

Lesson 121 - What About the Easy Gospel? [Addressing the challenging texts regarding salvation]

1. What is implied for a person to do that makes being saved easy? **Romans 10:13, Acts 2:21, Joel 2:32**

EGW: We are living in the last days, in a time when we may expect much from the Lord. These words should bring us to the throne of grace to claim great things of him. Here the promise is given that on the men and women and on our sons and daughters the Holy Spirit is to come; and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This brings to view a wonderful work to be done, for which we need the converting power of God in our hearts every day. It is our privilege to experience this. Heaven is full of blessings, and it is our privilege to claim the rich promises of God for our individual selves. We need to seek the Lord day and night that we may know just what steps to take, and just what we ought to do. {RH, April 1, 1909 par. 6}

2. What is the restriction placed upon all that call upon the Lord? **End of Psalms 145:18**

EGW: There is great need of personal influence. The influence of God-fearing men and women is wanted as workers for the Master, as devoted missionaries. Jesus will bestow his grace in rich abundance upon those who let it flow out to others. He who left heaven to save fallen men, sends none forth to work in his vineyard at their own charges. He says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." We are to feel our dependence, that we can do nothing without him, and then when we call, he will answer us. We must have hearts full of faith, having God's glory constantly in view. We need to be aroused upon one point,--that God has made us stewards; and we need to pray constantly for tact and a clear conception and heavenly wisdom to use his gifts of speech, of influence, aright for the Master, who has said, "Occupy till I come." All the blessings we enjoy are from the Lord, granted to us because of his great goodness. {ST, October 12, 1891 par. 8}

3. What type of heart is one to have to be calling upon the Lord? **2 Timothy 2:22**

EGW: In this his last letter to Timothy, Paul held up before the younger worker a high ideal, pointing out the duties devolving on him as a minister of Christ. "Study to show thyself approved unto God," the apostle wrote, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them

repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." {AA 501.2}

4. What two things does it seem easy to do to be saved? **Romans 10:9**

EGW: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This means more than an assent to the truth that Christ came into the world and died for the salvation of the race. The understanding may be convinced, but the text means more than this. It means entire sincerity. It means faith, intelligent faith, that will cling to the Saviour as the only hope of a fallen world. It means a faith that will grasp the wonderful provision made, and will engage the affections and control the life, resting upon the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour. It means a faith that works by love and purifies the soul. {ST, May 19, 1898 par. 6}

5. Those that confess, how do they live or dwell? **1 John 4:15**

EGW: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He showed compassion upon us; and should we not have compassion on our fellow servants, even as he has pitied us? "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." The confession of which John here speaks, is not the result of a nominal faith, but is the result of an abiding faith in the living Saviour,—the result of believing that the blessings of salvation are brought within our reach through the sufferings and death of Christ, who was raised from the dead, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. We should feel assured that Jesus is our Saviour, and that life would not be enjoyable, nor afford us peace or hope, if he had not loved us and given himself for us. If we rightly estimate the spiritual life, we shall choose the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; we shall love our brethren, realizing that they are those for whom Christ died. {YI, January 6, 1898 par. 3}

6. What specifically are they to confess? **1 John 4:2-3**

EGW: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that

confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." {ST, September 3, 1894 par. 1}

In this age of the world we see every grade and degree of skepticism. There are rank infidels, those who believe in the lying wonders of Spiritualism, and those who reject the claims of divine truth. All these are placed among the class that John has written of, and are controlled by the spirit of antichrist. Ignorance of the character of God, pride of understanding, and the love of sin, are the source of infidelity. Men deny the divinity of Christ, cast away the Bible, and thus seek to free themselves from personal accountability to God. They bring the Bible into conflict with "science, falsely so called." These doubters can start inquiries which the most humble and pious Christian would be perplexed to know how to answer. But because their queries cannot be answered, is no evidence that the Bible is not true. A little child has asked questions in regard to God, the soul, and the future, that the most learned could not answer. The truth of God's word will be revealed to those who are of a lowly heart, who will comprehend its duties and obey its precepts. It is pride of opinion that leads to skepticism, and to the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Skepticism has its origin in love of sin, love of ambition, and self-exaltation. {ST, September 3, 1894 par. 2}

7. What did Jesus do in the flesh? **Romans 8:3**

EGW: Christ came to the world to convince men, by evidence that could not be controverted, that "God is love." This fact, so long disputed by Satan, is forever put at rest with unfallen worlds and with heavenly intelligences. It is put at rest with those who look upon an uplifted Saviour, who are convinced by the manifestation of the love of God displayed at Calvary. The wondrous condescension of God in giving Christ to the world to work out the principles of divine character, leaves every human intelligence without a shadow of excuse in withholding his allegiance from the God of heaven. Jesus was one with the Father, and revealed the perfection of God, and yet he came to the world in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, and condemned sin in the flesh by his own life of perfect obedience to the law of God, showing that men may become partakers of the divine nature, and may through faith in Christ lay hold on moral power that has been brought within their reach through the love so abundantly expressed in their behalf. Human agents may form characters after the divine similitude, because of the great love wherewith Christ has loved us. The Saviour said: "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "This commandment have I received of my Father." {ST, March 7, 1895 par. 1}

