



**P R A C T I C A L**  
**Missionary Work**  
**I N T H E L A S T D A Y S**

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## CHAPTER ONE

# THE LOUD CRY

**T**HE prophet Zechariah lived at the time when Israel had returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity. When they first got back to Jerusalem, things were not so easy.

The first thing they did was to rebuild the temple, but right from the start they had great difficulties. The people became preoccupied with building their own homes, but despite this the temple was eventually built.

Because they were surrounded by jealous enemies, the temple became quite a fortress against attacks. Even though they had the full authority of the Persian king, these surrounding nations did not like the idea of a new people coming up among them.

How similar this is to situations we find today: the same enmity exists between peoples, tribes, and different countries. Take Kenya, Burundi, and even here in South Africa, not to mention the European countries. Look at America where troubles arise between the northern peoples and the Latin immigrants from the south. Also there are the differences between the blacks and the whites in the United States.

### **By My Spirit**

All this is not new, and it happened back in Zechariah's time too. While the people of God were caught up in the middle of all these difficulties, they got encouraging messages from the prophets, and Zechariah was one of them. Here is one of those messages:

#### **Zechariah 4**

<sup>1</sup> And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

<sup>2</sup> And said unto me, What do you see? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl

upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top:

<sup>3</sup> And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

<sup>4</sup> So I answered and spoke to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

<sup>5</sup> Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Know you not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

<sup>6</sup> Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>7</sup> Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

<sup>8</sup> Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

<sup>9</sup> The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you.

<sup>10</sup> For who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

The circumstances were most discouraging for Zerubbabel and the other workers. They were surrounded by hostile people, they had difficulties in finding material, and they had difficulties trying to find dedicated workers. And then came the message from the Lord,

“You have started it, you will end it. Don’t despise the days of the small beginnings.”

And this must have taken place over a long period of time. It was essential for them to be encouraged at this difficult time. Now when Zerubbabel finally finished building the temple, there were many who rejoiced. But there were also some who couldn’t help but show some disappointment, because the second temple was not as glorious as the first one.

The most important statement in chapter 4 is:

## **Zechariah 4**

<sup>6</sup> Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Oil is a symbol for the Holy Spirit, and the golden oil emptied into the bowl symbolizes that it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the work is to go forward. Now the bowl is the vessel, and this vessel is us. We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the oil that was poured down from the olive trees into the bowls.

There is a parallel in the New Testament to this scripture, which Jesus related as a parable. It's the parable of the ten virgins who also needed oil in their "bowls," although they are called vessels here and not "bowls." It seems that Jesus was referring to *Zechariah 4* when He said:

## **Matthew 25**

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

<sup>2</sup> Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

<sup>3</sup> Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

<sup>4</sup> But the wise took oil in their vessels [or *bowls*, to speak in the same language as *Zechariah*] with their lamps.

<sup>5</sup> But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

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

<sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

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

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

In this parable Jesus predicted His second coming and de-

scribed what the situation would be like at that time. He also showed how to prepare for His second coming. It was His burden to tell the people,

“This is how you are to prepare.”

## **The Darkness of Selfishness**

He also said that at midnight there was a cry heard. “At midnight.” That means at a time when it is dark, a time when there is a crisis. Let us first look at the darkness:

### **Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 414:**

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 darkest period of this earth’s history.” So, where is the darkness? Is it within God’s people? Certainly not. We may have a disappointment. We may feel that there is darkness around us but that is not necessarily the darkness of the world. The Lord wants to open our minds, our understanding. He wants us to look not only at ourselves in isolation, but to look at ourselves as a part of a worldwide web of humanity. And when the Bible talks of darkness it talks of the darkness of the world. We have our own difficulties, but they are small compared with the difficulties that the world will face when that time comes. It talks about the darkest hour in the world.

### **Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 414:**

The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man...

In the days of Noah, where was the darkness? It was everywhere. In the days of Lot, where was the darkness? It completely filled both the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And we are given some information about the darkness.

In the case of Noah the people did not believe the Word of God which said that the flood would come, and God gave those who did believe Him a way out. But most of the people simply did not believe the flood would happen.



In the days of Lot the great sin of the people was their immorality. Now both sins you can describe in two words—extreme selfishness. In both cases extreme selfishness prevailed. In the time of Noah people were just thinking of themselves, and in the time of Lot people were just thinking of themselves.

Selfishness always operates at the cost of others. If I want to serve myself it will cost my neighbor something. This is clearly seen when you live in a country where the difference between rich and poor is not so obvious and then you move to another country where you suddenly see a huge difference between rich and poor. What conclusion do many people draw from this? Many conclude that a few rich people live better than the masses of the poor, because the poorer people don't want to work.

But this is not so. The rich people live at the cost of the poor because they know how to exploit the poor. That is the real reason for this dreadful situation. It may not be seen directly as exploitation, as in the extreme case where a person has slaves. But it exists because the wealthy know how to handle money in order to benefit themselves.

And so we find that the world is separated into those who possess things and those who don't; into those who know how to use others so they can live a wealthy lifestyle, and those who don't, and therefore end up working in a slavish way for others.

It is true that even in an ideal system there would be some differences in levels of wealth that people have, but they would not be so great. If the Old Testament instruction to the people of Israel were to be followed, the differences between rich and poor would not be so extreme, where some starve while others have more money than they know what to do with.

But this situation exists in the world. It's extreme selfishness. And when you want to appeal to people today to live

better, let's say for their own health or for the sake of the environment, or even for the future of coming generations, then you always have to appeal to their selfishness—always. If you don't use this approach, it won't work.

“It's better for *you* if you do this; it's better for *you* if you do that.”

It's not necessarily wrong to appeal to the self-interest of people because a certain degree of self-interest is not sinful in itself, but how much better it would be to say,

“Look, what a great blessing it would be for others if you would look after yourself better! What a great blessing it would be to the world if you would be more careful with your energy!”

That would be a really positive appeal wouldn't it? But you can't make these kinds of appeals today. This approach is not successful because people generally don't really care. There is no reaction to it. The great sin of our time is selfishness. And selfishness leads to all kinds of immorality.

This selfishness even exists among the churches, and among God's professed people. Remember that among God's professed people there are ten virgins, and five of them had no oil in their bowls. Let's read on about the days of Noah:

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 414:**

The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work with all power and “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” *2 Thessalonians* 2:9-10.

At previous camp meetings we have learned what Baal worship is. We saw that Baal worship exists today just as much as it did in the time of Elijah. We used some examples to show this and indeed we find the same apostasy today, except that it is labeled differently. Today, people are supposed to be enlightened, but as far as the spiritual truth of the Bible is concerned there is very little knowledge. As far as moral standards are concerned, there is very little knowledge.

Before we had the German camp meeting, I was in a class where we had a discussion about the Nazi regime. You will be familiar with the fact that Germany was governed by a party that promoted the killing of Jewish people, and also began a war with all its subsequent atrocities.

Just prior to this discussion we were talking about alcoholism. We made the point that as far as alcohol is concerned we should remain abstinent and not drink any alcohol at all because it's not good for our body. Furthermore when we drink alcohol we are giving a bad example to those who have a struggle with alcohol.

As we were debating this one colleague said,

“Well, being moral is something that is a luxury; at the end of the day we need to look after our own interests, and therefore morality is a luxury.”

He really believed that it is a luxury to have morality in a society. In a discussion with another colleague, she took a stand which I could not condone because it was harming another person. I told her that I could not accept this because it was bad for another person. I told her to put herself into the other person's shoes. Her response was that she didn't care about the other person but only her own interests. I wanted to tell her that she was rather selfish, but I didn't need to say so because she actually admitted it herself.

“I am selfish, I know, but I have always come out on top this way.”

I stood there and wondered what on earth could I say, what could I say? Our discussion was about the payment of doctors. I questioned whether the whole concept of the ministry of health would not be ruined if it is our main goal to get very high wages? And then the first man repeated his argument and said,

“Being moral is a luxury.”

After this we talked about Nazi Germany and how the medical personnel did experiments on human beings, with those who were mentally retarded. We watched a documentary on this topic and everybody in the class was shocked. After a while I said,

“Look, this is the result of what happens when we consider morality as a luxury. This is the result. Eventually we will have no boundaries anymore.”

This is the darkness in which we are living. We look back at the Second World War, and the atrocities that happened there. We look at these things and are shocked. Even those who know a little about our history find it shocking. But are people today really different?

We hear in the news about the situations at Guantanamo, or Abu Ghraib; what happened there, the tortures that were carried out in the name of freedom. This is the same thing. There were many innocent people who were tortured. Many innocent people have been put into prison for many years, and even after it became known that they were innocent they were still not released. This is darkness, because it is carried out by those who fight for freedom, for those who stand for liberty. And if this is liberty, what is the benchmark for standards today? Where are we standing?

This is only an example. Consider too how terribly blind the people are about the future. In Germany our health system is struggling to stay afloat. Can we afford it? Can we not afford it? And at the same time we abuse our bodies. What logic is there in this whole thing? We have countless examples of our senseless ways.

There is darkness in this world which is ever growing. As people see the problems, as people want to find solutions for these problems, they realize it's impossible. Trying to solve one problem with money only creates another problem somewhere else.

### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 414:**

The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work with all power and “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” *2 Thessalonians 2:9-10*. 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.

Standing against these errors, against this Baal worship, we will feel the enmity of those who desire it. We will feel it. I would say that our approach at the moment is very soft. But it needs to become stronger. As the Holy Spirit moves us it will become stronger.

### **The Light of God's Character**

Now the question is,

“What is the difference between this darkness and that of the Midnight Cry?”

What character will the darkness of that time be? Will it be simply that we open our Bibles and point out the various sins it talks about? When we read Bible texts some people have a rough idea of what it is about but they don't see it precisely. The Bible was written using language from long ago and people don't fully understand it anymore. So people need an interpretation. And what is the interpretation? Is it that we know the Greek original and can read from a modern translation and see what it means? That's not the interpretation of the Bible language. Let's read more about this:

### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415:**

He causes “the light to shine out of darkness.” *2 Corinthians 4:6*. When...

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>2</sup> The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep,

<sup>3</sup> The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 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**

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

<sup>2</sup> Behold, 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.

Or misrepresented—that's the same thing, isn't it? Misrepresented, misinterpreted. Consider vegetarianism for example. What does the general public think about Christians who choose such a diet? They ask,

"Are you not allowed to eat meat?"

What they want to know is whether your religion allows you to do this or that. That is the common concept that people have of God today. They believe that God arbitrarily places rules upon us to restrict us. They don't see Him as someone who wants to give us good things. The best way to answer this question is to say:

"Meat eating is not good for me, but I'm allowed everything that is good for me, everything that makes me healthy, everything that is a blessing for others, that is how I see it!"

But people have lost a knowledge of His character. When people see themselves as selfish that is how they see God too. That's the problem.

## **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415:**

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.

Even in religious orders people manifest a lot of selfishness. These organizations are very often only interested in collecting money and members. They see people-power and money-power as more important than really helping people and connecting them with God in a living way.

**Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 415:**

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

**Isaiah 40**

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

<sup>10</sup> 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. 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.

In their own lives they are to reveal this.

**Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 416:**

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

Christ, the outshining of the Father’s glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men, and of Him it is written that He was anointed “with the Holy Ghost and with power,” and “went about doing good.” *Acts 10:38*. In the synagogue at Nazareth He said,

**Luke 4**

<sup>18</sup> 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,

<sup>19</sup> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do. He said,

**Matthew 5**

<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world.

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

So now you know why the oil needs to be poured into the bowls. It needs to be in those bowls so that it can shine out from there, so that it can be poured out to a needy world. And this is the work that Jesus did. He was filled in order to give. This was the motto of His life. Not for himself did He live. He always thought of, and prayed for, others.

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 417:**

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

**Isaiah 58**

<sup>7</sup> 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?

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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.

## **The Nature of the Work**

So when will the Loud Cry start? How will it start? What



will be its trigger? We have the history of the Midnight Cry as it began in 1844. Do you remember the story?

It was in the summer of 1844 when the disappointment was the greatest. The church expected Christ to come between 1843 and 1844, more specifically during the spring time. But when Jesus did not come there was a general disappointment. The believers had invested all their possessions in the proclamation of the message and now they were left not knowing what to do next or where to go to from there.

In the summer of 1844, Joseph Bates, one of the Advent pioneers, was giving a sermon comparing the church with a ship at sea. He described how sometimes there is a lot of wind and the ship goes fast, and sometimes there is no wind and the ship goes slow. He said we must have patience, we must wait. And so he tried to encourage the believers. But it was a hot day and the believers had heard this so many times; they were tired.

Then suddenly a man on a horse turned up. He was a little late. His name was Samuel Snow, and I think it was his sister or one of his relatives who said,

“Brother Bates, let’s hear now food for the season. Let somebody else speak.”

So Joseph Bates cordially invited Samuel Snow to speak and he explained to them the message of the Midnight Cry: the parallel between the Day of Atonement, the Day of Judgment, and the coming of Christ. He told them that Second Advent must be a fulfillment of the Day of Atonement just as the crucifixion of Christ was a fulfillment of the Passover. He showed how Christ was not only crucified in the very year that had been predicted, but also at the exact time of the year that was foreshadowed by the ceremonial law—by the Passover, which took place at a certain time of the year.

And as the people listened to this it was such a clear explanation to everything they had experienced so far, that there

were loud “Amen” in the congregation. There was a revival. Life came back into the church again. So, this was how the Midnight Cry began. And then the message went from village to village.

Now today, we expect things to happen in a similar fashion. Where is the person who will give the Loud Cry? That’s what we expect. But the Loud Cry is much more than just giving a sermon.

**Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 417:**

Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing.

I don’t know exactly what form this work will take, maybe it has started already. When you are in the process of fulfilling prophecy you may not understand it at the time, but it will become clear in hindsight. You might find yourself saying,

“Oh yes, that was the fulfillment.”

That’s very often how these things turn out. As Paul says, we see through a glass darkly. We don’t see the things of the future very clearly, even though they are clearly depicted in the Bible. But it is often in hindsight that we understand more clearly how the Lord has led us, and then we can be very grateful.

Now let us ask ourselves, what is the Loud Cry? How does it start? It certainly does not start by mere sermonizing. That is clear from this text:

**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.

Now this kind of practical work can be found in many organizations today. But where do we see the character of Jesus? Where do we see real selflessness? That is something that God wants to reveal to the world.

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 417:**

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.

1. The “darkness” is not just an experience of an individual, or of a church, but it is the world’s darkness.
2. The Midnight Cry will not be simply sermonizing, it will be action. It will be practical work.
3. This practical work is not for the church only, it is for the world.
4. The Loud Cry will not be given to the church but to the world.

These are things that we need to learn.

**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.

Now unless we have this golden oil in our bowls, the practical work will not bear the stamp of the Loud Cry. Only as our bowls are filled with the oil will our work bear that stamp. That is the point.

“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.”

As I said already, there are many organizations that give food to the hungry, clothe the naked, and give shelter to the homeless, but we are called to do more than this:

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 417-418:**

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 sym-

pathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.

God calls not only for our gifts for the needy, but for our cheerful countenance, our hopeful words, our kindly hand-clasp. 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.

This is how the Loud Cry will begin, and how it will continue.

### **Christ's Object Lessons, 418:**

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.

### **An Experience**

I will tell you a little experience we had that may help to illustrate this. We have lived in Dickendorf for quite a long time. But we have had little effect on the people around us, except that they wondered who we were and what we believed. There were of course some rumors in circulation, but no real facts.

So we started something, we opened the natural food store. However, the people were very reluctant to come. At first, only the believers came to the shop, and that helped it to stay afloat.

And then after a while a neighbor came and said she wanted to speak with me. I was called from the middle of my work and I wondered what she might want. I went to see her and she told me that she would soon be going into hospital to have an operation. She asked if we could look after her husband during this time because he needed help and company. I

told her we would be very happy to do this. Then she expressed her fears about the operation she was about to have. I asked her if she wanted to pray with me about this, and she said she would like to. So we prayed together. That was the first time I had dared to do this.

