

DIVINE ORDER  
AND  
ORGANIZATION

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# 1. The Mystery of God

## **Revelation 10**

<sup>7</sup> But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel; when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He has declared to His servants the prophets.

**T**HE seventh angel began to sound back in 1844, and sounds right on down to the end of time. And in the days of the voice of this angel, the seventh trumpet angel, the “mystery of God” should be finished or brought to its completion. But what is this “mystery of God”?

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>25</sup> Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God;

<sup>26</sup> Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

<sup>27</sup> To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

<sup>28</sup> Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which works in me mightily.

Paul tells us that the mystery of God is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” This mystery is further described as follows:

## **Ephesians 3**

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

<sup>11</sup> Wherefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

<sup>12</sup> That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus, you who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

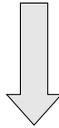
<sup>14</sup> For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

<sup>15</sup> Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

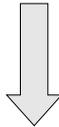
In the beginning then, we have up in heaven God the Father, then there was Jesus Christ, and then there were all the creatures God had made through Christ: all the intelligences, angels and unfallen beings alike and all the various worlds.

This first diagram shows the flow of light and life, proceeding from the Father, through Jesus Christ, to the creatures:

**GOD THE FATHER**



**JESUS CHRIST**



**CREATURES**

In heaven, this mystery was revealed in Jesus Christ, who was truly God, and at the same time, truly an angel. So He appears numerous times throughout the Old Testament.

### **The Mystery Revealed in Christ**

But while this mystery was “secret” or hidden in heaven, and in the Old Testament times, when Jesus was incarnated into a human body, the mystery was plainly revealed for all to see:

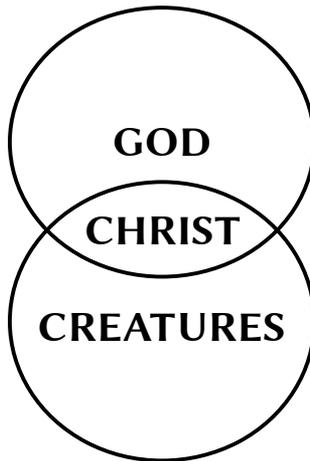
## **Romans 16**

<sup>25</sup> Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

<sup>26</sup> But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

It is called a mystery because no one can explain how the Creator of the universe, who possesses infinite power, can dwell in the body of a creature. Jesus Christ is both the Creator and the creature at the same time, but how this can be is a mystery.

This next diagram shows how Jesus Christ needed to partake of both natures (God and creature) in order to be an effective connector:

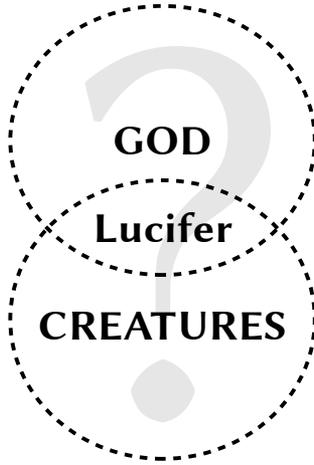


This mystery was described nicely in the verses we just looked at, “for to make in himself of twain one new man.” When Jesus came into human flesh, He was not just merely a man, but He was God in the flesh of a man. The “two” [humanity and divinity] “were made one,” and so He “made peace” between God and man. This was the same organization or order that God had originally

set up for the direction and communication in the heavenly kingdom.

### **The Mystery of Iniquity in Heaven**

At that time, before man was created, Lucifer wished to bring in a new order of things. He wanted to be equal with Christ, so that the order would look like this:



Lucifer did not desire to depose God. He understood that God was the all-powerful One,

#### **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>16</sup> ...dwelling in the light that no one could approach unto.

He recognized that he could never take the Father's place; but the place of Christ, whom he saw as an angel just like himself—this is what he coveted, and coveted very much.

And so he desired to change the order of things, from that which God had set up. He desired to institute a new order, a new organization, in the place of the old, established organization. When he failed to do this in heaven, then he labored to set up this type of organization on this earth. And so we read in the Scriptures of the...

## **2 Thessalonians 2**

<sup>7</sup> ...mystery of iniquity, [who] as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The spiritual battle going on now is between the establishment of the order of the mystery of God and the establishment of the order of the mystery of iniquity. So, in these last days, when the “mystery of God shall be finished,” in the church of God, those who will best understand God’s divine order and organization are those who best understand the mystery of God.

### **Paul’s Revelation of the Mystery**

In all of history, apart from Christ himself, what Bible writer stands out as the greatest exponent of the mystery of God? The apostle Paul. And to make this abundantly clear, let us turn again to some of his writings.

In *Ephesians 2*, Paul has been speaking about the mystery of God when he talks about Jesus,

#### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>15</sup> ...making in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

In those few words, Paul describes the mystery of God, which he also describes as:

#### **Colossians 1**

<sup>27</sup> ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And then in chapter 3, we begin to read as follows:

#### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>1</sup> For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

<sup>2</sup> If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me toward you:

<sup>3</sup> How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote before in a few words,

<sup>4</sup> Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).

Paul says in verse 2 that there had been given to him a special dispensation of grace. The word “dispensation” means a dispensing, or giving out of something.

It also carries the meaning of “a period of time.” Some people speak of the dispensation of law and the dispensation of grace, and they separate these things one from the other. And they mean by this that there was a period of time during which the law was the way of salvation. And they mean the dispensation of time when God’s grace is the way of salvation. That’s an erroneous doctrine because there was no such time anyway.

The true fact is that God’s grace has always been the way of salvation. And the keeping of the law is just the result of receiving the grace of God. I mention this, because the word “dispensation” from that kind of teaching has come to mean to us a period of time. But in the context of Paul’s statement, “dispensation” means the giving out by somebody to somebody else.

- Who did the giving or dispensing? Christ did, from the Father.
- To whom was it given? To Paul.
- And what was dispensed? The grace of God.
- And what is the grace of God? It is the power of God.

So to Paul then, was given the power of God, which is the Spirit of God, which is the character or life of God, to his servant upon the earth. This grace came to Paul to make special and specific revelations to him. And what was this special and specific revelation? The mystery of God:

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>3</sup> How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote before in few words).

Why was it made known to Paul? It was made known to him that others, when they read, may understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ, so that Paul became the channel of communication between Christ and the people in respect to this vital

and fundamental subject. Paul goes on to make some further comments:

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>5</sup> Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

So Paul had received new light on this question, light which had never been understood before by men, nor even by angels. How this was done is further explained:

<sup>6</sup> That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

This knowledge is given, not just simply that men might have a head full of knowledge, but that something much more than that might be accomplished, namely, that they be:

- “fellow-heirs,” and
- “of the same body,” and
- “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”

A person that is a true Christian is not just simply a man who is a modified improvement of the old nature. Do you follow that thought expressed in verse 6? We “should be fellow-heirs.” In order to be an heir, you must belong to the family. And Jesus Christ is our Elder Brother, and we are His brethren and sisters when we have truly been born again. Then we become of the same body, because we are born of the same Father and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

The understanding of the mystery of God—which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory”—is a very essential truth, if we are going to be something much more than only modified improvements of the old nature, if we are going to be truly and absolutely new men and women in Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Whereof I was made a minister.

How was he made a minister of this special work of preaching the gospel of the mystery of God? By human election or by divine appointment? By divine appointment from Christ, who is the one and only Head of the church, through the Spirit, to Paul. Paul makes very plain his claim to being divinely called and appointed to his work:

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>8</sup> Unto me, who am the less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

<sup>9</sup> And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

<sup>10</sup> To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

<sup>11</sup> According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul carries our minds along from point to point; he says the purposes of what God has done in him, to him, and through him was “to make all men see.” The word “make” means “to enable.” God does not force men to see, but He provides the opportunity.

Verse 10 brings out the thought that even the principalities and powers in heavenly places had not truly understood the mystery of God as it is now to be revealed by the church upon this earth to the angels up in heaven. This is remarkable, isn't it? To think that men upon this earth should be a means of angels learning so much more about the wonderful provisions of God!

So Paul stands out preeminently in the New Testament as the one through whom God would make known, as never before, the wonders of this mystery which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

If we want to understand best of all the way of God's order and organization, then we want to go to that person who knows the

most about it. And who obviously in the New Testament or in the Old for that matter, had the best understanding of the mystery of God? Paul. Therefore, who had the best understanding of the nature of God's order and organization as it is to be in the church of God? Paul, obviously.

## **The Mystery to be Finished**

Let's come back to the verse we started with:

### **Revelation 10**

<sup>7</sup> But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel; when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished...

What does this mean so far as the light in these last days is concerned? Will the mystery of God be understood even better in these last days than it has been in the past? Certainly it will:

### **Testimonies to Ministers, p. 18:**

To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. the church being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display.

Back in the days of the disciples, it did not yet appear in full and final display. It was still incomplete. And, therefore, great even as was the understanding of the apostle Paul in regard to the mystery of God, even greater light must shine upon this question down in these last days.

## 2. The Mystery of Iniquity

### The Mystery of Iniquity on Earth

**T**HE Roman Catholic Church is the papacy. And the Protestant Reformers had no difficulty recognizing the papacy as the man of sin—the son of perdition.

The papacy is the exact representation of Satan's ways, thoughts, aims, spirit, principles, and organization. It is an organizational structure in which Satan himself does not appear personally; but his vicegerent does, and that is the pope of Rome. Every member of the Roman Catholic Church must pass through the pope of Rome, as well as most priests and so forth, if they wish to come to God. There's no other way, but through the papacy.

It is a system where man has placed himself in the place of Christ in the church, and that is always of the way of the mystery of iniquity.

In our studies on God's character we saw that when we continued to think some of our old thoughts in regard to the character of God, we were thinking like the papacy. The papacy sets up her laws and then the papacy says to her people,

“Either you obey these laws or we will punish you into obedience. And if our first moral punishment doesn't effect the desired result, we will strike you harder and still harder and harder yet until the death decree strikes you hardest of all.”

That's the way of the papacy. That's not the way of God.

