

Building an Institution

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1. Daniel and Ezra

DANIEL lived during the time of the Babylonian captivity. The Babylonian captivity was the result of the apostasy of God's people. Like other faithful followers of God during his time, Daniel was very concerned for God's cause to be successful, even though it seemed to have reached a low point.

Such moments are times when many people "change horses"; that is, many leave the ranks of God's cause because they feel that it will not lead to success and think they must go somewhere else. But those who love the truth do not look at outward circumstances. They are concerned with only these questions:

"What is God's will?"

"What is His cause?"

"Where is it going, and what is my place in it?"

Ezra's Preparation

There were other faithful people like Daniel, one of whom was Ezra. Before we speak about Daniel in more detail, let's briefly review Ezra. He was a scribe who wanted to understand the reason for Israel's captivity.

Prophets and Kings, p. 608:

Born of the sons of Aaron, Ezra had been given a priestly training; and in addition to this he had acquired a familiarity with the writings of the magicians, the astrologers, and the wise men of the Medo-Persian realm. But he was not satisfied with his spiritual condition. He longed to be in full harmony with God; he longed for wisdom to carry out the divine will. And so he...

Ezra 7

¹⁰ ...prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it.

This led him to apply himself diligently to a study of the history of God's people, as recorded in the writings of prophets and kings. He searched the historical and poetical books of the Bible to learn why the Lord had permitted Jerusalem to be destroyed and His people carried captive into a heathen land.

We should compare people like Ezra and Daniel with ourselves. Although these men were unrecognized by the historians of their time and of today, they were recognized by God, and played a crucial role in history, because they applied their minds very diligently. They were not satisfied with their spiritual condition.

Ezra had studied and was familiar with the writings of the magicians, astrologers, and wise men of the Medo-Persian realm, just as Daniel was. As a captive and servant of the king, Daniel had to study these things. Ezra did not have to, but he did, probably because he wanted to help the Medo-Persians. Yet Ezra was not satisfied with his spiritual condition. He needed something else, and that was the Word of God.

Prophets and Kings, p. 608:

He searched the historical and poetical books of the Bible to learn why the Lord had permitted Jerusalem to be destroyed and His people carried captive into a heathen land.

How many of us study the Bible with the same diligence to learn why the Lord is not here yet? How many of us study diligently to learn why His coming is delayed? But Ezra inquired. He asked,

“Why is there such depression among God’s people?”

Daniel's Preparation

Daniel had exactly the same burden. Let us turn to *Daniel 7*, which describes his first prophetic vision. He had previously received the interpretations to Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams in *Daniel 2* and *4*. God spoke with him frequently. After he had seen the first part of this vision, Daniel was very concerned about it:

Daniel 7

¹⁵ I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

¹⁶ I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things.

Like Ezra, Daniel was not satisfied with the state of things. Both men searched earnestly and diligently, as is evidenced by the fact that Daniel was grieved in his spirit within his body, and the visions of his head troubled him. Why did the visions trouble him? Because he had seen God's enemy, as symbolized by the four beasts. He saw the strength of the beasts, especially of the little horn, which came from one of the ten horns on the last beast. This troubled him. Again and again he asked:

“What does this mean? What does that mean? Please explain it to me.”

And the angel responded to his requests. So likewise God will respond to our requests when we have such questions.

Daniel 7

²⁸ This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.

Daniel personally participated in the great controversy. In chapter eight, Daniel received another vision.

Daniel 8

¹⁵ Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

Why did this man come to him? Because Daniel was seeking the meaning of the vision. If he had never sought the meaning, but just said,

“Oh, that's an interesting vision I saw. I don't understand it, but that's interesting,”

—then the man would not have come. But that was not Daniel's response. He really felt that the powers of evil could not, and must not, become as strong as he had seen them. He was not satisfied with that condition of things. That is why he wanted to understand, and asked the Lord to explain. In fact, it upset him so much that we read,

²⁷ And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days.

Who would become sick over a vision, except someone with a spirit like Daniel's?

Daniel 9

¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

² In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

What does this indicate? It indicates that like Ezra, Daniel had diligently studied. He had understanding. In order to understand and to write such a thing, he must have already studied it very often. He would have read them together with Jeremiah, his teacher, while he was still in Jerusalem; and then he would have continued reading after he came to Babylon. Daniel was an expert on the book of *Jeremiah*, you can be sure. Yet he studied it again. And then he understood. He prayed. He wanted to make sure that God's cause would not suffer. In the next chapter we read:

Daniel 10

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Beltshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Our Circumstances

That is participation. In my present experience with students of the medical faculty, I am realizing that there are young, talented minds who are spending the majority of their time simply studying. I sometimes wonder what the results might be if all this energy were invested in studying God's will as revealed in His word. Would they do it? No. But do they study what they are studying now voluntarily? Hardly. They do it only for the tremen-

dous reward they think they will gain. Although I have joined them and am studying with them, I marvel at how little spiritual understanding they have. If they would voluntarily expend the same energy to study God's Word, what a great amount of good might be done! How I wish this would happen!

I see a lot of self-discipline in many of these students, which could be used for God's cause. Daniel had this self-discipline. Ezra had it. And because their heart's desire fueled their self-discipline, God could use them as instruments. What we have read from the book of Daniel shows that results always come when there is an earnest, diligent investigation.

The reason I thought of these examples is because I too want to understand something. I would like to understand exactly where we stand today. I would like to understand exactly what role the medical missionary work will play in the last days and of what it will consist. And I thought that if we together, like Daniel and Ezra, search God's Word with the same diligence for the meaning of this work, then the Lord should be able to use us.

Just yesterday I was shown an article in a newspaper which speaks about the coming crisis and peak oil. I think we are already quite familiar with the term "peak oil." It means that the maximum amount of oil which can be pumped out of the ground worldwide has already been reached, and if the demand rises above this level, it cannot be satisfied. With the growing number of people living on this planet, demand is increasing; but it is not possible to increase supply. Already they are pumping 90 million barrels of oil out of the ground daily. So with demand growing by leaps and bounds, supply is becoming less and less. You can see this quite precisely and scientifically on graphs.

All of this means that very soon, the price of oil will skyrocket. If the price of oil is very high, the price of everything will be very high. Almost 90% of all the goods we have are made of oil in some way or another. All our transport runs on oil. All our medicines, fertilizers, and pesticides are made from petroleum products. If these things run out, then our food will become very expensive.

There is already a food shortage in some regions. You have heard about the fires in Russia which destroyed the grain, and the subsequent export ban that was put in place. Now many are speculating on grain, which drives prices even higher. Poorer countries will no longer be able to afford it, which will lead to revolts and uprisings. This has happened in the past, and will be exacerbated by peak oil.

Governmental advisers know all about this. One of the reports made by the German military was leaked to the public. According to this report, we may have possibly reached peak oil already this year. That means from now on, we will no longer be able to have more oil. Many people think this means that there is no more oil in the ground, but that is not the case. In the end, there will still be enough oil left in the ground to burn this planet. But this oil cannot be extracted. Drilling becomes an increasingly expensive endeavor as companies try to drill in the Arctic and other extreme places. But despite their efforts, they can no longer fulfill the demand.

The result, according to the report, is that a planned economy such as existed in communistic times will become unavoidable. Next the report states that this would be understood by the people as a systematic crisis. Democracy would be threatened. Countries would fall into factions, with parties warring against each other. These are all the scenarios described in the report, although they do not know exactly what will happen. A similar report was made to the English government to the same effect.

We do not know precisely how the crisis will be triggered, or how soon it will happen. It may be very soon, or it may still take a few years. But the point is that all of this will lead to the events described in *Revelation* 13. Let us look at *Revelation* 13 to understand what is ahead of us.

The first verses contain a description of the beast, which receives its power from the dragon, and they state that the whole world will follow the beast. Then we read:

Revelation 13

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

The reason why this happens is because the earth has fallen into factions as a result of the tremendous crisis. Everything is falling apart; democracy is threatened; a carefully controlled economy is put into place because the existing economy is literally breaking down. People are trying to defend their possessions and disagree on the measures to be taken. There must be some unifying factor in order to prevent total annihilation of the human race. That unifying factor is the beast, who...

¹² ...exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast.

The reasoning behind it is that if we have a common aim—some common ground—then we will pull through. We know that the first beast is that unity between church and state which has been such a curse and plague to humankind for centuries. Yet this very measure will once more be suggested to solve the crisis coming upon us.

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Evidently this is connected with a great ability to work miracles.

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

¹⁵ He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads;

¹⁷ And that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

This will be the response to the crisis just before us. Even those who created the report see that democracy is threatened. The Bible clearly tells us that it is not only democracy, but humanity's freedom as a whole which is in danger. Everyone will be made to worship the beast and the image. A sign will be made, and those who do not receive it will be fiercely persecuted in the name of humanity, in order to "save" the human race.

When church and state unite, the sign that will be given is Sunday, which stands in contrast to the day which the Lord has given as a sign of His creation and power. And while the medical missionary work will show the power of God, of which the Sabbath is a sign, the effort of humanity to save itself through the unity of church and state will have Sunday as its sign.

Medical Missionary Work

This then is the problem we will soon face. *Revelation* 13 is the world's answer to it. The Lord's answer is found in *Revelation* 14, which describes the role of His people. This is the angel who flies in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel.¹ What is the everlasting gospel? It is what Jesus practiced while He was on earth. Let us read a statement about Jesus' work on earth. This is part of a sermon Peter preached:

Acts 10

³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said: In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

¹ See *Revelation* 14:6.

³⁶ The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all;

³⁷ That word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:

³⁸ How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Here is a very concise and accurate description of what Jesus did while on this earth.

³⁸ [He] went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

This also precisely describes our role in the last work. This is God's answer. It is the work of the angel in *Revelation* 14. This is true medical missionary work. Now I would like to read you the statement that caused me to study medicine:

Counsels on Health, p. 533:

I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work. The work of a minister is to minister. Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering.

Why will there soon be no work done in ministerial lines except medical missionary work? Simply because when the image to the beast is set up and persecution arises as it has done in the past, medical missionary work will be the only open door left. This is how I understand the statement, although it does not explicitly say so.

But this statement applies in another sense today too. In this day and age, people hear so many different teachings and doctrines that they have become full and it is hard to reach them. We have given studies on the gospel to the public. We have given studies about the end of the world to the public. But while these studies captured people's attention for a moment, there was hardly anybody who showed a long-lasting interest. They were

happy for the information about the coming crisis, but I wonder if they really believed what was said. Perhaps they just thought,

“Things will get better.”

I was talking with a fellow student at the beginning of my studies, and I said to him,

“Who knows if we will even be able to complete our studies? You know, a crisis is coming upon this world.”

“No way,” he replied. “Absolutely no way. We may face difficult times, but we have always overcome them.”

People simply don’t believe it. We are still too wealthy. And the urgent reports given by the German military as well as certain think tanks in England and America are shrugged off because people hope that a miracle or a great new discovery will solve things. So it’s very hard to reach them this way.

But I have found that if you deal with people personally, when they have a personal problem, the results are much better. Sickness is always a crisis in a person’s life. It’s the end of the world for that person, and they will not be indifferent when it comes upon them. Instead, they will want to know either how to prepare for death, or how to become better, with the emphasis on becoming better. This is a time when people will really open up and can be reached in a one-to-one conversation.

Studying at a Worldly Institution

Do not think for a moment that studying in an institution is what will give us the ability to be true medical missionary workers. This is not the impression I want to give. God has given us the medical missionary work, and we have to study what true medical missionary work is. The reason I am attending university is this: I want access to people’s hearts and minds. Those who have knowledge of worldly medicine gain access to people. This is simply a fact today.

I do not want to say that this is the only way we can do medical missionary work. There are certainly other means as well, and

perhaps that other work may be my task in the end too. If so, then the Lord will work in another way. But it is still medical missionary work.

The benefit I see from becoming acquainted with medicine at an institution is twofold. Firstly, I come closer to the public; and secondly, I come closer to the students.

Finally, this is not just my own personal goal. I hoped that some of our young people would share my vision and enthusiasm for the last work, and join me in studying medicine; and I wanted to accompany them because there is an inherent danger in the study of medicine at worldly schools, especially for those who are young and inexperienced.

If you read Sister White's statements, you will see that she had great misgivings about the young Adventists attending worldly institutions. One of the reasons why she really encouraged the founding of an Adventist college, which later became a medical university, was because she wanted to shield the students from the danger at worldly universities.

At the moment our church has no possibility of founding a medical college. What we can do is go to the worldly universities as Daniel and Ezra did, to study the wisdom of Babylon, but with the clear and decided aim of doing God's work and not the world's.

I feared, and still fear, that some of the young students will eventually be lost to the world's way of practicing the healing arts. This is quite possible. I am aware of the danger, and I cannot hinder it, whether I go with them or not. But I very much hope, pray, and believe that there are some who will come through and will reach not only patients, but also other students and teachers in these institutions—just as Daniel and Ezra did. This is our prayer and the objective of our studying medicine.

Summary

What do all of these things mean for us as a people?

1. Not everyone should now study medicine. I think this is very clear.
2. This endeavor can be accomplished only under God's utmost protection and direction.
3. We have other fields of right arm work in addition to medicine. Agriculture, for instance, will become very important in the peak oil crisis. Those who know how to grow food will be very much in demand.
4. We also have the educational work. Perhaps we can investigate what role education will play in the final stages of the work, because the work of education also includes medical missionary work.

