

# EGW Notes - Lesson 9

## Mission to the Powerful



### **Sabbath Afternoon, November 25**

Those who belong to the higher ranks of society are to be sought out with tender affection and brotherly regard. Men in business life, in high positions of trust, men with large inventive faculties and scientific insight, men of genius, teachers of the gospel whose minds have not been called to the special truths for this time—these should be the first to hear the call. To them the invitation must be given. . . .

Those who stand high in the world for their education, wealth, or calling, are seldom addressed personally in regard to the interests of the soul. Many Christian workers hesitate to approach these classes. But this should not be. If a man were drowning, we would not stand by and see him perish because he was a lawyer, a merchant, or a judge. If we saw persons rushing over a precipice, we would not hesitate to urge them back, whatever might be their position or calling. Neither

should we hesitate to warn men of the peril of the soul.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 230.

There are many . . . men whom [God] desires to connect with His church. Their sympathies are with the Lord's people. But the ties that bind them to the world hold them firmly. It requires moral courage for these men to take their position with the lowly ones. Special effort should be made for these souls, who are in so great danger because of their responsibilities and associations.

Much is said concerning our duty to the neglected poor; should not some attention be given to the neglected rich? Many look upon this class as hopeless, and they do little to open the eyes of those, who, blinded and dazed by the glitter of earthly glory, have lost eternity out of their reckoning. Thousands of wealthy men have gone to their graves unwarned. But indifferent as they may appear, many among the rich are soul-burdened. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase." Ecclesiastes 5:10.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 209, 210.

There is another danger to which the wealthy are especially exposed. . . . Multitudes who are prosperous in the world, and who never stoop to the common forms of vice, are yet brought to destruction through the love of riches. The cup most difficult to carry is not the cup that is empty, but the cup that is full to the brim. It is this that needs to be most carefully balanced. Affliction and adversity bring disappointment and sorrow; but it is prosperity that is most dangerous to spiritual life. . . .

Often prayer is solicited for those who are suffering from illness or adversity; but our prayers are most needed by the men entrusted with prosperity and influence. . . .

[The] men who stand, as it were, on a lofty pinnacle, and who, because of their position, are supposed to possess great wisdom—these are in greatest peril. Unless such men make God their dependence, they will surely fall.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 211, 212.

**Sunday, November 26**

## **Nebuchadnezzar**

God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus. The pride of man hinders him from accepting the provisions of salvation. But human merit will not admit a soul into the presence of God. That which will make a man acceptable to God is the imparted grace of Christ through faith in His name. No dependence can be placed in works or in happy flights of feelings as evidence that men are chosen of God; for the elect are chosen through Christ.

Jesus says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. When the repenting sinner comes to Christ, conscious of his guilt and unworthiness, realizing that he is deserving of punishment, but relying on the mercy and love of Christ, he will not be turned away.—

*Our High Calling*, p. 78.

In Daniel's life, the desire to glorify God was the most powerful of all motives. He realized that when standing in the presence of men of influence, a failure to acknowledge God as the source of his wisdom would have made him an unfaithful steward. And his constant recognition of the God of heaven before kings, princes, and statesmen, detracted not one iota from his influence. King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven."

The king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart that was partaking of the mercy and grace, the righteousness and peace, of the divine nature.—Ellen G. White Comments in, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1170.

In the work for this class [the rich and powerful] many discouragements will be presented, many heartsickening revelations will be made. But all things are possible with God. He can and will work through human agencies upon the minds of men whose lives have been devoted to money getting.

There are miracles to be wrought in genuine conversion, miracles that are not now discerned. The greatest men of the earth are not beyond the power of a wonder-working God. If those who are workers together with Him will do their duty bravely and faithfully, God

will convert men who occupy responsible places, men of intellect and influence. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, many will be led to accept the divine principles.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 215, 216.

**Monday, November 27**

## **Naaman**

Few realize the full meaning of the words that Christ spoke when, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He announced Himself as the Anointed One. He declared His mission to comfort, bless, and save the sorrowing and the sinful; and then, seeing that pride and unbelief controlled the hearts of His hearers, He reminded them that in time past God had turned away from His chosen people because of their unbelief and rebellion, and had manifested Himself to those in heathen lands who had not rejected the light of heaven. The widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian had lived up to all the light they had; hence they were accounted more righteous than God's chosen people who had backslidden from Him and had sacrificed principle to convenience and worldly honor.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 416.

