LESSON 13 – September 28, 1889.

A DIVINE LEGACY.

I. WHO has ever maintained the right of the poor? Ps. 14o: 12.

2. What provision did the law make for those too poor to bring a lamb? Lev. 12: 8.

3. What shows Christ's parents were thus poor? Luke 2: 24.

4. What was one evidence of Christ's Messiahship? Luke 4: 18; Matt. II:4, 5.

5. In what way could a rich man transfer all his wealth to Heaven? Mark 10: 21.

6. What class of persons has God specially chosen? James 2: 5.

7. What is "pure and undefiled religion before God"? James 1: 27.

8. Who on this earth personally represents Christ? Matt. 25: 34-40.

9. Will the people of God always have the poor with them? Deut. 15: 11.

10. What will give light, health, and righteousness to the people of God? Isa. 58: 7, 8.

11. What prominence did the apostles give to caring for the poor and widows? Acts 6: 3-6.

12. What was connected with the giving of the right hand of fellowship to the apostles? Gal. 2: 9, 10.

13. What provision was made for the poor, stranger, widow, and fatherless, in the law of Moses? Deut. 14: 28, 29; 26: 12, 13.

14. What arrangement was made for the poor in the time of harvest? Lev. 19: 9, 10.

15. By heeding this provision, who became one of the progenitors of Christ? Ruth 4: 13-17.

16. What difference does Jehovah make between lending to their brethren, and lending to strangers? Deut. 23: 19, 20.

17. What are among the characteristics of those who shall dwell in the city of God? Ps. 15: 1, 5.

18. What expression of the apostle's shows that there was a special arrangement for poor widows in the early church? 1 Tim. 5: 9-11.

19. Where does the responsibility of caring for widows first rest? Verse 16.

20. What assurance is given to those who give to the poor? 2 Cor. 9:9, 10.

21. In view of the above facts, is there any more important duty than to make provision for the poor? And if we have not done it, should we not do it at once?

**NOTES.**

None provided

**Ellen White Notes Compiled:**

#1 Jesus loved children, and ever influenced them for good. He cared for the poor and needy even in his childhood. In every gentle, tender, and submissive way he sought to please those with whom he came in contact; but though so gentle and submissive, no one could lead him to do anything that was contrary to the word of God. Some admired his perfection of character, and often sought to be with him; but others who regarded the sayings of men more than the word of God, turned away from him, and avoided his company. Throughout his childhood and youth, he manifested the same perfection of character as marked his after life. {YI, December 12, 1895 par. 1}

#2 She brought to the altar only two turtle doves, the offering appointed for the poor; but they were an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. {RH, December 9, 1890 par. 6}

#3 As an offering for the mother, the law required a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. But the law provided that if the parents were too poor to bring a lamb, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering, the other for a sin offering, might be accepted. {DA 50.2}

#4 Both these men were in sacred office, and professed to expound the Scriptures. They were of the class specially chosen to be representatives of God to the people. They were to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Hebrews 5:2), that they might lead men to understand God's great love toward humanity. The work they were called to do was the same that Jesus had described as His own when He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. {DA 499.3}

#5 "One thing thou lackest," Jesus said. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." Christ read the ruler's heart. Only one thing he lacked, but that was a vital principle. He needed the love of God in the soul. This lack, unless supplied, would prove fatal to him; his whole nature would become corrupted. By indulgence, selfishness would strengthen. That he might receive the love of God, his supreme love of self must be surrendered. {DA 519.4}

#6 "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" {4T 550.2}

Although Christ was rich in the heavenly courts, yet He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Jesus honored the poor by sharing their humble condition. From the history of His life we are to learn how to treat the poor. Some carry the duty of beneficence to extremes and really hurt the needy by doing too much for them. The poor do not always exert themselves as they should. While they are not to be neglected and left to suffer, they must be taught to help themselves. {4T 550.3}