What is our ultimate aim in all of this? Is it not to save people from ruin—from eternal ruin, not just temporal ruin? For this reason, there is no contradiction between the purpose I have described and the work that is done in other areas besides medicine.

Still, I would like to make it clear that not everything which claims to be right arm work is actually right arm work. Right arm work is only that work which is really the right arm of the work; that is, work which supports and strengthens the body and points to Christ. Right arm work is not limited to medical missionary work. Let me read the statement in *Counsels on Health* once more.

Counsels on Health, p. 533:

I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work. The work of a minister is to minister. Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering.

What is the main word here, which is repeated again and again? Ministry. "The work of a minister is to minister," and ministry is a personal work, no matter where we are working. "Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering," exactly as Jesus did.

When we study what true medical missionary work is, we have to study the life of Christ. We have studied this in the past, but we must go over it again because even if we are experts like

Daniel was, it doesn't mean much. We are now living in the last days, and we need to understand this better. We have to see how Christ did medical missionary work. This is the way that we are to follow. I pray very much that our questions run along these lines:

- How can the work be finished?
- What does it mean that the world is now realizing that a crisis is coming?
- Where will that realization lead?
- What is our role?
- Are we to warn the world of peak oil by digging up the scientific reports and holding them under people's noses? Or should we be doing something else instead?
- What is our work?

As you can see, we have been experimenting somewhat. We had our exhibition on addiction, which made an impression, but that impression fades. Should we speak to people personally? What is it exactly? This is what we must understand.

But in all this, let us not forget that we are simply channels in God's hands. We are to present His character, no matter what we do. Our work is to minister exactly as Jesus did. This is true medical missionary work, and this is what we want to study and understand.

I want to invite you to be as inquisitive as Daniel and Ezra were.

2. Jesus Is the Pattern

Life Sketches, p. 323:

Again and again I have been shown that the people of God in these last days could not be safe in trusting in men, and making flesh their arm. The mighty cleaver of truth has taken them out of the world as rough stones that are to be hewed and squared and polished for the heavenly building. They must be hewed by the prophets with reproof, warning, admonition, and advice, that they may be fashioned after the divine Pattern; this is the specified work of the Comforter, to transform heart and character, that men may keep the way of the Lord.

THERE are several options open to us in this last work. With the talents we have, we could build institutions. We could do various works on an individual basis. We could build many centers and do a lot of activities. But in these last days there is only one pattern we can follow, and that is Jesus. Unless we follow this pattern we will not be safe.

Yesterday we mentioned that the people in the world will unite in this coming crisis. In their efforts for unification they will not permit any deviation, since in their view this would only worsen the problem. But those who discern things spiritually will see that the real problem is the world's solution—the union of church and state, which will actually bring the world into a worse state of ruin than it did in the Middle Ages. Only those who understand the prophecies and the issues at stake will be able to judge these things correctly.

How can we work in these last days under the tremendous pressure that is coming? There will not be a lot of avenues open to us. But Jesus has showed us how to work because He also worked under great pressure. He worked at a time when His ministry was not wanted. He was actually rejected right at the start of His public ministry in Judea. After He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, the Sanhedrin interrogated him, and we are familiar with their judgment of the case.

Consequently He had to flee Judea and move His labors to Galilee. After a while He was persecuted there as well, and had to go to Syro-Phoenicia for a while. We will take a closer look at the ministry of Christ later to see if we can find a pattern for the last days.

But one thing is clear: the way Jesus worked is the way we are to work in these last days. We already read this in *Counsels on Health*, where it says that every other avenue for work will be closed except for medical missionary work. Medical missionary work is the very work that Jesus did—He spent more time healing than in preaching.

To avoid misunderstanding, I should add that this work is not restricted to those who have received training in the world; nor is this the aim of the training offered by the world. It is God who trains us for this work, and not worldly institutions. By the way, this was also the case with Daniel. He was taught by Christ, and that was what made him the person he was. It is only as we are taught by Christ that we will be enabled to do the last work.

Selfish Missionary Work

So how did Christ work? In order to understand this, let us look at a scripture which applies to both Christ and the last movement.

Isaiah 60

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

² For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.

³ The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

This scripture has two fulfillments. The first is found in the life of Jesus himself. The glory of the Lord rose over Him. He came in a time of darkness, of deep darkness that covered both the earth and the people; but on Him, the glory of the Lord was seen. The Gentiles came to His light. This fact angered the Jews very much.

However, this is not the only fulfillment of the prophecy. As we well know, it is to have a second fulfillment in the last days. And again we have the parallel: we are to work as Christ worked. This is the work described in *Isaiah 60*.

In the New Testament Jesus gave a parable about the ten virgins. In it, He more or less referred to *Isaiah 60*. The light that is spoken of here is the light which the ten virgins had. But in order to let their light shine for the people, they needed oil. And as you know, five of them had oil and five did not.

Matthew 25

¹ Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them:

⁴ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ And at midnight a cry was heard: Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!

⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.

⁹ But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.

In other words, five virgins were not ready to shine and do the work prophesied in *Isaiah 60*. When the call came,

“Arise, shine!”

—they were unprepared. We have studied this quite extensively in the past, so I will not go into more detail here. What we want to understand is,

“What is this shining?”

For this purpose we will now turn to the last chapter, “To Meet the Bridegroom,” in the book *Christ’s Object Lessons*. In this chap-

ter, we first find a description of the foolish virgins explaining what their problem is and why they are foolish. Let me read a few statements from this because it is important for us to understand why the foolish virgins are foolish.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 411:

The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature.

At this point I would like to stress that there is no excuse for being a foolish virgin, for this is often what we tend to think. We see ourselves as unfortunate victims of circumstances. But we need to put away such thinking. The Holy Spirit works for you according to your desire and consent.

But the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form.

Ezekiel 33

³¹ They come unto you as the people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.

At this point we are more concerned with how the work will be done in the last days than we are with the foolish virgins. I mentioned them simply to help us understand that nobody needs to be a foolish virgin. There is no excuse for this. When the Holy Spirit speaks to my heart, I must react; I cannot afford to let my pride stand in the way. I must give room to the working of the

Holy Spirit and act according to His directions. That is very important.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 412:

It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom comes; go out to meet him," and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied.

The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth's history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God's service. All apparently wait for Christ's appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.

At the final day, many will claim admission to Christ's kingdom, saying,

Luke 13

²⁶ We have eaten and drunk in your presence, and You have taught in our streets.

Matthew 7

²² Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? And in your name have cast out devils? And in your name done many wonderful works?

This is a description of right arm work that is not connected with the body. God cannot recognize it as being connected with the body because it is not true medical missionary work. It is a counterfeit, and this will be apparent at this time.

"Lord, have we not done this and this and this...?"

But the answer comes,

"I know you not!"

We really need to know what the problem is. Maybe we can sum it up as the following: The problem is always self, in one way or another.

1 Timothy 6

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

When we read this, we tend to think that it might apply to millionaires, but not to us. Since I am not swimming in money, it has no meaning for me. But what is the love of money—the root of all evil? It is the security that we find in earthly things. It's when we look for an anchor here on earth instead of in heaven. That is the love of money, and it is simply expressed in terms of money.

For instance, if someone doesn't have any money in the bank, that person will start to become restless and nervous. But how much money did Jesus have in the bank? His bank was in heaven, and that is where He found His rest. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Now while I stress the fact that unwise management is certainly not wanted in the cause of God, at the same time, if the desire to have a secure income is the motive for my doing right arm work, then it is not true right arm work. It's okay for us to do a job which we are paid for. This is not sinful. But if I do a work in order to ensure myself a safe income, then I am not doing the work of Jesus, because that was not how He worked.

This is not to condemn the carpenter, or plumber, or any other kind of worker who works to provide for his family. But all such considerations must be dismissed if we want to do true right arm work and follow our Pattern, Jesus.

This does not mean that there is no income in the right arm work. It is to sustain itself, but not as a means of security for me. It is important that we understand this. Self must be completely out of the picture and I must be ready to give up and forget everything. Only then can I do right arm work.

So let us now go back to the question,

“Lord, have we not done this and that and the other thing...?”

What will the Lord say in answer to this?

“Yes, you did, but only to secure your own income, and therefore I cannot consider it as work done for me because I did the work in a different way.”

Money really spoils people, this is evident. And for this reason we need to forget it, especially for the last work. It is very important that we understand this. Let us read on now:

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 412:

In this life they have not entered into fellowship with Christ; therefore they know not the language of heaven, they are strangers to its joy.

1 Corinthians 2

¹¹ What man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.

We must have God’s spirit if we are to understand His work. Unless we have the spirit of Christ we cannot understand what the right arm work is. This is simply not possible.

I would like to use another term now in place of the word “money.” Let’s use “fame,” because that’s basically the same thing. Fame is another word for acknowledgment. If we seek for acknowledgment in any way then we are also completely off track.

To give an example of this I would like to mention Judas. He joined the band of Christ’s followers, but he had a very different spirit from Christ. Jesus had a totally selfless spirit. He only wanted to be a channel for God and help others, nothing else. Judas, on the other hand, wanted to place himself in a good position.

You could say that all the disciples wanted the same thing, to a certain degree. But they were not as full of this spirit, and furthermore they were later cured of it. Judas was not cured of it, and yet he remained with Jesus—even though he did not get much money

from this enterprise. He did not follow Jesus for financial security, but rather for the security of a certain position. He felt that the cause of Jesus, who was a miracle worker, would become great one day and then he would be famous too! Jesus had all these skills and abilities, but He never used them to exalt himself or His disciples. And all this was a great disappointment for Judas.

Since some of us are studying in worldly schools I think this point is very relevant. We have assignments and are expected write scientific papers and so on. And it may be that the Lord will especially bless us with a discovery or something similar. After all, Jesus was also a diligent scientific researcher—of nature, as we read in *The Desire of Ages*. He studied plant life, the works of God in nature, and He discovered great things.

Scientific Discoveries a Snare

In this respect I would like to share some other quotations with you:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 448:

So also Christ presented the principles of truth in the gospel. In His teaching we may drink of the pure streams that flow from the throne of God. Christ could have imparted to men knowledge that would have surpassed any previous disclosures, and put in the background every other discovery.

Just think about this. All the Nobel Prize winners would be as nothing in comparison to Him. Einstein would be nothing. Jesus could have told the world all these things.

He could have unlocked mystery after mystery, and could have concentrated around these wonderful revelations the active, earnest thought of successive generations till the close of time. But He would not spare a moment from teaching the science of salvation. His time, His faculties, and His life were appreciated and used only as the means for working out the salvation of the souls of men. He had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and He would not be turned from His purpose. He allowed nothing to divert Him.

Just think about this for a moment. If He had unlocked these “mysteries,” how much good could have been accomplished? You might say that it would have led to an earlier discovery of the atom bomb if Einstein’s theory of relativity had also been understood earlier. Sure, Jesus’ ideas would not only have been used to discover good things. But how many good things would they have led to? For example, if the laws of hygiene had been understood two hundred years ago, how many deaths might have been prevented? But Jesus did not reveal these things. Why not? Because it was not the true right arm work.

I would like to make this point very clear. Our participation in the worldly schools is not for the sake of introducing new discoveries which no one has thought of so far. Perhaps we do write papers on scientific research, but the main purpose of our presence is to mingle with other people for their salvation. I say this especially to the youth here today. Our work is to be the same as Christ’s work, and if it is not, then we are not doing right arm work! And if this is the case, then Jesus will say to us one day,

Matthew 25

¹² I know you not!

We may say,

“But haven’t we made this and that wonderful discovery?”

And He will answer,

“Yes, you did, but I do not know you because that was not the work I assigned to you!”

What work was Jesus assigned? The salvation of humanity! And all that this work entailed. When we think of all the good things we might achieve, then our thinking will become confused. In reality, behind all of this stands the thought of fame and exaltation. Jesus avoided everything that might throw such a light on His work because it would have been counterproductive.

Let me read another statement which gives another reason why Jesus did not share the scientific knowledge He gained under God's personal tutorship.

Medical Ministry, p. 116:

A minister once said that he could but think that Christ must have known something about science. Of what could this minister have been thinking? Science! Christ could have opened door after door of science. He could have revealed to men treasures of science on which they might have feasted to the present time. But knowing that this knowledge would have been appropriated to unholy uses, He did not open the door.

What is an "unholy use"? You could say that Einstein's theories led to the discovery of the atom bomb. But not only that; if Jesus had been regarded as a great scientist rather than our Saviour, this would have opened the door for an "unholy use" as well. In the same way, if we appear to the world in any other light than that of a channel that God is working through for the salvation of humanity in these last days, then that is also a misuse of scientific knowledge.

The Narrow Path

Let me describe again the narrow path that we are to follow, for it is a very narrow path. Only when the work that we do is directed at saving human beings, under God's instruction and direction, does it have the approval of God.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 413-414:

Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, "I know you not." The fellowship of the Spirit, which you have slighted, could alone make you one with the joyous throng at the marriage feast. In that scene you cannot participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its melody upon deaf ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of gladness in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.

We cannot be ready to meet the Lord by waking when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ

apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven.

In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. Their light burned with undimmed flame through the night of watching. It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom's honor. Shining out in the darkness, it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom, to the marriage feast.

There is a real contrast between the light shining out from God's people at this time and the surrounding darkness. This darkness is a moral darkness; it is not a darkness of knowledge or accomplishment, for the world is quite advanced in these things. Therefore, the contrast that will be presented to the world is a contrast of morals, not of knowledge. And this moral light is nothing less than the selflessness of Christ. That is the key!

