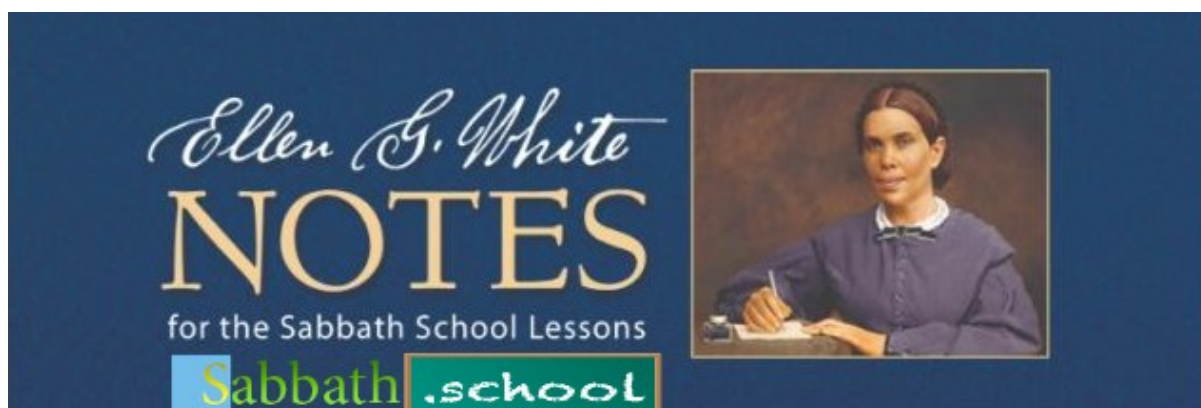


EGW Notes - Lesson 4

Unity Through Humility



Sabbath Afternoon, January 17

Urge our people to cease their criticism and evil-speaking, and go to God in earnest prayer, asking Him to help them to help the erring. Let them link up with one another and with Christ. Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life, and in the strength thus gained they will be enabled to develop characters that will be an honor to God. Perfect Christian fellowship will exist among them. There will be seen in their lives the fruit that always appears as the result of obedience to the truth.

Let us make Christ's prayer the rule of our life, that we may form characters that will reveal to the world the power of the grace of God. Let there be less talk about petty differences, and a more diligent study of what the prayer of Christ means to those who believe on His name. We are to pray for union, and then live in such a way that God can answer our prayers.

Perfect oneness—a union as close as the union existing between the Father and the Son—this is what will give success to the efforts of God's workers.

Complete union with Christ and with one another is absolutely necessary to the perfection of believers. Christ's presence by faith in the hearts of believers is their power, their life. It brings union with God. "Thou in me." Union with God through Christ makes the church perfect.

He who seeks to serve others by self-denial and self-sacrifice will be given the attributes of character that commend themselves to God, and develop wisdom, true patience, forbearance, kindness, compassion. This gives him the chiefest place in the kingdom of God.

Nothing can perfect a perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. Satan can sow discord; Christ alone can harmonize the disagreeing elements. . . . When you as individual workers of the church love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, then there will be no labored efforts to be in unity, there will be oneness in Christ, the ears to report will be closed, and no one will take up a reproach against his neighbor. The members of the church will cherish love and unity and be as one great family. Then we shall bear the credentials to the world that will testify that God has sent His Son into the world. Christ has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 200.

Sunday, January 18

Disunity in Philippi

God can make the humblest followers of Christ more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir, if they yield themselves to His transforming hand. They should be determined to make the noblest use of every faculty and opportunity. The Word of God should be their study and their guide in deciding what is the highest and best in all cases. The one faultless character, the perfect Pattern set before them in the gospel, should be studied with deepest interest. The one lesson essential to learn is that goodness alone is true greatness. . . .

The weakest follower of Christ has entered into an alliance with Infinite Power. In many cases God can do little with men and women of learning, because they feel no need of leaning upon Him who is the source of all wisdom. . . .

If you trust in your own strength and wisdom, you will surely fail. God calls for complete and entire consecration, and anything short of this He will not accept. The more difficult your position, the more you need Jesus. The love and fear of God kept Joseph pure and untarnished in the king's court. . . .

It is impossible to stand upon a lofty height without danger. The tempest leaves unharmed the modest flower of the valley, while it wrestles with the lofty tree upon the mountain height. There are many people whom God could have used in poverty—He could have made them useful there, and crowned them with glory hereafter—but prosperity ruined them. They were dragged down to the pit, because they forgot to be humble—forgot that God was their strength—and became independent and self-sufficient.

