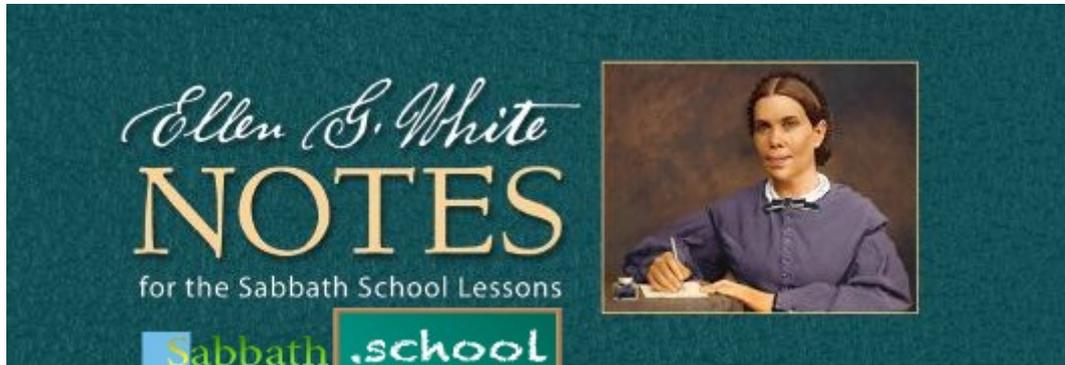


EGW Notes - Lesson 1

Reality Check



Sabbath Afternoon, March 28

In forming a relationship with Christ, the renewed man is but coming back to his appointed relationship with God. . . . His first duty is to his children and his nearest relatives. Nothing can excuse him from neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. In the day of final reckoning fathers and mothers . . . will be asked what they did and said to secure the salvation of the souls they took upon themselves the responsibility of bringing into the world. Did they neglect their lambs, leaving them to the care of strangers? . . . A great good done for others will not cancel the debt you owe to God to care for your children. The spiritual welfare of your family comes first.

In rightly training and molding the minds of her children, mothers are entrusted with the greatest mission ever given to mortals.

Whenever you take up the duty that lies nearest you, then God will bless you, and hear your prayers. There are too many doing outside missionary work, while their own households are left destitute of any such efforts,—going to ruin through neglect. . . . The first missionary work is to see that love, light, and joy come into the home circle. Let us not be looking for some great temperance or missionary work to do until we have first done the duties at home. Every morning we should think, What kind act can I do today? What

tender word can I speak? Kind words at home are blessed sunshine. The husband needs them, the wife needs them, the children need them. . . . It ought to be the desire of every heart to make as much heaven below as possible.—*Our Father Cares*, p. 36.

In the service of God there is no middle ground. . . . Let none expect to make a compromise with the world, and yet enjoy the blessing of the Lord. Let God's people come out from this world, and be separate. Let us seek more earnestly to know and do the will of our Father in heaven. Let the light of truth which has shone upon us be so received that its bright rays may go forth from us to the world. Let unbelievers see that the faith we hold makes us better men and better women; that it is a living reality, sanctifying the character, transforming the life. . . . Let our conversation be upon heavenly things. Let us surround ourselves with an atmosphere of Christian cheerfulness. Let us show that our religion can stand the test of trial. Let us by our kindness, forbearance, and love prove to the world the power of our faith.—*Our High Calling*, p. 305.

Sunday, March 29

Our Condition

Like the Jews in the days of Christ, many today hear and believe, but are not willing to step out upon the platform of obedience, and accept the truth as it is in Jesus. They are afraid of losing worldly advantages. Their minds assent to the truth but to obey means to lift the cross of self-denial and sacrifice, and to cease trusting in man and making flesh their arm, and they turn away from the cross. They might sit at the feet of Jesus, learning daily of Him whom to know aright is life eternal, but they are not willing.