### Coming Out of Babylon

Although we have left Babylon so far as Sunday-keeping is concerned, although we have left Babylon so far as the nature of Christ is concerned, although we have left Babylon so far as our belief in the immortality of the soul is concerned, up until now we have not yet left Babylon halfway in regards to our concept of God's character.

This coming out of Babylon is not an absolute thing which we experience in a moment; it's a process. We still retain certain concepts in our minds which we don't yet recognize, which are Babylonish in their nature. And what is the call to God's folk today?

### **Revelation 18**

<sup>4</sup> Come out of her my people.

The reformers came out of Babylon, but not totally. They still stayed in Babylon insofar as Sunday-keeping, the immortality of the soul, and the teaching of hell-fire were concerned. They still remained there as far as their concept of God's character was concerned because they certainly thought of God as being a punisher and as being a destroyer.

But on some things they were wonderfully and remarkably clear. They were wonderfully clear on the principles of the gospel. One has but to read the writings of Luther, the writings of Wesley, of Hus and Jerome, John Knox and others, to realize how absolutely clear they were on justification by faith. They did understand the mystery of God: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And, therefore, they did understand divine order in organization.

### **Christ, the Head of the Church**

If you know Christ's headship of the church, you will understand Christ's guidance of the church, because the Head is the guiding power in any body.

They knew that by the Holy Spirit the Lord Jesus personally guides the church and personally guides each individual person who is of the church.

In this they knew that the Holy Spirit is given to each individual Christian, and that by the Spirit the Lord Jesus gives himself personally to each individual Christian.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 181.

There are wonderful statements from Paul about each one of us being members and Christ being the one Head exclusively in the church.

By contrast, remember the multi-headed papacy back in the days of Wycliffe? The papacy had three popes simultaneously. And each of them claimed to be God upon this earth. That certainly opened the eyes of many folk back in those days to the nature of that great power and it began to cause her undoing.

In the church of God, there is only one head. Christ is that Head. And we are members of the same body. Some of us may have a larger or more expansive work than others. Some of us may never labor other than to a very small community. Others may be sent to all the world to preach the gospel. But the one who goes to preach the gospel and spends all his time doing it is a member exactly the same as every other member in the church. He is not a head.

There can be no presidents, no kings, or rulers, or any such thing in the church of God. There is only one head and that's Jesus Christ and all we are members. Now by contrast:

The Roman doctrine is that the Holy Spirit is given to “the church” and “the church” bestows the Spirit on the individual in the ceremony of “confirmation.”<sup>2</sup>

First of all, it's a Roman doctrine. Therefore, what is it? It's error. What kind of error? Serious or not? It is a most serious error. It is deadly! Why is it so deadly? If the Spirit is given to the church, and then the church bestows this Spirit on each individual, the church has put itself in the place of Christ. And men and women then, find themselves at the mercy of a church, which in this case is very corrupt.

A corrupt church can't even have the Spirit of God; therefore, it cannot even dispense the Spirit of God to others. And if individu-

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<sup>2</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 181.

als must depend upon the church to receive the Spirit of God, and the church doesn't have the Spirit of God, then what hope does the individual have? None whatsoever! Christ alone is...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, today and forever.

No church down through history, not even the church of God, has always remained pure, holy and uncorrupted. It would be foolishness, on God's part, to entrust to the church the dispensation of the Spirit or any other of the gifts of God. Now Jones says:

By the light and power of God's truth, the Reformers were made free from that Romish superstition and monopoly.<sup>3</sup>

Let us look now at the quotations Jones uses from the writings of Paul.

### **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>3</sup> But I would have you know, that the Head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Can you see in Paul here a disposition to make himself a pope? A president? A king? A head of any kind? No! He did *not* say,

"I'll have you know, inasmuch as I have a very special dispensation of grace from God to preach the mystery of Christ, that I, under Christ, am the head of every man."

Paul doesn't say that, he doesn't hint it, nor suggest it, in any way whatsoever.

But what about the pope of Rome, does he say those kinds of things? Absolutely. And what about the President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists? He doesn't say it outright in just the same bold way the pope does, but by his actions and by the attitude and teaching in the ministry throughout the Ad-

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<sup>3</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 181.

ventist Church today, what is the General Conference President, in effect, made to be? A king, a head.

I told you just the other day of my experience in Washington, D.C. last year when I put that question to a minister, and he said,

“I don’t have those answers, but I know where to go for them.”

Did he tell me he would go to Christ? No. He would go to the General Conference. So what was the General Conference to that man? It was the head to him. The General Conference was the fountain of knowledge.

There is a teaching today that is being systematically inculcated throughout the entire Seventh-day Adventist Church organization that the General Conference is the voice of God in the world.

In this message, when we gather together, God is working as He always does, through a messenger. But the messenger only passes on to you what God has revealed to him. And when you have a personal problem and you need to solve the problem for yourself, to whom do you go directly to find the answer for yourself? To Christ. Christ is our Head, the Head of every man in the church of God today.

Paul makes that very clear:

### **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>1</sup> Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Now I praise you brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

<sup>3</sup> But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ.

Note that the word “but” is again and again used in the writings of Paul. Sometimes Paul would say something that would seem to teach something different than his intent, so he would anticipate the misconception and correct it. Here is another example:

## **Romans 5**

<sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

And many folk, (and I believe even Martin Luther did at one stage,) have drawn from this the conclusion that if "where sin abounds grace does much more abound," then the more we sin, the more grace will abound. So sin as hard as you can so grace will abound. Paul anticipated that and so he says:

## **Romans 6**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?

Paul recognized the danger of some people concluding wrongly from what he said just the same as though he said it, because truth must be spoken even though it may be misinterpreted. And so he asked the question. In the light of the faith of where sin abounds then grace does much more abound, and what shall we say then? Shall we say that we are to continue in sin, that grace may abound? And what does he say? "God forbid." Now come back to *1 Corinthians*:

## **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>1</sup> Follow me, even as I also am a follower of Christ.

Some folk may conclude from that, that Paul is meaning that he is the head, that he is a ruler over them, that they are to obey him, but in verse 3 he clears it up by saying:

"But, even though I say to you, 'Be followers of me, even as I am of Christ,' I want you to know that I am not the head—that the head of every man is Christ and no one else but He."

Paul is a writer that we have to be careful to understand because, as Peter said, many folk misinterpret him because he speaks deep truths from the Scriptures.

## The Church, the Body of Christ

### 1 Corinthians 12

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Compare that to this verse:

### Ephesians 5

<sup>30</sup> For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

These two verses tell us that we are the body of Christ and members in particular. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

For a body to be effective, it must have two things: a head, and members. How far can a head get without members? Nowhere. And how far can members get without a head? Likewise, nowhere.

Every body—and we have a whole room full of them here—has each of them one Head and one Head alone. There is no room for another head. There is no need for another head. In fact, if we had a second head, we would only then begin to get troubled because one head might decide to go one direction and the other head in a different direction and what shall the poor members do? It would be confusion.

Babylon is a church which doesn't have one head; it has many heads. The pope is the supreme head. But he is only the supreme head. Every bishop, every cardinal, every archbishop, every priest is a head of a lesser or a greater degree. And because it's a many-headed system, with many members too—heads and subheads—then you have a church called Babylon and Babylon means what? Confusion. Nothing short of that. But it shall not be so in the church of Christ.

In the church of Christ, there can only be one Head, though there be millions of members, only one Head. This is something I make a continual matter of prayer in my own experience—that I

shall never have the least disposition to ever make myself or to attempt to make myself head over any other member.

When I was out in Washington, DC last year, I was staying with these two young men—two bachelors—and we were three bachelors together. I was far away from home and after living and eating together for three days they said to me,

“You’re just not like a minister; you’re just like a real human being.”

And that made me feel really good. I always want to be just a member with all the rest of the members. And I believe that God can continue to bless us in our work when this is our disposition or attitude.

This is one of the most important principles ever to be learned in the church of God: Christ is the Head and we are all members of that body. And no true body can have more than one head, though it has millions of members.



### 3. Divine Appointment

IN THE BOOK *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century*, Jones drew certain conclusions from the fact that Christ is the one Head and each one of us are members.

When Christ shed forth the Spirit at Pentecost, He gave Him to all—to each individual personally, as well as to the church as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

#### Christ Appoints Gifts Directly

On the day of Pentecost, God did not, first of all, give the Spirit to a church committee, or to a church President, and then in turn that body of people dispensed the Spirit to the rest of the church. It wasn't that way.

As the believers collectively bowed there in the presence of God and the Spirit came down, each person received that gift of the Spirit direct from Christ himself. And that's how it still is today:

When He by the Spirit came to the church here, He came to each individual as truly as He came to the church, and became the Head of each individual as truly as He is Head of the church.

Indeed He is Head of the church by being Head of each individual who is of the church. First, Head of the individual; then Head of the *assembly* of these, of whom He is already the Head individually.

“The Head of every man is Christ.” “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” “You are *built together* for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” And He is the Head of the body—the church which is the fullness of Him that fills all in all. *Matthew 18:20; Ephesians 2:22; 1:22-23.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem.*, p. 184.

To make the point really clear, the next thought will bring out the fact that Jesus Christ is not the Chief Head over lesser heads. But He is the only Head.

Thus Christ is not Head of the church in only a general sense, but in the *most particular sense*.

He is not Head by occupying the *chief position* and having the charge of “the large affairs” of the church, with the “details” left to others.<sup>6</sup>

The Roman Catholic hierarchy, the great papal system, can teach us important lessons in what to avoid and what to come out of. Because whatever is Babylonish, we must come out of, and have no more to do with, and have in its place the total and complete opposite.

In the Roman Catholic system, the pope is the head by occupying the chief position and having charge of the large affairs of the church with the details left to others. But that system is not the church of Christ. How do we know this? Turn back to *Ephesians*:

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>22</sup> And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of him that fills all in all.

Does the pope of Rome have the capacity to be the head of all things in the church? No, he doesn't, because he is a limited, fallible, erring human being.