8. What is associated with confession and believing? **End of Acts 19:18**

EGW: Facts which had previously been concealed were now brought to light. In accepting Christianity, some of the believers had not fully renounced their superstitions. To some extent they still continued the practice of magic. Now, convinced of their error, "many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds." Even to some of the sorcerers themselves the good work extended; and "many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." {AA 288.2}

9. By what are we saved? **Beginning of Ephesians 2:8**

EGW: If it were not possible for human beings under the Abrahamic covenant to keep the commandments of God, every soul of us is lost. The Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of grace. "By grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:8). Disobedient children? No, obedient to all His commandments. {AG 133.5}

10. Through what are we saved? **Middle of Ephesians 2:8**

EGW: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8. Here is truth that will unfold the subject to your mind if you do not close it to the rays of light. Eternal life is an infinite gift. This places it outside the possibility of our earning it, because it is infinite. It must necessarily be a gift. As a gift it must be received by faith, and gratitude and praise be offered to God. Solid faith will not lead any one away into fanaticism or into acting the slothful servant. It is the bewitching power of Satan that leads men to look to themselves in the place of looking to Jesus. The righteousness of Christ must go before us if the glory of the Lord becomes our reward. If we do God's will we may accept large blessings as God's free gift, but not because of any merit in us; this is of no value. Do the work of Christ, and you will honor God and come off more than conquerors through Him that has loved us and given His life for us, that we should have life and salvation in Jesus Christ. {1888 820.1}

11. What are we not saved by? **Ephesians 2:9**

EGW: The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham

believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:1-5. Therefore there is no occasion for one to glory over another or to grudge against another. No one is privileged above another, nor can anyone claim the reward as a right. {COL 401.2}

12. How do we know that grace does not permit sinning? **Romans 6:15, Romans 6:1-2**

EGW: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Paul asks, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" and answers, "God forbid." Again he asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" and answers, "God forbid; yea, we establish the law." God's will is expressed in his holy law, and Jesus says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The law of God is the standard by which character is to be measured, and he whose life is in harmony with that law is worthy to be trusted, but of what value is the testimony of a man whose life and teaching contradict the law of Jehovah? He then measures himself by his own finite standard, and may claim for himself as much as does the pope of Rome; but in the light of the detector of sin, his character may be wholly wanting. He may claim great spiritual riches, and think that he is in need of nothing, and may boast of the grace of Christ, but at the same time may have turned that precious grace into lasciviousness. This spurious character of religion is on the increase, and many whose hearts are carnal prate of the grace of Christ, while at the same time they openly blaspheme the name of the God of heaven by casting contempt upon the law of God, which rebukes their inconsistent course and detects their unchristlike character. {RH, August 28, 1894 par. 8}

13. How do we know that faith does not negate obedience? **Romans 3:31**

EGW: Is he now free to transgress God's law? Says Paul: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" And John declares, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." [Romans 3:31; 6:2; 1 John 5:3.] In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with his law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then "the righteousness of the law" will "be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [Romans 8:4.] And the language of the soul will be, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." [Psalm 119:97.] {GC88 468.1}

14. What role do works play? **James 2:18**

EGW: Faith does not make void the law, and though there are persons who insist that through faith in Christ they are freed from obligation to keep the law, yet the teaching of prophets and apostles contradicts their position. "Faith without works [obedience] is dead." Men's characters are estimated according to their works. James says, "Show me thy faith without thy works [if it were possible], and I will show thee my faith by my works." Faith in the great plan of redemption without corresponding works is not reckoned as faith. Christ our Redeemer did not suffer the penalty of the law for our sins in order to deliver us from obligation to keep God's commandments. Christ suffered the penalty of the law, which was death, in order to give to man another trial, to provide for him another probation, and allot to him another opportunity of proving loyal to the authority of God. Every soul is to be tested, for he is held responsible for obedience to the divine law, and, although Christ has died for man's transgression, those who continue in disobedience will suffer the penalty of their sin. The condition upon which men will be offered the benefits of salvation is through repentance toward God, because of transgression of his holy law, faith in Christ, by which he receives power from on high to become an obedient subject of the government of God. Those who would be saved must take Christ as their personal Saviour, and become not only hearers, but doers of his words. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {ST, September 24, 1894 par. 9}