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 414-415:

So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power...

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus

Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine.

Here we have a description of *Revelation 13*, when the entire world will marvel at the beast, when the image of the beast will be set up and all who do not worship it will be persecuted. That will be a night of darkness.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415:

2 Corinthians 4

⁶ [He causes] the light to shine out of darkness.

Genesis 1

² [When] the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep,...the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

³ And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.

So in the night of spiritual darkness, God's word goes forth, "Let there be light." To His people He says,

Isaiah 60

¹ Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

Here we have the text from *Isaiah 60*, which describes the last work.

Isaiah 60

² Behold, [says the Scripture,] the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you.

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.

This is the work outlined by the prophet Isaiah in the words,

Isaiah 40

⁹ O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.

"His character of love"—or of selflessness. Love is another word for selflessness. No love of money, no love of fame, but the love of God.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415-416:

The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness.

Here we find a description of the last work. Let us listen to these words very carefully because they give a precise outline of the right arm work in the last days. In *Acts 10:38* we read how Jesus went about doing good, and here we read the same thing.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 416-417:

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...

Acts 10

³⁸ ...with the Holy Ghost and with power, [and] went about doing good.

In the synagogue at Nazareth He said,

Luke 4

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has 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,

¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do.

Matthew 5

¹⁴ You are the light of the world, [He said].

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

This is the work which the prophet Isaiah describes when he says,

Isaiah 58

⁷ Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?

⁸ Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your reward.

Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn.

Sermonizing and Practical Work

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 417:

All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery. Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing.

When we read this statement, we tend to see it as a contrast: practical work on the one hand, and sermonizing on the other. Either we do practical work, or we give sermons! So we stop preaching and only do practical work. But this is not what the statement says; it says "mere sermonizing." There is a place for giving sermons, for presenting the truth to a congregation or in public. But this is the smaller part of the work.

How much time did Jesus spend in public teaching compared to His personal labor for the people? Only a small fraction! And I will later read some statements to you from Sister White which say that when the minister has preached his sermon, his work has merely begun. That's interesting—"merely begun." I thought that

was the end of his work. After I have preached a message to you, then I am finished and it is up to you to apply the message while I go and preach it somewhere else. But this is not the last work, and we really need to understand this. There is a place for preaching; but it is only the beginning, only a small fraction of the work.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 417:

Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.

It's one thing for a doctor to tell his patient that he has to do this and that, but it is another thing altogether to really apply it to him. The two are very different. It's important to tell him what he has to do, but it is far more important to apply it.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 418:

God calls not only for our gifts for the needy, but for our cheerful countenance, our hopeful words, our kindly handclasp. When Christ healed the sick, He laid His hands upon them. So should we come in close touch with those whom we seek to benefit.

There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.

We are not speaking of fellow believers here. Our fellow believers are a field where we can practice, but this refers to people from the world. People are more open for prayer than we think. I realized this when a neighbor came to me and asked for help. She was about to be admitted to the hospital, and her husband needed to be cared for while she was away. She asked if we could look after him, and I said, "Certainly we will." And then she asked me

to pray with her. The same thing happened with other people from the village. People are so open for prayer.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 418:

Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.

Light is a blessing, a universal blessing, pouring forth its treasures on a world unthankful, unholy, demoralized. So it is with the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The whole earth, wrapped as it is in the darkness of sin, and sorrow, and pain, is to be lighted with the knowledge of God's love. From no sect, rank, or class of people is the light shining from heaven's throne to be excluded.

The message of hope and mercy is to be carried to the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, may reach forth and take hold of God's strength and make peace with Him, and he shall make peace. No longer are the heathen to be wrapped in midnight darkness. The gloom is to disappear before the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The power of hell has been overcome.

All this takes place in a time of terrible darkness, when there is persecution. What a triumph for the gospel! There is no need to fear this persecution, because when we do the work as Jesus did it, there will be victory. And the greater the darkness, the greater the light will shine.

But no man can impart that which he himself has not received. In the work of God, humanity can originate nothing. No man can by his own effort make himself a light bearer for God. It was the golden oil emptied by the heavenly messengers into the golden tubes, to be conducted from the golden bowl into the lamps of the sanctuary, that produced a continuous bright and shining light. It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God.

I am the kind of a person who likes to organize others. I tend to think that I should preach and then let others go and pass the

message on to the people. I remember that as a child, I once gave a testimony in an evangelization. The adults had asked me to give a testimony of what Jesus meant to me. So I stood there and gave my testimony, and after the meeting some older youth came and wanted to talk to me, although I was much younger than them. Then the adults from our church came and started talking with them, and I was quite happy about that and withdrew from the scene. And this is what I like to do—start a fire and then let others care for it.

But this is not the work. We have to learn to do personal work, and I have to learn that now. Regardless of my age, I have to learn it and therefore I am in a school right now. That means that I cannot just give sermons; I have to work as well, and every one of us must learn the same. So if you have the opportunity to give a sermon, please do so; but remember that when the sermon is over, your work has just begun.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 419-420:

In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.

It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives.

The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others.

The Sun of Righteousness has “healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. So from every true disciple is to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness, and true healing.

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life.

Try to apply what we are reading here to your own work. In the right arm work, a lot of things need to be done that are not “personal work.” Preaching is not personal, especially when a large congregation is addressed. It has to be done, but remember that this is the smaller part. The bigger part is the personal work.

For example, consider the production of our health foods. Baking bread is not a personal work. It has to be done, but remember that your work has just begun when you have done it. Afterwards you have to offer it to the people, share it with them, eat it with them. You have to offer them the bread of life—this is the essence of your work. And let all your work in this area be directed towards this aim—to represent the love of the Saviour. This is what Jesus did. He showed the people the love of God, and our work is to show the people the love of the Saviour.

Sister White was filled with the love of God, and it was perfectly natural for her to speak about this love. She had seen it herself and her mind was full of it. Wherever she was, she spoke about the love of the Saviour. And this is our work too.

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 420:

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.

There is no point in me telling you what you should say to the people, how to heal them, and so on. That is not the point. The point is that:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 420:

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.

My prayer is that we will really understand that this is the work to be done in the last days. I still need to explain a bit about institutions in the last days, and for this we will look at how Jesus sent out the disciples. When He sent them out, He did so in an organized way, and that was two by two. And in fact, two people are an institution because they have to work together.

Many people are asking how this will be in the last days. In order to answer this question, we need to investigate and search, and so I would like to invite you to contribute your findings. Then we can pray intelligently for a preparation for the last work.

3. The Way of Jesus

OUR quest is to investigate how Jesus actually worked when He was on this earth. How did He do true medical missionary work? To understand what true medical missionary work is, we must look at how Jesus did it. This is the measuring rod, the “tuning fork” which helps us all to sing at the same pitch, so to speak. It enables us to do the same work, even if we are scattered throughout the world.

The Holy Spirit is present everywhere to guide us, as Jesus promised. He said that it was good for Him to leave, because then the Holy Spirit, who could be everywhere at once, would come.

The Institution of the Church

In order to understand the work Jesus did, we want to look at institutions. We certainly know that institutions have been a part of God’s work in the past and are a part of it today as well. Perhaps I should briefly define what we mean by the term “institution.” An institution is an organization of people. It is people working together in an organized way. We want to know what are God’s thoughts on such organizations.

For many people, the word “institution” has a very negative sound to it. For example, people often think that “institutionalism” or to “institutionalize something” means creating an impersonal monster that swallows up everything. This is a common idea. Some of the people who have left this movement have even criticized us for the organization we have, as insignificant as it is. They thought it was wrong to have any organization at all. But as we will see, Jesus founded an institution, and that is the institute of the church.

First let me turn to some statements about how the church operated after it was instituted. In *The Acts of the Apostles*, we find some guidelines in the context of Paul’s ministry. Paul worked according to the plan Jesus laid out.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 363-364:

A pastor should mingle freely with the people for whom he labors, that by becoming acquainted with them he may know how to adapt his teaching to their needs. When a minister has preached a sermon, his work has but just begun. There is personal work for him to do. He should visit the people in their homes, talking and praying with them in earnestness and humility. There are families who will never be reached by the truths of God's word unless the stewards of His grace enter their homes and point them to the higher way. But the hearts of those who do this work must throb in unison with the heart of Christ.

Much is comprehended in the command,

Luke 14

²³ Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Let ministers teach the truth in families, drawing close to those for whom they labor, and as they thus cooperate with God, He will clothe them with spiritual power. Christ will guide them in their work, giving them words to speak that will sink deep into the hearts of the listeners. It is the privilege of every minister to be able to say with Paul,

Acts 20

²⁷ I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

²⁰ I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

²¹ ...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Saviour went from house to house, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate.

Maybe you are aware of many thoughts and statements that are circulated about how we should do house-to-house work. We know about canvassers who go from door to door, knocking at every house. But the true meaning of house-to-house work is described here. It means visiting the people in their homes. The Saviour went from house to house, but He not only did that; He

also healed the sick, comforted the mourners, soothed the afflicted, and spoke peace to the disconsolate.

He was not always alone in people's houses. When He went to the house of Peter's mother-in-law, for instance, there was quite a crowd of people with Him—so many, in fact, that the friends of a sick man had to remove the roof of the house in order to reach Him. He was often surrounded by people. But at other times He would be alone. Remember how He said to Zacchaeus,

“Today I must come visit you!”²

Zacchaeus was so happy. He never would have dared to invite Jesus to his home. Can you imagine that there are people who would never dare to invite us, but who would be more than happy if we told them “I must come and visit your home”? Such people do exist, and it is important for us to really see this and be guided to them by the Holy Spirit.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 364:

The Saviour went from house to house, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke words of hope and comfort to the weary mothers. With unflinching tenderness and gentleness He met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for himself but for others did He labor. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to bring hope and strength to all with whom He came in contact. And as men and women listened to the truths that fell from His lips, so different from the traditions and dogmas taught by the rabbis, hope sprang up in their hearts. In His teaching there was an earnestness that sent His words home with convicting power.

When we study about institutions, this still holds true. We need to understand that personal work is still the main method of labor.

² Luke 19:5.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 364-365:

God's ministers are to learn Christ's method of laboring, that they may bring from the storehouse of His word that which will supply the spiritual needs of those for whom they labor. Thus only can they fulfill their trust. The same Spirit that dwelt in Christ as He imparted the instruction He was constantly receiving, is to be the source of their knowledge and the secret of their power in carrying on the Saviour's work in the world.

Although this statement is describing Paul's ministry, it gives an insight into the ministry of Jesus and how He worked. I would like to read a second statement from the same book. It says the same thing, but it's good to find this principle stated in more than one place. This will help it sink into our minds.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 527:

The work of the gospel minister is...

Ephesians 3

⁹ To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.

If one entering upon this work chooses the least self-sacrificing part, contenting himself with preaching, and leaving the work of personal ministry for someone else, his labors will not be acceptable to God. Souls for whom Christ died are perishing for want of well-directed, personal labor; and he has mistaken his calling who, entering upon the ministry, is unwilling to do the personal work that the care of the flock demands.

The spirit of the true shepherd is one of self-forgetfulness. He loses sight of self in order that he may work the works of God. By the preaching of the word and by personal ministry in the homes of the people, he learns their needs, their sorrows, their trials; and, cooperating with the great Burden Bearer, he shares their afflictions, comforts their distresses, relieves their soul hunger, and wins their hearts to God. In this work the minister is attended by the angels of heaven, and he himself is instructed and enlightened in the truth that maketh wise unto salvation.

It is obviously a temptation for us to leave the work to some organized institution or to some other person. Paul himself had experienced this. As long as he, a very powerful preacher, was

among the believers, they often excused themselves from doing their personal work. Once he was in prison, however, they not only realized the privilege they had enjoyed while he was with them; they were also aroused to take up personal responsibility. They now began to visit the people as Paul had done before and shown them to do by his example.

But now you may question:

“How can I do this work if I also have to earn a livelihood to take care of myself and my family? I would be glad to do this work all the time, but it just isn’t possible.”

Even those working full-time in the right arm work don’t always find themselves in direct contact with people. Let’s say you are producing food, working in the bakery from morning until evening. Or perhaps you are doing bookkeeping all day.

“Oh,” you say, “how I wish I could leave this job and go and talk with people! But the work just swallows me up.”

And,

“I’m supposed to be doing right arm work, and I hear that right arm work is personal work. Yet here I am, just baking bread.”

Is something wrong? Should we all leave these tasks in order to go to the people? This is quite a natural question. I used to have all the free time I needed to go and speak with people, and now I really have to struggle to sit down and study my medical books instead. Sometimes people ask me to come to their country, and I have to respond,

“I’m sorry. That’s right in the middle of my final exams.”

This is not easy for me. But must we choose the one or the other? This morning I really prayed to find the answer. I asked the Lord,

“What is really Your will? What direction should we really go?”

Nehemiah's Example

And one thing that came to my mind as I was praying was the story of Nehemiah. I think you are well acquainted with this story. Nehemiah was the king's cup-bearer. While he was diligently working for the king, his heart was not with his work; it was with God's cause, which was the rebuilding of the wall at Jerusalem. Yet here he was, tied to his secular employment. How could he do what was in his heart?

Nehemiah did not just run away to Jerusalem of his own accord. He knew that this desire was put into his heart by the Lord, so he gave it back to God and asked Him to guide. He also developed a plan in his mind to go and help his people; but he gave this plan back to God as well, knowing that if it was from God, then God would open the way. Meanwhile Nehemiah continued to do his job faithfully. In fact it was this faithfulness that had earned him a high position at the king's court.

