, the holiness, of the life of Jesus as presented from the Word of God possess more power to reform and transform the character than do all the efforts put forth in picturing sins and crimes of men and the sure results. One steadfast look to the Saviour uplifted upon the cross will do more to purify the mind and heart from every defilement than will all the scientific explanations by the ablest tongue.

Before the cross the sinner sees his unlikeness of character to Christ. He sees the terrible consequences of

transgression; he hates the sin that he has practiced, and he lays hold upon Jesus by living faith. He has judged his position of uncleanness in the light of the presence of God and the heavenly intelligence. He has measured it by the standard of the cross. He has weighed it in the balances of the sanctuary. The purity of Christ has revealed to him his own impurity in its odious colors. He turns from the defiling sin; he looks to Jesus and lives.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 297.

Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity. . . .

None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon them the white robes of righteousness; He bids them live and not die.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

Friday, May 3

For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “Rejoices the Heart and Enlightens the Eyes,” p. 45;

Lift Him Up, “Our Merciful and Faithful High Priest,” p. 345.