I don't know if you can understand this so well because your customs in Africa are quite different than ours, but in Germany you don't normally ask a person if they would like to pray with you. That is a very unusual request, especially if you belong to a different denomination. But she was very open about it. She was a Catholic and I was something altogether different; but even though she didn't know exactly what I believed she was still open. And as we prayed, a relationship began.

Since that time I was frequently called to their home and we often prayed together, including her husband, who was the former mayor of the village. When she finally came back from the hospital she was not able to care for him any more, so we took him into our home. And this opened another step and another step and another step. It has opened so many steps. It was a little trigger, you know. I couldn't have done this by a speech, by sermonizing, by standing on the streets and saying,

“Listen, I have a message for you!”

Rather, this friendship and trust developed through practical work. And this is how the Loud Cry will work. It won't work by giving an exciting sermon. That is what the fallen churches do. There is a lot of excitement out there in the religious world today. But the Loud Cry will be achieved through selfless work, by the calm and selfless work of those whose bowls are filled with the golden oil.

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 418**

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.

We often think that a certain person or group of people would not accept our message. I would never have thought before this experience that some Catholics would be so open as to pray with me. But I was wrong.

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 418:**

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.

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.

## CHAPTER TWO

# PRACTICAL WORK GIVES POWER

A study given by Joachim Schwarz

I WOULD like to share a few thoughts from the book of *James* and also look at the medical missionary work. But before this I would like to tell you about an experience I had which should help to illustrate these things.

### **Pure Religion**

At our camp meeting in Kenya, I spoke about the three children of Jesse, and how his two sons don't get the chance to mix with believers very often. This is because they are at boarding school or with their mother and so they just do not get this opportunity.

I wondered how I could have some special time together with them. Mary, the oldest child, had lived with us in Germany for a year and so our relationship was quite relaxed and natural. We took the time for a few walks in nature together, and then the time came for the baptism. We had the baptism in the morning and I thought that we could have the Lord's Supper in the evening. This way I could spend a good few hours with these children. We could go to the park and have a longer time together so that we could have the chance to build up a relationship.

On the other hand, I wondered if this would be the right thing to do because then there would be no time to prepare for the Lord's Supper. The conflict in my mind revolved around us being in the church at one moment, and then at a game park with these young people the next. My thoughts went round and round so I counseled with my brothers and in the end they fully supported the idea that I go with the boys.

I would like to share a statement from Ellen White which helped me a lot on this point.

**Counsels on Stewardship, p. 163:**

But among all whose needs demand our interest, the widow and the fatherless have the strongest claims upon our tender sympathy and care.

**James 1**

<sup>27</sup> Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

We have heard these verses before and are familiar with them. But then Ellen White continues,

The father who has died in the faith, resting upon the eternal promise of God, left his loved ones in full trust that the Lord would care for them.

And how does the Lord provide for these bereaved ones? He does not work a miracle in sending manna from heaven, He does not send ravens to bring them food; but He works a miracle upon human hearts, He expels selfishness from the soul, He unseals the fountain of benevolence.

He tests the love of His professed followers by committing to their tender mercies the afflicted and bereaved ones, the poor and the orphan. These are in a special sense the little ones whom Christ looks upon, whom it is an offense to Him to neglect.

What is this in a practical sense? It is worship. This verse starts with the words, “Pure religion.” And then it goes on to define what this is—practical religion that helps people who are struggling, and this is a blessing.

Now let’s take this further and look at the Bible verse that was quoted:

**James 1**

<sup>27</sup> Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

This Bible verse helped me so much when I thought about visiting sick people on the Sabbath. When I studied this I wanted to understand the context better, and so I read the pre-



vious verse. Let's read that now:

<sup>26</sup> If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

I was a little astonished by this. What did this verse have to do with the following one? What does it mean? Now let's go even further back look at the whole context. James says,

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

What does it mean when it says, "deceiving yourselves?" It means that we cannot be only a hearer or speaker, but we have to be a doer! If you are not a "doer" then you are just deceiving yourself.

### **James 1**

<sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

<sup>24</sup> For he observes himself, [that is he listens to the message, he studies the message] goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

He forgets it! Forgets what he is supposed to be!

<sup>25</sup> But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

So the one who looks in the mirror of the gospel, sees himself as he is and then makes changes, this man will be blessed indeed. And then it goes on,

<sup>26</sup> If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue...

In other words, if he professes Christianity, and if he hears and talks and sermonizes, then he must also live what he hears, talks, and sermonizes. "If he does not bridle his tongue..." If he talks too much, if he overstates things and if his life does not match what he says, then "this one's religion is useless." "Pure religion" involves having a tongue that is un-

der control.

It also involves visiting...

### **James 1**

<sup>27</sup> ...orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Very simply then, religion is a practical thing. The main thing here is to visit those who are in need. What we are saying is that this is the whole point of it all. We haven't understood this as we should have.

### **Practical Work**

This Bible verse helped me to understand other statements from Ellen White much better than I used to. And I would like to read them together with you because I think that it will help us to see the whole theme in a much plainer light.

But before we do this, let's go back for a moment and see that talking and giving a sermon and sermonizing is one thing, but practical work is another thing. Practical work is what the right hand does. It's the right arm. This is what really gives the gospel life. And the right arm is something that is constantly active.

For instance, if you are a carpenter without arms, how useful will you be? Are you much help if you have no arms? Can you function as a carpenter without any arms? Why not? Because you have to be practical. Exactly. That is religion. It's a practical work. So, when we have a right arm message this practical aspect will just naturally flow from the message that God has put into our heart.

#### **The Ministry of Healing, p. 144:**

This is the high duty and precious privilege of the medical missionary. And personal ministry often prepares the way for this. God often reaches hearts through our efforts to relieve physical suffering.

Medical missionary work is the pioneer work of the gospel. In the ministry of the word and in the medical missionary

work the gospel is to be preached and practiced.

That's how we can approach the heart of people. That is what creates trust; that is how we come very close to the needs of the people around us.

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 144:**

In the ministry of the word and in the medical missionary work the gospel is to be preached and practiced.

These two things belong together. If we look back at how the message has developed in the Adventist church, we see that there was always strife between the right arm and the gospel ministry, or the ministry of the word. But you don't see this strife in the life of Ellen White. When you read about her life you see that the two were very practically bound together, it was one message. In the development of the Advent Church however, these two things became separated and there was strife. But when we look to Jesus, to Ellen White, and what God has given us, these two areas belong very, very close together.

**Evangelism, p. 513:**

I can see in the Lord's providence that the medical missionary work is to be a great entering wedge, whereby the diseased soul may be reached.

This does not mean that there must be big hospitals. It does not mean that we must work marvelous miracles. Rather, it means doing simple, practical work for needy people: for those who are close to us or for those who are far away, or for those whom God brings us into contact with. It is an entering wedge, a pioneering work, a right arm work. It is taking care of the fatherless and widows. That is practical religion.

Just think for a moment about the work that Jesus did. What was His work? Did He go around just speaking and preaching with His hands in his pockets? What did He do? When He was in Peter's home, what did He do there? He spent the entire day healing sick people right through until it

was dark. In fact most of the stories that we read about His work involved working for the sick ones, for the lonely ones, for those who had a need. That was His religion. When He talked to people, when He gave a message, His daily activities just illustrated what He was saying. It was one message.

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 19:**

During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching...

Now for us as ministers who work in the gospel work, where do we put most of our time? Do we spend more time in talking or do we spend more time in working practically for the needs of others, or in serving with medical help? You could argue and say,

“But I have to be a proper doctor to do this.”

I don't agree. There is so much that we can do for sick people. Many of us do have people in need right on our door step. God will teach us. We will need to get some basic practical and theoretical understanding on things such as anatomy, first aid, nutrition, and hygiene, but these are all simple things. And God will give everyone of us opportunities to apply what we know. And we will learn. By this we can really help sick people.

From my practical experience in my office, some people are really open, even the Germans! I can often pray with them. They don't look like they would ever want to do such a thing, and sometimes I'm really surprised by their attitude. They really want to pray.

**The Work of a Minister**

**Evangelism, p. 523:**

I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work...

I used to think that this statement was an exaggeration. But if you ever go to Kenya on a Sunday you will hear the preach-

ers there. They are everywhere, and they are loud and noisy, although occasionally you might hear quieter ones. And even here in South Africa or in Germany there are preachers. Just about everywhere you can hear people giving sermons; you can hear religious talk, nice words and so on.

But people are sick of this nice preaching. They don't believe it anymore. I'm thinking in particular of some people I know. They don't want to hear this stuff anymore. But what they do need is help. And when you help people they sometimes ask themselves,

“Why is this person doing this? What's he up to? Will I have to pay for it—maybe not with money, but with my soul?”

But if they see that all you want to do is help them, that you are just there for them, they will see Christ. He was there for us. He came to serve. And that is what our role is, to serve the people. Of course we want to serve the soul and tell them the gospel—that is clear. But will they believe what we say? They will believe us if they see our practical help.

**Evangelism, p. 523:**

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...

“...preach?” Ah, did I make a little mistake here? Thank you, here it is again:

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*.

There it is, very simply—a minister ministers. The work of a preacher is to preach. But they should be more than preachers, they should be ministers. Our ministers are to work on the “gospel plan of ministry”. As I understand this more and more it becomes apparent what a different kind of church we are to be.

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 156:**

To reach the people, wherever they are, and whatever their position or condition, and to help them in every way possible—this is true ministry.

It is practical work that gives real power to our message. It's not what I say but what I am that counts most.

**Evangelism, p. 523:**

You will never be ministers after the gospel order till you show a decided interest in medical missionary work, the gospel of healing and blessing and strengthening...

It is because of the directions I have received from the Lord that I have the courage to stand among you and speak as I do, notwithstanding the way in which you may look at the medical missionary work.

This shows the condition the church was in at that time. On the one hand there was Kellogg. He was a very capable doctor, but he had the problem of being independent and following a path of his own making. On the other hand there were the ministers, or to use a turn of phrase, the “word ministers.” Many of them had difficulty accepting and appreciating the practical work. So Ellen White took a clear stand before the whole assembly. She said,

That is the reason I dare to say it, because God has told me. It is because of directions that I have received from the Lord that I have the courage...

Ellen White also needed the courage,

...to stand among you and speak as I do, notwithstanding the way in which you may look at the medical missionary work.

I wish to say that the medical missionary work is God's work. The Lord wants every one of His ministers to come into line. Take hold of the medical missionary work, and it will give you access to the people. Their hearts will be touched as you minister to their necessities. As you relieve their sufferings, you will find opportunity to speak to them

of the love of Jesus.

**Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 288:**

Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body.

That is saying the same thing we have just read in *James*.

Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active.

It should be as normal and natural for us to do this as it is for our physical right arm to be constantly working for the rest of our body.

The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. But it is not to be made the body. At the same time the body is not to say to the arm: "I have no need of you." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.

I can testify of this in my own work. I am rather active in my work, but it is so good to have the counsel of other believers when questions arise, or when I need support, or when I need direction. It's such a help. These two things belong very close together. So in closing I would like to read the text from *James* again:

**James 1**

<sup>26</sup> If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

<sup>27</sup> Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this...

...to do medical missionary work, in the broader sense.





## CHAPTER THREE

# PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

**A**S I considered the statements concerning Dr. Kellogg which Joachim quoted in our last study, it became clear that what Kellogg did was the same as what Lucifer did in the beginning. He took the gifts of God and made them his own.

No matter what our work, there is always the danger of making it our focus, and forgetting that we are what we are only because we are a part of God's great whole. This problem is the reason why there is often such competition between the ministerial and practical areas of life.

### Inner Power

#### **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 hand-clasp.

What does this look like? It is not something which you can extrinsically train, it comes from within. At the pool of Bethesda, Jesus stooped down to the paralytic, looked into his face, and asked,

#### **John 5**

<sup>6</sup> Do you want to be made whole?

The man immediately had faith. Why? He looked upon a cheerful countenance—one full of hope and promise. That is what God wants to do again. To come in that spirit is part of practical work. There are many who do charitable deeds. But how many have a cheerful countenance, hopeful words, and a kindly handclasp which bring people out of their depression?

#### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 418:**

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.

But no man can impart that which he himself has not re-

ceived. 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.

What does this have to do with personal responsibility? Very much! What is personal responsibility? Many people understand it to mean that we make our own decisions. That is not wrong, in itself. It's true that we are not just to be the mouthpiece of another person, a slave of another's mind, for example:

“He told me to do it, so I'll do it.”

That is not what God wants—not even of himself. God has made us individuals, not animals. He has created us as human beings who can think for ourselves. But how does this work? It does not work by only being independent. This would actually cause us to lose our personality. We see this clearly in those who claim to have a lot of freedom. They say,

“I am free to do what I want. I can do anything.”

But they become dependent on substances like nicotine, alcohol, or drugs. They seem to be very free, but in reality they are not. They are dependent on a drug, or something else. Often, people who seem to be so free are not really. They are so independent, so self-willed—and yet not. The true freedom which God plans for us is another freedom. It's the freedom to be in harmony with Him.

## **True Obedience**

To understand this better—what it means to be a vessel filled with oil—I'd like to read a statement about praying in Christ's name:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 668:**

All true obedience comes from the heart....

In other words, all true obedience comes from a person who bears personal responsibility, not from a slave. True obedience cannot come from a person who only carries out another person's commands. It cannot because that is not the true obedience of the kingdom of God. When a dog obeys because it fears punishment or receives a reward, it displays the obedience of an animal, not the obedience of a person. Personal obedience is different.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him *we shall be but carrying out our own impulses...*

“We shall carry out our own impulses.” He does not just want us to do what He tells us. He wants us to carry out our own impulses. Is this your impulse? Or is that your impulse? People who claim independence and individuality say,

“We only carry out our own impulses, not what another person tells us.”

But true obedience is also carried out by our own impulses.

...He will so identify himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses....

Why do we have so much difficulty in bringing together obedience to God and carrying out our own impulses? Why do you think that is? On one side we have carrying out our own impulses, and then on the other we have obedience to God. We seem not to bring these two things together. Why?

This happens when our will has not melded to His will—when we have not truly become one. And we cannot understand bearing personal responsibility unless we first understand becoming one with God. Only he who is one with Him in thought, feeling, and action knows how to carry out per-

sonal responsibility. We could ask the question:

“Did Lucifer carry out his own personal responsibility when he rebelled against the order of heaven?”

Certainly not, because he blamed his problem on everyone else: God, Christ, the other angels. Likewise, who did Adam and Eve blame when they fell into sin? Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. The serpent wasn't asked, but we know that Satan blames God. All three blamed God.

“The wife that You gave me,”

“The serpent that You have made.”

They did not bear personal responsibility, but rather followed their own impulses. Bearing responsibility is only possible if we become one with Him. But this is a work that Jesus does, as we read:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 668:**

He will so identify himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

People in this day and age often think that obedience is a negative word; that it is not something good; that it means slavery, or being immature. They believe that obedience is not even good for children. Instead of obeying, it is said that they should be independent, that their personalities must develop. This is understandable, but the meaning of true obedience is not grasped.

True obedience comes from the heart. It is never an outward thing; it comes from the heart. People who most hate the word “obedience” are the most obedient to advertisements, and to the fashions and god of this world. And those

who make the advertisements know exactly how to get their obedience. They don't do it by saying,

“Sit down and do what I tell you!”

They have different ways to do it. But they get their results. That is the order of the world. It is the darkness in which we live. People are deceived into buying things they don't need. They are deceived into doing things which harm them. They are deceived into being absolutely selfish. That is the darkness of the world in which we live. And only one thing can work against this—true obedience which comes from the heart. That means our will and Christ's will must meld together and become one.

### **Allowing God to Work**

Let's turn back to the statement about the loud cry which we've read in previous studies. How will the loud cry be given?

#### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 418:**

No man can impart that which he himself has not received...

I often think of Elijah. It seemed that he was alone. And now it seems that true obedience is barely understood, if at all. If even we struggle to understand it, how then does the world understand what true obedience is? As soon as we speak about obeying the Ten Commandments, this wrong concept of obedience comes in, and as a result the people don't understand. But God has seven thousand who have not bowed their knees before Baal—people who are really hungering and thirsting for harmony with the divine will and purpose.