But does Jesus Christ have the power and the capacity to be Head over all things to the church? Most certainly He does, because He is divine, He is perfect, He is infinite and He is unlimited. Therefore, Jesus Christ can be, and is for all who allow Him to be, the Head of the large affairs of the church, and the Head of the details in the church as well.

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<sup>6</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 184.

This means then, if you or I, as the least member in the whole church, desire to know what our work shall be, to whom do we go? We go to Christ because He has the capacity to be Head over all things to the church. He can teach you your duty just as effectively as he can teach me mine.

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

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity.

Certainly we can talk together and counsel about certain matters. We can glean from the experience of others; but we can't depend upon them.

The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally.

There are people who come to me at times and ask me what is the place in God's church where they are to work or the various positions they are to work or what position they are to fill. And my answer has unvaryingly been:

"This I cannot tell, because I am not the Head."

Here I have my left hand. That left hand is a member. Now that left hand, if it had the power to ask the question might say:

"What is my work today or at this moment?"

Does the left hand ask the right hand, what the left hand must do? No. If the left hand did ask the right hand what the left hand must do, what could the right hand tell it? Absolutely nothing. The left hand must depend upon the head for directions and for instructions.

In your body, where you have one head, does that head occupy the chief position and have charge of the large affairs of your body with the details left for some other subhead somewhere else

in the body? Is that the way of it? No, it's not the way. And neither is that the way in the church.

### **Human Control Only for Dead Members**

There does come a time, however, when one member must be controlled by another member, but still under the direction of the Head. And that is when one member becomes powerless or useless.

Just before I left Australia, I paid a visit to a family of believers in Sydney. And the aging father was not in this group; but he suffered a slight stroke down the left side, and his left arm had become quite useless. He couldn't move it; it wouldn't respond to the head at all. So when the head desired to move the left arm, the head had to tell the right arm, which was still alive, to come over and pick up the left arm and direct it and control it.

When the time comes that we have to be directed by other men, that is a witness to us that we have become a dead member. It is not a very pleasant thought. So while ever you remain living members, then you must look to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone for directions.

### **No Human Control in Christ's Church**

He [Christ] is Head of the church in the widest and most intricate sense; for God "gave Him to be Head of *all things to the church*" *Ephesians* 1:22. He is the Head of everything that can ever pertain "to" the church.

*Anything* of which He is not the Head *in the direct and full sense* in which He is Head of the church—*that* thing does not reach the church.

Even though it be done in the name of the church, and as if in behalf of the church, if *He* is not Head of it, it pertains to something else, it springs from *somebody else*, and comes just so far short of being *of* the church or of pertaining "to" the church.

And this is eternally right. In the eternal purpose, the church is to be the expression of the fullness of all the perfections of God.

To the church this is expressed, and can be expressed, *only from Christ* in whom all fullness dwells.<sup>7</sup>

Note the words here:

“The church is to be the expression of the fullness of all the perfections of God.”

In the order that God set up in heaven, God spoke through Christ to His creatures. Christ occupied that position because He had the fitness for it: by being both Creator and creature at the same time. That was an absolutely perfect arrangement. It could not be improved. It was faultless in every detail.

If then this is the method of God’s expression to His creatures and through His creatures, and if the church of God today is to be the expression of the fullness of all the perfections of God, how must the church of God today be organized? The same way precisely.

For *anything* of which He is not the Head and spring to reach the church, or to be of the church, would be only to mar or stain the divine perfection of the church.<sup>8</sup>

When Satan set up his rival organization, and sought to reach the church and make in it his will and his thought regarding principles of the church, did that mar and bring imperfection to the church of God? It certainly did—in the worst kind of way,

And Christ is now engaged in sanctifying and cleansing the church from all these things “with the washing of water *by the Word*,” that He may present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle *nor any such thing*, but holy and without blemish.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 184-185.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem.*, p. 185.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

There are two systems involved: the mystery of God and the mystery of iniquity. And the mystery of iniquity is when angels or men put themselves in the place of Christ to the church.

The mystery of God is when the Creator and the creature are combined in one person. The person is Christ first,—then that mystery is to be reproduced in us.

The mystery of iniquity is where either angels or men put themselves in the place of Christ to the church. Creatures take the place of the Creator. Jones says here that:

“Christ is now engaged in sanctifying and cleansing the church from all these things.”

### **A Continuing Reformation**

In the history of this movement, Christ, as the Head, has been engaged in the work of cleansing us from all the things that pertain to the mystery of iniquity: ideas and feelings, attitudes and beliefs, ways of doing things; all have been falling off one by one.

And this has been so because we have had no popes, no General Conference presidents, only messengers to bring us to the light of God’s truth—fellow members together with each other, studying, praying, and seeking light and knowledge from their great Head, Jesus Christ, by His Spirit.

The blessed work of preparing the church for this glorious presentation, the Lord Jesus *began* with the beginning of the Reformation, and He will now *finish* it. For we are *now* in the time of the finishing of the mystery of God. He began it according to the original standard in His Word, and He will so finish it.<sup>10</sup>

When did the Reformation begin? Wycliffe is named as the Morning Star of the Reformation. In what century do we find his work beginning? The fourteenth. Around 1316 AD, Wycliffe began his ministry. About 40 or 50 years later, in the early part of

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<sup>10</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 185.

1400's came Hus and Jerome in Bohemia which is now Czechoslovakia and a hundred years later in the early part of 1500, we find Martin Luther appearing on the scene. The next great names are the Wesley's in the 1700's and then Miller and his associates in the 1800's.

Back in 1300 there were fore-runners of the Reformation—the Waldenses, Albigenses, the Christians up in Scotland and Ireland, and various other outposts of the truth, who had maintained the truth in this period of darkness.

Let's look at 1300 in particular. At that time the prevailing system and the prevailing power in the earth was the mystery of iniquity; every aspect of which was anti-God and anti-Christ.

The work of the Reformation in its beginning was to bring the people of God out of that darkness, out of the mystery of iniquity, and into the mystery of God. The Reformation didn't complete that—not by any means. And that's why our opening text says to us that:

**Revelation 10**

<sup>7</sup> ...in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished.

Let's say this in different words. Instead of saying,

“...the mystery of God should be finished,”

—let's say,

“...the people of God shall finally and fully and completely and eternally, come out of Babylon.”

They began to come out in the beginning of the Reformation and took further steps with each messenger who arose as God sent those messengers. And in 1844, a gigantic step was taken further out of Babylon, but even the Adventist Church didn't come all the way out as we are learning—as we find ourselves who have been Seventh-day Adventists—that we must further

step out of that system, out of that way, out of that thinking, out of those concepts, and so on.

Over the past two or three days, we have taken some wonderful steps out of Babylon in our changed concepts in regards to God's character. And now we are going to learn that down in Australia, in the last several months, some further steps have been taken out of Babylon into the mystery of God. And these are outlined for you now as we proceed.

### **The Gifts Not Given by Man**

We turn to the further development of Jones' thoughts in the book *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century*. He quotes from *Ephesians*:

#### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>8</sup> Wherefore He said, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

<sup>11</sup> And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers;

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

<sup>14</sup> That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

<sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Again and again Paul reiterates this great thought that Jesus is the Head and we each one are members.

<sup>16</sup> From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure in every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Jones hasn't quoted all this; he has mainly quoted verse 8 and 11 which I'd like to look at a little further:

#### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>8</sup> When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Who is the "He" referred to here? Obviously, Jesus Christ. And He is the Head over all things to the church. What are these gifts that Jesus Christ gave?

<sup>11</sup> And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers;

So Jesus Christ gave the prophets and the apostles and the evangelists and the pastors and the teachers. How many of these did the church appoint to herself? None. Christ gave them all.

Whenever the church takes upon itself the work of Christ and begins to appoint to herself apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and so forth, then they appoint to themselves trouble, distress and ultimate disaster. I'll give example after example of this from the Word of God as we proceed. Contrariwise whenever the church has left to Jesus Christ the work of appointment, then the work has gone forward under Christ's direction successfully.

Why is it that Jesus Christ has given these gifts unto the church? He has given them...

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Until what time?

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith,

And furthermore,

<sup>14</sup> That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...

<sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

So the purpose of the organization is for the development of the character of God's people—the finishing of the mystery of God.

He began it according to the original standard in His Word, and He will so finish it.<sup>11</sup>

What is the original standard? God, through Christ, as the only Head, to every one of the members. That was the original. And how will Christ finish it? In just the same way precisely.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>1</sup> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

<sup>2</sup> You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led.

<sup>3</sup> Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

The ability to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Head, and we are only members, is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we certainly cannot understand divine order in the mystery of God. It just can't be understood. As surely as the church lost the gift of the Spirit, then just so surely did the mystery of iniquity begin to rise right in her very midst.

### **Diversities of Gifts**

#### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>4</sup> Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Is there any one man in the church of God which has every gift? There is not. There never can be. And neither do we want it to be that way because each person must fill their particular part in his peculiar way and according to his ability so that, collectively, all the gifts add up to a perfect unity and a perfect whole.

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<sup>11</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 185.

## 1 Corinthians 12

<sup>6</sup> And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.

<sup>7</sup> But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

<sup>8</sup> For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

<sup>9</sup> To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

<sup>10</sup> To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation on tongues;

<sup>11</sup> But all these works that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

Those words are very beautifully clear. Let's read on:

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

<sup>28</sup> And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

That's quite a comprehensive list. Let's just run on down and see how comprehensive it is:

1. **Apostles:** Sent of God. They are messengers primarily.
2. **Prophets:** They are mouthpieces too, but ones who foretell the future particularly.
3. **Teachers:** They don't have quite the same scope as apostles. Apostles are also teachers and so are prophets.
4. **Miracles:** The power to work wonders, to heal and so forth, like gifts of healing.
5. **Helps:** This would usually be regarded as a minor roll in the church. But there is no such thing as a minor roll in God's church. Every member is just as important as the other.