Every one who is saved must surrender his own plans, his ambitious schemes, which mean self-glorification, and follow where Christ leads the way. The understanding must be yielded up to Christ, for Him to cleanse, and refine, and purify. This will always be done when a right reception is given to the teachings of the Lord Jesus. It is hard for self to die daily, even when the wondrous story of God's grace is presented with the wealth of His love, which He unfolds to the soul's necessity.

O how much we need a more intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus. We need to enter into His will and carry out His purposes, saying with the whole heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" O how I long to see our churches in a condition different from the condition in which they now are—grieving the Holy Spirit day by day with their lukewarm religious life, a life neither cold nor hot. Christ says, "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15, 16).

O how greatly Christ would be honored and glorified before irreligious, worldly men and women if His followers were what they claim to be—true Christians, the love of Christ constraining them to make Him known before an idolatrous world, showing the marked contrast between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. . . . We are to tell others of the love of Christ, and in order to do this, we must know by experience what it means to have this love in the heart. All will find abundant opportunities to work if they will

improve the opportunities that come to them.—*This Day With God*, p. 64.

The condition of many of those who claim to be the children of God is exactly represented by the message to the Laodicean church. There is opened before those who serve God, truths of inestimable value, which, brought into the practical life, show the difference between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. . . .

The Bible is the storehouse of the unsearchable riches of God. But those who have a knowledge of the truth do not understand it as fully as they might. They do not bring the love of Christ into the heart and life. The student of the Word finds himself bending over a fountain of living water. The church needs to drink deeply of the spirituality of the Word. Their service to God needs to be very different from the tame, lifeless, emotionless religious experience that makes many believers but little different from those who believe not.—*Our High Calling*, p. 348.

Monday, March 30

Rebuke, Repent, and Reward

Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City. . . .

The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character.

As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.

Many will not receive the seal of God because they do not keep His commandments or bear the fruits of righteousness.

The great mass of professing Christians will meet with bitter disappointment in the day of God. They have not upon their foreheads the seal of the living God. Lukewarm and halfhearted, they dishonor God far more than the avowed unbeliever. They grope in darkness, when they might be walking in the noonday light of the Word, under the guidance of One who never errs. . . .

Those whom the Lamb shall lead by the fountains of living waters, and from whose eyes He shall wipe away all tears, will be those now receiving the knowledge and understanding revealed in the Bible, the Word of God. . . .

We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to Him; for He is all-wise. As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.

Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.—*Maranatha*, p. 241.

Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian. Satan uses him to do a work that no one else can do.

Love of self excludes the love of Christ. Those who live for self are ranged under the head of the Laodicean church who are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. The ardor of the first love has lapsed into a selfish egotism. The love of Christ in the heart is expressed in the actions. If love for Christ is dull, the love for those for whom Christ has died will degenerate. There may be a wonderful appearance for zeal and ceremonies, but this is the substance of their self-inflated religion. Christ represents them as nauseating to His taste.

Let us thank the Lord that while this class is so numerous, there is still time for repentance.—*Our High Calling*, p. 348.

Tuesday, March 31

Everlasting Love

You desire to please the Lord, and you can do this by believing His promises. He is waiting to take you into a harbor of gracious experience, and He bids you, "Be still, and know that I am God." You have had a time of unrest; but Jesus says to you, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest." The joy of Christ in the soul is worth everything. "Then are they glad," because they are privileged to rest in the arms of everlasting love. . . .

God is waiting to bestow the blessing of forgiveness, of pardon for iniquity, of the gifts of righteousness, upon all who will believe in His love and accept the salvation He offers. Christ is ready to say to the repenting sinner, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The blood of Jesus Christ is the eloquent plea that speaks in behalf of sinners. This blood "cleanseth us from all sin."

It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory.—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 516, 517.

When the sinner reaches the cross, and looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy; for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ; and the words of pardon are spoken: Live, O ye guilty sinners, live. Your repentance is accepted; for I have found a ransom.