Some are especially fitted to work for the higher classes. These should seek wisdom from God to know how to reach these persons, to have not merely a casual acquaintance with them, but by personal effort and living faith to awaken them to the needs of the soul, to lead them to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Many suppose that in order to reach the higher classes, a manner of life and method of work must be adopted that will be suited to their fastidious tastes. An appearance of wealth, costly edifices, expensive dress, equipage, and surroundings, conformity to worldly customs, the artificial polish of fashionable society, classical culture, the graces of oratory, are thought to be essential. This is an error. The way of worldly policy is not God's way of reaching the higher classes. That which will reach them effectually is a consistent, unselfish presentation of the gospel of Christ.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 213.

The truth should be presented with divine tact, gentleness, and tenderness. It should come from a heart that has been softened and made sympathetic. We need to have close communion with God, lest self rise up . . . and we pour forth a torrent of words that are - unbecoming, that are not as dew or as the still showers that revive the withering plants. Let our words be gentle as we seek to win souls. God will be wisdom to him who seeks for wisdom from a divine source. We are to seek opportunities on every hand, we are to watch unto prayer, and be ready always to give a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. Lest we shall impress unfavorably one soul for whom Christ died we should keep our hearts uplifted to God, so that when the opportunity presents itself, we may have the right word to speak at the right time. If you thus undertake work for God, the Spirit of God will be your helper. The Holy Spirit will apply the word spoken in love for the soul. The truth will have quickening power when spoken under the

influence of the grace of Christ.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 400.

**Tuesday, November 28**

## **Witnessing to the Learned: Nicodemus**

The success of the gospel message does not depend upon learned speeches, eloquent testimonies, or deep arguments. It depends upon the simplicity of the message and its adaptation to the souls that are hungering for the bread of life. “What shall I do to be saved?”—this is the want of the soul.

Thousands can be reached in the most simple and humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world’s most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 231, 232.

Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin and with others had been stirred by the teaching of Jesus. As he had witnessed Christ’s wonderful works, the conviction had fastened itself upon his mind that this was the Sent of God. Too proud openly to acknowledge himself in sympathy with the Galilean Teacher, he had sought a secret interview. In this interview Jesus had unfolded to him the plan of salvation and His mission to the world, yet still Nicodemus had hesitated. He hid the truth in his

heart, and for three years there was little apparent fruit. . . . When at last Christ had been lifted up on the cross, Nicodemus remembered the words that He had spoken to him in the night interview on the Mount of Olives, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14); and he saw in Jesus the world’s Redeemer. . . .

Now, when the Jews were trying to destroy the infant church, Nicodemus came forward in its defense. No longer cautious and questioning, he encouraged the faith of the disciples and used his wealth in helping to sustain the church at Jerusalem and in advancing the work of the gospel. Those who in other days had paid him reverence, now scorned and persecuted him, and he became poor in this world’s goods; yet he faltered not in the defense of his faith.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 104, 105.

The experience of the apostle Paul in meeting the philosophers of Athens has a lesson for us. In presenting the gospel before the court of the Areopagus, Paul met logic with logic, science with science, philosophy with philosophy. The wisest of his hearers were astonished and silenced. His words could not be controverted. But the effort bore little fruit. Few were led to accept the gospel. Henceforth Paul adopted a different manner of labor. He avoided elaborate arguments and discussion of theories, and in simplicity pointed men and women to Christ as the Saviour of sinners. . . .

Let those who work for the higher classes bear themselves with true dignity, remembering that angels are their companions. Let them keep the treasure house



of mind and heart filled with, "It is written." Hang in memory's hall the precious words of Christ. They are to be valued far above gold or silver.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 214, 215.

