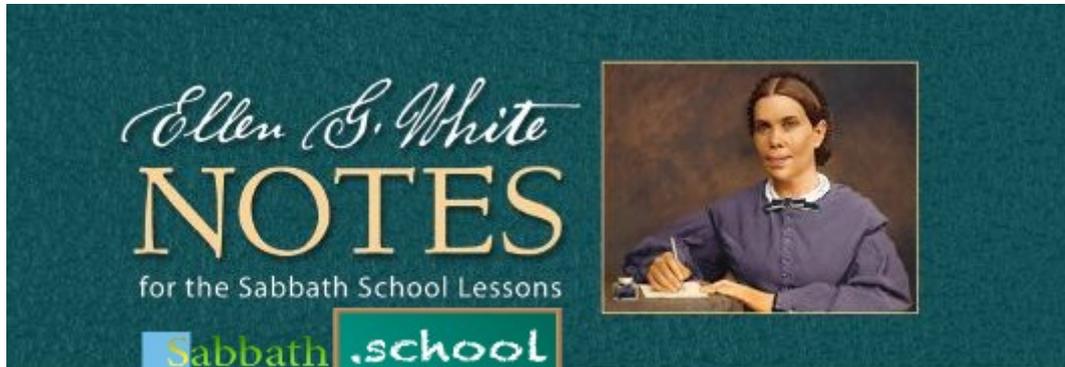


EGW Notes - Lesson 4

The Role of the Bible



Sabbath Afternoon, April 18

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So -closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be im-possible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God’s immutable word? Are we

prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?

Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them un-prepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly -presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan -watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready.—
The Great Controversy, pp. 593, 594.

Sunday, April 19

The Most Powerful Weapon

According to this, there is something to believe, also something to confess. The heart must first accept the truth as it is in Jesus. This is the foundation of true religion. Conviction of sin then begins to be felt; the sin-sick soul, feeling his need of a physician, comes to Jesus of Nazareth for pardon. Taking up the warfare against the enemy, he looks to Jesus for strength to resist temptation. He watches unto prayer, and searches the Scriptures. The truths of the Bible are seen in a new and intensely interesting light, and the Spirit of God opens to him their solemn importance. He studies the life of Christ, and the more clearly he discerns the spotless purity of the Saviour's character, the less confidence he has in his own goodness; the more steadily and closely he views Jesus, the less he discovers of perfection in himself. His self-righteousness disappears, and he falls, all helpless and broken, upon the Rock, Christ Jesus. He will be sorely pressed by the tempter, and at times may have feelings of discouragement, and be tempted to think that God will not accept him; but, taking God at His word, and pleading His sure promises, he presses through the darkness into the clear sunlight of Christ's love.

“And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” If the heart is indeed the treasure house of grace and the love of Christ, these will be expressed in the words and deportment. There will be a constant attraction to Christ. All will be tested; hence the need of divine grace, and of sound religious faith and principles. The lips should be sanctified, that the words spoken may be few and well chosen.

Oftentimes professed Christians bring upon themselves great spiritual weakness by dwelling upon their trials and grievances. Not only does the matter become magnified by every repetition, but they as surely separate from Jesus as they allow themselves to transgress in this particular. Satan seeks to draw their attention to themselves, and to fasten upon them the idea that they are not appreciated. They begin to pity and sympathize with themselves, and to lose faith and confidence in Jesus; and as the result they walk apart from Him who asks them to cast their burdens upon Him.

To such we would say, Recount what God has done for you. Tell Satan that you do not trust in your own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ. Keep the mind filled with the precious promises found in the Bible, and when Satan comes in like a flood to overwhelm you, meet him with the weapon which the Word of God has provided, "It is written." This will break his power and give you the victory.—Lift Him Up, p. 273.

Monday, April 20

Scripture, the Authority

The subject of Christ's teaching and preaching was the Word of God. He met questioners with a plain, "It is written." "What saith the Scriptures?" "How readest thou?" At every opportunity, when an interest was awakened by either friend or foe, He sowed the seed of the Word. He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Himself the living Word, points to the Scriptures, saying, "They are they which testify of Me." . . .

Christ's servants are to do the same work. In our day, as of old, the vital truths of God's Word are set aside for human theories and speculations. Many professed ministers of the gospel do not accept the whole Bible as the inspired word. One wise man rejects one portion; another questions another part. They set up their judgment as superior to the Word; and the Scripture which they do teach rests upon their own authority. Its divine authenticity is destroyed. Thus the seeds of infidelity are sown broadcast; for the people become confused and know not what to believe.