Joseph bore the test of character in adversity, and the gold was undimmed by prosperity. He showed the same sacred regard for God's will when he stood next to the throne as when in the prisoner's cell. Joseph carried his religion everywhere, and this was the secret of his unwavering fidelity. As a representative of Christ, you must have the all-pervading power of godliness. You must be hid in Jesus. You are not safe unless you hold the hand of Christ. You must guard against everything like presumption and cherish that spirit that would rather suffer than sin. No victory you can gain will be so precious as that gained over self. Selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections.—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 94.

Monday, January 19

The Source of Unity

What attainments are there presented for the Christian's endeavor, but how far short are our practices. Were our practices in harmony with the command of our Lord, the result would be glorious. He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" ([John 17:20, 21](#)). . . .

Jesus did not pray for that which was not attainable by us, and if this unity is possible, why do not those who are professed followers of Christ strive more earnestly for this condition of grace? When we are one with Christ, we shall be one with His followers. The great want of the soul is Jesus, the hope of glory. Through the Holy Spirit this unity may be attained, and love for the brethren will abound, and men will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Our life will be a reflection of His holy character. As believers in Him we shall represent His meekness of spirit, His gentleness of demeanor. Individually the church of God must answer the prayer of Christ till we all come into the unity of the Spirit.

What is it that causes dissension and discord? It is the result of walking apart from Christ. At a distance from Him, we lose our love for Him, and grow cold toward His followers. The farther the beams of light recede from their center, the wider separated they become. Each believer is as a beam of light from Christ the Sun of righteousness. The more closely we walk with Christ, the center of all love and light, the greater will be our affection for His light-bearers. When the saints are drawn close to Christ, they must of necessity be drawn close to each other, for the sanctifying grace of Christ will bind their hearts together. You cannot love God and yet fail to love your brethren.—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 87.

The door of the heart must be opened to the Holy Spirit, for this is the sanctifier, and the truth is the medium. There must be an acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus. This is the only genuine sanctification: "Thy word is truth." Oh, read the prayer of Christ for unity, "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." The prayer of Christ is not only for those who are now His disciples, but for all those who shall believe on Christ through the words of His disciples, even to the end of the world. . . .

The Lord has had a church from that day, through all the changing scenes of time to the present period. . . . The Bible sets before us a model church. They are to be in unity with each other, and with God. When believers are united in Christ the living vine, the result is that they are one with Christ, full of sympathy and tenderness and love.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 199.

Tuesday, January 20

Mind Implant or Mind Surgery?

Even the thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God, and the feelings under the control of reason and religion. Our imagination was not given us to be allowed to run riot and have its own way, without any effort at restraint and discipline. If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character.

The power of right thought is more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. . . . We need to place a high value upon the right control of our thoughts, for such control prepares the mind and soul to labor harmoniously for the Master. It is necessary for our peace and happiness in this life that our thoughts center in Christ. As a man thinketh, so is he. Our improvement in moral purity depends on right thinking and right acting. . . . Evil thoughts destroy the soul. The converting power of God changes the heart, refining and purifying the thoughts. Unless a determined effort is made to keep the thoughts centered on Christ, grace cannot reveal itself in the life. The mind must engage in the spiritual warfare. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. All the habits must be brought under God's control.

We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts and the damaging influence of evil thoughts. Let us place our thoughts upon holy things. Let them be pure and true, for the only security for any soul is right thinking. We are to use every means that God has placed within our reach for the government and cultivation of our thoughts. We are to bring our minds into harmony with His mind. His truth will sanctify us, body and soul and spirit, and we shall be enabled to rise above temptation.

The control of the thoughts, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, will give control of the words. This is true wisdom, and will ensure quietness of mind, contentment, and peace. There will be joy in the contemplation of the riches of the grace of God.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 164.

The beginning of yielding to temptation is in the sin of permitting the mind to waver, to be inconsistent in your trust in God. The wicked one is ever watching for a chance to misrepresent God, and to attract the mind to that which is forbidden. If he can, he will fasten the mind upon the things of the world. He will endeavor to excite the emotions, to arouse the passions, to fasten the affections on that which is not for your good; but it is for you to hold every emotion and passion under control, in calm subjection to reason and conscience. Then Satan loses his power to control the mind. The work to which Christ calls us is to the work of progressive conquest over spiritual evil in our characters. Natural tendencies are to be overcome. . . . Appetite and passion must be conquered, and the will must be placed wholly on the side of Christ.—*Our High Calling*, p. 87.