15. What is implied as being the only thing we need to be saved? **Romans 8:24**

EGW: We are saved by hope." Romans 8:24. The fallen must be led to feel that it is not too late for them to be men. Christ honored man with His confidence and thus placed him on his honor. Even those who had fallen the lowest He treated with respect. It was a continual pain to Christ to be brought into contact with enmity, depravity, and impurity; but never did He utter one expression to show that His sensibilities were shocked or His refined tastes offended. Whatever the evil habits, the strong prejudices, or the overbearing passions of human beings, He met them all with pitying tenderness. As we partake of His Spirit, we shall regard all men as brethren, with similar temptations and trials, often falling and struggling to rise again, battling with discouragements and difficulties, craving sympathy and help. Then we shall meet them in such a way as not to discourage or repel them, but to awaken hope in their hearts. As they are thus encouraged, they can say with confidence, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." He will "plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness." Micah 7:8, 9. God "looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike." Psalm 33:14, 15. {MH 165.1}

16. While people hope, what do they do to themselves? **1 John 3:3**

EGW: The Bible contains instruction regarding the character God's children must possess. "Blessed are the pure in heart," it declares, "for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3. {CT 429.2}

17. While having hope, what shall happen to our hearts? **1 Peter 3:15**

EGW: The followers of Jesus Christ, scattered throughout the world, do not have a high sense of their responsibility, and the obligation resting upon them to let their light shine forth to others. If there are but one or two in a place, they can, although few in number, so conduct themselves before the world as to have an influence which will impress the unbeliever with the sincerity of their faith. The followers of Jesus are not meeting the mind and will of God if they are content to remain in ignorance of his word. All should become Bible students. Christ commanded his followers, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Peter exhorts us, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." {RH, February 16, 1886 par. 6}

18. If a person has hope, what did they hear and accept beforehand? **Colossians 1:5**

EGW: It is your privilege to have the higher life, even the life of God. The first chapter of Colossians says much that I would say to you. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. . . . For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of

the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." {7MR 60.3}

19. What does a person just need to do and even become baptized afterwards? **Mark 16:15-16, Acts 15:11**

EGW: Not only are they to shine to illuminate the immediate darkness, but through the united endeavors of the church of Christ they are to be the light of the world. It was the object kept in view through all Christ's ministry that the church should be united in one, and be one with himself and the Father in the great work of recovering souls from the slavery of sin and the dominion of Satan, to translate them into the kingdom of God. In this work he encourages them with the thought that heavenly intelligences will mingle with their ranks, and at every point of danger the mighty Captain of their salvation will be present to strengthen them with his might, and to lead them on to success. Just before his ascension, Christ gave his last commission to his disciples. As he was about to leave the earth and enter the portals of heaven, he said: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." {RH, November 6, 1894 par. 3}

20. What reaction do believing devils have? **James 2:19**

EGW: The fatal deception of the religious world is the old disregard for the claims of the law of God. The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but we must sound a note of warning. What saith the word of God? Says the apostle James, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? . . . Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." {ST, March 30, 1888 par. 8}

21. What do nonbelievers have that implies that believers would no longer have in their lives? **John 8:24, John 16:8-9**

EGW: "Whither I go, ye can not come," Christ said. "Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself?" The answer came, clear and decided: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." {ST, August 22, 1900 par. 9}

22. What will believers receive regarding their sins? **Acts 10:43**

EGW: And what was the outcome of God's dealing with Cornelius? Read the precious history, and learn, and praise God; for its lesson is for us. Finding Cornelius and his friends gathered to hear the word of God, "Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, speaking peace by Jesus Christ. (He is Lord of all); that word, I say, ye know:... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And ye are witnesses of all things which He did." And God "commanded us to preach unto the people, and testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." {AUCR, January 1, 1900 par. 6}

23. What simpler thing allows people to be saved? **Isaiah 45:22**

EGW: We are not to look at ourselves. The more we dwell on our imperfections, the less strength we shall have to overcome them. Jesus says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." It is not necessary for us to be ever stumbling and repenting, and writing bitter things against ourselves. It is our privilege to believe the promises of the word of God, and accept the blessings that Jesus loves to bestow, that our joy may be full. {HM, November 1, 1890 par. 31}

24. What happens to a person who beholds the image of Jesus? **2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 2:6**

EGW: Beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, he finds the peace of Christ; for pardon is written against his name, and he accepts the word of God, "Ye are complete in him." How hard is it for humanity, long accustomed to cherish doubt, to grasp this great truth! But

what peace it brings to the soul, what vital life! In looking to ourselves for righteousness, by which to find acceptance with God, we look to the wrong place, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We are to look to Jesus; "for we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." You are to find your completeness by beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. {ST, July 4, 1892 par. 9}