The king would not have just anybody as his cup-bearer. This was a very responsible position, and Nehemiah literally had the king's life in his hands because in those days, many kings were poisoned. He had to make sure that the cup he gave the king was pure. The cup-bearer was a man of greatest trustworthiness. It was Nehemiah's task, and therefore he was a very trusted, diligent, and good worker. He was not slack. Any slackness in this line would have meant death to the king, and Nehemiah's certain removal from the position.

So Nehemiah was diligently doing this work, while at the same time he carried God's cause in his heart. He was so affected by the sad state of affairs at Jerusalem that he often wept and had to wash his face before going into the king's presence. Nehemiah knew that the king always watched to be sure his servants were happy, and did not like to see any sadness on their faces. Everything had to be pleasant in his presence; so Nehemiah hid his sorrow. But one day the king realized that Nehemiah had been weeping and asked him what was wrong. Nehemiah could not disguise

what was really in his heart, so he openly told the king of his sorrow. Then the king asked him:

“What do you want? What is your desire?”

This was a totally unexpected reaction on the king’s part; but it was prompted by the Lord, and Nehemiah knew it. At this moment he felt absolutely incapable, so he quickly prayed to God, and the Lord gave him the strength to formulate his plan to the king. Then all the pieces fell into place, and Nehemiah received everything he wanted.

So he came to Jerusalem, and I want to read with you what happened after his arrival there. The way that Nehemiah did a faithful job in his work with the king, but at the same time had God’s cause first in his heart, was exactly the same way that the workers had to build the wall in Jerusalem. In this context one statement really caught my eye.

Nehemiah 4

¹⁵ And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work.

¹⁶ So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah.

¹⁷ Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon.

¹⁸ Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

These precautions were absolutely necessary because they were in constant danger. How much they would have liked to devote themselves completely to building!

“Building is the priority,”

–they could have said.

“Building the wall is God’s work. But instead of being able to concentrate on that, we have to wear armor and bear swords, and maybe even fight. And not only that; the fighting is also totally needless, because it’s clear that to build this wall is both the will of the king and God’s plan. The only reason for this hindrance is some jealous people who keep delaying the work again and again, and keep us from focusing on the work.”

They could have argued this way; but they did not. They worked happily. This whole story is a spiritual lesson because it speaks of the building of the wall. In *Isaiah* 58 God’s Sabbath-keeping people are called,

Isaiah 58

¹² ...the repairers of the breach.

This chapter talks about Jesus’ personal work and was included in the chapter “To Meet the Bridegroom,” which we read in our last study from *Christ’s Object Lessons*. Now we will read further on in *Isaiah*, beginning in verse ten.

¹⁰ If you extend your soul to the hungry...

This is the personal work to be done in the last days. This is the way we are to prepare the world for Jesus’ coming and lighten the path for Him.

¹⁰ If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

¹² Those from among you shall build the old waste places.

In one sense, this is a prophecy of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. *Isaiah* lived before that time, but he looked forward to when the walls would be built again. Yet the building of the wall was only a metaphor for the building of a spiritual wall, which is the kingdom of God. The old waste places are also the old truths, which have been buried under a lot of error.

¹² You shall raise up the foundations of many generations.

In other words, the truths that many generations have found will all be brought together in the last days.

Isaiah 58

¹² ...And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

What is the breach that needs to be repaired? We read this in the next verse.

¹³ If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words:

What is the breach? The old waste places are all the errors that exist. The breach in the wall is the breaking of the commandments, especially the Sabbath commandment, which the whole Christian world has dishonored and is dishonoring by setting up another command that God never gave. That command is based solely on the authority of men, and resulted from the church's connection with Constantine. This breach will once more be repaired. How? Just as the chapter describes—through personal work. The character of God must be preached together with the restoring of His commandments. When the Sabbath is preached in full power, it will be preached by people who do Christ's work and follow His methods.

¹³ ...the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words:

This describes a people who are totally selfless. They do not pursue their own business, but follow God's ways alone.

¹⁴ Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

This is the promise of the new earth, which is given to those who close the breach that has been made by breaking God's commandments.

Let me come back again to the builders of the wall in Nehemiah's time who were closing the breach. They are a symbol; and as they closed the breach, so we are to close it. Were they undisturbed in this work? No, they were not. They had to keep their swords in their hands. Some of them had to stand on guard wearing armor. So it is today too. We might like to work only in contact with people and be near to them; but in serving the people, we have other tasks to do as well, just as Nehemiah did when he was in the presence of the king. Some of us are more involved with people than others; but all of us need to be involved on both sides. Every worker had a sword in his hand; and everyone who had a sword was a worker. No one could excuse himself by saying,

"Well, I'm just responsible for defending the city. I have nothing to do with building the wall."

Everybody had to build the wall. Likewise, every one of God's people is called upon to do the work described in *Isaiah* 58. No one can say,

"No; this is the work of the preacher. My work is to just earn money so that the preacher has something to live on."

That would be like a soldier saying,

"My work isn't building. My work is just to defend the city so that the builders can work."

No; every man had to have his turn. Every family was given a certain portion of the wall, and they all worked on it. But at the same time, they all had swords in their hands. The answer is really that we are to do both. We are never to be so engrossed in our occupations that we no longer have time for the work of *Isaiah* 58. If that is the case, then we will lose because we are not faithful workers. On the other hand, we must not expect to be

able to lay down the sword. We must still take it up and earn a living.

Even Paul did this. He was a tent-maker and a spiritual worker at the same time. The one occupation supported the other. Even as he was diligently making tents, he still sought avenues to reach those with whom he worked. That is how he came into contact with Aquila and Priscilla.³ As they made tents, he talked with them about the gospel.

Paul was a full-time right arm worker in every respect, even while he was earning a livelihood. These are the kind of workers God needs in the last days. He needs those who are ready to do both—to build the wall and to hold a sword in their hands. These are the kind of workers with whom Jesus built His first institution.

How Jesus Built the Institution

Now I would like to consider how Jesus built that institution. We will not be able to study everything, but we will at least start.

Mark 3

¹³ And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He himself wanted. And they came to Him.

¹⁴ Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.

Other Bible passages say ordained instead of appointed. With the ordination of the twelve disciples, Jesus really began the institute of the church. This lesson Jesus gave us is important. When we think of an institution or a center, what is the first thing we think of? A building. We think of a property and a building. But Jesus did not begin with a property. He did not begin with a building. Instead, He began with people. He called the twelve to himself, appointed them to be with Him, and anointed them...

¹⁴ ...that He might send them out to preach,

¹⁵ And to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.

³ See *Acts* 18:2.

The church is to do all the things described here, and it is all personal work. It is the same personal work that Jesus did. Jesus intentionally started His institution without a building or a property. Let us look at a further text, which adds more detail.

Luke 9

⁵⁷ Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.

That person was Judas.

⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

Although these words were especially to Judas, Jesus said them publicly. Why did He speak this way to Judas? Because Judas had a different idea of what an institution should be. The rest of the disciples didn't have the right idea either; but their minds were still more impressionable. Judas was rigidly fixed in his ideas of how the institution they were establishing should be. The other disciples probably agreed with him too; so Jesus had to warn them. Therefore He said,

⁵⁸ Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

How can you establish an institution without a building? Can you imagine this? Can you establish a medical missionary institution without a building or a property? Jesus did.

⁵⁸ Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

Does this mean that they always slept outside? No. Where did they sleep? They slept in people's homes, wherever they were invited and welcomed. You see, if they had owned a building right from the beginning, then they would have been satisfied. They would have simply slept there. But in this way they were dependent upon others' hospitality. In this way Jesus set the tenor of their work from its very first moments. The work is not established on buildings; it is founded on personal work.

Luke 9

⁵⁸ Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

In saying this, we are not stating that God never works through buildings and properties. After all, He himself instructed His people to build a temple. But so that we should not forget what the work really is, Jesus established it in this way.

Again, Jesus did not establish the work on nothing. He had something much more important than property and buildings, and that was people. He had the eleven disciples. Judas pressed in, and Jesus gave him a chance just like the others; but Judas pressed in with his own ideas. These ideas he constantly sought to force through, and he influenced the other disciples to adopt them. Jesus allowed him to do so until things were clear enough for a separation to take place.

But the ordination of the disciples shows that people are what's most important. We might have a property and a building; but if we have no people, or people who are like Judas, then the institution will be a terrible mess. There is tremendous wisdom in the way Jesus established the institution of the church. Many people overlook Jesus' statement to Judas,

⁵⁸ Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

Now I would like to read from the chapter "He Ordained Twelve," in *The Desire of Ages*. He ordained twelve. He did not ordain one. This cannot be overstressed. Why did He ordain twelve? Because He wanted them to work together. An institution is a place where people work together in an organized fashion. This is what Jesus founded.

The Desire of Ages, p. 290:

Mark 3

¹³ And He went up into a mountain, and called unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him.

¹⁴ And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.

It was beneath the sheltering trees of the mountainside, but a little distance from the Sea of Galilee, that the twelve were called to the apostolate, and the Sermon on the Mount was given. The fields and hills were the favorite resorts of Jesus, and much of His teaching was given under the open sky, rather than in the temple or the synagogues. No synagogue could have received the throngs that followed Him; but not for this reason only did He choose to teach in the fields and groves. Jesus loved the scenes of nature. To Him each quiet retreat was a sacred temple.

It was under the trees of Eden that the first dwellers on earth had chosen their sanctuary. There Christ had communed with the father of mankind. When banished from Paradise, our first parents still worshiped in the fields and groves, and there Christ met them with the gospel of His grace. It was Christ who spoke with Abraham under the oaks at Mamre; with Isaac as he went out to pray in the fields at the eventide; with Jacob on the hillside at Bethel; with Moses among the mountains of Midian; and with the boy David as he watched his flocks. It was at Christ's direction that for fifteen centuries the Hebrew people had left their homes for one week every year, and had dwelt in booths formed from the green branches...

Leviticus 23

⁴⁰ ...of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook.

Everything we read here points to how Jesus honored nature and how even nature itself can be a building, or a center, for us.

The Desire of Ages, p. 291:

In training His disciples, Jesus chose to withdraw from the confusion of the city to the quiet of the fields and hills, as more in harmony with the lessons of self-abnegation He desired to teach them.

I think we all have a wrong concept of what an institution should be. At our missionary seminar, how much time did we spend teaching outside in nature? And how much time did we spend indoors? If I were to do it again, I would remember to follow Christ's pattern more closely.

The Desire of Ages, p. 291:

And during His ministry He loved to gather the people about Him under the blue heavens, on some grassy hillside, or on the beach beside the lake. Here, surrounded by the works of His own creation, He could turn the thoughts of His hearers from the artificial to the natural. In the growth and development of nature were revealed the principles of His kingdom. As men should lift up their eyes to the hills of God, and behold the wonderful works of His hands, they could learn precious lessons of divine truth. Christ's teaching would be repeated to them in the things of nature. So it is with all who go into the fields with Christ in their hearts. They will feel themselves surrounded with a holy influence. The things of nature take up the parables of our Lord, and repeat His counsels. By communion with God in nature, the mind is uplifted, and the heart finds rest.

The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church.

We could also read "in the institution of the church," because it is the same thing.

The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to be His representative on earth. No costly sanctuary was at their command...

You could argue that the church wasn't so developed back then and that Jesus didn't have the means; and this is true. But do we have the means to build churches everywhere now? We have this center here, and we are thankful for it. But in many parts of the world field, we don't have a building.

...but the Saviour led His disciples to the retreat He loved, and in their minds the sacred experiences of that day were forever linked with the beauty of mountain and vale and sea.

Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as His witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, and was second only to that of Christ himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world. As in the Old Testament the twelve pa-

triarchs stand as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles were to stand as representatives of the gospel church.

The Saviour knew the character of the men whom He had chosen...

When God chooses people today, He knows their character too. He knows our weaknesses. He knows the Judases, who will eventually go away. He also knows the Peters, who have their crises but who remain firm. He knows us. And often, when I look at the material God has today in comparison with the disciples, I must say there is indeed a striking similarity.

The Desire of Ages, p. 291-292:

The Saviour knew the character of the men whom He had chosen; all their weaknesses and errors were open before Him; He knew the perils through which they must pass, the responsibility that would rest upon them; and His heart yearned over these chosen ones. Alone upon a mountain near the Sea of Galilee He spent the entire night in prayer for them, while they were sleeping at the foot of the mountain. With the first light of dawn He summoned them to meet Him; for He had something of importance to communicate to them.

These disciples had been for some time associated with Jesus in active labor. John and James, Andrew and Peter, with Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew, had been more closely connected with Him than the others, and had witnessed more of His miracles. Peter, James, and John stood in still nearer relationship to Him. They were almost constantly with Him, witnessing His miracles, and hearing His words. John pressed into still closer intimacy with Jesus, so that he is distinguished as the one whom Jesus loved. The Saviour loved them all, but John's was the most receptive spirit.

What this makes clear is that Jesus showed no favoritism. He did not give some disciples more attention than others; instead, the closer disciples were closer because they drew nearer to Him. There were some who really wanted to be close to Jesus, and therefore they were more blessed.

The Desire of Ages, p. 292:

He was younger than the others,...

This means he probably did not have so much experience with which to make many plans for Jesus.

...and with more of the child's confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and through him the Saviour's deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to His people.