How many of you would like to sacrifice one of your members? Even a finger joint? Pretty important, isn't it, that finger joint? Especially if you are a musician. If you're a musician and you lose the first joint of a finger, you are in serious trouble, and for other occupations as well. There is no such thing as a minor position in the church of God. Every member, no matter how small he may be, is important in the great scheme of things.

But helps covers the work of administration, and governments covers that too, but doing those things behind the scenes, an unseen effort for the most part. But even those offices are filled or given to the church by God. It says,

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>28</sup> And God has set some in the church.

If God sets the apostles in the church, and the prophets, and the teachers, and the miracle workers, and the healers, and the helpers, and the administrators in the church, what is left for the church to set in the church? Nothing. It's all of Christ because He is Head of all things to the church.

A. T. Jones now makes a statement, which he repeats twice more; three times he says this. When a writer or a speaker says the same thing, and repeats it here, and the third time over here, then in the speaker's mind, how does this statement rate? Very important. And he has a burden that those who hear the word of God understand the principle laid down in this particular statement.

Therefore, in the church of the Scriptures, every responsibility is the gift of Christ direct by the Spirit; and is thus set in the church by God himself Personally.<sup>12</sup>

This was the position and the understanding of God's messenger, A. T. Jones, who, as we recognized earlier, was the leading exponent in the twentieth century of the mystery of God. Waggoner

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<sup>12</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 186.

understood it, too. But Jones seemed to stand out ahead—just as Paul stood out in this connection back in the early church.

Note the wording carefully. I'll read the second instance of it over here because it's repeating the same thing.

It should be repeated, that it may not be forgotten, that every responsibility in the church is the direct gift of God by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

So in the first case then, it is God by Christ and through the Holy Spirit, who places them upon this or that or the other individual.

### **The Church Recognizes the Gifts**

But that is not all, because more than this, then the God of heaven gives to the church the power or the same Spirit to recognize what God is doing in the church and for the church. So it says:

And the membership of the church, by the Spirit, are to be able to recognize the gift upon the individual and accordingly to recognize that individual in the place and work in the church for which the gift has prepared him. *Acts 13:2-4; 6:3-5.*<sup>14</sup>

Come back to the human body again. Every member in your body is perfectly content to recognize the work of every other member. Do you know how the hand and foot will co-ordinate to accomplish certain objectives? Or two hands will coordinate to accomplish a certain work? In the body is the most perfect harmony. However, there is only one head between all the members.

And so, likewise, when the Head, who is Jesus Christ, places upon a certain individual a special gift or particular gift and then puts that person in a certain position in the church, the church will have no difficulties at all in recognizing what God is doing in

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<sup>13</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 188.

<sup>14</sup> *Idem.*, p. 188-189.

the church, provided, that we do have the Spirit of God in our hearts. Because as the scripture said:

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>3</sup> ...no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

If Jesus Christ is doing something in the church of God and we don't have the Holy Ghost, then how can we recognize His doing of that thing and His right to do that thing as the Head? It would be impossible.

### **Failing to Recognize the Gifts**

Jones has just said that the church is able to recognize the gift upon the individual and accordingly to recognize that individual in the place and work in the church for which the gift has prepared him. Now he makes this observation:

The failure of James and the church in Jerusalem to recognize Christ's gift *of* Paul and *in* Paul to the church put Paul in Roman prisons to the day of his death (except a very short interval near the end), robbed the churches of Christ's wonderful revelations in the mystery of God, and hastened the rise of the mystery of iniquity. *Galatians* 2:12; *Acts* 21:18--; *2 Timothy* 1:15; 4:16; *Galatians* 1:15-16; *Ephesians* 3:2-5; *Colossians* 1:26-29; *2 Thessalonians* 2:3-10.<sup>15</sup>

Who was James? The brother of Christ, and one of the leading brethren in the Apostolic church in the city of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem, back in those days, was the world center of the Apostolic church—until the destruction came and they were all scattered abroad.

Was there in Paul some great talents, abilities and gifts which were of great value to the church of God at that time? He stands out as the greatest of all the apostles—the one who preached the gospel with the greatest power, obtained the greatest results, and traveled the furthest in the preaching of the message.

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<sup>15</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 189.

Who had placed those gifts in Paul? Christ had. Having put those gifts in Paul, then where did God put Paul? In the church. So Paul was a man in whom were the gifts of Christ, and he was a man in whom was the gift of God to the church. That being so, what did the church need to do? They needed to recognize and see what Christ had done. But James and the church in Jerusalem failed to do this.

Jones has made some very serious charges here. Because what could be more serious than to charge the leaders in Jerusalem with putting Paul in Roman prison to the day of his death? That's a very serious charge, and secondly, of robbing the church of...

...Christ's wonderful revelations in the mystery of God.

That's a more serious charge. And...

...hastening the rise of the mystery of iniquity;

–that's likewise a very serious charge. I asked myself the question when I read that paragraph:

“Well, is A. T. Jones exaggerating? Is he saying too much here? Is he being over emphatic?”

I asked myself those questions. And to find the answers I turned to the book *The Acts of the Apostles* to read the account of it. And I found that rather than exaggerated, if anything, he could have said more about it, because the failure of James and the church in Jerusalem did put Paul in Roman prison until the day of his death, did rob the church of the wonderful revelation of the mystery of God, and did hasten the rise of the mystery of iniquity. Then Jones goes on to say:

And the failure of professed Christians to recognize Christ's spiritual gifts, is always of the mystery of iniquity. For it is but the manifestation of the natural against the spiritual, of the will

of man against the will of Christ, and of *man* instead of *Christ*—of man in the place of God—in *the church*.<sup>16</sup>

When Satan became proud in his own heart and lifted up, he came to that place where he no longer could see God’s gift of Christ and God’s gift in Christ to the church. And that’s where the mystery of iniquity began. Wherever that thing is repeated, anywhere at any time, as A. T. Jones says, it “is always of the mystery of iniquity.”

I emphasize the thought now. When we come to read the account of Paul’s imprisonment in *The Acts of the Apostles* a little later, then you’ll see how Sister White develops that thought and shows how that is precisely and exactly true. For as the last quote from Jones said:

For it is but the manifestation of the natural against the spiritual, of the will of man against the will of Christ...<sup>17</sup>

The will of man is the will of a member. The will of Christ is the will of the Head. So we have the will of the member against the will of the Head; and worse than this, of man in the place of God in the church.

In the original rebellion, there was the will of the member, Satan, against the will of the Head, Christ, with the definite purpose of the member, Satan, to put himself in the place of Christ to the church. And while Satan can never do that in the true church of God—because the true church of God will never allow it—Satan has done it in the false church of God. In the false church, Lucifer was taking the place of Christ in that church, which is the church of the mystery of iniquity.

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<sup>16</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 189.

<sup>17</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 189.

Therefore, again let it be said: In the Scriptures and according to the order of God every responsibility in the church is the direct gift of God by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

### Ordination versus Election

So Jones has said this thing three times. From this he now draws a conclusion:

In the Scriptures there is no such thing as appointment or election *by men* in the church, nor in the churches. There is *ordination*, but not election.<sup>19</sup>

Ordination is but the recognition by the church of what God has already done in the church; the same as baptism is but the recognition, on the part of the individual, a declaration and recognition of what God has already done in the heart of the person. So ordination is to God's election in the church as the service of baptism is to the experience of new birth—simply a recognition of what God has done.

Baptism is not doing something; it is only declaring, or acknowledging. So ordination is not doing anything; it is simply declaring or acknowledging. It is God who does the thing and puts that person in that place in the church.

In the Scriptures and according to the order of God, every responsibility in the church is a direct gift of God by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Therefore,

In the Scriptures there is no such thing as appointment or election *by men* in the church, nor in the churches. There is *ordination* but not election.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

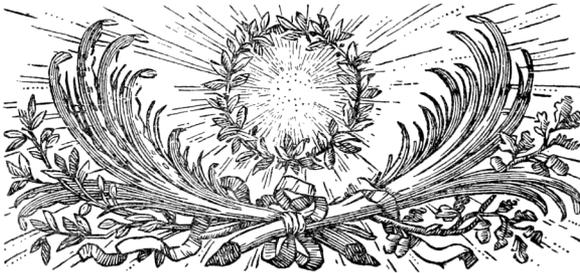
<sup>19</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 189-190.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

And the ordination is the active response of the members of the body to the will of their Head—not the endorsement nor the legalizing of it.

In the history of the scriptures, there have been occasions when there have been elections by men in the church and in the churches. But Jones is referring, not to the history as contained in the Scriptures, but to truth as contained in the Scriptures. And in that truth, according to the order of God, there is no such thing as election by men in the church nor in the churches.

Later on, we'll see that when there was such a thing as election by men in the church, it always brought trouble and difficulty and problems and evil into the church of God.



## 4. Human Election

LET us look back to the House of Israel, as it was under the Pharisees and Sadducees. What kind of organization did the Jewish people have when Christ appeared upon this earth? Were the men in the Sanhedrin, the High Priest and the various other officials of the Jewish organization, appointed by God or appointed by men? They were appointed by men.

What was their condition in respect to their relationship to God? They were in apostasy, the very deepest kind of apostasy.

According to the principles laid down here by the apostle Paul, and endorsed by A. T. Jones, the Apostolic church lived in a much higher spiritual plane. Paul says,

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>28</sup> God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

When the Apostolic church was living near to God, what system do we then find to exist in the church organization? Human election, or divine appointment? Divine appointment.

### **The Falling Away**

And after the great days of the Apostolic church there came that “falling away” prophesied by Paul:

### **2 Thessalonians 2**

<sup>3</sup> ...for that day [the day of Christ’s coming] shall not come, except there come a falling away first...

Jones now says:

Elections came in from Greece by those Greeks who in the “falling away,” had not the Spirit, and so had lost their Head.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 190.

Earlier, we learned that we only recognize the Head by the Spirit.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>3</sup> Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

And when the church in the “falling away” lost the Spirit, they lost the Head. And they became, in effect, a headless body. And a headless body is not very effective. It can’t operate. A headless body is a dead body.

What do men always do right down through history when they lose what God has given to them? They substitute it with something else.