Wednesday, January 21

The Mind of Christ

The Word of God is the grand instrument which convicts the unconverted, convincing them of their need of the sin-pardoning Saviour.

The plan of salvation combines the holy influences of past and present light. These influences are bound together by the golden chain of loving obedience. Receiving Christ by faith and bowing in submission to God's will constitutes men and women sons and daughters of God. By the power which the Saviour alone can give they are made members of the royal family, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. . . .

To love God with all the heart, to be a partaker with Christ in His humiliation and suffering, means more than many understand. The atonement of Christ is the great central truth around which cluster all the truths that pertain to the great work of redemption. The mind of man is to blend with the mind of Christ. This union sanctifies the understanding, giving the thoughts clearness and force. . . .

The world is our field of missionary toil, and we are to go forth to our labor surrounded with the atmosphere of Gethsemane and Calvary.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 229.

How glorious are the possibilities set before the fallen race! Through His Son, God has revealed the excellency to which man is capable of attaining. Through the merits of Christ man is lifted from his depraved state, purified, and made more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. It is possible for him to become a companion of the angels in glory, and to reflect the image of Jesus Christ. . . . Yet how seldom he realizes to what heights he could attain if he would allow God to direct his every step!

God permits every human being to exercise his individuality. He desires no one to submerge his mind in the mind of a fellow mortal. Those who desire to be transformed in mind and character are not to look to men, but to the divine Example. God gives the invitation, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." By conversion and transformation men are to receive the mind of Christ. Every one is to stand before God with an individual faith, an individual experience, knowing for himself that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. . . .

As our example we have One who is all and in all, the Chiefest among ten thousand, One whose excellency is beyond comparison. He graciously adapted His life for universal imitation. United in Christ were wealth and poverty; majesty and abasement; unlimited power, and meekness and lowliness, which in every soul who receives Him will be reflected. . . .

O that we might more fully appreciate the honor Christ confers upon us! By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character, and unite with Him in ascribing praise and honor and glory to God as supreme. Those who live up to their high privileges in this life will receive an eternal reward in the life to come. If faithful we shall join the heavenly musicians in singing with sweet accord songs of praise to God and to the Lamb.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 134.

Thursday, January 22

The Mystery of Godliness

Before this wonderful, priceless gift was bestowed, the whole heavenly universe was mightily stirred in an effort to understand God's unfathomable love, stirred to awaken in human hearts a gratitude proportionate to the value of the gift. Shall we for whom Christ has given His life, halt between two opinions? Shall we give God only a mite of the powers of our nature? Shall we return only a part of the capabilities and powers lent us by God? Can we do this while we know that He who was Commander of all heaven. . . , realizing the helplessness of the human race, came to this earth in human nature to make it possible for us to unite our humanity to His divinity?

He became poor that we might come into possession of the heavenly treasure, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. To rescue the fallen race, He descended from one humiliation to another, until He, the divine-human suffering Christ, was uplifted on the cross, to draw all men unto Him. The Son of God could not have shown greater condescension than He did; He could not have stooped lower.

This is the mystery of godliness, the mystery which has inspired heavenly agencies so to minister through fallen humanity that in the world an interest will be aroused in the plan of salvation. This is the mystery that has stirred all heaven to unite with man in carrying out God's great plan for the salvation of a ruined world, that men and women may be led, by the signs in the heavens and in the earth, to prepare for the second coming of our Lord. . . .

As the Head of the church Christ is authoritatively calling upon every person who claims to believe on Him to follow His example of self-denial and self-sacrifice. . . . They are called upon to rally without delay under the blood-stained banner of Christ Jesus. Withholding nothing, they are to make an entire offering for the attainment of eternal, measureless results—the salvation of souls.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 81.

Christ's divinity is to be steadfastly maintained. When the Saviour asked His disciples the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" ([Matthew 16:15, 16](#)). Said Christ, "Upon this rock," not on Peter, but on the Son of God, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (verse 18).

Great is the mystery of godliness. There are mysteries in the life of Christ that are to be believed, even though they cannot be explained.—*The Upward Look*, p. 58.

Friday, January 23

For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, "Special Care of the Flock," July 23, p. 218.

This Day With God, "Eternal Loss," December 7, p. 350.