At the head of one of the groups into which the apostles are divided stands the name of Philip. He was the first disciple to whom Jesus addressed the distinct command, "Follow me."⁴ Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. He had listened to the teaching of John the Baptist, and had heard his announcement of Christ as the Lamb of God. Philip was a sincere seeker for truth, but he was slow of heart to believe. Although he had joined himself to Christ, yet his announcement of Him to Nathanael shows that he was not fully convinced of the divinity of Jesus. Though Christ had been proclaimed by the voice from heaven as the Son of God, to Philip He was...

John 1

⁴⁵ Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Again, when the five thousand were fed, Philip's lack of faith was shown. It was to test him that Jesus questioned,

John 6

⁵ Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

Philip's answer was on the side of unbelief:

⁷ Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Jesus was grieved. Although Philip had seen His works and felt His power, yet he had not faith. When the Greeks inquired of Philip concerning Jesus, he did not seize upon the opportunity of introducing them to the Saviour, but he went to tell Andrew. Again, in those last hours before the crucifixion, the words of Philip were such as to discourage faith. When Thomas said to Jesus,

⁴ *John* 1:43.

John 14

⁵ Lord, we know not whither You go; and how can we know the way?

–the Saviour answered,

⁶ I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life...

⁷ If you had known me, you should have known my Father also.

From Philip came the response of unbelief:

⁸ Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.

So slow of heart, so weak in faith, was that disciple who for three years had been with Jesus.

The reason I have read this with you is because we want to see ourselves in it. We are the institution, and this institution must be firmly established. Although Jesus had organized people, He had no organized locality. Even at His last meal, the Lord's Supper, He was a guest somewhere. But there was always a door open for Him, and this is a lesson for us. We are a small people too; but we are like the disciples, and we need to learn from them and from Jesus. We need to see how Jesus dealt with them. This is why we want to dwell a little more on this chapter, in order to understand how the Lord is working in these last days.

In saying all this I do not mean that it is always wrong to have a meeting place or a building that serves as a center from which we can work. The point is that such places are not obligatory. The way Jesus started His work is the way we are to start ours too—with people rather than with buildings.

4. Out of the Common Order

The Looming Crisis

WE BEGAN by looking at the situation in the world, which is on the brink of a large-scale crisis. The growing shortage of raw materials is closely connected with the worsening state of our economy, and the world is also suffering increasingly under the abuse of the pollution that goes hand in hand with our technology. When this crisis hits, we will no longer be able to take for granted the liberties we enjoy today.

All this has been recognized by various people in the world. I quoted a German military report that was leaked to the public. There is a lot of leaking today. Perhaps such reports are even leaked intentionally in order to prepare people for what is coming upon us. This report states that the coming oil crisis will be so severe that we will no longer be able to function as a free market economy. A planned economy will be put in place, which will be very distasteful to people. They will see the situation as a systemic crisis. This will increase the danger of nations breaking up into factions, which will require further control.

We have looked briefly into prophecy to see what the Bible says about the times ahead. *Revelation* 13 describes the fact that the world will try to unify, and this as a matter of mere survival and not just out of a desire for aggrandizement. This chapter says clearly that the two-horned beast will erect an image to the first beast, and that the whole world will be unified in worshiping that first beast. A mark will be created, which we understand to be the enacting of a false day of worship, Sunday, by political power. The aim of this move will be purportedly to bring the world back under God's blessing. The entire world will be required to receive that mark. All of these things will result from the crisis ahead.

Our question in that context was:

“What is our role as God's people? Where do we stand?”

There are a lot of decisions to be made and questions to be answered, especially in connection with how we should proceed as a people in the various countries where we are located.

“Should we purchase property and erect a center?”

“How should we go forward with the right arm work?”

“How shall we continue to serve the people?”

In the past, the Lord has marvelously opened the health food work as the most interesting way to access the people. Medical missionary work in directly treating sick people has also opened up. Our question is:

“How shall we continue and in what capacity?”

As you know, some of the young people from our church and I are going to university.

“What is our purpose there? Why do we attend university, especially in view of what is going to happen very soon?”

We do not know exactly how soon it will be, but you can somehow feel that it is on the brink. To answer this we looked at the life of Jesus and His ministry, because Jesus’ way of doing right arm work is our pattern. This is the basis upon which we build our quest of understanding our role in this last battle. We want to work as Jesus did.

Parallels Between Christ’s Ministry and Ours

There are parallels between Jesus’ ministry and ours, as we will see more clearly later. The way He began His public ministry, and the way He conducted His work at the end of His public ministry, are also examples for us. They are a pattern of how we should work in this world. Even the persecution He received is a pattern and shows us what will come upon us. We must not be blinded to the fact that the more powerfully God works through His people to present the gospel, the more powerful the enmity of the world will become. Satan does not like this at all, which is why we will have a repetition of the situation as it was when Jesus was on this earth.

Another parallel is the fact that the world had reached a low point when Jesus came. He was living at a time when sin had become a real science, something that people were striving to do. Sin was not sin anymore. Satan had total control over many people's bodies and minds, which is evident in the frequent biblical reports of mad people. They were truly controlled by demons. This possession did not just happen by chance, but was the result of society's increasing departure from the Spirit of God. And when everyone—even the angels—expected God to withdraw, instead He sent His son into this darkness, as a contrast. This contrast between light and darkness will be repeated.

We studied *Isaiah 60*, which is a double prophecy both of Jesus' work and of ours.

Isaiah 60

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

We saw how Jesus conducted His work. He did personal work; He did not work through large institutions. We then studied the importance of personal work. I would just like to repeat one statement with you which describes this very well.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 363:

A pastor should mingle freely with the people for whom he labors, that by becoming acquainted with them he may know how to adapt his teaching to their needs. When a minister has preached a sermon, his work has but just begun. There is personal work for him to do. He should visit the people in their homes, talking and praying with them in earnestness and humility. There are families who will never be reached by the truths of God's word unless the stewards of His grace enter their homes and point them to the higher way. But the hearts of those who do this work must throb in unison with the heart of Christ.

God really wants to place His character within us and make us His personal laborers. That is quite a commission. We, as humans, have a tendency to want to institutionalize everything. We like to refer things to an institution. In Western countries especially, we

have many institutions. We have institutions for the elderly, for the sick, for the unemployed, and we consider these things a blessing because they give these people somewhere to go.

In a way these institutions really are a blessing. But they cause many people to refuse personal responsibility, and as a result the institutions grow cold and impersonal. Technically speaking, everything is sterile and correct. But there is no one on the other side who cares and loves anymore. There is no warm handclasp, no word of cheer and encouragement. Elderly people merely get correct food and correct bedding, or maybe not even that, because everything also has to be as cheap and as fast as possible. People are just not interested in personal work anymore. This is the problem of our time.

The Divine Way of Building

We have looked at how God wants an institution to be run. Again, we returned to Jesus as our Pattern, who shows us how an institution should really work. Jesus instituted the church. That was the first institution He established. He did not do this by first purchasing a property and then erecting a building on it. Instead, He instituted the church by going to the mountain with His twelve disciples and ordaining them for the ministry.

There was one disciple, Judas, who did not really consider this a proper institution. He thought, as most people do today, that an institution cannot function without a property, building, etc. He joined Jesus and the disciples, hoping that eventually these palaces would follow and that they would reign. But right from the beginning, Jesus disappointed his hopes. From the first moment Jesus said,

Luke 9

⁵⁸ Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

By this Jesus made it clear that His institution is established on people and not buildings. This is the most important lesson about institutions which Jesus gives us. This means that what God

needs in order to have an institution of the right kind—to take its place in the last work—is people. He needs people like the disciples. In our previous studies we have looked at the disciples as well. Before continuing, I would like to mention a few other thoughts we have stated in this regard. The question always comes up:

“Am I doing the right work?”

The work is at its end; it is coming to a close. We see this and know it from the word of prophecy. We realize it when we watch the news. This prompts us to ask whether we shouldn't be doing full-time ministry in the right arm work. Even those who are doing right arm work often have a lot of technical things to do. Sometimes they are baking bread or producing health food for others. They do this from morning till evening and ask themselves,

“Will this really end the work? Or will it just feed some people who may not even appreciate it?”

Someone else may be doing another work which is good in itself, and yet be asking,

“Is this really God's work?”

In order for any work to be right arm work, we must do it in a selfless spirit. A selfless spirit means without any self-interest; without any interest in making a profit; without any interest in securing my own life. The only way a work can be true right arm work and stand in the last test is if we are really interested in blessing the people—showing them God's character, and recruiting them to be part of God's army in the last battle. Only when the work is absolutely selfless in heart will it qualify. Otherwise Jesus will one day say,

“I know you not.”

“But haven't we done this, and that, and the other?” we will ask.

“Haven't we baked bread?”

They were all healthy things, weren't they?

"Haven't we had so many patients in our office? Didn't we save so many lives?"

But He will respond,

"I know you not."

And this is the most dreaded thing to hear. In order to hear the words,

"Well done, good and faithful servant,"

—we need to have the spirit of Christ. Let me read this again.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 363:

But the hearts of those who do this work must throb in unison with the heart of Christ.

In other words, you may visit many people personally; but if your heart doesn't throb in unison with Christ's, He will one day say,

"I know you not."

This really shows how important the right spirit is in doing this work. Still, we ask ourselves:

"Am I doing the right work? Shouldn't I be going to people's homes instead?"

Many of us do have the drive and urge to do this, but are hindered by many technical things must be done and which also serve people. In this connection we looked at the example of Nehemiah, who served the king faithfully as a cup-bearer while having God's cause in his heart at the same time. He also asked himself whether he was doing the right work.

Nehemiah had a very influential position; but what good did it do if it could not serve to bless the people of God, who were building Jerusalem? So he prayed much in this situation, and the plan developed in his mind to go to Jerusalem and lead out in the work. He gave this plan back to God and, as you know, eventually God opened the way for him to go. This spirit of Nehemiah's is

the spirit of those who do the last work. Regardless of where they stand today, the uppermost thing in their hearts is the work of God and the success of His cause.

Even after Nehemiah came to Jerusalem through God's providence, the people who were building the wall still had no rest. Their enemies were constantly pressing them, trying to get into and destroy the city. To meet this challenge, the workers needed to have their tools in one hand, and weapons to fight their enemies in the other.

This is symbolic for the work we have to do today. On one hand, we have the everyday things that we need to do in life. However, these things must not hinder us from doing the other work, which is to build the wall at the same time. The building of the wall is the actual restoring of the knowledge of God's character in this world. It is the restoration of the law of God and the repairing of the breach in that wall. This breach was the transgression of His law—particularly the abolishing of the fourth commandment, which was changed by human authority into another commandment altogether. This commandment needs to be restored again. It needs to be restored by a people who truly represent God's character, and who show what God is like.

Again, we are like the builders on the wall. We have to build, but at the same time, we have to deal with many other things that may not be direct personal work. For example, I am studying. Another person is baking; another person is doing bookkeeping. All of us ask ourselves,

“Wouldn't this time be better spent by going and helping people?”

But we have to do both. We cannot afford to do only one or the other. Jesus did both. Paul did both, working as a tent maker and as a preacher. Even while Paul was making tents, he was doing missionary work. Personal work on a one-to-one basis must go hand in hand with the work of serving people in the background. The two must go together.

On the other hand, we also tend to think that direct, personal work on the front line is someone else's responsibility. We see our responsibility in simply supplying the necessary organization for the other person's work. We like to send others, to delegate tasks to others, and to *stay at home* ourselves. But this is not what God wants. He wants *me* to go too. For this reason we all have to do both sides of the work.

Close to Nature

Let's now turn back to the disciples and look more closely at how Jesus instituted the church which was to accomplish His work. We previously read from the chapter "He Ordained Twelve" in *The Desire of Ages*. What impressed us most was that Jesus did not choose a building in which to establish His institution, the church; rather, He chose nature. He went out into nature with them to ordain them. The most important work ever done—the work of establishing the church which would continue the work after Christ's ascension—was done in the temple of nature, which God himself made without human intervention. This is the pattern Jesus left for us.

When we consider how to go forward with the work, we must strive to connect it more closely with the things God has made. This is very important.

I've considered how we conducted our missionary seminars almost exclusively indoors. We should not completely avoid doing anything in a room—we are in a room now, for example, and it would not be possible for us to communicate internationally without being in this room—but at the same time, we must not become dependent on buildings, properties, and rooms. It is important that we come closer to nature.

I determined yesterday to spend more time in nature, because that is where God is present, and where His handiwork is found. I need this balance; we all need it; otherwise we become too involved and too engrossed in the things humans have made.

Using Imperfect Vessels

After explaining how Jesus established His institution in nature, Ellen White describes the characters of the disciples. When we build a house, we use the best material available. Jesus also used the best material that was available, but nonetheless it was not perfect material. There were doubting Philip and Thomas, as well as Nathanael and others. But although we see their weaknesses, we also see strengths in them. Everything is described in a very open way. This helps us to understand that despite the fact that we are not perfect at this stage, God can still use us.

One thing is sure: all of the disciples except Judas were willing to be taught. They truly desired to do Jesus' work, and their desire was not superficial; it was very deep. They were not repulsed when everyone left Jesus. Instead, when He asked them if they would leave Him as well, they answered,

“Where shall we go?”⁵

This qualification is necessary for us today too. Like the first disciples, we also have weaknesses today; and just as the disciples needed to overcome, so we need to overcome these weaknesses now.