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.

It is not something which we can originate ourselves. It is not something which gives glory to humanity. Very often we would like to see the results of our work. For example, I like to see others worshipping God right away—if possible immediately—and I am disappointed if it does not happen. We all must learn that it is the Holy Spirit who works, not us.

In rare cases I have seen people accept the truth very quickly. They were looking for God, and seemed to be ready, even before I met them. Maybe you have experienced this also. In other cases the work seems to be in vain. But it is not in vain. The Holy Spirit works and we need to realize that we can originate nothing—not in the other person, and not through us. It is not our work.

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 419:**

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.

What does it mean that Christ reigns in the soul? It does not mean that we are slaves. It means that Christ’s mind has become our mind—that we have become one. As a result, we rejoice to follow Him because that is exactly our will. What He wants is what I want, and I am looking forward to the next instruction from Him, because I know He has wisdom. It is my exact desire to do what He wants, and so I will follow Him. That is what happens when Christ reigns in the heart.

#### **Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 419-420:**

The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.

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

The shining of our light is not something which we can generate—which we can accomplish by our effort. But what can we do? It's very clearly described. Remove the obstructions—that is our part. How do we remove obstructions? We need to search our own hearts and seek for the motives of our deeds.

“Why am I doing this or that?”

The Holy Spirit is present when we ask this. During the Lord's Supper and foot washing this is especially our work. But why not make it our life work to continuously ask the Lord,

“What is my motive? Where am I going? Am I really in harmony with You?”

As we do this, the Lord will reveal things which we can gladly lay on the altar and have removed. Removing the obstructions is our work of being self-critical. It is also our willingness to give up anything that may hinder us on the path of coming into full unity with Christ. These things may even be something material or a secret desire.

Let us honestly lay these things on the altar before our Saviour. As we do this the obstructions will be removed and—without us being aware—light will shine forth to dispel the darkness.

## **The Light Shines Through**

You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. You cannot help it. You can't generate it, you can't hinder it. It's simply there. This is the case when we are in harmony with Christ.

### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 420:**

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.

This is a promise. Many souls are won to God through such a light which shines within.

**Christ's Object Lessons, p. 420-421:**

**Isaiah 60**

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

To those who go out to meet the Bridegroom is this message given. Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. He is coming with all the holy angels with Him.

While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him.

While the wicked flee from His presence, Christ's followers will rejoice. The patriarch Job, looking down to the time of Christ's second advent, said,

**Job 19** [margin]

<sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger.

To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.

With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draws nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying,

**Isaiah 25**

<sup>9</sup> Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.

**Revelation 19**

<sup>6</sup> And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.

<sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.

<sup>9</sup> And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

**Revelation 17**

<sup>14</sup> He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

This makes the meaning of personal responsibility very clear. We cannot separate personal responsibility from harmony with God. Otherwise, we end up with the world's common understanding of personal responsibility, which is really another form of slavery in the end.

CHAPTER FOUR  
THE STILL, SMALL VOICE

**Zechariah 4**

<sup>1</sup> Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.

<sup>2</sup> And he said to me, What do you see? So I said, I am looking, and there is a lamp stand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.

<sup>3</sup> Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.

<sup>4</sup> So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying What are these, my lord?

<sup>5</sup> Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said No, my lord.

<sup>6</sup> So He answered and said to me: This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

**T**HAT is something that not only Zerubbabel, but everyone needs to understand. That includes us.

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.”

The most important thing is the golden oil which is poured into the bowls. It is more important than anything else in the world. We could busy ourselves with activities, but we will never be truly successful unless we have the golden oil.

**At the Time of the Restoration**

At the time when this promise was given to Israel, they were not enjoying a time of great success. This was not a time of glory for the people of God. On the contrary, it was a time when things were going particularly badly for them. Certainly, they had just been delivered from the Babylonian captivity, but despite this, their future outlook was grim. They were in a very poor and weakened state.

When Nehemiah came, the people were still practicing idol worship. They were not keeping the Sabbath. Nehemiah had to give them a really good shake up. They were not paying their tithes. They were only really interested in building their own homes and not so interested in building God's truth. The Sabbath was no longer kept as a holy day and the building work was progressing very slowly.

At the same time, they were surrounded by their enemies who were constantly hostile toward them. What a marked difference between this and the glory that attended Israel under the reigns of David and Solomon, when Israel was one of the most powerful kingdoms on earth and held the respect of nations. At that time, even the Queen of Sheba came to Israel to inquire of the wisdom of Solomon.

But now, no one was interested in the wisdom of Israel. Who was Israel? A band of prisoners who had recently been freed. This is how Israel was looked upon. Maybe some of the surrounding nations also saw it as a threat. Many of the returning Israelites looked back to the earlier, more glorious times of the nation.

There were some in this company, who saw more glory in the first temple that was erected under Solomon. But now, they had to build Jerusalem again out of what seemed like a pile of rubbish. How? They needed workmen, they needed artisans.

During the reign of Solomon there was one artisan especially gifted by God for the very purpose of building the temple. This man was also motivated by money. He was a descendant of the people who carried out the art work in the first wilderness tabernacle. The fact that this man asked for wages was in itself a step in the wrong direction. But at least he had the natural skill and ability to complete the task.

Now however, there was no one who could do this work as in the past. Of course, some of the people were skilled, but they could not attain to the high standard of workmanship of

past generations.

## **Not by Outward Glory**

At this very time, and under these particular circumstances, God said to Israel, “Not by might or by power.” These words were actually a comfort to them. God was reminding them that it was through His Spirit that they would be able to build the temple. He was saying,

“Don’t look at these outward things. Don’t look at the fact that you are lacking in skill at the moment, and don’t look at your lack of materials.”

From where did Solomon get the material? From all over the earth: the most precious wood, the most precious stones, and the best workmen. When you think of all the materials and skills that were available to Solomon, and compare this with what the Hebrews had at this time, it is obvious that their circumstances were totally different. But God said,

### **Zechariah 4**

<sup>6</sup> Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.

God wanted to teach them something through the fact that they had virtually no resources available to them. Let’s turn to the book *Prophets and Kings* and read about God’s promise to the Jews at this time.

### **Prophets and Kings, p. 596:**

The promise was literally fulfilled:

#### **Zechariah 4**

<sup>9</sup> The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.

#### **Ezra 6**

<sup>14</sup> The elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

<sup>15</sup> And this house was finished on the third day of the month

Adar [the twelfth month], which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

Notice how accurately the dates have been documented by the record of the year of the king's reign and by mentioning the specific months. These are important because the 2300-year prophecy is calculated using these very dates.

**Prophets and Kings, p. 596:**

Shortly afterward the restored temple was dedicated. "The children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy;" and "upon the fourteenth day of the first month" they "kept the Passover." Verses 16, 17, 19.

The second temple did not equal the first in magnificence, nor was it hallowed by those visible tokens of the divine presence which pertained to the first temple. There was no manifestation of supernatural power to mark its dedication. No cloud of glory was seen to fill the newly erected sanctuary. No fire from heaven descended to consume the sacrifice upon its altar. The Shekinah no longer abode between the cherubim in the most holy place; the ark, the mercy seat, and the tables of testimony were not found there. No sign from heaven made known to the inquiring priest the will of Jehovah.

Some would say that Israel was left high and dry. They no longer had any visible token of the Divine presence any more—no obvious token. Many would have asked if this direction to re-build the temple really came from God. Is this really the time to rebuild? The Shekinah was the glory which hallowed the temple. It was a bright light which nobody could bear to look at. It was manifested in the Most Holy. But now this Shekinah was no longer present. It was no longer with them. It had gone.

And the ark had also been removed—nobody knew where it was. In fact, nobody knows where it is to this day. There are some people who claim to know where it is, but this is spurious and not something we need to concern ourselves with.

Where is the ark containing the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God? It is hidden in a cave somewhere, and there is a statement from Ellen White which tells us this. There is also another statement that indicates that God will reproduce the Ten Commandments, but not necessarily by revealing the whereabouts of the original in the ark.

However, for now they are hidden. And there is a reason for this. The ark was the symbol of God's presence and therefore it was considered to be the strength or power of Israel. It was a symbol of strength—whenever the ark was in the camp, Israel was successful. Whenever the ark was away from the camp, Israel was unsuccessful. But it was only when the Israelites had the right spirit that the ark's power was manifested. So without the right spirit, the ark was useless to Israel.

The ark was an outward symbol. Some of the Israelites understood this, but others did not. And what is the symbol of our strength today? Do we have an ark? Our ark today is the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the special sign that God gave us and that should be the symbol of our strength.

As with Israel of old, keeping an outward day with the wrong spirit is of no value at all. But if we have the right spirit, the Sabbath, the presence of the Sabbath among God's people, will be a sign of victory. If it is not there, the battle will be lost.

In other words if we transgress the Sabbath in spirit, as the Jews did after the Babylonian captivity, we will lose our battles. If we keep it with the right spirit, then we will win the battles. But we must keep the Sabbath in heart, not merely as an outward form.

So it is the keeping of the Sabbath in the right spirit that ensures our strength and power. The same was true for ancient Israel, but the people did not understand this. Let's continue reading:

## Glory Means Character

### **Prophets and Kings, p. 597:**

And yet this was the building concerning which the Lord had declared by the prophet Haggai:

#### **Haggai 2**

<sup>9</sup> The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.

What? The glory of this house shall be greater than of the former? More glorious than the Shekinah was? How can that be?

### **Prophets and Kings, p. 597:**

#### **Haggai 2**

<sup>7</sup> I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

For centuries learned men have endeavored to show wherein the promise of God, given to Haggai, has been fulfilled; yet in the advent of Jesus of Nazareth, the Desire of all nations, who by His personal presence hallowed the precincts of the temple, many have steadfastly refused to see any special significance. Pride and unbelief have blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet's words.

So in what way was the glory of this latter house greater than that of the former? By the presence of Jesus. This Presence was truly more glorious than the Shekinah glory. In reality, the Shekinah glory was the presence of Jesus; but in His incarnation, He came closer to men. In that sense it was more glorious.

The Shekinah glory couldn't be touched. It couldn't be looked upon. It was hidden behind a curtain. It was removed from man. But Jesus could be touched. He could be spoken with. He laid His hands on the sick and they were healed. He took the children on His lap and they were comforted. So this glory was greater.

In God's eyes, "glory" does not mean an external splendor. Glory means character. And the character of God was more



clearly revealed, much more clearly revealed, when Christ came personally as a man among men to this earth. So in that sense the glory of the second temple was greater than that of the first one.

Christ didn't appear in the temple during the time of Zerubbabel. So Zerubbabel had to see it by faith. Why don't the people of today see the fulfillment of this and why didn't they back then? Why is the book of *Haggai* not understood today? Many wonder and bring up complicated explanations as to why the second temple was more glorious than the first. Why do they struggle with this? The answer is given here: because of pride. Wasn't it pride that led the people to reject Jesus? Pride desires outward glory. Pride depends on outward things.

Those who become one with the mind of God however, those who see things as He sees them and appreciate things as He appreciates them, perceive the glory that is in character, and are not awestruck by a mere outward splendor. It is pride and unbelief that have blinded minds to the true meaning of the prophet's words.

**Prophets and Kings, p. 597:**

The second temple was honored, not with the cloud of Jehovah's glory, but with the presence of the One in whom dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"—God himself "manifest in the flesh." *Colossians* 2:9; *1 Timothy* 3:16. In being honored with the personal presence of Christ during His earthly ministry, and in this alone, did the second temple exceed the first in glory. The "Desire of all nations" had indeed come to His temple, when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts.

This was to be understood by those who built the temple long before Jesus ever entered it in person, and this was included in the promise,

"You will succeed. Your hands have directed and your hands will finish the temple."

The significance of that second temple was that it was a ves-

sel for the presence of Jesus. And when Jesus came to this earth He taught in that temple; He healed in that temple; and it is well known that He twice cleansed the temple. This was the significance of that temple. And what a privilege it was for the builders of the temple to contribute to the work of Jesus.

“So take courage; go on and do the work. You may not see results straight away, but what you are doing is very significant.”

## **The Parallel to Our Time**

This is what the prophets told the people who built the temple. Now I would like to read about the preparations and the building of the temple:

### **Prophets and Kings, p. 560-564:**

The setting up of the altar of daily burnt offerings greatly cheered the faithful remnant. Heartily they entered into the preparations necessary for the rebuilding of the temple, gathering courage as these preparations advanced from month to month. They had for many years been deprived of the visible tokens of God’s presence. And now, surrounded as they were by many sad reminders of the apostasy of their fathers, they longed for some abiding token of divine forgiveness and favor.

Above the regaining of personal property and ancient privileges, they valued the approval of God. Wonderfully had He wrought in their behalf, and they felt the assurance of His presence with them; yet they desired greater blessings still. With joyous anticipation they looked forward to the time when, with temple rebuilt, they might behold the shining forth of His glory from within.

The workmen engaged in the preparation of the building material, found among the ruins some of the immense stones brought to the temple site in the days of Solomon. These were made ready for use, and much new material was provided; and soon the work was advanced to the point where the foundation stone must be laid. This was done in

the presence of many thousands who had assembled to witness the progress of the work and to give expression to their joy in having a part in it. While the cornerstone was being set in position, the people, accompanied by the trumpets of the priests and the cymbals of the sons of Asaph, “sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever toward Israel.” Verse 11.

The house that was about to be rebuilt had been the subject of many prophecies concerning the favor that God desired to show Zion, and all who were present at the laying of the cornerstone should have entered heartily into the spirit of the occasion. Yet mingled with the music and the shouts of praise that were heard on that glad day, was a discordant note.

### **Ezra 3**

<sup>12</sup> Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.

It was natural that sadness should fill the hearts of these aged men, as they thought of the results of long-continued impenitence. Had they and their generation obeyed God, and carried out His purpose for Israel, the temple built by Solomon would not have been destroyed and the captivity would not have been necessary. But because of ingratitude and disloyalty they had been scattered among the heathen.

I would like to draw a parallel to this event so that we can see the purpose in reading this. We are living at a time when this history is being repeated. The first building of the temple corresponds to the building of the Advent movement before and after 1844.

Leading up to 1844, there was great glory in the movement. There were many who came and listened. A great wave of enthusiasm swept through the people throughout the world, and especially in the USA, as the message of the second coming of Christ was preached. William Miller always spoke to a

crowded house.

After 1844 there was a thorough shaking and many people left, but the ranks were filled up again rather quickly. Within ten years there were thousands of people in North America who believed that Christ was coming again soon. And after another ten years real progress was being made. The Spirit of Prophecy was among them. The presence of God was manifested in visions, and definite instructions were given as to how to go forward in various lines. The people were blessed with the visible presence of God in a certain way.

When ministers preached at this time the Holy Spirit was often manifested in a very marked manner. This is apparent from the reports in *Life Sketches* for example, or other history books. And we are cheered and inspired when we read about these things. Although we were not there ourselves, we can relate to the experiences of these people.

But how is it today? By comparison, how much of the manifestation of God's presence is there today? What does the temple look like today? Aren't we also tempted to weep as we look back to the past glory and compare it with the present building of the temple? When we look at all the difficulties that exist among God's people and see how little progress seems to have been made—how little interest the message seems to generate.

**Prophets and Kings, p. 564-565:**

Conditions were now changed. In tender mercy the Lord had again visited His people and allowed them to return to their own land. Sadness because of the mistakes of the past should have given way to feelings of great joy. God had moved upon the heart of Cyrus to aid them in rebuilding the temple, and this should have called forth expressions of profound gratitude. But some failed of discerning God's opening providences. Instead of rejoicing, they cherished thoughts of discontent and discouragement. They had seen the glory of Solomon's temple, and they lamented because of the inferiority of the building now to be erected.

The murmuring and complaining, and the unfavorable comparisons made, had a depressing influence on the minds of many and weakened the hands of the builders. The workmen were led to question whether they should proceed with the erection of a building that at the beginning was so freely criticized and was the cause of so much lamentation.