In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve were dressed in a magnificent garment of living light, a gift from God. And when they sinned, they lost their garment of light. What did they then do? They substituted a garment of fig leaves to take the place of the garment of light. It was a rather poor substitute. The living garment of light would have been there forever. It was beautiful—glorious to behold. Whereas, the leaves could only last but for a few days and had to be changed, again and again. God, in His mercy, appointed the first animal sacrifices and gave them garments of skins in the place of garments of leaves.

And likewise, as A. T. Jones mentions, there is only one kind of power the church of God should have and that is the power of God. But when men lose the power of God, they seek another power, and acting in the place of Christ, they put in the place of God’s power, their own power, which is the power of force:

The church was fully conscious of her loss of the power of God before she sought the power of the State. Had she not been, she never would have made any overtures to the imperial authority, nor have received with favor any advances from it.

There is a power that belongs with the gospel of Christ, and is inseparable from the truth of the gospel; that is, the power of God. In fact, the gospel is but the manifestation of that power; for the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.”

As long, therefore, as any order or organization of people professing the gospel of Christ maintains in sincerity the principle of that gospel, so long the power of God will be with them, and they will have no need of any other power to make their influence felt for good wherever known.

But just as soon as any person or association professing the gospel loses the spirit of it, so soon the power is gone also. Then, and only then, does such an organization seek for another kind of power to supply the place of that which is lost.

Thus was it with the church at this time. She had fallen, deplorably fallen, from the purity and the truth, and therefore from the power, of the gospel. And having lost the power of God and of godliness, she greedily grasped for the power of the State and of ungodliness.<sup>22</sup>

When we find a “falling away” and the church loses the divine Head, then the church—instead of sitting down or kneeling down and confessing before God their loss and repenting of what they have done to bring about that loss, and then to call upon God to act his part and bring back to them what they have lost—instead they take the place of God and they appoint men in the church in the place of God putting men in the church. And so it was, that

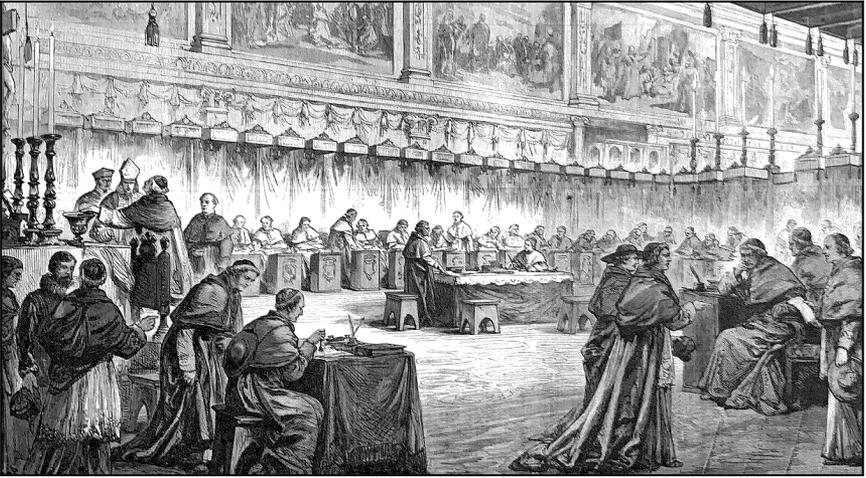
Elections came in from Greece, by those Greeks who in the “falling away” had not the Spirit, and so had lost their Head.

Appointments came in from Rome, when the Greek political system in church affairs was imperialized and the bishop of Rome became the head.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A. T. Jones, *Great Empires of Prophecy*, Ch. XXXII, “Rome—The Original Sunday Legislation.”

<sup>23</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 190.



Election of a Pope - Conclave of Cardinals voting

This led to the papacy, the great church of the dark ages, and it was a return to human election.

What really is human election? Supposing that one man appoints himself to a position, is that human election? Of course, it is. Supposing three or four men, a committee of men, appoint a man or woman or men or women to a position or positions, is that human election? Certainly. If the whole church gathers together and casts their votes, and by this means appoint men and women to positions, then that is still human election.

However, the pope of Rome is not appointed by the entire Church of Rome. Catholics—the American Catholics, Australian Catholics, New Zealand Catholics, any other Catholic any where in the world—do not vote for the pope of Rome. The Cardinals do it, a certain number of them. Many Cardinals get together and they vote the pope of Rome into his position, and then he claims to be put there by God. But men put him there, and it is straight-out human election.

## The Reformation Church

Then came the Reformation and those great and godly men rose up in the power of the Spirit, saw the great truths of the gospel, and lived by those great truths.

Then what must we expect, in the light of the pattern we have seen so far? When a church has lost the Spirit, then they substitute human election for divine appointment. When they come out of apostasy, then the divine appointment returns. Then, when the Reformation church came out of the darkness of the papacy, what must we expect to find here? Divine appointment. And so Jones states it:

The Reformation threw off the Greco-Roman heathen political *naturalism*, and restored the *spiritual principle* of the divine order.<sup>24</sup>

Well, A. T. Jones certainly calls this thing by some names! He calls this system of human election, “Greco-Roman heathen political naturalism.” The moment you have the voting system you will always have politics. You will always have a power struggle. You will always have men vying for positions, and getting jealous and angry when they don’t get those positions. The further away from the truth the people of God have gone, the worse these conditions are in the church.

The intense struggles and the corruption which exists in the nations of today—and the tremendous expense involved in putting a man in position of President of the United States of America—each of the candidates spends several million dollars in trying to put himself in that position—what a fearful waste of good money.

## Another Falling Away

Jones says:

But there has been another falling away.

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<sup>24</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 190.

There has been, hasn't there? The Reformation began back in 1300 and ran down to the work of the Wesley's in 1700, with sundry fallings away in the meantime. It was an up and down period, but then came the great final falling away in the Protestant churches, at the time when William Miller began to preach his great and wonderful message of truth. During that period when Miller began his work, there was a return to human election. And Jones says:

But there has been another falling away. Again the spiritual principle has been lost. In every denomination of professed Protestants, the Greco-Roman naturalistic principle of human election and appointment prevails.<sup>25</sup>

Pause for a moment and name for me today, anywhere in the world, any organization at all, be it the local baseball club, be it the local floral society, be it the state government of this country or the national government of this country or the government of Russia or the organization of the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church or any other organization you can name; is there any one of them that is not guided and controlled by the "Greco-Roman naturalistic principle of human election"? Can you name one? You can't.

Even a dictatorship is formed on the principle of human election. When one man has sufficient power, as Adolph Hitler had in the Second World War, to put himself in a position of absolute authority and to be a one man-king in that nation, it is still human election. Don't think of human election in terms of democracy. That's only one form of human election. Dictatorship is also the same thing. Only the system is just a little different so far as the way in which the actual election takes place.

Let's go one step further. Last night we saw in our study of the nature of Christ that every single church organization in the

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<sup>25</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 190.

world today, in one way or the other has the mark of Antichrist excepting for this group.

I know what I am talking about here because I have traveled widely. And I made it my very special business to investigate every particular church organization I find anywhere in the world: Seventh-day Adventist, Reformed Seventh-day Adventist, in all their different divisions, each of the other groups which come from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Protestant churches, the Jehovah's Witnesses every one of them.

And every one of them in one way or the other deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Some teach that He *has* come in the flesh, but we are the only people on the face of the earth who believe He *is* come in the flesh. Therefore, we alone today are the people who believe and teach and understand, as far as we do understand it, the mystery of God.

If then this is the only organization that does understand the mystery of God, what does every other organization have? The mystery of iniquity. God set up in the beginning an organizational structure or an order of things in heaven which is synonymous with, and inseparable from, the mystery of God. You can't separate them. Where you truly have the one, you'll just as truly have the other.

Satan came in and determined to change that order—to restructure the organization of heaven; and in doing so, he set up the mystery of iniquity. There is a system of organization which is synonymous with, and inseparable from, the mystery of iniquity.

If we in this group have an organization or structure identical with that of any other of these Babylonish forms—be it democratic, be it dictatorial, or any other system based upon human election—then there has got to be something very wrong with our message. We have to have an organizational structure that is totally separate from and different from that which is found throughout the entire world.

They have human election; we must have divine appointment. They have many heads; we must have one Head—and not only one Head but the One Head. And who is that Head? Christ is the Head. We must come completely out of this Babylonish system.

And so Jones calls it quite correctly, “the Greco-Roman naturalistic principle of human election.” And Greco-Roman is nothing short of the mystery of iniquity. He then goes on to talk about the inconsistency of some of these churches:

Yet they are not consistent even in this inconsistency. Only *some* of the responsibilities that rightly pertain to the church are allowed to be subject to election or appointment: as deacons, elders, and others of “helps” or “governments.”

Evangelists, pastors, and teachers, stand in a sort of “twilight zone”—of the gift of God in a sense, but of no standing till “authorized” by appointment or vote of men.

Apostles, prophets, miracles, tongues, and all the rest are left wholly to God as *His* gifts: or even *denied to Him*, and *left out altogether*, as belonging only to primitive Christian times.<sup>26</sup>

Let’s take these three specifications:

1. First of all, they have a straight out voting system, or election, so far as certain offices are concerned—the more lowly ones, such as deacons, elders, helps and governments.
2. Then secondly, they do have a system of what they suppose to be divine appointment. And in this case when perhaps there might arise in one of these Protestant churches a great miracle worker like, shall we say, Oral Roberts or a great preacher like Billy Graham then, the church will recognize and claim that this man has been raised up of God. But in the many churches that isn’t even present.
3. And then the third position is one which is a mixture of both. First of all, they believe the man has been called of

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<sup>26</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 190-191.

God but not authorized until he has been voted in by the church.

I emphasize this point because down in Australia there were folk there who said:

“Well, we are prepared to recognize that some of these offices are called of God, but others we must appoint ourselves.”

But Jones raises the question here:

But when *men* can elect or appoint *some* of God’s gifts, why not all?

