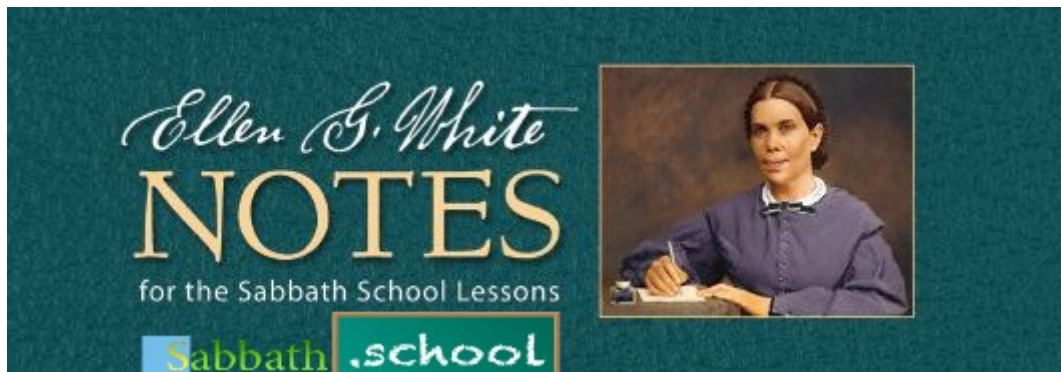


EGW Notes - Lesson 4

Standing for the Truth



Sabbath Afternoon, April 20

The brazen serpent was uplifted in the wilderness that those who looked in faith might be made whole. In like manner God sends a restoring, healing message to men, calling upon them to look away from man and earthly things, and place their trust in God. He has given His people the truth with power through the Holy Spirit. He opened His Word to those who were searching and praying for truth. But when these messengers gave the truth they had received to the people, they were as unbelieving as the Israelites. Many are cavilling over the truth brought to them by humble messengers.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1116.

The disciples still expected Christ to reign as a temporal prince. Although He had so long concealed His design, they believed that He would not always remain

in poverty and obscurity; the time was near when He would establish His kingdom. That the hatred of the priests and rabbis would never be overcome, that Christ would be rejected by His own nation, condemned as a deceiver, and crucified as a malefactor,—such a thought the disciples had never entertained. But the hour of the power of darkness was drawing on, and Jesus must open to His disciples the conflict before them. He was sad as He anticipated the trial. . . .

Now the time has come for the veil that hides the future to be withdrawn. “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 415.

In comparison with the millions of the world, God’s people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence. God is always a majority. When the sound of the last trump shall penetrate the prison house of the dead, and the righteous shall come forth with triumph, exclaiming, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55)—standing then with God, with Christ, with the angels, and with the loyal and true of all ages, the children of God will be far in the majority.

Christ’s true disciples follow Him through sore conflicts, enduring self-denial and experiencing bitter disappointment; but this teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they are led to look upon it with abhorrence.

Partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

Sunday, April 21

Persecuted Yet Triumphant

In the sixth century the Papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the Bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. . . . And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and John. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7.) Christians were forced to choose, either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeon cells, or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax.

Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus, "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." Luke 21:16, 17. Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity. Thus says the prophet: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Revelation 12:6.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 330.

More than eighteen centuries have passed since the apostles rested from their labors, but the history of their toils and sacrifices for Christ's sake is still among the most precious treasures of the church. This history, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit, was recorded in order that by it the followers of Christ in every age might be impelled to greater zeal and earnestness in the cause of the Saviour. . . .

Not in their own power did the apostles accomplish their mission, but in the power of the living God. Their work was not easy. The opening labors of the Christian church were attended by hardship and bitter grief. In their work the disciples constantly encountered privation, calumny, and persecution; but they counted not their lives dear unto themselves and rejoiced that they were called to suffer for Christ. Irresolution, indecision, weakness of purpose, found no place in their efforts. They were willing to spend and be spent. The consciousness of the responsibility resting on them purified and enriched their experience, and the grace of heaven was revealed in the conquests they achieved for Christ.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 593, 595.

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The Lord is at the door. . . . A crisis is just upon us.

But God's servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to Him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of

coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 753.

Monday, April 22

Light Vanquishes the Darkness

All who in that evil day would fearlessly serve God according to the dictates of conscience, will need courage, firmness, and a knowledge of God and His word; for those who are true to God will be persecuted, their motives will be impugned, their best efforts misinterpreted, and their names cast out as evil. Satan will work with all his deceptive power to influence the heart and becloud the understanding, to make evil appear good, and good evil. The stronger and purer the faith of God's people, and the firmer their determination to obey Him, the more fiercely will Satan strive to stir up against them the rage of those who, while claiming to be righteous, trample upon the law of God. It will require the firmest trust, the most heroic purpose, to hold fast the faith.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 431.

Satan will bring in pleasing fables to meet the minds of all who love not the truth. With angry zeal he will accuse commandment keepers. Satan claims the world, but there is a little company who withstand his devices and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Satan sets himself to destroy this commandment-keeping company. But God is their tower of defense. He

will raise up for them a standard against the enemy. He will be to them “as an hiding place from the wind,” and “as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isaiah 32:2). He will say to them, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain” (Isaiah 26:20, 21).—*That I May Know Him*, p. 355.