There were many in the congregation, however, whose larger faith and broader vision did not lead them to view this lesser glory with such dissatisfaction.

### **Ezra 3**

<sup>12</sup> ...many shouted aloud for joy:

<sup>13</sup> So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

Could those who failed to rejoice at the laying of the foundation stone of the temple have foreseen the results of their lack of faith on that day, they would have been appalled. Little did they realize the weight of their words of disapproval and disappointment; little did they know how much their expressed dissatisfaction would delay the completion of the Lord's house.

The magnificence of the first temple, and the imposing rites of its religious services, had been a source of pride to Israel before their captivity; but their worship had oftentimes been lacking in those qualities which God regards as most essential. The glory of the first temple, the splendor of its service, could not recommend them to God; for that which is alone of value in His sight, they did not offer. They did not bring Him the sacrifice of a humble and contrite spirit.

It is when the vital principles of the kingdom of God are lost sight of, that ceremonies become multitudinous and extravagant. It is when the character building is neglected, when the adornment of the soul is lacking, when the simplicity of godliness is despised, that pride and love of display demand magnificent church edifices, splendid adornings, and imposing ceremonials. But in all this God is not honored.

He values His church, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world.

He estimates it according to the growth of its members in the knowledge of Christ [in *knowledge*, not in *numbers*], according to their progress in spiritual experience. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ's representatives.

A temple had to be built so that there would be a vessel for the presence of Jesus when He came to this earth. It was necessary; it was important; but it was not to be outwardly magnificent. It was not to have the same outward glory in gold that adorned the first temple. However, gold was later added to the temple by the Romans and by Herod. They made the temple more outwardly beautiful—but this was done at a time when Israel no longer possessed beauty of character. God does not put any value in these outward things. What God values is character. That is the important point. And this is what will ultimately have success in the world.

But character is not seen immediately. It is the outward things that are first seen. This is apparent in the rise and fall of nations. A nation rises when it has pure, noble principles, like the United States in its formative years. A nation falls when it has very bad principles, as you see in most western nations today. The decline of these nations is the result of a moral decay. One is the cause of the other. This takes place over a period of time, but eventually the consequences are seen. They are not seen immediately, because the external still continues to shine, giving the impression that all is successful and secure, when in reality it is totally corrupt within.

**Prophets and Kings, p. 566:**

A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attractions of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation.

### **Psalm 107**

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.

<sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

### **Psalm 105**

<sup>2</sup> Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk of all His wondrous works.

<sup>3</sup> Glory in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

### **Psalm 107**

<sup>9</sup> For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

So it doesn't matter how many we are in number, or how much money we have. The important credential we bear is the character that we have. The work of God in these last days will not be accomplished by outward glory. Rather, it is character that counts.

## **The Lesson Given to Elijah**

This is a lesson that even Elijah needed to learn. Let's read about the victory on Mount Carmel and see how God worked there and how Elijah did not fully understand this point at that time:

### **1 Kings 18**

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

<sup>21</sup> And Elijah came to all the people, and said, How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people answered him not a word.

It's always very comfortable to remain quiet. How often we are asked questions and we do not answer a word. This is neutrality. In such a situation, to not answer is also an answer. You can't be quiet. You can't be quiet, it's impossible! When such a question is asked you must say something. It's like when Jesus was questioned by the High Priest,

“I adjure you—Are you the Son of God?”

Jesus couldn't be quiet. He said,

“You say it.”

There are times when we really have to say something. At such times, remaining quiet is considered the greatest sin by heaven.

### **1 Kings 18**

<sup>22</sup> Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

<sup>23</sup> Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

<sup>24</sup> And call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answers by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

<sup>25</sup> And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for you are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

<sup>26</sup> And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

<sup>27</sup> And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or perhaps he sleeps, and must be awaked.

<sup>28</sup> And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

<sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.



Now when it says they prophesied, it means they were in a trance-like state, in ecstasy; they were in a kind of stupor, brought on by their own self-hypnosis. They were under the influence of Satan at that moment.

### **1 Kings 18**

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

<sup>31</sup> And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, Israel shall be your name.

<sup>32</sup> Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two measures of seed.

<sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.

<sup>34</sup> Then he said, Do it a second time, and they did it a second time; and he said, Do it a third time, and they did it a third time.

<sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

<sup>36</sup> And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word.

<sup>37</sup> Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.

<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

<sup>39</sup> Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!

That was quite a success. When Elijah first spoke to the people, they didn't say a word, but after this demonstration of power they cried out,

“The Lord He is God! The Lord He is God!”

So it was a conversion, although not a very deep conversion. The rain came and signified the fact that Israel again acknowledged Jehovah as God.

But shortly after this Elijah realized that Jezebel still exercised power over Israel, and she threatened to kill the prophet who had been so successful. In his despair over the fact that the reformation did not accomplish what he expected, he ran away. He had been running for some time when the Lord asked him,

“What are you doing here Elijah? What are you doing here? Have I sent you here?”

This very message—what are you doing here?—was a rebuke to him. And then God revealed himself to Elijah. First He strengthened him with some food so that he could go without food for quite a long time and finally reach Mount Horeb. Mount Horeb is the place where God gave the Ten Commandments to His people, and it was here that He appeared to Elijah.

At first there was a wind, then an earthquake and a fire, and finally a still small voice. Elijah needed to learn that which seems so difficult for human nature to learn: that the work of God is not accomplished by outward glory—it is accomplished by character. In theory we seem to grasp this, but we really have to lay hold on this very deeply.

When Elijah saw the fire coming down from heaven he was really enthusiastic—and rightfully so because it was a mighty manifestation of God’s glory. There was nothing sinful about that manifestation. It had its place and its time. But God does not always reveal himself by such glorious manifestations.

In Old Testament times God often revealed himself to Israel in a miraculous manner: in supplying the manna from heaven, in fire coming down from heaven, etc. He revealed himself in the fiery cloud and the Shekinah glory. And He also mani-

fested His presence through the words of the prophets.

In the New Testament, Jesus also manifested God's presence, although somewhat differently. But the people were not satisfied with this. They constantly asked Jesus,

"Give us a sign! Work us a miracle!"

And even though He did work miracles they were still not satisfied. They said,

"In the Old Testament God gave much greater manifestations. For example, Moses gave us manna from heaven. But what are you doing? You haven't given us bread from heaven. You just multiplied the bread of this young lad. Of course, there was enough for everyone, but Moses made it come down from heaven and the people could gather it all up. Why don't you do it like that? Then we would have some real evidence. As it is, maybe you just used a trick or something."

There was a change in the way God manifested His glory in the Old Testament and how He did it in the New Testament. But today, we seem to have neither the Old Testament miracles nor Christ's miracles. In fact, people who do not value character even turn away from the truth because they are disappointed that there are no outward manifestations of God's presence among us.

## **In the Latter Days**

In regard to the fire coming down from heaven I would refer to *Revelation* 13. This is the chapter that speaks of the beast and his image. The image of the beast performs quite a number of signs, and one of these signs is fire coming down from heaven.

### **Revelation 13**

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come

down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark...

In verse 13 we read that the devil makes fire come down from heaven. This seems confusing. In the time of Elijah, God made fire come down from heaven, but in the last days Satan will make fire come down from heaven. Not only that, this outward manifestation of glory will make the same impression on people.

The very reason why God does not make fire come down from heaven in these last days is because Satan is doing it. Satan is copying God's work. He knows our human nature very well. He knows that we are prone to look for outward things and so he supplies them. Baal's priests would have made fire come down from heaven if they had been given the chance, but God did not permit them to do this at that time.

In the last days however, God will permit Satan to do this. Why? Because He has been educating His people, His true people, not to look to these outward manifestations but rather to listen to the still small voice. And this still small voice is actually the glory of the second temple.

The glory of the first temple was the fire that came down from heaven. The glory of the second temple is the glory of the still small voice. So in the past, the glory of God's presence was shown in outward manifestations, but the glory of the second coming, and of the people who proclaim it, is the still small voice.

Now that does not necessarily exclude physical manifestations of God's presence being associated with the second coming. We will have to wait and see what God's plan is. But the important thing is that we do not depend on these things. Instead, we need to depend on the presence of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Zechariah 4**

<sup>6</sup> Not by might or by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.

God's people depend on the golden oil that comes from the trees and fills the bowl. That is the secret of their strength. And this is what we need to learn and understand in these last days. In volume 2 of *Selected Messages*, there is a chapter entitled "Miracles Not a Test of God's Favor." Ellen White here explicitly warns people against paying attention to outward manifestations:

#### **Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 51:**

We are coming right upon the time when Satan is to work with all manner of bewitching influences, and those who are charmed with them now, or give them the least countenance now, will be all ready to be swept right in to act a part with the devil then.

Evil angels are working all the time upon the hearts of men. Satan is working with everyone who is not under the control of the Spirit of God. It is the lying wonders of the devil that will take the world captive, and he will cause fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. He is to work miracles; and this wonderful, miracle-working power is to sweep in the whole world. It is now just beginning.

I want to tell you another thing. The vials of God's wrath and the sprinkling of them are already coming. What is the matter that we do not discern it? It is because the light of truth does not affect the heart. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world.

You hear of calamities by land and by sea, and they are constantly increasing. What is the matter? The Spirit of God is taken away from those who have the lives of men in their hands, and Satan is coming in to control them, because they

give themselves to his control. Those who profess to be the children of God do not place themselves under the guardianship of the heavenly angels, and as Satan is a destroyer, he works through those men and they make mistakes; and they will get drunk, and because of intemperance, many times bring these terrible calamities upon us.

Not too long ago, a big tanker ship grounded along the coast of Alaska. The name of the ship was the Exxon Valdez and it spilled a lot of oil. This accident happened because the captain of the ship was drunk. Terrible destruction was caused.

And many similar accidents happen which we do not necessarily hear about. I once read of a plane accident where a plane from Egypt Air just dropped into the Atlantic. It was later discovered that the pilot simply steered the plane down. Why? Because of satanic influences. What about terrorists who destroy so many people, and themselves too? What is the cause of this? It is because of satanic influences. It is not just false religion; it is satanic influences at work. Are we blind not to see these things?

In regard to the financial crisis that is going on right now, many people are not at all concerned. I spoke about the crisis to a student and said,

“We will see what will happen over the next few years because of the crisis.”

His response was,

“Oh no things will improve and we will get back to normal again.”

I replied,

“It could be worse than in the 1930’s when there was a severe depression.”

He said,

“Oh no, things will get better again.”

So I left it at that. I thought,

“What can I do?”

So many people have such little concern for the future. They don't seem to comprehend what is going on around them. I also gave some presentations on climate change, peak oil, and other calamities that are looming up ahead of us. These threats are very tangible, but there is very little concern among the people. The interest shown in these things is very disproportionate to the enormity of the issues coming upon us.

It's really true what Ellen White says here. Satan works very, very hard to hold people captive and blinded. He is also using techniques such as hypnosis or Autogenic Training to literally control the minds of people. And then he uses these people as his instruments.

**Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 52-53:**

And see the storms and tempests. Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal life. And being in the position that we are, we need to be wide awake, wholly devoted, wholly converted, wholly consecrated to God. But we seem to sit as though we were paralyzed. God of heaven, wake us up!

Those who engage in the work of God's cause today will meet just such trials as Paul endured in his work. By the same boastful and deceptive work Satan will seek to draw converts from the faith. Theories will be brought in that it will not be wise for us to handle. Satan is a cunning worker, and he will bring in subtle fallacies to darken and confuse the mind and root out the doctrines of salvation. Those who do not accept the Word of God just as it reads will be snared in his trap.

Let not the days pass by and precious opportunities be lost of seeking the Lord with all the heart and mind and soul. If we accept not the truth in the love of it, we may be among the number who will see the miracles wrought by Satan in

these last days, and believe them. Many strange things will appear as wonderful miracles, which should be regarded as deceptions manufactured by the father of lies.

I am instructed to say that in the future great watchfulness will be needed. There is to be among God's people no spiritual stupidity. Evil spirits are actively engaged in seeking to control the minds of human beings. Men are binding up in bundles, ready to be consumed by the fires of the last days. Those who discard Christ and His righteousness will accept the sophistry that is flooding the world. Christians are to be sober and vigilant, steadfastly resisting their adversary the devil, who is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Men under the influence of evil spirits will work miracles. They will make people sick by casting their spell upon them, and will then remove the spell, leading others to say that those who were sick have been miraculously healed. This Satan has done again and again.

Here you see how Satan works his miracles.

We need not be deceived. Wonderful scenes, with which Satan will be closely connected, will soon take place. God's Word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test. Many who have had great light will fail to walk in the light, because they have not become one with Christ.

Ellen White was also accused of "not working miracles." She explained that those who look for miracles as a sign of divine guidance are in great danger of deception.

**Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 53-54:**

It is stated in the Word that the enemy will work through his agents who have departed from the faith, and they will seemingly work miracles, even to the bringing down of fire out of heaven in the sight of men. By means of "lying wonders" Satan would deceive, if possible, the very elect.

The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I



am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.

The way the Lord has marked out is a rational application of medicine. There is a lot of irrationality in the medical world today, but rational medicine simply applies the laws of nature. The laws that Ellen White describes include trust in God, which is a very important element in healing. As God's people apply these principles they will be attended by a positive success rather than spurious miracles.

You could call this kind of success "miraculous" because God brings about the healing, but in a very different way than the kind of "miracles" that Satan works. God's working requires our cooperation, as in the feeding of the five thousand. It requires effort on our part, as with the man who had to wash himself in the pool of Siloam. But this kind of work will bear the stamp of God's approval.

This is the still small voice that is at work today. Ellen White warns us again and again in these statements concerning miracles in the last days, and of Satan's way of working. And she emphasizes that God's people will work in a very different way. It is the work of the still small voice.

So here we are building the second temple. Here we are endeavoring to listen to the still small voice that gives a direction; that shows us where to go and how to go, in a world that is overwhelmingly evil and under the control of Satan. It

seems an impossible task to human wisdom. But with God there is no impossibility or defeat. I really pray that we understand this point so that we are not deceived in these last days.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# HYGIENE

A study given by Joachim Schwarz and Uta Dura

**W**E WILL now have a short session on hygiene. I would like to thank the kitchen staff very much for everything they have done to prevent anyone from becoming ill or unwell in any way. I truly appreciate this and furthermore, it really illustrates what I want to show you.

### **Bacteria and Travel**

We all come from different places. Some of us are from Europe, some from Africa, some from Asia. Do you realize that most of us come from Christian countries? Only one of us does not come from a Christian country—so he represents the larger part of the world’s population.

I’d like to ask a simple question:

“How should we prepare food?”

I would like to talk about some of the problems that arise when we consider hygiene in food or drink.

The first thing that we need to be aware of is bacteria, which are present everywhere, and which produce disease. It is because of these bacteria that we have to be very careful that we wash and clean things so that nobody contracts any disease caught through contact with contaminated food or water.

However, there is another thing which we are not so well aware of—a phenomenon called territorially-distributed bacteria. What does this mean? If you were to come to Germany for example, and eat the food there, some of you might get sick, despite the fact that Germany does not have any major infectious diseases found in food. Perhaps I could explain it better like this:

Each area of the world has specific bacteria which co-exist

with the human population. People who spend their lives in a certain area such as Kenya, South Africa, Germany, Greece, or anywhere else, do not get sick from these bacteria. They get along fine together. But if a person moves from one country to another they often get sick because their bodies are not used to these slightly different bacteria. Diarrhea is the result of territorially-distributed bacteria. It is not usually a serious sickness although it can bring quite a bit of discomfort.

Consequently, when we visit a foreign country for just a short period of time, we need to be very strict about hygiene. This is because we could easily become ill, or at least experience some discomfort which would make it difficult to really participate, particularly in heavy work, be it mental or physical.

Another thing which we should be aware of is untrained immune systems. Many foods have a lot of additives in them. We also put many additives into the environment, such as disinfectants. These are especially present in highly-developed countries. In such countries, the immune system of the general population is not as accustomed to dealing with bacteria as people from undeveloped countries. So that is another problem—some of us have a better-trained and some of us have a lesser-trained immune system.