Through the cross we learn that our heavenly Father loves us with an infinite and everlasting love, and draws us to Him with more than a mother's yearning sympathy for a wayward child. Can

we wonder that Paul exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”? It is our privilege also to glory in the cross of Calvary, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then with the light of love that shines from His face on ours, we shall go forth to reflect it to those in darkness.—*Our High Calling*, p. 46.

Wednesday, April 1

Abide

In coming to Christ there must be an exercise of faith. We need to bring Him into our everyday life; then we shall have peace and joy, and we shall know by experience the meaning of His word, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10). Our faith must claim the promise, that we may abide in the love of Jesus. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (verse 11).

Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Through faith the Holy Spirit finds access to the heart, and creates holiness therein. Man cannot become an agent to work the works of Christ unless he is in communion with God through the Holy Spirit. We can be fitted for heaven only through a transformation of character; we must have Christ's righteousness as our credentials, if we would find access to the Father. We must be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We must daily be transformed by the influence of the Holy Spirit; for it is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to ennoble the whole man, by presenting to the soul the matchless charms of Jesus.

We are to behold Christ, and by beholding to become changed. We must come to Him, as to an open, inexhaustible fountain, from which we may drink again and again, and ever find a fresh supply. We are to respond to the drawing of His love, to feed on the Bread of Life which came down from heaven, to drink of the Water of Life which flows from the throne of God. We are to keep looking up, that faith may bind us to the throne of God. Do not look down, as though you were bound to the earth. Do not keep up an examination of your faith, pulling it up, as though it were a flower, to see if it has any root. Faith grows imperceptibly.—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 77.

Christ is acquainted with the difficulties that try every soul, and He says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide

in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5).

Our first and highest duty is to know that we are abiding in Christ. He must do the work. We are to seek to know "What saith the Lord," yielding our lives to His guidance. When we have the Spirit of an abiding Christ, everything will take on a changed aspect. The Saviour alone can give us the rest and peace we so much need. And, in every invitation He gives us to seek the Lord that He may be found of us, He is calling us to abide in Him. This is an invitation, not merely to come to Him, but to remain in Him. It is the Spirit of God that moves us to come. When we have this rest and peace, our daily worries will not lead us to be coarse and rough and uncourteous. We shall no longer follow our own way and will. We will want to do the will of God, abiding in Christ as the branches in the vine.—*This Day With God*, p. 140.

Thursday, April 2

Linked to the Vine

The character of the Christian is shown by his daily life. Said Christ, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17). Our Saviour compares Himself to a vine, of which His followers are the branches. He plainly declares that all who would be His disciples must bring forth fruit; and then He shows how they may become fruitful branches. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4).

The apostle Paul describes the fruit which the Christian is to bear. He says that it "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). And again, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23). These precious graces are but the principles of God's law carried out in the life.

The law of God is the only true standard of moral perfection. That law was practically exemplified in the life of Christ. He says of Himself, "I have kept my Father's commandments" (John 15:10). Nothing short of this obedience will meet the requirements of God's Word. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). We cannot plead that we are unable to do this, for we have the assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). As we look into the divine mirror, the law of God, we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and our own lost condition as transgressors. But by repentance and faith we are justified before God, and through divine grace enabled to render obedience to His commandments.

Those who have genuine love for God will manifest an earnest desire to know His will and to do it. . . . The child who loves his parents will show that love by willing obedience; but the selfish, ungrateful child seeks to do as little as possible for his parents, while he at the same time desires to enjoy all the privileges granted to the obedient and faithful.

The same difference is seen among those who profess to be - children of God. Many who know that they are the objects of His love and care, and who desire to receive His blessing, take no delight in doing His will. They regard God's claims upon them as an unpleasant restraint, His commandments as a grievous yoke. But he who is truly seeking for holiness of heart and life delights in the law of God, and mourns only that he falls so far short of meeting its requirements.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 96.

Friday, April 3

For Further Reading

The Upward Look, "Every Man Is Given His Work," June 14, p. 179.

Our High Calling, "A Message Full of Encouragement," December 11, p. 351.