If men can elect some, and God the rest, where would we draw the line? Who determines that?

If men had any authority at all, upon any ground or under any plea, to elect or to appoint *any* of these, they have equal authority to elect or appoint all.<sup>27</sup>

## The Adventist Church

Before I go into this argument, I want to go back for a moment to a point I should have mentioned previously and that is this: When the great Second Advent Movement was born, we had the early Adventists from 1833 to somewhere about 1856. Why have I chosen the date 1856? In 1856, in *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 1, God, through Sister White, for the first time applied the Laodicean condition to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So by 1856, what had begun? The apostasy, the “falling away.”

During the period of the early Adventist Church from 1833 to 1856, think of the work of Miller, of Himes, of Fitch and Litch, and answer me this question: Who directly and personally gave William Miller his work? God. So then he obtained his position, against his personal judgment and desires, by direct appointment from God.

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<sup>27</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 191.

And what about Himes and Fitch and Litch? Did a committee appoint them to their work? No. Right through the whole period of time the principle of divine appointment was in operation. In that little publication *Christ's Coming Delayed*, we have given many statements that the church, if it had continued faithful after 1844, it would have gone into heaven. And if that had happened, would there ever have been a Seventh-day Adventist General Conference President? Or a Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Committee? There would not. Those things came in as they have always come in, when the church fell away into apostasy.

### **The Fourth Angel's Movement**

Today we are in the days of the message of the final angel—the last work upon this earth. And I know I don't have to convince any of you folk here of that fact. You know it, so I won't take time to prove it because it is something we all understand mutually.

The question was raised toward the end of the last study: How is it then that we find in the early part of the book *Testimonies to Ministers* and other parts of the Spirit of Prophecy, very extensive counsel from God through the prophet to the Adventist Church to organize along the lines of human election? Throughout this period from 1863 right down to the present time, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, under divine instruction is, without question, a system based upon human election. And so folks say to us:

“You have the counsels of God to the remnant church, and if God says to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to organize along those lines, then that is how we must organize.”

It is true that if the counsels given there in the Spirit of Prophecy are applicable to this period in which we live today, then we must go back and elect ourselves a president, and committees (providing they're honest), and build an organization exactly as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is today. It's not quite the same because in the early part of the century, Sister White did

try to have the people put away their President and have a committee of 24 men to take charge of the work [1901].

I'm going to show you now that the counsels given during that period there are not applicable to our time today because we are not down in the valley of apostasy where that kind of organization belongs. And there is no more beautiful statement to be found anywhere in the Word of God that tells what kind of organization must prevail in this last and finishing work. Sister White says:

**Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300:**

Unless those who can help in ---- are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work...

Before I go any further, let's establish the period of time about which this statement is speaking. Sister White is about to describe how God will work in "this last work." When did "this last work" begin? It began in 1888. But it was cut off because of the unbelief of the people. So when did it again begin? 1950. So from that point of time on, we have before us a description of how God will work:

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work, in a manner very much out of the common order of things...

What is the common order of things? Human election—it's common to every government and every organization around the face of the earth. That is the common order of things. Will God in the last work, work according to the common order of things? No, but very much out of it. And how much more out of that order can you get than divine appointment? That's the total opposite. And that's not all:

...and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.

So how much human planning will be involved in this last work? None, whatsoever. If there is to be no human planning, what need do we have for a presidents, committees and all that sort of thing? None.

When there is human planning, you must have human planners—not just one, but many of them. And those human planners must come together and sit down—and with prayer and the study of God’s Word—they must decide for God what is to be done in the work of God. I’ll read further. Despite this fact, tragically we have the following prophecy:

**Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300:**

There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.

That’s very clear. During this period of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, from 1863 and onward, in whose hands then were the reigns of leadership and control and planning in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? In the hands of men. But in this last work, it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands.

If this prophecy is true, and if we are the people of God, then at this very moment as we reflect back on the history of this movement up till the present time, we should be able to see that God has, so far in the building of this movement, taken the reins in his own hands.

Has God been at work, or have men been at work? How could a movement like this be built up around the world by human planning, human wisdom, and so forth? Totally impossible. And nothing impresses me so much as the fact that wherever I go, the Lord

opens up the way, solves our problems, and all the rest of it. I will never forget, several occurrences in our past experience.

A number of years ago a young man came from Australia to America, linked up with some people over here and they certainly declared that they were going to build a movement in opposition to this one, and get out of this one, which would change the whole order of things in this movement.

I personally could have been on the same aircraft, flying from Australia to America on which that man came, or the next one, or even the one before it. I could have come across here and traveled around and withstood that person wherever he went.

But that was not my work. I had other work to do in Australia. And inasmuch as God leads this movement, God protects it and God makes the plans. So I stayed where I was bidden and did my work where I was and left that young man and his accomplices in the care of Him who can take care of all these things.

They boasted that they would change the order of things, that there would be a different movement altogether. Has there been? Those men have disappeared off the face of the earth, so to speak; we see them no more; we hear them no more, not one of them or any two of them see each other any more; and the movement simply goes on as if they had never existed. Is that my work or God's work? That's God's work—obviously.

And at this present moment I have left the entire Australian field to the activities of several people down there who are bent—absolutely bent—on bringing in a system of human election, of having committees, presidents and all that kind of thing. These folk have declared they have dedicated themselves to travel to every believer in Australia and come to America too, if need be, to set the matter really straight.

The time came, under God's direction, that I must come to the European camp meeting, to these camp meetings over here, and I think you recognize that this is my place at this moment to share

these great truths with you. And those men down there are left entirely in the care of the Lord. And He is doing a very good job of looking after them.

God runs this movement and no one else but He does it. And this is a great truth you need to come to understand very clearly and distinctly. If I was running it, then I would be running around down there in Australia taking care of those rebels and leaving this work up here undone.

And so I believe and I hope you can see it too, that God is taking the reins into His own hands. People come to me sometimes, and say to me:

“What plans do you have for the future in this country?”

I say:

“I have none!”

And I truly have none. I simply wait until God opens up things in His own good time and His own good way. And this is the only way the work can be a success.

Having seen this picture of how things are to be in this last and finishing work—and that picture is very much out of the common order of things, in a way that is contrary to any human planning—and we see God is taking the reins into His own hands. There’s the picture as given to us as to how things are to be in this last great work.

How shall we explain then the fact that God himself through Sister White told the Seventh-day Adventist Church how to organize after the principles of human election during the period of their apostasy? Doesn’t the answer come to us in previous studies? When things have to be man’s way, with God, then what does God do in his kindness? He comes in and tells them the best way for them to do it.

It is the same principle as when they had slaves back in the land of Israel in the long distant past; and God hates slavery, as much as God hates apostasy. God came down in His great kindness and told those men how best to do things man's way. That's the kindness and long-suffering of God, isn't it? That's something of His wonderful mercy and love.

And think of where the Seventh-day Adventist Church would have been if they had tried to organize along the principles of divine appointment when they didn't have the Spirit. Is that possible? Impossible. You cannot organize along the principles of divine appointment if you don't have the Spirit.

But Jones says here in this very chapter, that human election came in from Greece:

...by those Greeks, who in the "falling away" had not the Spirit, and so had lost their Head.<sup>28</sup>

But when men can elect or appoint some of God's gifts, why not all?...

When every responsibility known to the Scriptures, that pertains to the church, is the direct gift of God by the Spirit himself in His own divine administration and Kingdom, then what superior right or wisdom can *men* have *above God* to discriminate among them?

But deeper than that, what right can *men* have under any possible plea to assume any authority or control in the matter? It is all of the realm of God. All here relates exclusively to the kingdom of God. In all these things Christ is conducting the affairs of His own House.

What colossal presumption it is, then, for finite, fleeting *men* to assume to exercise dominion and authority *there!*<sup>29</sup>

Think about this for a moment. We have in this room a number of households. We have a number of heads of houses with their

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<sup>28</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 190.

<sup>29</sup> *Idem.*, p. 191.

partners beside them. Now you have your own house, your own business, and your own source of income. And of that house you are the authority and the controlling directing force.

Suppose I was to come into your house and begin to reorganize your home under my direction and to tell who should do this and who should do that, how your money should be spent, and so forth. How would you like that? Wouldn't that be colossal presumption? The most colossal presumption! And you wouldn't tolerate it. You would open the door and throw me out. And you would shut it behind me and tell me never to come back again. And I wouldn't blame you—not for a moment.

Jones is comparing the same thing here with the House of Christ. And he says insofar as the things of the House of Christ are concerned:

“What colossal presumption it is, then, for finite, fleeting men to assume to exercise dominion and authority there!”

Where? In the House of Christ. And what is the House of Christ? The church of God. So I personally, or any one of you individually or personally, who begin to assume any dominion or authority in this church, would be but to bring in the mystery of iniquity. May God deliver us from ever doing that.

Next, Jones uses an illustration from the ministry of Jesus Christ, and the period of time he is referring to is from the cross of Calvary, during the forty days thereafter until the ascension of Christ back to heaven:

While Jesus was with His church here those forty days after His resurrection, “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” what an arrogantly disrespectful and presumptuous thing it would have been for the disciples, *with Him present* to take upon themselves the conducting of the affairs of His kingdom—and of course according to their thinking concerning the kingdom!<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Refor-

During those forty days, the Head Jesus Christ, was personally among them. He was the Head and they were the eleven survivors. Judas was dead at this point. With Jesus Christ present among them—the One to whom they continually looked for instruction, for guidance—whatever He directed, they did. They made no plans. They looked to Him for the planning.

But during those forty days if those eleven had then begun to take upon themselves the authority of directing the church, then as Jones says:

“What an arrogantly disrespectful and presumptuous thing it would have been.”

And then he raises the question:

And how *much more* would it have been arrogantly disrespectful and presumptuous in them to do such a thing *after Pentecost* when He was *more present* than He was in those forty days!!

And such only is it ever for anybody. Has not God sufficiently characterized that thing...<sup>31</sup>

What thing? Human election—the taking over by men of the work of Christ. That’s what human election in the church is. And what is that? The mystery of iniquity. And note how Jones characterizes it:

Has not God sufficiently characterized that thing, at its first appearance in the world...