So how do we deal with these things? What solutions are there? The most important thing is hygiene—the separation of clean and unclean things. We also know about this separation from the Sanctuary. It is a Biblical principle. There is a separation between people in the church and those outside of the church.

Some other practical illustrations of this are:

- If some food falls on the floor it is not put back on the table.
- Food is not kept near the ground but higher up, where things are cleaner. In the case of fresh food from the garden it's a little different, until it is cleaned up.

- When you prepare food it is done on a table or bench because it is always dirty close to the ground.

Then we have natural disinfectants. In Africa you have a very good natural disinfectant: the sun.

Have you heard about Kneipp? Mr. Kneipp came from Germany and he did a lot of work with water treatments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He studied how the women washed bed sheets and then put them outside to air. And he said that having things outside in the sun is a really good disinfectant. So I just want to remind everyone, that the sun is a very good disinfectant. Charcoal is also a very good disinfectant. And heat, boiling things, also disinfects. All these things disinfect in a natural way.

Then we have other disinfectants—chemical disinfectants. These chemicals appear everywhere in our households, even in toothpaste! In some ways they are similar to drugs. They can poison the body, they can produce allergies, and they can disturb the biological flora, that is, the natural bacteria found in the intestines. They play a part in weakening the immune system.

So we all come from different nations and we all face a different environment with different situations. An untrained immune system is an immune system that is not used to dealing with bacteria because most of them have been systematically removed from the environment. In Africa most of the locals have a well-trained immune system. In contrast to this, those who come from the “disinfected” western countries have a weaker immune system because it has not had to work so much.

Now we are together at the international camp in Africa, with all our different individual immune systems. And at this kind of camp we often have one person getting sick while others do not get sick. We wonder why it should hit one person but not another although we are all in the same place. But each individual has a different immune system, notwithstand-

ing the fact that people from the same area will have a more or less similar immune system.

Don't think just in terms of "individuals," but think also in terms of "communities," or even "nations." The people belong together, they share their lives together, they interact with each other, and they share the same bacteria as well. These bacteria are not infectious and do not produce diseases within their given population. However, if their bacteria are passed on to others outside of their population, these people can become affected. Anyone who moves to a new area needs a little time to get used to the bacteria that exists within that population.

If a person visits a foreign country, the same hygiene laws also protect those who live in that country from the new bacteria brought into the country by the visitor. And they help the visitor to adapt to the new environment. The quarantine period provides time to see if any problem develops.

In North America entire populations of Native Americans died because of the diseases brought in by the white settlers. Take measles, for example. Measles in Germany is not a big problem, but once it got into the Native American population, it was a huge problem for them.

At the international seminar we will spend a short time together in a new environment. Many of us are not used to this environment, and therefore are not used to the bacterial population here. Our immune system is not adapted to it and for this reason many precautions have to be taken. Everyone here will be eating and drinking during our time together. You may prepare your own food if you wish, but we do have a plan for eating together. How shall we deal with this?

Again, there needs to be a careful separation between clean and unclean things, especially in the kitchen, in washing hands, and so on. We can use natural disinfectants to purify our water. Chlorine can be added to the water or other chemicals can be used. However you can also use charcoal, or the

mineral water filter, so there are natural disinfectants which we can use and are using.

And the last thing which I would like to mention is trust in God. Do you know what that means? You might go somewhere and say,

“Eeek! I may get sick if I touch this or if I eat that.”

And you might be quite right and quickly feel under the weather.

“Oh! Maybe I will get diarrhea now.”

And you could get it. You might want to come to me because of this, and you are quite welcome to do so. However, try to take the approach that apart from being a little uncomfortable it should only last for one or two days. Do you know what I mean? Get adapted to the situation.

I remember when I was in Kenya at one time. I got really tired after a while. However it was just the difference between Germany and the tropics. Did I have a disease? No, it was just an adaptation of my body to the new environment. And this sort of symptom can be caused when “new” bacteria come into the intestines. The bacteria in our intestines are not used to seeing these new ones, and so they react. They are not pathological, disease-producing bacteria. The discomfort is just a period of adaptation that the body goes through.

When we eat here, even the food is new to our digestive system. We are highly-developed machines and therefore very sensitive. When we introduce new foods into the body, the body will deal with it, but in the process of getting used to these new foods we may feel some discomfort for a while until the body adapts. It is not a disease; it is just a part of adjusting to this situation.

We are here for only ten days. There is no real time to adapt because by the time you are adapted it is time to go home. But say you were traveling from one country to another; in this

case I would recommend using as many precautions as possible. If you don't you will simply have the problem of adapting again and again and you will never be fit for work.

If your body is continually adapting, you would be weakened for sure. Unless you stay for a longer time, you would be weakened. There is a good reason for a longer stay in Africa. A few years ago my wife and I stayed here for a while and we did not get any throat infections when we went back to Germany. The sun is really healthy and health producing. Other people around us got sick but we didn't. But when I do not travel to Africa I get these infections much more readily.

### **Separation of Clean and Unclean in the Kitchen**

Uta would like to add some practical things for us now.

[Uta continues the talk]

The practical separation of clean and unclean covers many different aspects of life. But I think the main point is before you start handling food you should wash your hands. If you touch something that somebody else will put into their mouth, it is quite obvious that you must do this. But you have to be careful as well. You can wash your hands and afterward scratch your head and then go back to the food. That wouldn't help very much would it! Or you can wash your hands and then blow your nose and so having washed your hands was also a waste of time! There are a lot of habits that human beings have, and so we have to think a little.

When we prepare food that other people will eat we have to be aware that we really must separate clean and unclean things. I don't want to say that something unclean is sinful—there is nothing sinful in scratching your head or blowing your nose, but it is a matter of timing; doing everything at the right time.

Then there is the difference between clean and unclean food itself. As the food comes in from the garden with dirt and stuff on it, or from packaging in the shop, or wherever it



comes from, it is unclean. It should first be cleaned and then it can be prepared. In a lot of kitchens, like the one here, it's not so easy because there are no proper wash basins or sinks. So when food comes out of the cool house where it still has soil and bugs on it, and is put on the same table where washed food is put, you have just one table for both the clean and the unclean. That is not so good.

It is much better to have one table for the food that comes from the cooling area, where you can weigh it or unwrap it. And then have another table where the clean food can be dealt with. It's very important to have this system in a big kitchen. If you don't make this separation in a smaller kitchen it's bad enough, but for a large number, such as we are here, and where a lot more food is involved, problems will arise if care isn't taken in this area.

Another area where separation is important is when there are leftovers which are served again at the next meal. This is dangerous. It is better to start with a lesser amount on the table and then put out more if necessary. This is preferable to putting lots of food on the table where people talk over the food and socialize and so forth, and then bringing it back to the kitchen and putting it all out again the next day. It's not as easy to do it the right way, but the alternative can create real problems.

Storing raw food and cooked food in the same fridge can also be a problem. Bacteria multiply at certain temperatures. When food is on the table the temperature is warmer and so the bacteria will multiply. Then it goes into the fridge and we put it together with the unwashed and the unclean vegetables where it can contaminate them. When we cook in groups we have to be especially careful as well. If we put the clean and unclean things together in the fridge and later take them out without cleaning again it can create problems.

Doing the dishes is another area where we need to separate clean from what is unclean. Do you remember when the an-

nouncement was made yesterday that we would wash the dishes in the evening? When I looked later I saw two sinks filled with heaps of dirty dishes left sitting there for the whole afternoon in the warm kitchen, do you realize what we did? We created a perfect environment for bacteria to increase and multiply. The dirty dishes could have been stored in water, but there weren't enough basins to do this, so we decided to wash them. We enjoyed the work. We did not desecrate the Sabbath because of this. We still have to do what the laws of hygiene require, and washing the dishes instead of leaving them to produce more bacteria in a warm room is the better option.

Dish washing and food preparation should really be done at two different sinks in the kitchen. If you don't have two sinks, or two water supplies, then you need to do these two tasks separately. When work is being done with unclean foods you should finish this first and then clean the work place before starting work with the clean foods. But don't mix the two because of a lack of space.

We could go further. Another point I would like to mention is the dish washing cloths and the tea towels. This is a major point. They get very wet and they are used a lot, especially when there are a lot of people. It is preferable to disinfect them by washing them in boiling water. This is a problem in the USA because their washing machines are always set to wash with cold water. They pour heaps and heaps of chloride into the washing machines, but this is not a good way. It is better to use boiling water and really disinfect the dish cloths and tea towels before using them again. After a day's use, dish cloths and tea towels smell, and then it's obvious that bacteria are present.

I am always very impressed at how the Israelites applied hygiene to keep bacteria, and therefore disease, at bay. There were millions of people living in tents, and there was not one toilet among all these people. The hygiene, the separation of clean from unclean things, was one of the biggest rules in Is-

rael. If we think about this and make it our business to apply these rules to our lives today, we will see how God really blessed the Israelites by giving them these rules. The Lord can do just as much for us today—in our bodies as well as outside our bodies.

Are there any questions?

[Eric] You mentioned boiling tea towels and Joachim mentioned the idea of using sunlight to disinfect things. Is that sufficient?

If you wash them with boiling water and detergent, or whatever is available, and then dry them in the sunlight that would be a good idea.

[Eric] In addition?

Yes, not instead of. The dirt needs to be physically removed from the fabric and you need more heat for that. Are there any more questions?

[Samuel] We tend to think that we are hygienic; we know how to wash our hands or how to behave in the kitchen, especially the women. And when I tell people that they need to be more hygienic they are usually offended. I used to give advice to hotels. One day I suggested to some cooks that we should have a hand washing class. They were quite surprised when I gave them a lesson on how to wash the hands and the different kinds of hand washing for different situations. Then I took a big bowl and asked them to wash their hands in it. Afterwards the water was black. Then I showed them the water and said, “Do you see that? That dirt was on your hands!” So we need to realize that our hands affect the health of other people, especially when we are involved with food preparation. It is a great privilege to do this but it is also a great responsibility as well, and we need to learn how to improve in this area.

[Joachim] Thank you! Shall we do a hand washing course now?



## PRESENTING SOMETHING BETTER

**L**ET us now look at *John 4* where Jesus met the Samaritan woman and observe how Jesus did public work. He is our model.

**John 4**

<sup>5</sup> So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

<sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well.

<sup>7</sup> It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

In this first contact that Jesus made with the woman, He could have told her something about the Messiah. He could have told her something about the wrong habits of the Samaritans. They were really apostates; not just because they had mixed with heathen people, but also by virtue of their religion. True they had the first five books of Moses as their rule, but they rejected virtually everything else from the Bible.

It's a little bit like many religions today that hold to parts of the Bible. Take for example the Muslim faith. The Muslim faith is not totally opposed to the Bible. They include it in their religion; it's a part of it. In the same way the Samaritans included the five books of Moses in their religion, and Jesus referred to that very thing.

**Breaking Down Walls**

First of all He said,

“Give me a drink.”

That was the right arm—a need that He had; not something that He wanted to give, but He had a need.

“I need to have something.”

#### **John 4**

<sup>8</sup> For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

<sup>9</sup> Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus' act of speaking actually broke down walls. The right arm work has the purpose of breaking down walls. These walls exist between the truth and the world. There are walls; there are prejudices. I don't know how strong they are here in South Africa. They are certainly present in India, against the Christian religion as such. They also exist in atheistic countries like Germany—probably Canada too, where religious people are thought of as being a bit fanatical, or extreme. Another term used is fundamentalist.

Very often I have heard people say,

“Religion is something for the weak.”

“Yeah it's good; religion is not bad when you are weak and so forth. But we are young and strong; we don't need it.”

There is a wall—a real wall between us and them. This wall needs to be broken down and Jesus was very tactful in breaking it down. He did not come to this woman as somebody who wanted to give her something, but as someone who had a need. He put himself on the same level as she was, and this surprised her because Jews didn't normally do this.

And religionists often don't do things that God gives us to do when we are breaking down walls. What is it that breaks down walls? What is it that enables us to reach the people? The very first thing we need to do is break down walls. And Jesus did this; He broke down those walls.

#### **John 4**

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living

water.

Jesus did not criticize the Samaritan religion. He could have done this. But instead He gave her something better. And this is what we were reading earlier:

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 156:**

It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits.

“It is of little use.” Then should we never speak of wrong habits? Now it is true that Ellen White says here, “What we *may regard* as wrong habits”, but not everything that we regard as wrong habits is merely our opinion. There are some habits that are really wrong. People get sick as a result of wrong habits. And when we give our health exhibitions we have taken a stand against wrong habits.

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 156:**

It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits. Such effort often results in more harm than good. In His talk with the Samaritan woman, instead of disparaging Jacob’s well, Christ presented something better.

**John 4**

<sup>10</sup> If you knew the gift of God, [He said,] and who it is that says to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water.

He turned the conversation to the treasure He had to bestow, offering the woman something better than she possessed, even living water, the joy and hope of the gospel.

In the last days of my recent university term we had a class in which people gave certain presentations about certain subjects and one subject was about mental balance where a student spoke about a kind of Autogenic Training. There are several ways of applying Autogenic Training and she said she would demonstrate this to us. And then she said,

“Now lay everything down—your pencils and your things—and now you get very tired, your eyes get very heavy, and

now we think of this and this...”

She began to talk as people do when they practice this technique. After a while she said,

“And now you wake up again...Now how was it?”

I was supposed to close my eyes but I didn’t close my eyes. I was appalled. I wanted to say,

“What nonsense. What nonsense this is! That is not really helping.”

But I didn’t say anything. The second thought I had was, what would I say if she were to ask me,

“What do you think about this?”

What would I say? What would you say? The inclination is to speak out and say,

“That is harmful! It is not good for you!”

Do you know what a storm of opposition you would have reaped if you said such a thing? These people think that this is the greatest thing in the world. It gives you mental balance and many other things. I thought, if she would ask me, I would say,

“I have prayer. I gain mental balance through prayer.”

I would have said this straight out. There was actually no opportunity to say it, but I thought about it: What shall I do, what shall I say? And that’s giving something better. I could have attacked her, but that would not have helped. I could have said,

“If you knew what prayer does then you would not need this anymore. You would have something much better.”

And this is how we need to approach people. We need to present something better to them. This is the basis we need to learn—to really show the people something better.

But of course you must have experienced it yourself. You



can't talk of something you haven't experienced. Nor can you attack things that you don't understand. There are many things in the world I don't understand and yet I attack them because I think they are wrong. There are many practices in the medical field and I don't understand them all. And yet I don't practice them, I don't even want to learn them. Can I attack them? If I do, they will simply say to me,

“You don't understand. You don't understand what is really going on here.”

Maybe I do, from principle, but not in detail. The point is, it's always safer to present something better rather than to attack the existing things.

## **The Time for Denunciations**

And yet we cannot stop there. Let me read another statement to you now:

### **The Great Controversy, p. 606:**

Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them.

The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven.

As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, Are these things so? The ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the

awakened conscience.

But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men and demand a plain “Thus says the Lord,” the popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it.

So that’s the result. What do you think about this? Is this presenting something better instead of attacking the existing errors? It’s obviously not presenting something better. It is directly attacking the sins of Babylon. It is very, very clearly stated here that when the Spirit of God comes the errors of Babylon will be directly exposed.

When we present something better we also attack the wrong things as well, but this is in an indirect manner. Jesus did attack the errors of the Samaritans, but in a very tactful way, by presenting something better, and the woman began to understand this.

There is a difference between attacking a person and the system he represents. For example, we know that the papacy is based on wrong principles, but I don’t attack the Pope personally. Is that the difference? What does Ellen White mean in the statement from *The Ministry of Healing*? Does she mean that we should not attack persons, but we can attack systems?

Jesus is our model. And this is what we said at the beginning. In His dealing with the Samaritan woman we see very clearly that He did not attack the person. He did not attack even the system. He simply presented something better. In this way He won the heart of the woman.

And Ellen White says this is how we should approach the people. We should present something better. In the life of Jesus however, towards the end of His ministry, He also made a very direct attack on the Pharisees. Let’s turn to this for a moment and read His words.