Let no man flatter himself that he is a successful man unless he preserves the integrity of his conscience, giving himself wholly to the truth and to God. We should move steadily forward, never losing heart or hope in the good work, whatever trials beset our path, whatever moral darkness may encompass us. Patience, faith, and love for duty are the lessons we must learn. Subduing self and looking to Jesus is an everyday work. The Lord will never forsake the soul that trusts in Him and seeks His aid. The crown of life is placed only upon the brow of the overcomer. There is, for everyone, earnest, solemn work for God while life lasts. As Satan’s power increases and his devices are multiplied, skill, aptness, and sharp generalship should be exercised by those in charge of the flock of God. Not only have we each a work to do for our own souls, but we have also a duty to arouse others to gain eternal life.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 70.

Tuesday, April 23

Courage to Stand

I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." He who has God's law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God's people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 361.

Do not let faith waver. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. It will be a severe fight, but fight it at any cost, for the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Put your hand in the hand of Christ. There are difficulties to be overcome, but angels that excel in strength will cooperate with the people of God. Face Zion, press your way to the city of solemnities. A glorious crown and a robe woven in the loom of heaven await the overcomer. Though Satan would cast his hellish shadow athwart your pathway and seek to hide from your view the mystic ladder that stretches from earth to the throne of God, on which ascend and descend the angels who are ministering spirits to those who shall

be heirs of salvation, yet press your way upward, plant your feet on one round after another, and advance to the throne of the Infinite.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 462.

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence.

The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow back to the great Giver.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:1. To those who go out to meet the Bridegroom is this message given. Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. He is coming with all the holy angels with Him.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 420.

Wednesday, April 24

The Morning Star of the Reformation

In the fourteenth century arose in England the “morning star of the Reformation.” John Wycliffe was the herald of reform, not for England alone, but for all Christendom. . . .

. . . In the Scriptures [Wycliffe] found that which he had before sought in vain. Here he saw the plan of salvation revealed, and Christ set forth as the only advocate for man. He saw that Rome had forsaken the Biblical paths for human traditions. He gave himself to the service of Christ, and determined to proclaim the truths which he had discovered.

The greatest work of his life was the translation of the Scriptures into the English language. This was the first complete English translation ever made. . . . [T]he people of England received the Bible in their own tongue. Thus the light of God’s Word began to shed its bright beams athwart the darkness. A divine hand was preparing the way for the Great Reformation.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 336.

The value of the human agent is estimated according to the capacity of the heart to know and understand God. “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou

therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” The highest possible good is obtained through a knowledge of God. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent.”

This knowledge is the secret spring from which flows all power. It is through the exercise of the faculty of faith that we are enabled to receive and practice the word of God.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 341.

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.
Jeremiah 15:16. . . .

. . . the Word of God was opened before me in a most beautiful, striking light. Page after page was turned, and I read the gracious invitations and words of entreaty to seek God’s glory and God’s will, and all other things would be added. . . . Seek first to know God before any other thing. Search the Scriptures. Feed on the words of Christ, which are spirit and life, and your knowledge will enlarge and expand. Study your Bible. Study not the philosophy contained in many books, but study the philosophy of the Word of the living God. Other literature is of little consequence when compared with this. Do not crowd into your minds so many things that are cheap and unsatisfying. In the Word of God is spread before you the richest banquet. It is the Lord’s table, abundantly provided, whereof you may eat and be satisfied.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 201.

Thursday, April 25

Cheered by Hope

What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered persecution for Christ's sake? It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. Reproach and persecution have separated many from earthly friends, but never from the love of Christ. Never is the tempest-trying soul more dearly loved by his Saviour than when he is suffering reproach for the truth's sake. "I will love him," Christ said, "and will manifest Myself to him." John 14:21.

When for the truth's sake the believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, Christ stands by his side. When he is confined within prison walls, Christ manifests Himself to him and cheers his heart with His love. When he suffers death for Christ's sake, the Saviour says to him, They may kill the body, but they cannot hurt the soul. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." John 16:33; Isaiah 41:10.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 85.

The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ.

The Scriptures are to be received as God's word to us, not written merely, but spoken. When the afflicted ones came to Christ, He beheld not only those who asked for help, but all who throughout the ages should come to Him in like need and with like faith. . . .

So with all the promises of God's word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power. They are leaves from that tree which is "for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:2. Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of the character, the inspiration and sustenance of the life. Nothing else can have such healing power. Nothing besides can impart the courage and faith which give vital energy to the whole being.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 122.

I find that I have to fight the good fight of faith every day. I have to exercise all my faith, and not rely upon feeling; I have to act as though I knew the Lord heard me, and would answer me and bless me. Faith is not a happy flight of feeling; it is simply taking God at His word—believing that He will fulfill His promises because He said He would.

Hope in God, trust in Him, and rest in His promises, whether you feel happy or not. A good emotion is no evidence that you are a child of God, neither are disturbed, troubled, perplexing feelings an evidence that you are not a child of God. Come to the Scriptures and intelligently take God at His word. Comply with the conditions and believe He will accept you as His child. Be not faithless, but believing.—*Our High Calling*, p. 119.

Friday, April 26

For Further Reading

Gospel Workers, “A Season of Trust and Privilege,” p. 267;

The Desire of Ages, “The Crisis in Galilee,” pp. 385, 386.