When was its first appearance? With Lucifer.

...in the awful branding that he gave it, of “mystery of iniquity,” “the man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” “that Wicked,” “who opposes and *exalts himself* above all that is called God, all that is worshiped, so that *he as God* sits in the temple of God, showing himself that *he is God*”?

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mation Guidance of the Church,” p. 191-192.

<sup>31</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 192.

No, no, no. “The church is *subject* unto Christ in *every thing*”: not His *superior*, nor even His *equal*, in any thing. *Ephesians* 5:24.

God will yet have *in this world* that church that will be “subject unto Christ in *every thing*.”

Out of all the Babylonish confusion of the two great fallings away *combined*, Christ calls all of His own *unto himself* in *His own church* which He is *now* sanctifying and cleansing with the washing of water *by the Word*, *preparatory* to her glorious presentation. *Revelation* 17:5; 18:4.<sup>32</sup>

I believe we’ve come to understand a little better what it means to heed the cry, “Come out of her, my people.” It’s much more than we thought before. And as Jones so wonderfully says—and praise God that this will be so—that God will yet have in this world that church which will be subject unto Christ, not in most things, but in everything.



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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

## 5. The Appointment of Matthias

**W**E WANT to look a little more deeply into the appointment of Matthias as the replacement for Judas, who died by his own hand.

### **Acts 1**

<sup>15</sup> And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty,)

<sup>16</sup> Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

<sup>17</sup> For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

<sup>18</sup> Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

<sup>19</sup> And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

<sup>20</sup> For it is written in the book of *Psalms*, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.

<sup>21</sup> Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

<sup>22</sup> Beginning with the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.

<sup>23</sup> And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

<sup>24</sup> And they prayed, and said, You, Lord, which know the hearts of all men, show whether of these two You have chosen,

<sup>25</sup> That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

<sup>26</sup> And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

## The Original Appointment of the Twelve

Let's go back to the original appointment of the first twelve. Eleven of the twelve were appointed by divine appointment, and one by human election. Judas was not appointed by God or by Christ.

### **The Desire of Ages, p. 293-294:**

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

#### **Matthew 8**

<sup>19</sup> Master, I will follow You wherever You go.

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

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

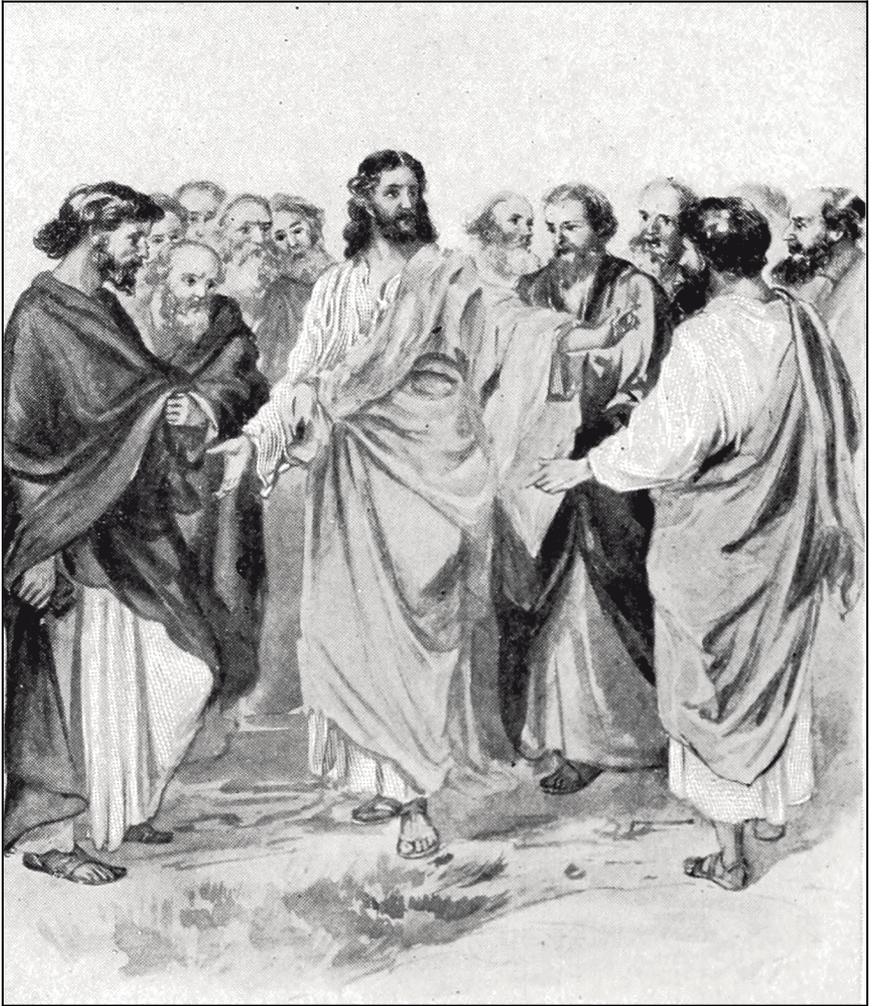
Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty.

So who was it that appointed Judas to this position? Judas. He urged his presence among them and made his declaration that he would serve Christ with great faithfulness and closeness. Jesus neither welcomed him nor repulsed him. Why, above all else, did Christ not repulse him?

The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coldly.

First of all, Judas urged his own presence; so he is a self-appointed worker. And secondly, the members of the church of that day, the other apostles, were most anxious and urged that Jesus

accept Judas to be His disciple. So Jesus gave the church what the church wanted as Christ always does. Christ never compels us; we are left free to choose and God will honor the choice we make.



When those apostles chose Judas as the twelfth man among them then Christ gave to them the freedom of that choice and accepted Judas—not on the basis of His own appointment—but on the basis of their choice or election of that man.

So there was a difference right from the beginning: eleven apostles were chosen by Christ, and one was chosen by men; eleven were chosen by the Head, and the other one was chosen by the members. That's the beginning of the story.

At the end of the story, at the cross of Calvary, eleven disciples are faithful, and one disciple is an apostate and a betrayer. Which eleven were faithful? The divinely appointed ones. Which one was a traitor and a betrayer and an apostate? The man appointed by human election. That conveys to us a warning. And it ought to have conveyed to Peter and the other apostles a warning too.

### **A Replacement for Judas**

Despite the fact that Peter and the other apostles were very much aware of the fact that Judas—the one that had been humanly elected had come to naught and worse than coming to naught, he died a rebel and lost soul—they still sat down in *Acts* the first chapter to again do what they had done back in the first case and again elect a man to fill this vacancy. *Acts* chapter 1 is a straight-out example of human election.

What appears to give this a great deal of divine sanction and authority is the fact that, first of all, Peter quotes from the scriptures. Then he expresses his own opinion without the support of scripture. Let's see the differences between each of these different aspects of the case.

As Peter stands up to make his speech, he says:

#### **Acts 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...this scripture must needs have been fulfilled.

What scripture? The scripture that Judas was to die and his place was to be given to somebody else:

#### **Acts 1**

<sup>20</sup> For it is written in the book of *Psalms*, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take.

Did there have to be twelve apostles? Certainly, there had to be twelve. Therefore the vacancy created by Judas' death had to be filled. But the choice would be made by Christ, the Head. Peter made this great mistake because he had not yet come out of the Babylonian ideas of human election to which he had been accustomed throughout the entire previous period of his life.

I can sympathize with Peter very much. As I think back on the early days of this movement, I remember that when this movement first began, back in 1962 on to 1964, this church for the first time became a clearly defined and separate entity down in Australia and New Zealand where the church was at that time a real body of believers.

We had come out of a Seventh-day Adventist organization and in that Seventh-day Adventist organization we had known only one kind of organization and that was based upon the principles of human election. That's all we had known. And coming out of that into this movement, the most natural tendency for us to follow back in 1964 was to copy the same kind, and we did. It was a strange mixture of divine appointment and human election. But that's what it was: a strange Babylonian mixture.

In like manner when Peter and the other apostles came out of the experience of being among the Jews, where the only system known there was the system of human election, and came into the Apostolic church, even before the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, what was the most natural thing for those men to do? Follow the Jews. We can't condemn them for it because we've done the same thing ourselves. We are seeing as never before, that we still have steps to take out of the old Babylonian ideas.

Peter quite correctly quoted the scripture which said that inasmuch as there were only eleven disciples and there had to be twelve, then there had to be one more appointed to fill that position. But he quoted no scriptures to tell how it was to be done. Not one. He had no defined directions from the scripture to tell

him what to do; he just said the scriptures said it has to be done; so we will do it. Note the expression of his own opinion:

### Acts 1

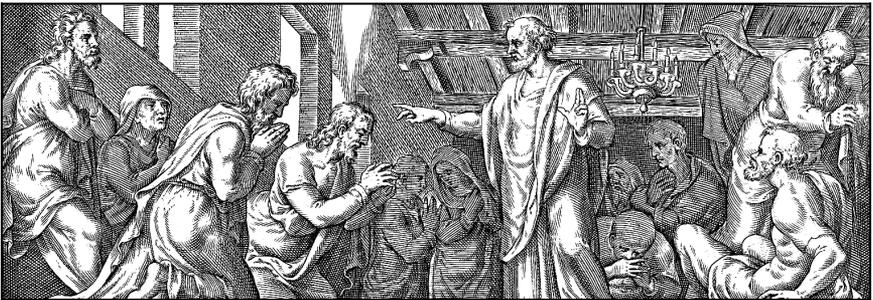
<sup>21</sup> Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

<sup>22</sup> Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.

Upon what authority was Peter saying those words? His own. It's not scriptural. There is no "thus says the Lord" there whatsoever. The Lord had not said the twelfth apostle had to be one who had been right back there and been baptized by John the Baptist, had continued together with Christ, and the other eleven disciples right down to the death and resurrection. The Bible didn't say that. That was simply and only a declaration by Peter. And the others apparently agreed to it. He didn't speak by inspiration because Pentecost had not yet come, that was still future. And, therefore, he spoke his own opinion.