### **Matthew 23**

<sup>2</sup> ...The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

<sup>4</sup> For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on en's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

This was a direct attack. It's even almost a personal attack. He attacked the system, no question. But the people had so identified themselves with that system that he had to mention them by name: Pharisees and Sadducees.

### **Matthew 23**

<sup>6</sup> They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

<sup>7</sup> Greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

<sup>8</sup> But you, do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

<sup>9</sup> Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

<sup>10</sup> And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

<sup>11</sup> But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

<sup>12</sup> And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

<sup>13</sup> But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

<sup>14</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

That seems to be a direct contradiction to what we read here in *The Ministry of Healing*, doesn't it? It reminds me of a man in Germany who was once interested in the message, a long time ago. He used to stand in the market place and he

spoke very loudly with a megaphone,

“The pope is the beast! The pope is the beast!”

He was even put into prison from time to time for it. But that only increased his pride. “I denounce the sins of Babylon,” he said. However, he had no effect on the people; nobody’s heart was changed.

Jesus, on the other hand, was very effective. Now what is the difference between Jesus denouncing the sins of the Pharisees and what men try to do in their own strength?

First of all, Jesus loved the Pharisees and Sadducees as much as he loved everybody else, including His disciples. He tried to win them too. And He did this all the time. When He wept over Jerusalem, He wept over the Pharisees and Sadducees. When He gave His teachings, He gave them to the Pharisees and Sadducees. He was also very tactful with them. For example, they dragged a woman towards Him and accused her of adultery:

“She is a sinner! She was caught in adultery! Now Moses said we should stone her! What do you say we should do?”

What did He do? He bowed down and wrote the sins of the accusers in the sand. Now those men became very embarrassed. They realized that Jesus knew the secrets of their lives. Then Jesus simply said,

### **John 8**

<sup>7</sup> He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone.

And they all went quietly away without any further discussion. Throughout the whole affair Jesus did not expose the Pharisees. Can you see that? He was very tactful with them. He helped them not to commit a great sin. So in all His dealings with the Pharisees, Jesus was very tactful.

But the time came when His public ministry drew to a close. *Matthew 23* relates the last words of Jesus while He was preaching in the temple. That was just before His trial and

condemnation. And in these final moments He needed to give this message. Why?

Not in order to save the Pharisees and Sadducees, they were beyond help. They had already decided against Jesus, and they were determined to reject and crucify Him. It was a foregone conclusion to them that Jesus must die.

But there were others that He had in mind: those who were still deceived by the Pharisees and Sadducees. And these people needed to be delivered from this deception. They were living under a wrong impression. To them, these men were sitting in Moses' seat. They had authority over the people.

The pastors and the preachers of the churches today, also have authority over the people. While it is our task to try and reach them, the time will come when they will turn against the message forever—when they will sin against the Holy Spirit and thus close their door of opportunity. And so it will be necessary to give this warning message to the world again, because the people need to be separated from the influences of these false teachers. This is exactly what the Loud Cry is about.

**The Great Controversy, p. 606:**

By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from Heaven.

So the people are amazed at what they hear. They are now undeceived in regard to the things they were formerly deceived in. But this time has not yet come, and so we are in the same phase of Jesus' ministry where He was still very tactful to the Pharisees and Sadducees—where He still gave them the opportunity to come in.

So today, we turn to the ministers of the fallen churches as well, to the pastors, preachers, and ministers. Jesus loves them

as much as He loves anybody else, and He wants to save them. And for this reason it is not the time to speak so disparagingly today. The time is yet to come when these people will finally reject the truth.

The same thing happened in the early Advent days of 1844. William Miller was invited to speak by many preachers and pastors of the churches. He was invited to speak in their churches. But eventually the time came when they rejected him, when they ridiculed him and rejected his message. And then the second angel's message came:

**Revelation 14**

<sup>8</sup> Babylon is fallen.

## Summary

So we have to know what time we are living in. When we present the message we must present something better than directly attacking the errors.

There are many people who practice errors: in lines of health, in religious lines, or in mental lines. They practice great errors, but they do so ignorantly—not because they have rejected the truth; not because they hate the truth and love error, but because they honestly don't know better. And so it would be futile to attack these errors under such circumstances, because they simply wouldn't understand it.

So let us read this text again because it tells us what our work is today:

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 156:**

It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits.

In His talks in *Matthew 23*, Jesus was not trying to reform the Pharisees. Their opportunity was past. He made no effort to reform them anymore. What was needed then was to separate the people from their influence. That was the work that needed to be accomplished then. But when we go out today, our work is to reform the people, and because of this we can-

not begin by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits.

Such effort often results in more harm than good. In His talk with the Samaritan woman, instead of disparaging Jacob's well, Christ presented something better.

I pray that God will give us the strength to do this. When we see errors we are very angry about the sin, which we should be. In the case of alcoholism, for example, we should be angry about alcohol, and also with those who deal in alcohol because they are harming people. This industry actively and literally destroys the bodies and souls of men. It is right to be angry. But while we may be angry, let us remember that God loves the people and therefore not attack the wrong habits, but present something better.

It is my prayer that we understand this point and present the message in the right way; then God will bless the work.





## BASIC PRINCIPLES IN PUBLIC WORK

I WOULD like to tell you about some basic principles in presenting practical truths to the public. The first thing to remember is that we have a model, and this is Jesus. Throughout His life Jesus demonstrated how to work for the public. So if we want to learn something about this work, the best thing to do is to learn from Him.

### The Method of Christ

The book, *The Desire of Ages*, is full of instruction concerning how to preach to the public, and preaching to the public is exactly what Jesus did. There is one chapter in this book in particular that describes how Christ talked and how He reached the hearts of the people, and this is the chapter entitled “At Capernaum.”

#### **The Desire of Ages, p. 255:**

Jesus watched with deep earnestness the changing countenances of His hearers.

So He watched with deep interest the changing countenances of his hearers. What would He read in the countenances of people? What can be read in the countenances of people?

You can see if someone is interested or bored in what you are saying. Does he look sleepy, or does he look like he is really interested in what you are talking about?

What else can be read in people’s countenances? Whether they agree with you or not.

What do you see in their countenances when you are giving them too much? They look confused and their faces go blank.

What else can be read in people’s countenances? Their emotions, their temper, changes in their moods, like anger and joy and so forth.

When you are presenting something you can see whether people are following you or not by their countenances. You can see happiness if they appreciate the presentation.

You can see whether they feel conviction in their soul, thankfulness, fear—all these things can be read in people’s countenances. Jesus was watching for this. He watched the changing countenances. So something happened; His sermons had an effect because the countenances of people changed.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 255:**

The faces that expressed interest and pleasure gave Him great satisfaction.

We all wish for this when we present something, that we see faces expressing pleasure and interest.

As the arrows of truth pierced to the soul, breaking through the barriers of selfishness and working contrition and finally gratitude, the Saviour was made glad.

Jesus saw interest and pleasure in the faces of the people as a result of His preaching. But He saw some other things before this: He saw contrition and even despair in people’s faces. And before all this, the first thing He probably saw was selfishness, or self-satisfaction:

“Yes, we already know this. We have heard this before and it’s clear. Yes, we agree.”

He saw a very self-satisfied look on people’s faces. But then there was surprise as they were touched by what they heard. And finally, there was gratefulness for what the Holy Spirit revealed to them.

To see all this in one sermon is quite something. Jesus must have been a very powerful preacher to be able to see all this in one sermon. The people were really moved by what they heard, and Jesus was very, very glad as He saw this.

When His eye swept over the throng of listeners, and He recognized among them the faces He had before seen, His

countenance lighted up with joy. He saw in them hopeful subjects for His kingdom. When the truth, plainly spoken, touched some cherished idol, He marked the change of countenance, the cold, forbidding look, which told that the light was unwelcome. When He saw men refuse the message of peace, His heart was pierced to the very depths.

So Jesus not only experienced joy, His heart was also pierced to the very depths. And I could imagine that this happened several times, even within the brief time of one sermon, because not all His hearers reacted positively to what He said. Some did, but others reacted negatively.

Now what would we like to see? Naturally we would like to see a positive reaction. We would like to see the reaction first spoken of in this paragraph—that would be very satisfying. Who does not want that? We want the people to be interested, and convicted of a wrong lifestyle. We want to help people to learn something and to see them really happy and grateful for what they receive.

And because we desire this reaction, we question whether we have done it right when we do not get this result.

“Maybe I took the wrong approach?”

“Maybe I did not pass on the Good News in the right way and that is why it was received so negatively?”

“Maybe I should have used different words?”

Or, if the people show no interest and look sleepy, we think we should have done something altogether different.

## **An Experience**

Let me tell you about an experience I had when I first learned the message. I was still at school and we were given the opportunity to take worship from time to time. I don't know why exactly, but I was rarely given this job. In fact, I was only given the task twice in three years at school. On one of these occasions I had just begun to get to know the mes-

sage and I was really interested in God's character. So I presented the fact that God does not destroy. This is a message that should really stir the people, shouldn't it? It's so new and positive.

And so I began preaching, but nobody showed any interest at all. When I looked at the expressions in the other student's faces I could see only vague indifference. To be fair, I must say that the worship times were compulsory and the students would rather have done something else. Also, the worship was in the evening and they may have been tired after the day's studies and various activities. They were more or less dragged along to these worship sessions. That was part of the problem.

But all I could think of was,

"What did I do wrong?"

I was really devastated. Finally, one of the students came to me and said,

"Don't take it too seriously. It's OK."

She tried to comfort me a little. But I didn't find her words very comforting. I thought,

"This message should have created at least some interest."

I didn't put the blame on the situation so much as on myself. I kept asking myself,

"Where did I go wrong? What am I lacking?"

And even today, when there is no great interest in what I say, I ask myself,

"What could I have done better?"

Or if I come to a camp meeting and I see how many people leave because of being rebuked, I ask myself,

"Did I present these things correctly?"

We have a rather negative record because many people

have left over the years, and we ask ourselves,

“Did we do everything right?”

On the other hand, if I would only get applause for what I said, I would also be suspicious. And you should be suspicious if you get only applause for everything you say because the reason may be that you only say what people want to hear. But in this way they won't learn anything. They will only nod in agreement and say “yes” all the time.

### **Following the Father's Instructions**

Jesus wouldn't have been satisfied with that. He was looking for people who were prepared to learn something and make changes, rather than just “yes men.” He wanted more than just acquiescence to what He said.

So what should we expect really? What must we expect? When we look at the work of Jesus we see that on the one hand He attracted many people, and on the other hand He also repulsed a lot of people as well. Didn't almost everyone leave Him after He gave His sermon in Capernaum after the feeding of the five thousand? Yes, almost everyone left Him! He could have said to himself,

“What did I do wrong to make everyone leave?”

But He did not dwell on such a thought—not even for a moment. And why not? How could Jesus stand His ground and know that this is exactly what had to happen? Why did He not question His own preaching?

Because He was following the instructions of His Father. Let us read from the chapter “The Final Warning”, in *The Great Controversy*:

#### **The Great Controversy, p. 608-609:**

In this time of persecution the faith of the Lord's servants will be tried. They have faithfully given the warning, looking to God and to His word alone. God's Spirit, moving upon their hearts, has constrained them to speak. Stimulated with

holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they entered upon the performance of their duties without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord had given them. They have not consulted their temporal interests, nor sought to preserve their reputation or their lives.

Yet when the storm of opposition and reproach bursts upon them, some, overwhelmed with consternation, will be ready to exclaim: "Had we foreseen the consequences of our words, we would have held our peace." They are hedged in with difficulties. Satan assails them with fierce temptations. The work which they have undertaken seems far beyond their ability to accomplish. They are threatened with destruction. The enthusiasm which animated them is gone; yet they cannot turn back.

Then, feeling their utter helplessness, they flee to the Mighty One for strength. They remember that the words which they have spoken were not theirs, but His who bade them give the warning. God put the truth into their hearts, and they could not forbear to proclaim it.

The same trials have been experienced by men of God in ages past. Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Baxter, Wesley, urged that all doctrines be brought to the test of the Bible and declared that they would renounce everything which it condemned. Against these men persecution raged with relentless fury; yet they ceased not to declare the truth.

Different periods in the history of the church have each been marked by the development of some special truth, adapted to the necessities of God's people at that time. Every new truth has made its way against hatred and opposition; those who were blessed with its light were tempted and tried.

The Lord gives a special truth for the people in an emergency. Who dare refuse to publish it? He commands His servants to present the last invitation of mercy to the world. They cannot remain silent, except at the peril of their souls. Christ's ambassadors have nothing to do with consequences. They must perform their duty and leave results with God.

This is what we need to learn when we give our public presentations. There is danger that we misunderstand the paragraph from *The Desire of Ages*, and think that all we have to do is watch the countenances of the people. If they accept it, our preaching is right, if they reject it, our preaching is wrong. That is what we tend to think. But what is wrong with thinking like this? Such thinking does not put God in the center, but self.

We may talk with great emotion to the people. We might say,

“I have finally found the key! I can reach them! They listen to me!”

But this is of no value at all if we do not follow the Lord’s instructions. We must be out of the picture altogether. It does not matter whether we are received or not. Not a bit! The important question is,

“Am I speaking God’s message or not?”

That is the question; that is the key. And if God’s message is presented, it may be that the people appreciate it; or it may be that they reject me. But so what? Does it matter? Not at all. All that matters is whether we give the message that God wants us to give. That is what matters. So we don’t need to worry about whether we are well received or not. We only need to ask ourselves—is the message from God or not?

## **Love Means Carefulness**

There is another element in this also. We have read about how Jesus talked and watched the countenances of the hearers; how He desired to see a positive response, and how it pierced His heart when the people rejected the message. He did not do this for himself, for His own sake. He did this because He loved the people—simply because He loved them.

And God loves the people too. So we cannot be careless about whether people receive the message or not. If we really

love people, we will want them to accept the message, and we will do everything in our power and even go the second mile if it will help them to accept the message.

That means that if it is too difficult for them to hear the Gospel directly, then we come to them with the right arm. And we pray that the Holy Spirit will so direct our minds that we will know what kind of language to use. But the main thing is that they are helped. That is God's thought. That is His wish, and if we have one mind with God we will think like Him too.

But the most important thing is that we are not the center of attention. Whether we are accepted or rejected is unimportant. We must be ready and willing to be literally consumed on the altar. That means that our work may be over after giving the message. But the main thing is that we have given the message. God's work must go forward, not we.

So in our work for the people, let us remember two things:

1. That it is God who sends us, and we follow His directions. If we do this, then we will have peace and rest, even if the people reject us. God's servants have nothing to do with consequences, they must preach the message and leave the consequences with God.
2. That because we love the people and have the same mind as God, we naturally desire them to receive the Gospel. So we, together with God, will do everything to give them the Gospel in such a way that they can receive it. But we will not make compromises so that we will be accepted by them.

This is a great danger in our time—that we will place ourselves between God and the people. We must be aware of this. The only way that we can do God's work is by losing sight of self completely. We must be willing to be counted as something or as nothing, however the case may be. But as far as the people are concerned, we desire them to receive the message because of the love we have towards them.



I recommend that you read the chapter entitled “At Capernaum” in *The Desire of Ages*. The first few paragraphs are especially useful because they describe Jesus’ teaching style. For example, the statement,

**The Desire of Ages, p. 254:**

Christ never flattered man.

People place themselves in the foreground and want to be accepted and flattered, but:

Christ never flattered man. He never spoke that which would exalt their fancies and imaginations, nor did He praise them for their clever inventions; but deep, unprejudiced thinkers received His teaching, and found that it tested their wisdom. They marveled at the spiritual truth expressed in the simplest language. The most highly educated were charmed with His words, and the uneducated were always profited. He had a message for the illiterate; and He made even the heathen to understand that He had a message for them.

Let this be our focus when we meet the people.



CHAPTER EIGHT  
STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

**L**ET us read from the chapter “Asking to Give” in the book *Christ’s Object Lessons*. This chapter clearly spells out the principles of Christ’s kingdom.