The Desire of Ages, p. 293:

In happy contrast to Philip's unbelief was the childlike trust of Nathanael. He was a man of intensely earnest nature, one whose faith took hold upon unseen realities. Yet Philip was a student in the school of Christ, and the divine Teacher bore patiently with his unbelief and dullness. When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, Philip became a teacher after the divine order. He knew whereof he spoke, and he taught with an assurance that carried conviction to the hearers.

While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them.

The reason why so much focus is given to Judas in the Bible is because his experience is a very deep and close lesson for each

⁵ *John* 6:68.

one of us. Very often people use Judas' example to justify wrong things. For example, many say that since Jesus had so much patience with Judas, He must have patience with them too. Then they claim that they—with their ideas, plans, and sins—can still participate in God's work. They base this claim on the patience Christ had towards Judas. This is a wrong use of Judas' example.

It is true that Jesus had patience with Judas, but He would not tolerate his ways, his ideas, or his sins. There was no room for these in the work of Jesus. So if you claim that you should be accepted with your sins, using the ground that Jesus accepted Judas, you are very, very wrong. This is not the case. We should rather see ourselves as those who deal with Judas, instead of as Judas who is to be dealt with. We should think and pray about how to deal with those who are trying to bring their own plans, ideas, and sins into the work. This is more our focus.

Another question to ask ourselves is,

“How can we avoid going down the same pathway that Judas did?”

This question is even more important. These are the only two reasons why the story of Judas is given in the word of God, and why we are studying it.

The Desire of Ages, p. 293:

While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples. With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared,

Matthew 8

¹⁹ Master, I will follow You whithersoever You go.

Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words:

²⁰ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay His head.

Here we see why Jesus said this. He said this to make it clear how He would establish the institution of His church.

The Desire of Ages, p. 293-294:

Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty.

The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number.

The same spirit that was in Judas also moved the other disciples to some extent. This is the reason they wanted him to join their number. Very often we ask ourselves the question,

“How can I prevent someone from being influenced by other people?”

Perhaps we want to prevent our children from being influenced by other children who misbehave a lot of the time, or we may want to prevent fellow believers from being negatively influenced by people who are worldly-minded. But the more important question, which we need to begin with, is:

“Why are our children or fellow believers even attracted to these people? Why is there even a possibility that such an influence may take hold?”

It is because there is an interest. There is some sympathy in the heart, and this is what really needs to be dealt with, rather than the superficial outward influence.

In the great controversy between God and Satan, Satan gained much sympathy from the angels. We know that a third of them joined him in open sympathy. The other two thirds remained loyal to God, but they still had their questions. This sympathy between the angels and Satan is what God dealt with. He did not deal so much with Satan himself, but dealt rather with the link of sympathy that was present in the angels. He did this by revealing His character and by sending His Son to the world. This is how

God removed the problem. Jesus dealt with Judas in the same way.

Out of the Common Order

Looking a little further we can see that Judas had a certain expectation as to how the work should proceed. He thought it should follow a certain way. His ideas were actually quite common. They reflected the mainstream thinking of his time and seemed sensible.

“You don’t institute a kingdom with just a dozen men, and without a building, property, palace, or soldiers! That’s just not done!”

This is how Judas thought. Let’s look at a few statements that illustrate how God will work in the last days. It is very important that, as a people, we come into harmony with God’s ideas, so that we will do God’s work in this last work.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 299:

Oh, that the Lord might guide you! You should never in a single instance allow hearsay to move you to action, and yet you have sometimes done this. Never take action to narrow and circumscribe the work unless you know that you are moved to do so by the Spirit of the Lord. Our people are doing work for foreign missions, but there are home missions that need their help just as much as these foreign missions.

It is comfortable for us to send out missionaries so that we ourselves can stay uninvolved at home. This is avoiding personal responsibility. It’s good to support such missionaries with your prayers, but sometimes it is also necessary to do work yourself. There is a mission field with work to be done right at home.

We should make efforts to show our people the wants of the cause of God, and to open before them the need of using means that God has entrusted to them to advance the work of the Master both at home and abroad. Unless those who can help in ___ are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up

to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas.

This is exactly what Judas wanted to do. Whenever Christ had a certain plan, Judas had another. Judas' ideas were narrow; but in his mind, his ideas were more far-reaching than the ideas that Jesus had. Judas thought that Jesus' work was narrow and that He had narrow ideas.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 299:

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.

Those who are accounted good workers will need to draw nigh to God, they will need the divine touch. They will need to drink more deeply and continuously at the fountain of living water, in order that they may discern God's work at every point. Workers may make mistakes, but you should give them a chance to correct their errors, give them an opportunity to learn caution, by leaving the work in their hands.

God will work in a different way than many expect. They will be surprised and wonder what is happening.

"How can the work go forward like this?" they will ask.

But it *will* go forward, providing it is institutionalized as Jesus institutionalized His church; that is, providing the right workers were chosen at the beginning. Jesus chose twelve. He did not choose one, to control the work. Rather, He chose twelve to cooperate with each other and to follow God's guidance. That is how He worked, and that is how an institution must be run.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 299:

God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands.

The work will bear the handwriting of Jesus. Why will this work be very much out of the common order of things? Because in this world, everything is based on humanity. Man gets the praise for everything.

We recently visited some health clinics, and all of them have names. Clinics are usually named after a physician, especially in the field of natural medicine. It's the Dr. So-and-so clinic, or the Dr. So-and-so diet. Take Dr. Kellogg, for example. Kellogg's handwriting was everywhere in Battle Creek, literally. Battle Creek did not bear the handwriting of Jesus. And why not? Because it was after the common order of things. "Very much out of the common order of things" means you will see that God is taking the reins in His hands. He is leading. This is so important in the right arm work.

The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Those who are accounted good workers will need to draw nigh to God, they will need the divine touch. They will need to drink more deeply and continuously at the fountain of living water, in order that they may discern God's work at every point. Workers may make mistakes, but you should give them a chance to correct their errors, give them an opportunity to learn caution, by leaving the work in their hands.

Workers who make mistakes can become even more reliable as a result because they now know their weaknesses and can learn to depend on God. A worker who seems to never make mistakes, on the other hand, often becomes self important. This tendency is very human.

How are we to be trained as medical missionaries in the last days? God wants us all to become knowledgeable on how the body functions and on simple treatments to relieve disease. This is the only avenue of access to people that will still be open to us in

the last days. Other avenues will close down, especially as far as larger organizations are concerned. But the avenue of personal work done for the sick will remain open for a very long time. People ask me:

“How am I to get trained? Do I need to go to medical school or a special college? What do I need?”

I want to stress the fact that I am going to university with some students so that I can encourage them. But my main purpose is not to gain knowledge about the body which I could get in a different way too. My main purpose is to reach the people who are at the university, as well as to accompany the young people who studying this subject in the schools. Some of them need a medical degree in order to pursue the work for others that they want to do. But while I have a special purpose for attending university, this is not to serve as a pattern for everyone. God can use us in different ways.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 82:

Many have exalted science, and lost sight of the God of science. This was not the case with the church in the purest times.- God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate.

Very much out of the common order of things.

He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of His Spirit, than by the outward training of scientific institutions. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned;...

It is not for us to despise these facilities or condemn them. It is not as if they know nothing; they have a lot of knowledge.

...they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals.

This is a very important statement which really shows that everybody can be prepared for medical missionary work, even without going to one of these institutions. Even those who do go must realize that God is not dependent on school education. But we can

reach people there. There are people who attend these courses for idealistic reasons, and I ardently hope and pray to reach some of them. Perhaps we have reached some of them already. God is working to save them out of Babylon just as much as anyone else.

God is not dependent on any man-made institution. When He works in the last work, it will be very much out of the common order of things. Let us now turn back to *The Desire of Ages* and look at Judas again. Judas did not grasp the fact that God works differently from human beings, and he always wanted to interpose his own way on Christ's work.

The Desire of Ages, p. 294:

The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number.

Wouldn't we too be anxious to have such a talented person as Judas among us? Wouldn't we even have a certain sense of pride to have such a person among us? I don't know. The sympathies between Judas and the disciples needed to be broken, and our sympathies towards the way of the world must be broken too.

[Judas] was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coolly.

When Jesus received him so coolly it wasn't because He didn't like Judas. It was just that He wanted to discourage a certain way of thinking, both in Judas and in the disciples. It was also for their sakes that He received Judas coolly, because they were very enthusiastic about Judas.

"Oh look!" they thought. "Finally we have someone among us from a higher class than we are. We are just ordinary fishermen. But here is a real professional. Here is someone whose influence can really help us."

So they were very surprised at Jesus' reaction.

The disciples had been much disappointed that Jesus had not tried to secure the cooperation of the leaders in Israel. They felt

that it was a mistake not to strengthen His cause by securing the support of these influential men. If He had repulsed Judas, they would, in their own minds, have questioned the wisdom of their Master. The after-history of Judas would show them the danger of allowing any worldly consideration to have weight in deciding the fitness of men for the work of God.

I hope that we understand this a bit better now. Do we understand that the last work will go very much out of the common order of things, and that it will surprise many? Even the disciples were surprised at how Jesus established the institution of the church.

The Desire of Ages, p. 294:

The cooperation of such men as the disciples were anxious to secure would have betrayed the work into the hands of its worst enemies.

Judas didn't look like an enemy. He was an ardent admirer of Jesus.

Yet when Judas joined the disciples, he was not insensible to the beauty of the character of Christ. He felt the influence of that divine power which was drawing souls to the Saviour. He who came not to break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax would not repulse this soul while even one desire was reaching toward the light. The Saviour read the heart of Judas; He knew the depths of iniquity to which, unless delivered by the grace of God, Judas would sink. In connecting this man with himself, He placed him where he might, day by day, be brought in contact with the outflowing of His own unselfish love. If he would open his heart to Christ, divine grace would banish the demon of selfishness, and even Judas might become a subject of the kingdom of God.

Selfishness is described here as a demon. A demon is something that controls you against your will. This is what selfishness is. It is a demon, and once a person is possessed by it, he is controlled by it. This is the demon that we need to be delivered from the most of all. Even Judas might have become a subject of the kingdom of God. He could have been delivered from that demon.

The Desire of Ages, p. 294-295:

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.

Judas had the same opportunities as had the other disciples. He listened to the same precious lessons. But the practice of the truth, which Christ required, was at variance with the desires and purposes of Judas, and he would not yield his ideas in order to receive wisdom from Heaven.

Can you see how Judas tried to control the work of God? Even when it was moving forward under the direction of God's guidance, he still tried to control it.

The Desire of Ages, p. 295:

How tenderly the Saviour dealt with him who was to be His betrayer! In His teaching, Jesus dwelt upon principles of benevolence that struck at the very root of covetousness. He presented before Judas the heinous character of greed, and many a time the disciple realized that his character had been portrayed, and his sin pointed out; but he would not confess and forsake his unrighteousness. He was self-sufficient, and instead of resisting temptation, he continued to follow his fraudulent practices. Christ was before him, a living example of what he must become if he reaped the benefit of the divine mediation and ministry; but lesson after lesson fell unheeded on the ears of Judas.

Jesus dealt him no sharp rebuke for his covetousness, but with divine patience bore with this erring man, even while giving him evidence that He read his heart as an open book. He presented before him the highest incentives for right doing; and in rejecting the light of Heaven, Judas would be without excuse.

We need to really understand how Jesus established His institution. This is our quest for the moment. Then we will be able to better understand how to go forward with our work. Again, our missionary work is to be done exactly the same way as Jesus did it. Then we will be on the right track.

5. Following Jesus

WE WANT to continue to investigate how Jesus did the right arm work in His time. Our aim is to understand how the right arm work should be done and what it will look like in the last days.

We have already seen from the chapter “He Ordained Twelve” how Jesus began to establish the institution of the church. We saw that He did not begin with a building, a property, a print shop, a radio station, or anything like that. These things were not available in His days, but He very simply took the disciples privately with Him into nature and ordained them for the work. Afterwards He gave the Sermon on the Mount where He spoke to the public and the disciples assisted Him.

Man’s Way vs. God’s Way

Let us now continue to read in that chapter where it is described how Judas tried to control the work, and how Jesus dealt with him. Christ endeavored to help him out of the path which was leading to his destruction. Simultaneously, Jesus wanted to separate Judas from the sympathy of the other disciples because they were constantly influenced by his spirit. Judas did not understand the simplicity of God’s way of working.

The Desire of Ages, p. 295:

Instead of walking in the light, Judas chose to retain his defects. Evil desires, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished, until Satan had full control of the man. Judas became a representative of the enemy of Christ.

The word that especially catches our attention in this paragraph is the word “cherished.” Satan can tempt us to have dark and solemn thoughts—thoughts of discouragement, thoughts of anger, thoughts of revenge, and so on. But Judas was not only tempted with these things, he actually cherished them. This was an active thing he did. When we realize that such thoughts come into our minds, it is our duty to positively resist them and not to cherish them. That is our decision.

The Desire of Ages, p. 295:

When he came into association with Jesus, he had some precious traits of character that might have been made a blessing to the church. If he had been willing to wear the yoke of Christ, he might have been among the chief of the apostles; but he hardened his heart when his defects were pointed out, and in pride and rebellion chose his own selfish ambitions, and thus unfitted himself for the work that God would have given him to do.

We could ask ourselves why Jesus accepted Judas at all. Was it simply because of the sympathy the disciples had for him? Hadn't the disciples pushed Judas forward? There is some truth in this. He also pushed himself forward, probably with the help of the other disciples. There were surely many others who might have been eligible for a discipleship, and yet Jesus chose Judas. The sympathy of the disciples for him was only one reason. The other reason was so that we should have an important lesson.