There are many beliefs that the mind has no right to entertain. In the days of Christ the rabbis put a forced, mystical construction upon many portions of Scripture. Because the plain teaching of God's Word condemned their practices, they tried to destroy its force. The same thing is done today. The Word of God is made to appear mysterious and obscure in order to excuse transgression of His law. Christ rebuked these practices in His day. He taught that the Word of God was to be understood by all. He pointed to the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority, and we should do the same. The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the end of all controversy and the foundation of all faith.

The Bible has been robbed of its power, and the results are seen in a lowering of the tone of spiritual life. . . . [Yet] there are many who are crying out for the living God, longing for the divine presence. . . .

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal tenderness and abundant grace of God; He dwelt much upon the holiness of His character and His law; He presented Himself to the people as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let these be the themes of Christ's ministers. Present the truth as it is in Jesus. Make plain the requirements of the law and the gospel. Tell the people of

Christ's life of self-denial and sacrifice; of His humiliation and death; of His resurrection and ascension; of His intercession for them in the courts of God; of His promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3).—Lift Him Up, p. 108.

Tuesday, April 21

Bible Truth

At Capernaum Jesus dwelt in the intervals of His journeys to and fro, and it came to be known as “his own city.” . . .

It was a great thoroughfare of travel. People from many lands passed through the city, and tarried for rest in their journeyings to and fro. Here Jesus could meet all nations and all ranks, the rich and great as well as the poor and lowly, and His lessons would be carried to other countries and into many households. Investigation of the prophecies would thus be excited, attention would be directed to the Saviour, and His mission would be brought before the world.

Notwithstanding the action of the Sanhedrin against Jesus, the people eagerly awaited the development of His mission. All heaven was astir with interest. Angels were preparing the way for His ministry, moving upon men’s hearts, and drawing them to the Saviour.

In Capernaum the nobleman’s son whom Christ had healed was a witness to His power. And the court official and his household joyfully testified of their faith. When it was known that the Teacher Himself was among them, the whole city was aroused. Multitudes flocked to His presence. On the Sabbath the people crowded the synagogue until great numbers had to turn away, unable to find entrance.

All who heard the Saviour “were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power” (Luke 4:32). . . .

Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of the patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the Word of God.

Jesus met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities. He made truth beautiful by -presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He

spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. The hearers were daily involved in greater uncertainty. But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted. . . . In every theme God was revealed.—Lift Him Up, p. 172.

Wednesday, April 22

Bible Claims

Like [a] child, you shall receive day by day what is required for the day's need. Every day you are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Be not dismayed if you have not sufficient for tomorrow. You have the assurance of His promise, "So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." David says, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:3, 25). . . .

He who lightened the cares and anxieties of His widowed mother and helped her to provide for the household at Nazareth sympathizes with every mother in her struggle to provide her children food. He who had compassion on the multitude because they "fainted, and were scattered abroad" (Matthew 9:36) still has compassion on the suffering poor. His hand is stretched out toward them in blessing; and in the very prayer which He gave His disciples, He teaches us to remember the poor. . . .

The prayer for daily bread includes not only food to sustain the body, but that spiritual bread which will nourish the soul unto life everlasting. Jesus bids us, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6:27). He says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (Verse 51). Our Savior is the Bread of Life, and it is by beholding His love, by receiving it into the soul, that we feed upon the bread which came down from heaven.

We receive Christ through His Word, and the Holy Spirit is given to open the Word of God to our understanding and bring home its truths to our hearts. We are to pray day by day that as we read His Word, God will send His Spirit to reveal to us the truth that will strengthen our souls for the day's need.

In teaching us to ask every day for what we need—both temporal and spiritual blessings—God has a purpose to accomplish for our good. He would have us realize our dependence upon His constant care, for He is seeking to draw us into communion with Himself. In this communion with Christ, through prayer and the study of the great and precious truths of His

Word, we shall as hungry souls be fed; as those that thirst, we shall be refreshed at the fountain of life.—To Be Like Jesus, p. 11.

Thursday, April 23

State of the Heart

The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4.

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know “what saith the Lord.”

In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that I by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. The experiences related in God’s word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.—The Desire of Ages, pp. 390, 391.

Friday, April 24

For Further Reading

Reflecting Christ, “God’s Authority Forever Established,” February 15, p. 60.

Lift Him Up, “Strong in the Strength of God,” September 4, p. 261.