### Receiving to Give

The fundamental principle of Christ’s kingdom is giving, rather than receiving. We do receive things in Christ’s kingdom, but we receive them in order to give. It is about asking so that you can give, whereas the principle of the kingdom of Satan is about giving so that you can get something back. Jesus is the great model of the true principle, and He is the model we want to follow:

**Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 139:**

Christ was continually receiving from the Father that He might communicate to us.

**John 14**

<sup>24</sup> The word which you hear, [He said,] is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.

**Matthew 20**

<sup>28</sup> The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

*Not for himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed.* From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed.

**Isaiah 50**

<sup>4</sup> The Lord God has given me, [He said,] the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakens morning by morning, He wak-

ens my ear to hear as the learned.

The main reason Jesus prayed was not for himself. We have studied the science of prayer together before. We saw how the disciples learned to pray through watching Jesus' example. We looked at how He taught them to...

### **Matthew 7**

<sup>7</sup> Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you will find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

We studied the parable of the widow who pleaded her case with a judge and the man who had a visitor at night and asked his neighbor for bread. All these stories have the same message, which is that we are to come to God and ask, to be enduring in our asking, and to not give up so easily. However the main point of these stories is that Christ did all this for the sake of others. Let's read this statement again:

### **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 139:**

Not for himself, but for others He lived and thought and prayed.

When we receive any blessing therefore, the blessing is not for us, but for others. Can you really grasp this? Can you really lay hold on this? Not for himself He prayed. Not for himself, He thought. Not for himself, He lived, but always for others. This is the kingdom Christ came to establish. This is the model He gave to all of us. And when we study the science of prayer it is so that we can learn to give as well.

## **Running the Race**

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

<sup>25</sup> And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

<sup>26</sup> Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not

as one who beats the air.

<sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

How do you normally read this text? Does it make you think that you need to put your utmost effort into your salvation? Does it make you think that if you are not really striving you will not achieve the prize of eternal life?

While the ancient Grecian races do not give a perfect comparison with the goal of the Christian, there is a certain comparison in that those who ran in these races had to abstain from all unnecessary things. Young athletes were chosen who showed signs of promise, and they had to exercise strict temperance. They were specially trained, they had to run for miles and miles, their muscles had to be firm and flexible, and they had to be strong. They endured very strict training programs and had to give up those things that most young people normally did.

Furthermore during the race itself, they had to exert the utmost effort. Before they ran, the rules were spelled out before everyone. These rules were made very clear, and should any of the athletes transgress any rule, then they would be disqualified. This is the case today in the Olympics as well.

It may help you to understand what Paul was trying to say when you consider the enormous effort and sacrifice put in by modern athletes. Towards the end of a race, just before the finishing line, their faces show the strenuous effort they are making to be the first, to keep up their full speed and vigor. Sometimes another runner manages to snatch the victory at the last moment from the one who had been leading, and who is then extremely disappointed. He had put in such an effort but had not achieved his goal.

Sometimes the Greek athletes put in so much effort that they actually died in the race. As a matter of fact, that happened quite frequently. This still happens in the Olympic

Games, although today it is more often due to doping. Back then they didn't have these drugs for athletes, all they had was physical exercise and sometimes they did this until they collapsed. Sometimes the one who became victor would collapse after the race, before he even got the chance to go up and receive his prize. And this is what Paul was referring to in his analogy.

But the difference between the Grecian races, or the Olympics today, and the Christian's "race" is that only one person wins, whereas with Christ, or in the Kingdom of God, everyone who fulfills the conditions can win. Everyone, even the weakest, when he combines his weakness with the strength of Christ, becomes the strongest. Even he can achieve the goal. It is never the case that, despite our best efforts, the victory will be snatched away from us at the last minute. That is not how it works in God's kingdom.

But, and this is the real comparison that Paul is making, it is only through the utmost effort that the Christian goal can be reached. We have to put in everything. We have to abstain from everything that comes between us and Christ. In this connection I would like to read a text from *The Ministry of Healing* in the chapter, "A Physician and Educator". This applies to the physician himself as well as his patients:

**The Ministry of Healing, p. 128:**

We cannot be too often reminded that health does not depend on chance. It is a result of obedience to law. This is recognized by the contestant in athletic games and trials of strength. These men make the most careful preparation.

So to get a medal is not a matter of chance, it's a matter of decided effort. This is absolutely clear and everybody knows it. But strangely enough, when it comes to health nobody seems to give this much thought.

These men make the most careful preparations. They submit to thorough training and strict discipline. Every physical habit is carefully regulated. They know that neglect, excess

or carelessness, which weakens or cripples any organ or function of the body, would ensure defeat.

How much more important is such carefulness to ensure success in the conflict of life. It is not mimic battles in which we are engaged. We are waging a warfare upon which hang eternal results. We have unseen enemies to meet. Evil angels are striving for the dominion of every human being. Whatever injures the health, not only lessens physical vigor, but tends to weaken the mental and moral powers. Indulgence in any unhealthful practice makes it more difficult for one to discriminate between right and wrong, and hence more difficult to resist evil. It increases the danger of failure and defeat.

So it is not enough just to outwardly do what is right. Practicing temperance is important. Temperance *does* matter. Every little aspect of life can be decisive. Let me relate to you a couple of experiences I have had.

When I was doing my school exams, many years ago, I fasted in the morning in order to really keep my head as absolutely clear as possible. I was not interested in eating, I was only interested in passing those tests and getting the best mark I could. This was very successful until the last day. On this day I took a little break after the first part of the test. I felt very confident about everything and relaxed a bit, because soon it would all be over. I believed I had everything under control and so I took something to eat.

But when I got back into the exam room I suddenly felt that my mind was no longer as clear as usual. I sensed it. I really had to put in a lot of effort to solve the last task. I managed to pass the test, but this experience showed me what an influence a small thing can have.

I'm not saying that you should fast every morning, but this experience shows that a little difference in our habits can make a big difference in our lives.

## **The Ministry of Healing, p. 128-129:**

Whatever injures the health, not only lessens physical vigor, but tends to weaken the mental and moral powers. Indulgence in any unhealthful practice makes it more difficult for one to discriminate between right and wrong, and hence more difficult to resist evil. It increases the danger of failure and defeat.

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>24</sup> They which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize.

In the warfare in which we are engaged, all may win who will discipline themselves by obedience to right principles. The practice of these principles in the details of life is too often looked upon as unimportant—a matter too trivial to demand attention. But in view of the issues at stake, nothing with which we have to do is small. Every act casts its weight into the scale that determines life's victory or defeat. The scripture bids us,

<sup>24</sup> So run, that you may obtain.

The progress of reform depends upon a clear recognition of fundamental truth. While, on the one hand, danger lurks in a narrow philosophy and a hard, cold orthodoxy, on the other hand there is great danger in a careless liberalism. The foundation of all enduring reform is the law of God. We are to present in clear, distinct lines the need of obeying this law.

I am not saying that we should fast for a week and possibly risk injuring our health. What I am trying to say is that we must adapt our lifestyle so that the way we live will help us to reach our goal. That is the important point. What aim do we want to reach? And does my lifestyle aid me in achieving this aim?

## **Paul's Appeal to the Corinthians**

I would like to come back now to *1 Corinthians 9* and look at the context in which Paul wrote this:

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>1</sup> Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?



<sup>2</sup> Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> My defense to those who examine me is this:

<sup>4</sup> Do we have no right to eat and drink?

<sup>5</sup> Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

<sup>6</sup> Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?

<sup>7</sup> Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

<sup>8</sup> Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?

Here Paul asserts that he has the right to receive some support from the believers, and He goes on to say,

<sup>11</sup> If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

<sup>12</sup> If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more?

Why did Paul say this? Certainly not because he had a lack of funds or because he was thinking of himself. He was thinking of the Corinthians when he wrote this. Like Jesus, Paul did not think, live and pray for himself. He acted this way for the sake of others. He was simply saying,

“I want to help you, the Corinthians. I want to open your eyes. Unfortunately, I am the person being scrutinized here, but it’s your attitude which is important.”

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

And then he goes on to explain why he says this.

<sup>13</sup> Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

<sup>14</sup> Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

<sup>15</sup> But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me.

Notice that Paul says, I have not written these things so that you will start to treat me in this way.

<sup>15</sup> ...For it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

<sup>16</sup> For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

<sup>17</sup> For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

<sup>18</sup> What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

Paul was telling the Corinthians that it is more blessed to give than to receive. He was saying to them that if they followed his example—in giving, rather than in receiving—then they would be blessed. That is why he wrote to them in these terms, so that their eyes would be opened. He was more or less saying,

“You think so much of yourselves, you Corinthians, that you don’t see the most obvious things. And so I have to explain these things to you because you have become blind through your selfishness!”

Then he continues to write of his own example.

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

<sup>20</sup> And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;

<sup>21</sup> To those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;

<sup>22</sup> To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

<sup>23</sup> Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

Then he goes on to make the comparison with the Grecian races:

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?

So why does he write this? Why does he use the analogy of the race? Because he wants to clarify the point about service for others. His reason for striving was not primarily to obtain salvation for himself. Rather, he strove to give a better service, so that he could be a blessing to others.

In doing this of course, he also secured his own salvation. But for Paul, his own salvation was a by-product of his service to others. The main purpose of his thoughts and prayers and life was to live for others and not for himself—just as it was with Christ.

### **The True Motive**

Now why should we press on? What is our motive? You know if obtaining salvation for ourselves was our motive, then I would say,

“Well friends, you might as well end it all. Life on earth is pretty grim, but life in eternity will be much happier, it will be so much better. So let's leave it. Or alternatively, we could fill our time on earth as best as we can. Maybe we could build a nice house with a garden for ourselves and our family and not sin too much and everything will be okay.”

What will we find? Will we obtain eternal life? One thing is certain, and that is we will never reach excellence, never! And why? Because we will be satisfied with what we have. We will not strive for anything more. Why should we?

But if I want to become everything to every man, I must

strive; I must put forth the utmost effort. I think we are all in danger of falling into this trap—of allowing ourselves to become too satisfied with ourselves. We have a work to do in developing our characters, and it requires constant effort and the utmost discipline to do this. We are to reveal God’s character to a world that is so contrary to God’s character. What a task this is! What an effort this takes!

I notice this to a certain degree in my medical studies. I have a very great desire to see the people around me accept the truth; I see that they have great minds. Whether they are teachers or fellow students is irrelevant, all that I truly desire is that they become fellow workers, and that they are saved from sin. But you can’t do this unless you strive for excellence yourself. It’s impossible. You have to give it your whole heart.

Thirty years ago when I was at school, I was often top of the class. And because of this, when I started my medical training last year I thought it wouldn’t take much for me to keep up with everyone else and do everything right. But I was mistaken; I was really mistaken. It took more effort than I thought. Then my teachers told me that I had to be quicker. A lot quicker! And I thought, What? Quicker? I thought I was already quick! But I wasn’t quick enough. I took two oral tests and in both of them I was told that I have to be a lot quicker. And I thought,

“Wow! This is something new! I need to strive much more for excellence.”

While I obviously need to improve on how quickly I do things, this is only a small part of the bigger picture. Spiritual things are obviously more important, but in order to reach the people around me I need to be like them to a certain degree. I do not want to appear so different to them, or so superior, that they can’t grasp anything I say. In order to save them I want to be on the same level with them. This is my aim. And this requires the utmost discipline.

So I can't afford to waste time any more. I can't do this. I can't afford to be lazy, because I want to reach people. And the same is true in presenting the truth. If you want to help people you have to understand their mind, you have to understand their work, and how they are faring. This requires constant effort. This effort may be tedious at times. Constantly doing this can make you tired and worn out so that after a while you say,

“Oh, this is too much. Let's try doing something else that's more achievable.”

If you find yourself thinking like this, then you have the wrong motive. If the motive is to bless and help people, then you will not cease trying to enter into the minds of the people. You will constantly strive to really understand how you can help them. What is it that they need? What do they appreciate? How can their prejudices be overcome? This will be the constant question, and for this we should constantly strive.

Some doors have opened for us over the past few years concerning this, and we have done some work in this regard. We have begun to see what reaches the people. It's the work of the right arm. But in order to really reach people we must strive for excellence in this field. When we have been applying the right arm, no matter what area we were working in, we have had to be constantly looking for what will open the hearts of the people? What is it?

### **By All Means to Save Some**

It is easy to become quite satisfied with our own understanding of the truth and say

“Oh I have a wonderful understanding of the truth, and I understand the Bible and I understand this and that. But this other person is not even interested in understanding the Bible.”

This is because he may have other needs. So my mind must

be geared in this direction: how can my understanding be a blessing to this other person? How can I reach him with the understanding he currently has? How can I reach him with this knowledge? This requires strength, it requires a clear mind, and it requires the greatest effort we can muster.

We are losing a lot, and we have lost a lot in the past, because we have not really striven to serve others. This, I must say. When I look back, I see that we were too self-satisfied with our knowledge and with our ideas. I do not want to discourage you when I say this, because God has given us many messages and a lot of understanding in the past. And I am really very thankful and grateful for this, but we must concede that we have not made the effort to bring this knowledge to other people.

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

<sup>20</sup> And to the Jews I became as a Jew.

How did Paul become a Jew to the Jews? How did he preach to the Jews? Did he speak about Christ? Of course, he did, but how did he speak about Christ? He began with the law, he began with Moses. This was an area where the Jews were very much at home. He began with these things, and he was very knowledgeable in this field. He had such an understanding that everybody would listen to him.

He did not just stand there and say something which came into his mind. He had read the Scriptures himself. He was an expert in this area, and on all the finer details of the laws, because he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Due to his past experience he could immediately tell what they were thinking.

For example, at one time he was standing before the Sanhedrin, which was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees. He simply said one sentence:

“I stand here because of my hope in the resurrection.”<sup>1</sup>

He knew that this would lead them to fight among themselves. And why did he know that? Because he was an expert and understood their thinking. And he used his knowledge to help them. He used it to reach their hearts. So he became a Jew to the Jews, and he did this by striving for the utmost excellence. You may say,

“But he was already an experienced Pharisee himself, how much more could he learn?”

Well, he was always thinking about how he could use his knowledge to help the Jews.

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>20</sup> ...and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;

<sup>21</sup> To those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law.

What Paul is saying here is that he was not a transgressor of the law, but that he was somebody who the law would not condemn because in his heart he was free from the power of sin.

<sup>22</sup> ...to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak.

Now when he spoke to the Greeks, Paul did not begin with Moses. So how did he start in order to reach them? In Athens he talked of the “unknown God”:

### **Acts 17**

<sup>16</sup> Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. [He saw the Areopagus and the Acropolis opposite to it, the special temple that the Greeks had.]

<sup>1</sup> **Acts 23** <sup>6</sup> But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

<sup>18</sup> Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What does this babbler want to say?

This shows that the Greeks were prejudiced against the Jews. Paul was a Pharisee and they judged him as being one of those who say you cannot touch anything on Sabbath and who have a lot of strange laws. They considered the Jews to be very illogical, very unreasonable, thinking they were experts in their ways, but in their eyes they were just babblers. And it was because of this prejudice that they said,

“What does this babbler want to say?”

### **Acts 17**

<sup>18</sup> Others said, He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

<sup>19</sup> And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, [that is the place where they held philosophic discussions] saying, May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?

<sup>20</sup> For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.

<sup>21</sup> For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Well, at least they were curious, that's something.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>22</sup> Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;

<sup>23</sup> For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

<sup>24</sup> God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is



Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

<sup>25</sup> Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

<sup>26</sup> And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

<sup>27</sup> So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

<sup>28</sup> For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.

I think the quote he used was from Homer. Have you heard of the Greek classics? Some people learn about them at school. You will have heard of the names Plato and Homer and so forth. Paul knew about these people. He knew about their writings. How did he know? He was a Jew, a Pharisee, why should he bother to know anything about Greek philosophers? Because he wanted to reach the heathen.

It's a bit like learning a language. If God were to place me here in South Africa then I would need to learn your language. That would take some effort, but it would simply be necessary. How could I reach you without knowing how to speak your language? It's impossible. Again we see how important it is to strive for excellence.