#7 Pure religion and undefiled before the Father is this: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Good deeds are the fruit that Christ requires us to bear: kind words, deeds of benevolence, of tender regard for the poor, the needy, the afflicted. When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures. "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Every merciful act to the needy, the suffering, is regarded as though done to Jesus. When you succor the poor, sympathize with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriend the orphan, you bring yourselves into a closer relationship to Jesus. {2T 25.1}

#8 In that day Christ does not present before men the great work He has done for them in giving His life for their redemption. He presents the faithful work they have done for Him. To those whom He sets upon His right hand He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." But those whom Christ commends know not that they have been ministering unto Him. To their perplexed inquiries He answers, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." {DA 637.2}

#9 How few who claim to be Christians practice the lesson that Christ has given on this point! In principle this was not new teaching; for the Old Testament gave rules that should control the action of those who loved God. From the pillar of cloud, Christ had given instructions to his people, saying: "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. . . . For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." These words had been given to Moses to speak to the children of Israel. They were among the last words that he spoke to the Hebrew nation. Their invisible Leader, who was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, gave these words of instruction to the people who had been chosen of God to be the light of the world. {ST, May 14, 1896 par. 3}

#10 Christ, the outshining of the Father's glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men, and of Him it is written that He was anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power," and "went about doing good." Acts 10:38. In the synagogue at Nazareth He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19. This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do. "Ye are the light of the world," He said. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14, 16. {COL 416.2}

This is the work which the prophet Isaiah describes when he says, "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward." Isaiah 58:7, 8. {COL 417.1}

#11 Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel. "Wherefore, brethren," they said, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons. {AA 89.1}

The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole. {AA 89.2}

#12 The work of the apostle Paul was a wonderful work. The Holy Spirit wrought on his mind, showing him that the gifts of God come straight from God to all who seek him with a whole heart, the circumcised and the uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, and free. Paul held to his inspired truth, and taught it to others, opposed as he was by the apostles, who ought to have upheld him. He took his position against Peter, who was one of the pillars of the church, and his companion in labor, and against Barnabas, the first one to honor him with the right hand of fellowship, when all his Christian brethren were afraid of him, and questioned and doubted his fitness for the work, because he had persecuted the church. {RH, May 25, 1897 par. 5}

#13 (No comment)

#14 The instruction given to ancient Israel was to the same effect as that given by Christ to his disciples upon the mount. Both were intended to counteract selfishness and encourage benevolence. God ever remembers the poor, and gives directions to his people to remember them. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest." Again he says, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. {ST, July 22, 1880 par. 4}

#15 (No comment)

#16 "He that putteth not out his money to usury." Exacting usury is directly opposed to God's rule as given in Exodus 22:21-26: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in anywise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as a usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down." Deuteronomy 23:19, 20: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it." {ST, February 7, 1884 par. 9}

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#18 (No comment)

#19 "Rebuke not an elder [a man older than yourself], but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honor widows that are widows indeed." "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." {SpTA03 15.2}

The greatest obstruction to your work will be the disregard of the tenderness of Christ in dealing with one another, because self is seeking the supremacy. Self loves to vaunt itself, and those who possess a spirit unlike Christ's, cannot discern what manner of spirit controls them. They speak and act like sinners, while they profess to be Christians. They more readily express their own will than the will of God, yet they are very strenuous to have their will regarded as the will of God. Satan is urging his attributes into the very midst of us; he is seeking to destroy our love for, and confidence in, each other; and the lack of confidence which brethren in the ministry repose in their fellow-laborers, is easily read in the rules and regulations concerning even the details of the work which they seek to impose upon them. {SpTA03 15.3}

#20 (No comment)

#21 The Lord has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent on the consecrated ability and the voluntary gifts and offerings of his people. While he has called men to preach the word, he has made it the privilege of the whole church to share in the work by contributing of their means to its support. And he has bidden them also to care for the poor, as representatives of himself. {RH, May 9, 1893 par. 7}