Judas had a fair chance, just like everyone else. His fate was not predetermined; it was not locked or sealed. And as we clearly read, he could have chosen another path. He could have become a valuable worker in spite of his original attitude. This is one important lesson: our lives are not predestined; we have a choice; we can go one way or the other.

The other important lesson for us is that when we make independent choices we will certainly fail. We will certainly choose the wrong person for any office in the work of God. We have no wisdom to choose the right person—we simply don't have it. We can't read a person's heart. We may be too hard on one and too soft on another. I have experienced that I have often misjudged people, and I have no wisdom to choose. None of us has this wisdom. God must choose the workers. That is a very important lesson we can learn from the case of Judas.

Though the disciples had sympathy with Judas, they needed to learn to trust Christ's judgment rather than their own. We all tend to trust our own judgment, and a hard lesson which we must learn is to trust someone else's—in particular Christ's—more than

our own. But the disciples did not do this at the beginning. They wondered why Jesus received Judas so coolly. They should have asked themselves where they were wrong. But instead of questioning themselves and their own choice they questioned Jesus' cool reception of Judas.

These are some of the important lessons to be learned from the story of Judas. Once Jesus accepted and ordained Judas, together with the other eleven disciples, it was also important to support him in that role—until Judas separated himself completely.

The Desire of Ages, p. 295-296:

All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them to His service. Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called “the sons of thunder.”

The other eleven disciples might seem even less promising to us than Judas. Outwardly, Judas was very civilized in comparison to John and his brother, for example. They were quite rough and had earned the name, “The sons of thunder.”

While they were with Jesus, any slight shown to Him aroused their indignation and combativeness. Evil temper, revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. He was proud, and ambitious to be first in the kingdom of God. But day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. He opened his heart to the divine influence, and became not only a hearer but a doer of the Saviour's words. Self was hid in Christ. He learned to wear the yoke of Christ and to bear His burden.

When you read John's gospel and his letters you see that there was a real change in him.

Jesus reproved His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and his brethren did not leave Him; they chose Jesus, notwithstanding the reproofs. The Saviour did not withdraw from them because of their weakness and errors. They continued to the end to share His trials and to learn the lessons of His life. By beholding Christ, they became transformed in character.

The material that God is using to build His church today is very similar, and those who are willing to be corrected will certainly receive the same refinement of character that the disciples received. There is a wonderful promise in these paragraphs.

The Desire of Ages, p. 296:

The apostles differed widely in habits and disposition. There were the publican, Levi-Matthew, and the fiery zealot Simon, the uncompromising hater of the authority of Rome; the generous, impulsive Peter, and the mean-spirited Judas; Thomas, true-hearted, yet timid and fearful, Philip, slow of heart, and inclined to doubt, and the ambitious, outspoken sons of Zebedee, with their brethren. These were brought together, with their different faults, all with inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil; but in and through Christ they were to dwell in the family of God, learning to become one in faith, in doctrine, in spirit.

It's not just a matter of becoming one with each another, one in faith. We need to become one with Christ—to have the same devotion and the same connection with Him, and then we will become one with one another.

They would have their tests, their grievances, their differences of opinion; but while Christ was abiding in the heart, there could be no dissension. His love would lead to love for one another; the lessons of the Master would lead to the harmonizing of all differences, bringing the disciples into unity, till they would be of one mind and one judgment. Christ is the great center, and they would approach one another just in proportion as they approached the center.

If there is no unity, it means there is no moving towards the center. That is the conclusion that we must draw from this. The closer we are to the center, to Christ, the closer we are to one another. We all have our cultivated and inherited weaknesses—not just from heredity, but also learned through our former education. In spite of this, however, we can really become like Jesus in character—exactly like Him—if we come close to Him. Then we will also become one with each another.

The Desire of Ages, p. 296-297:

As His representatives among men, Christ does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took upon himself humanity, that He might reach humanity. Divinity needed humanity; for it required both the divine and the human to bring salvation to the world. Divinity needed humanity, that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man. So with the servants and messengers of Christ. Man needs a power outside of and beyond himself, to restore him to the likeness of God, and enable him to do the work of God; but this does not make the human agency unessential. Humanity lays hold upon divine power, Christ dwells in the heart by faith; and through co-operation with the divine, the power of man becomes efficient for good.

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with himself, of apprenticeship to Christ.

We sometimes think how wonderful it would be if we had the same privileges as the disciples. They had a direct apprenticeship. An apprenticeship is a form of training where you learn both theory and practice, and where you actually work with tools. We have this system here in Germany. You learn to work with the tools of the trade until you actually start to produce things. This is what Christ offers us: an apprenticeship; practical work with Him. Our experiences gained in personal work from now on, as we better understand what our work is, will be an apprenticeship.

The Desire of Ages, p. 297:

He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God.

2 Corinthians 4 [RV]

⁷ We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves.

This is why the preaching of the gospel was committed to erring men rather than to the angels. It is manifest that the

power which works through the weakness of humanity is the power of God.

We will be surprised by the simple means that God will use, but this is entirely in harmony with His work. I remember that Fred Wright used to tell us an object lesson about a music competition. All the artists came to play the best music they could. They brought their best instruments—very expensive and famous ones. Then another musician came with a very cheap instrument. It was a very poor, cheap thing, but yet everyone was captivated by the music. He knew how to get the best music out of that instrument. Similarly, God uses a very, very poor instrument when He uses us. He could use better instruments to make better music. The angels would be a better instrument, but He uses humanity.

Now why does He do this? The answer is given:

2 Corinthians 4

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

God's ability, His tremendous power, and His character are seen when He uses human flesh to demonstrate His character in this world. All heaven marvels about this, and we also marvel when we think about it. So this is why it is committed to erring men rather than to angels.

The Desire of Ages, p. 297:

It is manifest that the power which works through the weakness of humanity is the power of God; and thus we are encouraged to believe that the power which can help others as weak as ourselves can help us.

When such a melody can be brought out of this instrument, you know for sure that other instruments can be used as well.

And those who are themselves “compassed with infirmity” should be able to “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” Hebrews 5:2.

We will be surprised by the simple means that God uses. We tend to think that God only uses the best available. But no, He

uses the most humble instruments to bring out the best results. Again, we will be surprised by the simple means He uses.

The Desire of Ages, p. 297:

Having been in peril themselves, they are acquainted with the dangers and difficulties of the way, and for this reason are called to reach out for others in like peril. There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ.

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love.

Don't be ashamed of the gospel. Don't be ashamed of the poor instrument that God uses, namely yourself. There is no reason to be ashamed because God is working. He wants to manifest His greatness; and those who think themselves great, those who are looked upon as talented by the world, will accomplish the least in the last work. But those who God is working through will accomplish the greatest work.

Building Up of the Disciples

Let's now investigate more deeply how Jesus actually worked with His disciples, how He built them up and formed them. One thing that immediately comes to mind is the actual fulfillment of Christ's words:

Luke 9

⁵⁸ The foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

In other words Jesus was dependent on the invitation of others. The well-known story of the Samaritan at Jacob's well (in *John 4*) shows this very clearly. Jesus actually asked a favor of the woman. That was uncommon because He was a Jew, and the Jews

normally looked down upon the Samaritans. Besides this, the Samaritans did not have the truth either. They believed only in the five books of Moses. The rest of their religion was basically heathen tradition. So in fact they were half heathen. But nevertheless, Jesus saw a potential harvest here. He was thirsty, and although He was God's Son He made himself dependent on man.

John 4

⁷ And the woman of Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, Give me a drink.

He asked a favor of her, a woman—a Samaritan woman. First of all He was a man, and secondly He was a Jew. The woman was totally surprised. And we too will be surprised by the simple means that God will use. What did Christ use here? A need that He had. This was used to reach the woman. And this moment of surprise helped Him to open her heart because she realized that the barriers were broken down. This is one story that shows how Jesus worked.

I would like to turn now to another story, that of Zacchaeus.

Luke 19

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.

² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.

⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.

The openness towards people, to say,

“I have a need, I want to come and visit you;”

—what a privilege it was for Zacchaeus. Many people would think,

“He is such a rich and influential man; I can’t talk to him like that.”

But Jesus was very simple and straightforward. This is simplicity. Again He worked with His need. Another story that shows this is the Lord’s Supper.

Mark 14

¹² On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, Where do You want us to go and make preparations for You to eat the Passover?

¹³ So He sent two of His disciples, telling them, Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.

¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?

¹⁵ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.

Jesus had no room of His own. He did not even have a place where to lay His head. And yet He had everything He needed at all times. There was no lack. And when Jesus asked the disciples,

“Did you lack anything?”

—they honestly answered,

“No.”⁶

They received no regular wages and they had no regular work. In those days no one had regular work; they simply worked from day to day for whoever needed them.

The disciples were workers also, but while they were with Jesus they hardly had any time to “work” because there was so much to do for the people. They did a lot of charity work, and yet they never lacked. So even though Jesus did not have somewhere to lay His head, He always had the best room necessary for the work that He did. The room He needed for the Lord’s Supper was even furnished—it was ready for them to use.

⁶ *Luke 22:35.*

Let me now read one or two statements regarding this.

The Desire of Ages, p. 524:

At the home of Lazarus, Jesus had often found rest.

So here was one of the places where Jesus “rested His head.”

The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples, and often, when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, He had been glad to escape to this peaceful household, away from the suspicion and jealousy of the angry Pharisees. Here He found a sincere welcome, and pure, holy friendship. Here He could speak with simplicity and perfect freedom, knowing that His words would be understood and treasured.

Such a home is like heaven. Where would you prefer to live, in a palace where there is strife and unhappiness, or in a simple home like this? The answer is obvious. You can live in the poorest dwelling if God’s sunshine is there. You would be happy there. But you would be very unhappy in the richest mansion without Christ. And this is simplicity.

The Desire of Ages, p. 569:

Purposing to ride into Jerusalem, Jesus had sent two of His disciples to bring to Him an ass and its colt. At His birth the Saviour was dependent upon the hospitality of strangers. The manger in which He lay was a borrowed resting place.

A manger is an animal’s feed trough. That was His borrowed resting place.

Now, although the cattle on a thousand hills are His, He is dependent on a stranger’s kindness for an animal on which to enter Jerusalem as its King. But again His divinity is revealed, even in the minute directions given His disciples for this errand. As He foretold, the plea, “The Lord has need of them,”⁷ was readily granted. Jesus chose for His use the colt on which never man had sat.

Again, we see simplicity. It’s a revelation of what God can do using the most simple means. This must become evident in the

⁷ *Matthew* 21:3.

last work. Our role is to reveal that God uses the simplest things. We cannot do in our own power. If a poor musician plays a poor instrument, nothing good will come out of it. If he uses a good instrument it may sound better. But a good musician will bring out the best music—even with a poor instrument. When God uses us, then the simple means He uses are an evidence of His power to work. This is how God works.

Further Parallels

I would now like to draw a parallel between the chronology of the life of Jesus and our experience in the last days. When I say “the life of Jesus,” I am not referring to His childhood but His public ministry—from the very first day of His public ministry. There is a parallel between His childhood and our experience as well, but I think this chapter of our movement is coming to an end. We are on the verge of entering public ministry. How should this ministry be done? What did Jesus do?

Christ’s public ministry began with His baptism, and was soon followed by the first cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem. Shortly thereafter, He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, and then He was on trial before the Sanhedrin and had to leave Judea because of the enmity and jealousy that had arisen with the disciples of John the Baptist. So He went to Galilee, working there for some time. When that work came to a close, He set off on His final journey to Jerusalem.

During all this time Jesus kept a relatively low profile. He could not remain entirely unknown because He was to preach the kingdom of God. He continued the message of John the Baptist, especially after John was imprisoned. He and His disciples were really the only ones who preached the kingdom of God being at hand. His ministry was very necessary, but still He kept as low a profile as possible. Let’s see this in the story of the cleansing of the leper.

Matthew 18

¹ When He came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him.

² A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.

³ Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. I am willing, He said. Be clean! Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

⁴ Then Jesus said to him, See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.

Jesus emphasized that he should not tell anyone. Why is that? It was a wonderful miracle that happened. It could have not only helped this man, but could have been an inspiration for many other lepers as well. And yet He said, "Don't tell anyone." Just imagine you had found a cure for a terrible disease, had healed someone, and then charged your patient, "Don't tell anyone!" Would you do this as a physician? Jesus was a physician, and this is just what He did. He said, "Don't tell anyone." But why? There were several reasons.

The first reason was that this man should present himself to the priests before word of his healing got to them. Otherwise, they would be prejudiced against him. They should pronounce him healed before they knew where the source of his healing had come from. It was their duty to judge his case, but they would have been prejudiced if they had known that Jesus had healed him.

There are other reasons too. For example, Jesus knew if this man would trumpet His healing abroad many other lepers would come to Him for healing. But that would make it difficult to heal others because lepers were unclean and the people would keep away. He would be more or less surrounded by lepers and everybody else would stay away. His work would have been stigmatized. Jesus was very far sighted.

The Desire of Ages, p. 264:

Jesus charged the man not to make known the work that had been wrought, but straightway to present himself with an offering at the temple.

The words of Scripture show with what urgency Christ enjoined upon the man the necessity of silence and prompt action.