Let's look at what Ellen White says about this event in the chapter "Berea and Athens" in the book *The Acts of the Apostles*:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 237-238:**

Paul drew the minds of his idolatrous hearers beyond the limits of their false religion to a true view of the Deity, whom they had styled the "Unknown God." This Being, whom he now declared unto them, was independent of man, needing nothing from human hands to add to His power and glory.

The people were carried away with admiration for Paul's earnest and logical presentation of the attributes of the true God—of His creative power and the existence of His overruling providence. With earnest and fervid eloquence the apostle declared,

**Acts 17**

<sup>24</sup> God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.

Ellen White also writes in another place about how Paul really understood the learned people in Athens. She describes how Paul met these people on their own ground in order to help them. She mentions that Paul had quite some knowledge of their philosophy, of their teachers, and of their poets. When he said,

**Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> ...as also some of your own poets have said,

—it shows that he could quote them almost as well as he could the Bible.

## **Other Examples**

The Reformation also went forward in a similar way. When Luther had the disputation with Dr Eck, he could quote the apostolic fathers by heart. It was not just the Bible that he quoted, but also those who followed the Bible writers. We don't learn about them in our time, and we don't really need to because they are no longer relevant. But back then, the intellectual class knew the writings of the fathers.

However, if we were to go to the Vatican today, where these writings are still in use, or if we were to find ourselves in one of their schools, we may find it helpful to learn about the writings of the fathers in order to meet the people on their own ground. It is so important that we make every effort to reach people.

Our work today is to reach people through the right arm. That means making an effort according to how the Lord has

shown us. This may be debt counseling or any other aspect of the right arm work. And in our efforts to reach the people we must strive to overcome such things as laziness and insufficient knowledge. We must really do our very best to reach people. And we must also strive for an excellent character so that we can work with the ignorant, or those who are slow. This requires special strength of character. The point is that we must strive to do whatever is necessary.

And for this reason I cannot rest satisfied with what we have accomplished so far. For this very reason I see we must press on. We have had a beginning, which was accomplished by the grace of God. But unless we press on it will be just a little “blip” that will come to nothing. And this pressing forward requires self-denial, as it did with the runners in Athens. It requires the utmost effort, discipline, healthful living, and a real striving to understand those around us.

In South Africa there are walls between the black and white people. This is a special challenge to us, but we could look at it as a blessing because we need challenges. The Greek philosophers that Paul faced are like the white people in this country. They are proud and very difficult to reach. But you can reach them if you strive as Paul did. And Paul did reach them in the end. A large church was formed in Corinth, which was one of the “intellectual cities” in Greece. And a church was also established in Athens. But after all his efforts, Paul did not sit down and relax and say,

“Well, I’ve done my job, now it’s up to them to take things further.”

No! He thought about how he could improve his work for his next visit. He wanted to achieve a higher standard, to reach them in a better way. He was continually thinking about this, and even when he was cast out of a city he came back to it again later!

Have you heard the story of Froment, the French/Swiss re-

former? He was one of the lesser known reformers. He lived at the same time as Farel and Calvin. Calvin was the great reformer from Geneva. Farel led the movement before him. Farel was a very zealous man who didn't consider his own safety. He would go into certain cities knowing he would be persecuted there, but he did not worry about that. He went there anyway.

But sometimes he was simply unable to work in certain cities. Geneva was one such city. It was one of those "intellectual cities," similar to Athens. The people there were not just intellectual, they also loved liberty. The Catholic Church and their priests had a difficult time in that city, and so did the reformers.

When Farel was expelled from the city he said to his friend and helper Froment, "you go." Froment did not have the experience that Farel had as a reformer, he was a school teacher. When he went into Geneva he was also quickly thrust out. The people cried out,

"What do you want here? Hey, what do we want with you?"

They did not appreciate his services at all. He tried to preach in the markets and they said,

"Go away, we don't want you. We don't need such stuff here."

So he had to leave, and he was very disappointed. He must have asked himself,

"If Farel, the great master, is unwelcome in this city what can I do here?"

But somehow his conscience bothered him. He thought that he could not leave the city like this. There must be something that he could do. So he decided that if they would not accept him as a preacher, maybe they would accept him as a school teacher. He returned, took a room at an inn and put a placard

in the market place saying,

“I can teach French to all who desire, within three months. And those who have not learned French within three months will not have to pay me anything.”

The Genevans were not particularly complimentary about this; they merely said,

“Well at least he doesn’t want our money.”

But they sent their children to him and at the end of each class he would hold a Bible study with the children. They repeated what they had learned to their parents at home. The parents were quite surprised at what their children explained to them, and eventually they came and listened to the Bible studies too.

So after each day’s French classes, the little room he used for teaching the children was filled with people who wanted to learn about the Bible. Thus the work in Geneva went forward until the way was prepared for Calvin, who went on to perfect the Reformation in that city.

Again we see that it requires real effort on the part of God’s people to reach others who are prejudiced. It requires us to ask ourselves,

“How can I reach them? What will open their hearts? What is the key?”

I cannot simply rest satisfied and say,

“Well everything will work out by itself because I have the truth and the truth has convinced me, and it’s so logical and clear that the others will accept it too.”

Let us remember that Jews are different, Greeks are different, those who are under the law and those who are not under the law are very different. And wherever the Lord puts us it is our duty to learn, to really learn, to become like them.

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but

one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

While I was thinking about this subject recently, I also thought of Elijah and the widow. Remember how Elijah put his whole effort into the matter and how he finally came to the widow and he asked her for her last morsel of bread. This was done under the direction of God, but he reached her heart through it. Then her son died, but Elijah brought him back to life by God's power. The Lord did all this to open up the work in this place.

And the Lord will also attend our humble efforts. We don't have to become experts overnight. We don't have to understand everything right from the word "Go." But we do have to earnestly learn about how to work, and the Lord will double our efforts and open the way. He will direct circumstances so that people will see the truth, and hindrances and prejudices will be removed.

But one thing is important: we must exert every effort, and really strive for excellence in winning souls.

## PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH

**L**ET'S begin with the chapter "In Remembrance of Me" from *The Desire of Ages*. This chapter especially describes the Lord's Supper:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 656:**

Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgment. God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the heart? Who can distinguish the tares from the wheat?

**What is Exclusiveness?**

I am thinking specifically of the sentence,

Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's supper.

So how do you interpret the word "exclusiveness" here? It is clearly explained in the next sentence where it says that nobody is excluded except people who persist in open sin. So apart from this area we are not to pass judgment upon one another. We are not to exclude others because we do not know who genuinely wants to partake of the Lord's Supper and who does not.

This is one meaning of "exclusiveness." But there is another meaning of this word which I will now read from the Bible, and in this sense the Lord's Supper is also not exclusive.

**1 Corinthians 11 [RV]**

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

<sup>24</sup> And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broke for you; do this in remembrance of me.

<sup>25</sup> In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, say-

ing, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

“You proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.” Can this be done in an exclusive way? Can you exclude yourself from people to whom you proclaim something? In other words, if you travel to some remote place to hold the Lord's Supper, can you proclaim the Lord's death? How can you? To whom can you declare it? To the snakes? To the bushes? To the sand? Do you see the point? To proclaim the Lord's death means that you cannot be exclusive. It is impossible.

So this is the other meaning of “exclusive.” Let me repeat these two meanings again:

1. We cannot exclude people unless they are living in open sin, and persist in this. That's one meaning of the term “exclusive.”
2. We cannot exclude ourselves from those whom we want to benefit. This throws a whole new light on our work, and also on the Lord's Supper.

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this drink you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”

How can we proclaim it unless we make it public? We have begun public work with the aim of reaching people in order to win fellow workers, and the Lord's Supper is evidently a means of doing this:

### **1 Corinthians 11 [RV]**

<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

On the one hand we wish to be undisturbed during the Lord's Supper, which is understandable and good. Jesus also wished to be undisturbed with His disciples at times. But let us remember that the Lord's Supper is not just for us, it is for the world. It is to proclaim something. So if we have visitors



(and we desire to have visitors) then the Lord's Supper is in a special sense for them.

When I review the history of our church, we often had visitors just as we were about to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The first time I experienced this was at a camp meeting in England, and suddenly we had a visitor. My first thought was,

“Hmm, what does he want?”

And then he asked to participate in the Lord's Supper, and we felt we couldn't say that this was only for church members, so we let him participate. Somehow I felt uneasy, but the visitor was really happy about it. He honestly felt he had never had such a Lord's Supper as this. I thought, well at least it did something good for him. Since then I have often had the same experience.

When we hold the Lord's Supper we proclaim the Lord's death. So it must be public, it can't be private. The Lord's Supper is not an exclusive, private issue. It's a public issue, and by holding it we declare publicly that Christ died for me, and that He is now my Savior. We are saying that I want to live in obedience to Him. I declare this publicly.

## **Baptism and Communion**

You will be aware that there is another ordinance of public declaration which is very similar, and that is baptism. Let's read about it:

### **Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 91:**

The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God.

What does Ellen White mean when she says one ordinance is “within” and one ordinance is “without” the church? What she means is that before we are baptized we are without the church, and through baptism we come into the church. So

Baptism is the ordinance without the church, that brings from without, to within. And the Lord's Supper is the ordinance that we keep when we are in the church. So that's the ordinance within the church. Let me read this again:

**Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 91:**

The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God.

And then she goes on to say:

Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper being "within" the church appears to contradict what we looked at just previously about exclusiveness. This ordinance is within the church.

But the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is not to be exclusive. It's not to exclude anybody, and it is not a private ordination, it is a public declaration that Christ has died. It simply means it is an ordinance for those within the church who have been baptized, while at the same time it proclaims to those "without" (those who are outside of the church) the Lord's death.

This does not mean that we must question those who come from other churches and tell them they cannot partake in the Lord's Supper with us. It would be inappropriate to do this.

But it must be in our hearts to proclaim the Lord's death. While it is an ordinance for those within the church, it is not only an ordinance for them—it is also an ordinance for those without the church. It is for those within the church to participate in, but it is those without the church to whom the message must be given. That summarizes the principle behind the

## Lord's Supper.

We need to really focus on giving the message to the world. This is the assignment God has given to us. We are no longer here to simply hold camp meetings for ourselves. We must really focus on reaching the world. The whole interest of God's people must be directed towards this.

Here in South Africa the fruit of our work seems to be rather rich, whereas in other parts of the world the fruit is rather meager at this point in time. We have a small beginning but the Lord has definitely led us up to now. By faith we will continue to press forward and not turn back. We do not know how quickly things will develop, or how big things will get, but this is the work.

## Proclaiming the Lord's Death

The Lord's Supper must be in harmony with our work. It was designed to proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. So we are to give a proclamation, we are to give a message to the people. But how is it possible to give the message if we are not truly unified? If a church is not unified, what message does it give to the world? A very poor one.

Let us see what the condition of proclaiming the Lord's death is:

### **John 17**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify You,

<sup>2</sup> As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

<sup>4</sup> I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given me to do.

<sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

So the glorification of Christ was the purpose of this prayer,

and this is still the purpose today.

<sup>6</sup> I have manifested your name to the men whom You have given me out of the world. They were yours, You gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

<sup>7</sup> Now they have known that all things which You have given me are from You.

<sup>8</sup> For I have given to them the words which You have given me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent me.

<sup>9</sup> I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given me, for they are yours.

<sup>10</sup> And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

In *2 Thessalonians* 1:10 Paul says that Christ will come when he is glorified in His saints. In other words, when the character of Christ is perfectly reproduced in His children. This is what He prays for, so that He can say,

<sup>10</sup> ...I am glorified in them.

<sup>11</sup> Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through your name those whom You have given me that they may be one as we are.

What was the evidence that Christ gave that He spoke God's truth?

### **John 10**

<sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.

This was continually His work. When they accused Him of Sabbath-breaking He said,

“I simply carry out what my Father tells me, because I and my Father are one. My Father works here and I work. I cannot do anything without the Father. I and my Father are one.”

And this unity, which was an evidence of His mission, is to be manifested in His disciples, as we read:

## John 17

<sup>11</sup> ...that they may be one as we are.

Just how closely was Christ one with His Father? He had the same mind as His Father had—exactly the same mind. He had the same thoughts as His Father. His Father desired to save people, and Christ desired to save people. His Father knew when it was time to be sad, and so did Christ. When it was time to rejoice, Christ knew it. His thoughts were exactly parallel to His Father’s thoughts. There was no discrepancy whatsoever.

Some may argue that there was a discrepancy between the Father and Christ in Gethsemane when Jesus pleaded in dreadful agony that the cup may pass from Him. But you can be sure the Father had the same struggle as His son at that time. He would also wish that the cup could pass from His Son. So you see they are completely one.

There is not a moment when they are not one—in thought, in feeling, and in action. And this is the unity that God wishes to accomplish among His people. But this unity can only be achieved when we first become one with Christ. That is the condition.

What does it mean to pray in Christ’s name? It means to pray according to His character, or to become one with Him. To blend His will and our will so that our impulses are the result of the love of Christ, or the character of Christ. This unity in prayer, or to pray in His name, is the condition for unity with one another.

And it is only when we have achieved the point of total selflessness, when there is no longer any “self” left in us because it has been replaced entirely with Christ that we are one with Him. The only reason why we are not completely one is because “self” is there to some degree, and this must go completely.

## John 17

<sup>11</sup> ...that they may be one as we are.

<sup>12</sup> While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. Those whom You gave me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

<sup>13</sup> But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

<sup>14</sup> I have given them your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

<sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

<sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.

<sup>18</sup> As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

<sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Not for himself did He live, think, and pray. This becomes very apparent in this prayer.

<sup>20</sup> I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word;

<sup>21</sup> That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent me.

How does the world come to believe that Christ was sent to this earth to save humanity? How can we proclaim the Lord's death? How does this happen? Jesus tells us how.

<sup>21</sup> ...You, Father, are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent me.

So we proclaim the Lord's death only as we are one in Christ. And then,

<sup>21</sup> ...the world may believe that You sent me.

<sup>22</sup> And the glory which You gave me I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one:

<sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved me.

Again Jesus repeats the thought that...

<sup>23</sup> ...the world may know that You have sent me.

How can the world come to know this? How do we proclaim the Lord's death till He comes? Exactly, through the church being...

<sup>23</sup> ...made perfect in one, that the world may know that You have sent me and I have loved them as You have loved me.

<sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also whom You gave me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which You have given me; for You loved me before the foundation of the world.

<sup>25</sup> O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent me.

<sup>26</sup> And I have declared to them your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved me may be in them, and I in them.

It is clear that each of us has been given different gifts or talents from God. But in all this diversity there is to be a perfect unity between the believers. Unity in mind, thought, and purpose. As God's people live out this unity, we proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

So how is the Lord's Supper tied in with all this? We understand that there is the preparatory service of the foot washing, and this service is to illustrate that we lay aside all selfishness. Let us put away everything that is selfish, let us wash this away by washing each others feet, so that as we come together, and have this feast of unity, it will be a real proclamation of the Lord's death till He comes.

I am really looking forward to the time when we have many visitors and they see a unified church that proclaims the Lord's death through the unity that declares that God has sent His Son to save the world. And they will see it when this

unity is clearly revealed in us. They will be able to see it because the Lord's Supper is a public ordinance.

I repeat again, it is not to be exclusive. It is not to be kept somewhere in a corner where nobody can see it. It is to be clearly displayed right at the top of the mountain, so that everybody can see it.

“This is how Christ died for me.”

And this is what people will see. I really pray that the foot washing today will truly make us one and then the communion service will be an expression of this unity.

First of all we have unity with Christ, but then we have unity with one another as well. This is to be a pattern for other communion services in the future, which will take place more often than in the past because we need to proclaim the Lord's death.

We can't have this exclusiveness where the Lord's Supper is only celebrated once a year at camp meetings, and where nobody is present apart from ourselves. That's not the purpose of it, especially in our time.

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is the proclamation of the Lord's death. We must use the present time of “relative exclusiveness” that we still have to search our hearts, to lay aside all selfishness, and to let Christ come into our heart; to really become one with Him in the burning desire for the finishing of the work and the glorification of Christ in the world. Then He will come soon. Amen.