**Wednesday, November 29**

## **Mission to the Rich**

There is a work to be done for the wealthy. They need to be awakened to their responsibility as those entrusted with the gifts of heaven. They need to be reminded that they must give an account to Him who shall judge the living and the dead. The wealthy man needs your labor in the love and fear of God. Too often he trusts in his riches, and feels not his danger. The eyes of his mind need to be attracted to things of enduring value. He needs to recognize the authority of true goodness, which says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 230.

The [rich young ruler] looked upon Christ with admiration. His heart was drawn toward the Saviour. But he was not ready to accept the Saviour's principle of self-sacrifice. He chose his riches before Jesus. He wanted eternal life, but would not receive into the soul that unselfish love which alone is life, and with a sorrowful heart he turned away from Christ.

As the young man turned away, Jesus said to His disciples, . . . “Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure.” Now they realized that they themselves were included in the solemn warning. In the light of the Saviour’s words, their own secret longing for power and riches was revealed.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 393, 394.

The Bible condemns no man for being rich, if he has acquired his riches honestly. Not money, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. It is God who gives men power to get wealth; and in the hands of him who acts as God’s steward, using his means unselfishly, wealth is a blessing, both to its possessor and to the world. But many, absorbed in their interest in worldly treasures, become insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. They regard their wealth as a means of glorifying themselves. They add house to house, and land to land; they fill their homes with luxuries, while all about them are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death. Those who thus give their lives to self-serving are developing in themselves, not the attributes of God, but the attributes of the wicked one.

These men are in need of the gospel. They need to have their eyes turned from the vanity of material things to behold the preciousness of the enduring riches. They need to learn the joy of giving, the blessedness of being co-workers with God.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 212, 213.

**Thursday, November 30**

## **Mission to the Powerful**

Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus came to the help of the disciples. Both these men were members of the Sanhedrin, and were acquainted with Pilate. Both were men of wealth and influence. They were determined that the body of Jesus should have an honorable burial.

Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and begged from him the body of Jesus. . . .

Neither Joseph nor Nicodemus had openly accepted the Saviour while He was living. They knew that such a step would exclude them from the Sanhedrin, and they hoped to protect Him by their influence in its councils. For a time they had seemed to succeed; but the wily priests, seeing their favor to Christ, had thwarted their plans. In their absence Jesus had been condemned and delivered to be crucified. Now that He was dead, they no longer concealed their attachment to Him.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 773.

We need a power to come upon us now and stir us up to diligence and earnest faith. Then, baptized with the Holy Spirit, we shall have Christ formed within, the hope of glory. Then we will exhibit Christ as the divine object of our faith and our love. We will talk of Christ, we will pray to Christ and about Christ. We will praise His holy name. We will present before the people His miracles, His self-denial, His self-sacrifice, His sufferings, and His crucifixion, His resurrection and triumphant ascension.

These are the inspiring themes of the gospel, to awaken love and intense fervor in every heart. . . .

We need to have a living connection with God ourselves in order to teach Jesus. Then we can give the living personal experience of what Christ is to us by experience and faith. We have received Christ and with divine earnestness we can tell that which is an abiding power with us. The people must be drawn to Christ. Prominence must be given to his saving efficacy.

The true learners, sitting at Christ's feet, discover the precious gems of truth uttered by our Saviour, and will discern their significance and appreciate their value. And more and more, as they become humble and teachable, will their understanding be opened to discover wondrous things out of his law, for Christ has presented them in clear, sharp lines.—*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 186, 187.

If we only realized how earnestly Jesus worked to sow the world with the gospel seed, we would labor untiringly to give the bread of life to perishing souls.

Catch the spirit of the great Master-Worker. Learn from the Friend of sinners how to minister to sin-sick souls. His heart was ever touched with human woe. . . .

God's servants are to work for the higher classes, but this does not mean that they are to bind themselves up with the honored of the earth, depending on them for strength, influence, and success. The Lord will often incline the hearts of those in positions of responsibility to grant favors to His commandment-keeping people. But when God's servants leave Him to solicit recognition

from men of the world, they exchange power for weakness.—*The Upward Look*, pp. 330, 331.

**Friday, December 1**

## **For Further Reading**

*The Story of Redemption*, “The Burial,” pp. 227–229;

*Our High Calling*, “A Submissive Will,” p. 105.