Mark 1

⁴³ He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

⁴⁴ And said unto him, See you say nothing to any man: but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

There were other objects which Christ had in view in enjoining silence on the man. The Saviour knew that His enemies were ever seeking to limit His work, and to turn the people from Him. He knew that if the healing of the leper were noised abroad, other sufferers from this terrible disease would crowd about Him, and the cry would be raised that the people would be contaminated by contact with them. Many of the lepers would not so use the gift of health as to make it a blessing to themselves or to others. And by drawing the lepers about Him, He would give occasion for the charge that He was breaking down the restrictions of the ritual law. Thus His work in preaching the gospel would be hindered.

Now if you were one of His disciples, would you have understood why Jesus charged him not to tell anyone? If you were a physician and would have been able to heal a leper, would you tell him not to tell anyone? This shows how totally selfless Jesus was. He was not looking for fame at all. He had the work of God in mind, and absolutely nothing else. He wanted men to be saved—not only physically healed. This was the work He came to do, and this must be our incentive when we do right arm work.

Imagine that we are successful in the food ministry, coming up with a recipe which the people are enthusiastic about and want to learn. And then we say,

“We’re not going to tell you who made this recipe or where it comes from.”

That is basically the same thing as Jesus saying, “Don’t tell anyone.” He knew what the outcome would be and therefore He kept a low profile.

The Desire of Ages, p. 264:

The event justified Christ's warning. A multitude of people had witnessed the healing of the leper, and they were eager to learn of the priests' decision.

Another story that shows how Jesus worked in contrast to how people usually work is found in *The Desire of Ages*, page 260. We pick up the story when the disciples came to Jesus in the morning. During the previous night Jesus had healed many people and the disciples expected Him to continue His wonderful work the next day.

The Desire of Ages, p. 260:

Early in the morning, Peter and his companions came to Jesus, saying that already the people of Capernaum were seeking Him. The disciples had been bitterly disappointed at the reception which Christ had met hitherto. The authorities at Jerusalem were seeking to murder Him; even His own townsmen had tried to take His life; but at Capernaum He was welcomed with joyful enthusiasm, and the hopes of the disciples kindled anew. It might be that among the liberty-loving Galileans were to be found the supporters of the new kingdom. But with surprise they heard Christ's words,

Luke 4

⁴³ I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

This morning we read another statement from *The Desire of Ages* which speaks of us being strongly motivated to do a certain work when God calls us to another place. This is exactly the same situation here. When the work is going very nicely, then God calls us to go somewhere else. Who would go? Would you not say,

“Well, sorry, I will come, but I am not quite finished here yet. I will follow you Lord. I'll go wherever you want me to go—when I am finished here.”

But this is not how Jesus reacted. He immediately followed God's directions. But why did Jesus leave the work when it

seemed to be successful? The answer is given in the next paragraph.

The Desire of Ages, p. 260:

In the excitement which then pervaded Capernaum, there was danger that the object of His mission would be lost sight of. Jesus was not satisfied to attract attention to himself merely as a wonder worker or a healer of physical diseases.

Can we, as physicians, be satisfied when people come to us as a healer? Are we satisfied? Ask yourself this question. Jesus was not satisfied to attract the people to himself merely as a healer of physical disease.

The Desire of Ages, p. 260-261:

He was seeking to draw men to Him as their Saviour. While the people were eager to believe that He had come as a king, to establish an earthly reign, He desired to turn their minds away from the earthly to the spiritual. Mere worldly success would interfere with His work.

This is real strength of character—to step aside at the moment of greatest success.

And the wonder of the careless crowd jarred upon His spirit. In His life no self-assertion mingled. The homage which the world gives to position, or wealth, or talent, was foreign to the Son of man. None of the means that men employ to win allegiance or command homage did Jesus use. Centuries before His birth, it had been prophesied of Him,

Isaiah 42 [margin]

² He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

³ A bruised reed shall He not break, and the dimly burning flax shall He not quench:

⁴ He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth.

The Pharisees were different in character. They did things the ordinary way, as people in the world do things today. But God will work very much out of the common order of things—very different from the ways of the Pharisees.

The Desire of Ages, p. 261:

The Pharisees sought distinction by their scrupulous ceremonialism, and the ostentation of their worship and charities. They proved their zeal for religion by making it the theme of discussion. Disputes between opposing sects were loud and long, and it was not unusual to hear on the streets the voice of angry controversy from learned doctors of the law.

In our time, controversies are no longer carried out on the streets, but in the papers: scientific papers, newspapers, and so on. But it is the same controversy.

In marked contrast to all this was the life of Jesus. In that life no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed. Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son. To this revelation Jesus desired the minds of the people to be directed, and their homage to be given.

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ,

Hosea 6

³ His going forth is prepared as the morning.

Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness, and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, “with healing in His wings.”
Malachi 4:2.

In the same way, the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings will be revealed again in the last work. This is exactly the work we are to do, and with exactly the same spirit—the spirit that shuns everything that is geared towards the glory of man. If there is one thing that we have to fear, it is giving the glory to man. We must see this point. It is one thing to accept the thankfulness of people who have really been helped—to be happy because they are happy. But how quickly does glory to man mingle in with it!

When Jesus sent the disciples out to work as physicians, they came back with a joyful report of what had happened. But Jesus somewhat dampened their rejoicing by saying,

“Don’t rejoice too much about this. Rather rejoice that your names are written in the book of heaven.”⁸

This is what we also need to rejoice about. Be careful lest humanity be exalted. This is the example that Jesus has given us. He left the place of work when the people gave too much attention and glory to Him merely as a healer of physical disease. He wanted to draw them to something else. He wanted to give them spiritual healing and He strictly blocked anything that would interfere with this.

And so Christ’s earthly ministry continued. We can expect that, as our ministry continues, we will have to be careful not to make too much of our works, even when God especially blesses us. And God is obviously blessing us. We see this as the people come to the shop, the clinic, and so on. God is blessing us. But we must know how to handle it, and we have to handle it as Jesus did. We have to avoid receiving too much attention. We have to intentionally withdraw to some extent in order to let the work grow healthfully. Otherwise we will block God’s work. This is very evident.

Another story which makes this point very clear is found in *The Desire of Ages*, page 377, in the chapter “A Night on the Lake.” It was just after Jesus fed the five thousand—a wonderful experience. The five thousand were fed from just five barley loaves and two fishes. They had listened to Christ’s sermons all day and now they were spiritually and physically satisfied. Who could do such a thing? It was fantastic.

So what was the next logical step? The disciples were not fanatical when they thought of crowning Christ king. That’s how people think, and it’s very normal to think that way. Christ was preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand, and the people

⁸ *Luke 10:20.*

were now enthusiastic and ready. In Jerusalem they had rejected Him, but here there was a real opening. So why not go on to the next stage?

The Desire of Ages, p. 377:

Seated upon the grassy plain, in the twilight of the spring evening, the people ate of the food that Christ had provided. The words they had heard that day had come to them as the voice of God. The works of healing they had witnessed were such as only divine power could perform. But the miracle of the loaves appealed to everyone in that vast multitude. All were sharers in its benefit. In the days of Moses, God had fed Israel with manna in the desert; and who was this that had fed them that day but He whom Moses had foretold? No human power could create from five barley loaves and two small fishes food sufficient to feed thousands of hungry people. And they said one to another,

John 6

¹⁴ This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

Could you expect more?

All day the conviction has strengthened. That crowning act is assurance that the long-looked-for Deliverer is among them. The hopes of the people rise higher and higher. This is He who will make Judea an earthly paradise, a land flowing with milk and honey. He can satisfy every desire. He can break the power of the hated Romans. He can deliver Judah and Jerusalem. He can heal the soldiers who are wounded in battle. He can supply whole armies with food. He can conquer the nations, and give to Israel the long-sought dominion.

Well, they might not have had a correct understanding of God's character, but at least they were following the right person.

The Desire of Ages, p. 378:

In their enthusiasm the people are ready at once to crown Him king. They see that He makes no effort to attract attention or secure honor to himself. In this He is essentially different from the priests and rulers, and they fear that He will never urge His claim to David's throne. Consulting together, they agree to take Him by force, and proclaim Him the king of Israel. The disciples

unite with the multitude in declaring the throne of David the rightful inheritance of their Master. It is the modesty of Christ, they say, that causes Him to refuse such honor. Let the people exalt their Deliverer. Let the arrogant priests and rulers be forced to honor Him who comes clothed with the authority of God.

And once He is crowned He will be a humble king. He will not oppress the people; He will be a very modest king, just as you would want Him to be.

The Desire of Ages, p. 378:

They eagerly arrange to carry out their purpose; but Jesus sees what is on foot, and understands, as they cannot, what would be the result of such a movement.

The Lord will work in a very different way—very much out of the common order of things. Here we have an example of such a manner of working. We would expect that after such a hard time during the first part of His ministry, He now had the opportunity to make some progress. Judea had rejected Him, but here He could go forward. Now was the time. It was hard work at first, but now the work was really going forward.

Even now the priests and rulers are hunting His life. They accuse Him of drawing the people away from them. Violence and insurrection would follow an effort to place Him on the throne, and the work of the spiritual kingdom would be hindered. Without delay the movement must be checked. Calling His disciples, Jesus bids them take the boat and return at once to Capernaum, leaving Him to dismiss the people.

When I compare this with today I see that there are many people who want to support us and make us more prominent because they see our work as being a good thing. They think that it needs to be seen by the people. What we don't see, but what God probably sees, is that opposition is already forming; that enmity already exists. Sometimes we see a little of this enmity, but not much. From time to time we hear that something is going on.

Now if we really became prominent those who oppose us would be alarmed and go to work to keep the people from getting

to know the truth—the gospel truth that heals. For this reason it’s better for us not to be so prominent, not so famous. Not for our sakes, but for the cause—and for the people. I see a parallel to our situation here. God knows more than we do. Let us not be so quick to think that coming into the forefront is exactly what God wants.

Jesus understood this point and therefore kept a low profile. But as you know, there came the time when He was no longer modest. He seemed to put away all modesty and began to be very loud. In fact, He went to the temple in the middle of the day, when there was a lot going on, and drew the attention of the people to himself. He called himself the Fountain of Life—the Water of Life. On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying,

John 7

³⁷ If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Before this, Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on a colt. We read about this in *The Desire of Ages*, in the chapter, “Thy King Cometh.” It speaks about how Jesus obtained a colt—a young animal that no one had ridden—and rode into Jerusalem while the multitude cheered and honored Him.

The Desire of Ages, p. 570-571:

As they proceeded, the multitude was continually increased by those who had heard of the coming of Jesus and hastened to join the procession. Spectators were constantly mingling with the throng, and asking, Who is this? What does all this commotion signify? They had all heard of Jesus, and expected Him to go to Jerusalem; but they knew that He had heretofore discouraged all effort to place Him on the throne, and they were greatly astonished to learn that this was He. They wondered what could have wrought this change in Him who had declared that His kingdom was not of this world.

Their questionings are silenced by a shout of triumph. Again and again it is repeated by the eager throng; it is taken up by the people afar off, and echoed from the surrounding hills and valleys. And now the procession is joined by crowds from Jerusalem.

From the multitudes gathered to attend the Passover, thousands go forth to welcome Jesus. They greet Him with the waving of palm branches and a burst of sacred song. The priests at the temple sound the trumpet for evening service, but there are few to respond, and the rulers say to one another in alarm.

John 12

¹⁹ The world is gone after Him.

So the synagogues were empty and everyone seemed to be following Him.

The Desire of Ages, p. 571:

Never before in His earthly life had Jesus permitted such a demonstration. He clearly foresaw the result. It would bring Him to the cross. But it was His purpose thus publicly to present himself as the Redeemer. He desired to call attention to the sacrifice that was to crown His mission to a fallen world. While the people were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set himself apart as an oblation. It would be needful for His church in all succeeding ages to make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. It was necessary, then, that the eyes of all people should now be directed to Him; the events which preceded His great sacrifice must be such as to call attention to the sacrifice itself. After such a demonstration as that attending His entry into Jerusalem, all eyes would follow His rapid progress to the final scene.

Here we have the answer as to why Jesus permitted the people to honor Him. There is a parallel in this for us too. When the time comes, God will place us in the focus of the world through events that will be beyond our control. At the moment, we do not even know what these events will be, but they will place us at the center of the world's attention. God will bring this about intentionally—very, very deliberately. When this time comes, the attention of the people will be drawn to God's work. He will not direct their attention to any human element or talent, but to His work. The reason for this is so that the people can see the final revela-

tion of God's character during the time of trouble. Everyone will see it. It will be the focus of attention for the whole world.

The time of Jacob's Trouble will not be a pleasant time for us, as you know. But it will be the greatest demonstration of God's character. It will shine the brightest at the time of the greatest darkness. Then the light will shine forth all the more brilliant; then God's character will be fully revealed.

As Jesus drew the attention of the people to the cross, so God will draw the attention of the world to this last revelation of His character. The cross was the first revelation, and Jacob's Trouble will give the final revelation. Let me emphasize this again: God will call attention to this revelation—not our talent or work, no matter how good or benevolent it may be. These will not and must not capture the attention of the world. We must keep a low profile as long as necessary, just as Jesus did.

This is a parallel between the chronology of Jesus' public work and our experience. In every respect we can say that Christ's right arm work is the pattern which we are to follow.

I truly hope that we understand this better now and that we will follow this course by faith—that we will be faithful to His cause, like the disciples later were, and not work as they did in trying to crown Him king. We have their story; we can learn from them, and follow the pattern Jesus left us, rather than that of the disciples. We should rather withdraw when the people's attention is drawn in a wrong direction.

With these thoughts we will conclude our studies. Amen.