<sup>23</sup> And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

<sup>24</sup> And they prayed, and said, You, Lord, which knows the hearts of all men, show whether of these two you have chosen.



Whenever men do things combining man's way together with God, they will always pray to God to help them. Always! No exceptions. So don't be deceived by the fact that Peter and these folks did pray about this because that is incidental.

Consider Peter's argument and see some of the weakness that is in it. Let's go back from the time of John the Baptist and pass on down to the cross of Calvary. Beyond that there are forty days when Christ was with them. Then there were ten days before there came the mighty outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Matthias had been a disciple (not an apostle but a disciple) of Christ apparently all the way from the days of John right down until this period just before Pentecost. Therefore, Matthias was alive upon this earth and accompanying the disciples during those forty days when Christ was still here upon the earth. He had to be because he was right there with them after the ascension.

If then Matthias was the man of God's appointment, then why did not Christ appoint him during those forty days? Matthias was right there. He fulfilled Peter's specifications. And if he was to be the one after Christ ascended, if God had directed those men to appoint that man after Christ ascended, then why did not Jesus do it there exactly as he personally and directly had appointed the other eleven before that?

Here is a repeat of the same situation: eleven directly and personally appointed by Christ and one appointed by the church in behalf of Christ. Which would you rather have been had you lived back at that time? Very obviously, you would rather be one of the eleven—not that one man who was appointed by the church who were acting in behalf of Christ.

I am not here to condemn Peter and the other apostles because I know that we have done the same things before we learned better. But we do need to understand the nature of the action they took back there at that time.

### **Casting of Lots**

When they came to make a decision, the matter was not so clear cut in their minds that they could say without any hesitation, "that is the man." There were two men who fulfilled the specifica-

tions: Joseph, called Barsabas who was surnamed Justus and Matthias—the two of them. Then they had turned around and cast lots to decide which of those two men were to be chosen.

Sister White has some very strong words to say about casting lots:

**The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1054:**

Let none be led from the sound, sensible principles that God has laid down for the guidance of His people, to depend for direction on any such device as the tossing up of a coin. Such a course is well pleasing to the enemy of souls; for he works to control the coin, and through its agency works out his plans. Let none be so easily deceived as to place confidence in any such tests. Let none belittle their experience by resorting to cheap devices for direction in important matters connected with the work of God.

The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God's will concerning them. Satan and his agencies are always ready to step into any opening to be found that will lead souls away from the pure principles of the Word of God. The people who are led and taught of God will give no place to devisings for which there is not a "Thus says the Lord."

I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to all church duties. . . . Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order.

That's pretty plain and straight. In the Old Testament the lot was used. I'm not able to say precisely why. In the New Testament the Lord says it's not to be used because Satan can control it. Remember when Achan sinned against Israel? They cast lots and, first of all, took the tribe; then they broke it down and down and down to the family, to the actual individual, and Achan was

the man. And by lot they found the correct man; and they stoned him to death as the result.

We have to draw a clear distinction between the Old Testament, when Israel was a nation as well as a church and the New, where we have only a spiritual organization—the church of God—to be guided only by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit doesn't need men to cast lots to tell us what to do. So, therefore, in the New Testament that has no place whatsoever.

From this moment that Matthias was chosen by lot, by the church in behalf of Christ, we never, ever hear of that man again. He just vanishes in the pages of recorded history; we hear no more whatsoever.

### **What Peter Should Have Done**

I believe that if Peter had understood the principles of divine appointment, this is the procedure he would have followed:

He would have gathered together as they did, and he would have made the same speech up to a certain point. He would have quoted those scriptures which said that this position had to be filled; there had to be twelve apostles.

Then he would have reminded the apostles of the lesson to be learned from what had already happened. He would have reminded them that they had been the ones who had appointed Judas in the first place. And look what had become of him. He would have reminded them of how Jesus had so coolly and unenthusiastically received Judas into the company of the apostles.

Peter would have told them to look and see what was the result on the one hand of divine appointment: eleven faithful men and, on the other hand, what had taken place when there had been human election. And then Peter would have said to them:

“Now from this we must learn the Bible lesson that we must not repeat the mistake that we made before. That place must be filled and there is only one person who can choose a person to fill it, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And now our task is to

wait very patiently until that time comes when He sees fit to fill that position.”

And in due time it would have been done. And while I’m not prepared to say that this can be proved at the moment, there are very strong indications to tell us that the apostle Paul was that twelfth man that God planned to put in that position. But, tragically, before God could do it, the church had gone ahead and put in a man of their own election.

### **God’s Choice of Paul**

In the book of *Revelation*, God does not give us a list of the names of the twelve apostles, although it mentions that their names appear in the foundation of the city. And I think that the Lord accepted what the church did back there in electing Matthias, but at the same time God still worked to elect an apostle of His own choosing; namely Paul. And Paul, again and again, refers to himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ.”<sup>33</sup> And what man in the New Testament stands out as the mightiest witness to God? Paul does.

Furthermore, there are some rather interesting parallels between Paul and Judas. Judas was a man of considerable education:

#### **Education, p. 93:**

He had come more into contact with the world than they, he was a man of good address, of discernment and executive ability, and, having a high estimate of his own qualifications, he had led the disciples to hold him in the same regard.

Judas was a man of education; he had mingled with the people in high places in the world; and had that social poise and ability which enabled him to mingle with the upper class and to carry the gospel to them. Wasn’t Paul just that kind of man? A well-educated man—who was familiar with the higher circles and well able to walk in those circles. He could stand before kings, governors, princes and carry the gospel to them all.

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<sup>33</sup> *Romans* 1:1; *1 Corinthians* 1:1; *2 Corinthians* 1:1; *Galatians* 1:1; *Ephesians* 1:1; *Colossians* 1:1; *1 Timothy* 1:1; *2 Timothy* 1:1; *Titus* 1:1.

But the disciples failed to learn the lesson which they ought to have learned from their past experience. And let's not condemn them, as I said, because we are also very slow to learn.

### **The Seven Deacons**

Let's turn to another experience in the New Testament—this time the sixth chapter of the book of *Acts*. I'm going to bring up the major argument employed by those who believe that we should go back to the system of human elections in this group.

Before I lay down these principles before you—you, as the church of God in this part of the world, must decide for yourselves as to what system you will have in this church. And whatever you decide to have for yourselves, God will give to you—with all the consequences or results—just as the case may be.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Acts* we come to the sad story of this difficulty that arose in the Christian church because of the attitude of the Grecians toward the Hebrews. I have quoted this story as a good example of the power of the old ideas and theories. The Grecians murmured against the Hebrews and a real need was thus created in the church at that time. And the solution is revealed in verse 2 and onward:

#### **Acts 6**

<sup>2</sup> Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

<sup>3</sup> Wherefore, brethren, look you out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

<sup>4</sup> But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

<sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen...

<sup>6</sup> Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

<sup>7</sup> And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

As you read this through, the wording indicates here again was a definite human election. And this is what it could have been, but there are certain things in the Spirit of Prophecy which caused me to think twice about that:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 89:**

Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church.

In these last days, we are told that God will work contrary to any human planning. So who, then, will be the planner? Christ through the Holy Spirit. And who was the planner in this idea of having seven deacons? The Holy Spirit:

“Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were *led by the Holy Spirit* to outline a plan...”

Whose plan was it? The Holy Spirit’s plan. The plan was for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. There were already certain forces at work in the church—namely, in the person of different individuals. So this was not a matter of appointing workers, but of organizing existing forces or existing workers to do a particular work. And that’s different than going around saying,

“Well we have a work to be done, who shall we elect to this position?”

And you pick out this man or that man who is not already involved in that kind of work. But note the wording carefully: It was the Holy Spirit’s plan to better organize the working forces of the church. Those forces were already working.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 89:**

The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor, and similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel.

“Wherefore brethren,” they said, “look you out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons.



Let’s approach the subject from two points of view. The first point of view is the more positive one and is as follows:

If the Holy Spirit came to the church and told the church that seven men must bear the responsibility of this particular work, then there must be seven men in the church whom God has chosen to do that work already, because the Holy Spirit will not tell

the church to fill certain positions, if there is no one of God's choosing to fill them.

So there had to be already seven men of God's appointment already chosen by the Holy Spirit to do that work. There had to be, otherwise the Holy Spirit would never have come and outlined that plan.

When Christ chose the apostles, He chose eleven. At the moment He left the twelfth position vacant. No doubt, because at that moment there was no one of His choosing that could fill that position. And all the way down through history, it is far better to leave some very real needs or very real responsibilities vacant than to go ahead and appoint someone to that position whom God has not chosen. We've learned this.

There was a time before we understood these principles that we did go ahead and appoint one person to a position because there was a very real need for that place to be filled. And in three months that man had undone work which had taken three years to put together. Wouldn't it be better to have left the position vacant than to fill it under those conditions? Very obviously.

If then the Holy Spirit had already chosen those seven men and told the leaders to lay upon them the responsibility or recognize the responsibility as being on them by ordination to do that work, then all that was left for the church to do was to discover whom the Spirit had chosen for that particular work.

There are two ways of choosing. We may sit down and say:

“Now we have to have seven men; so let's have some nominations, second those nominations, and from the number of nominations, we'll break the number down to the required number.”

That's precisely what took place back in *Acts* when they chose Matthias to take the place of Judas. Two men were found and then they had to decide by casting lots which of those two was to fill the position. That's one way of making a choice. That's the way of voting or human election.

The other way is as follows: First of all, they knew by the Holy Spirit that there were to be seven men to bear this responsibility. Therefore, they could say to the Lord,

“Who are those seven men?”

And the Lord would reveal to them, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, just who those seven were. At that point, the church could then choose to say:

“No, we don’t like those seven men. We won’t accept them.”

Or they could say,

“Yes, that’s God’s choice so we do accept those men.”

Wouldn’t the church thereby make a choice? And if they chose to accept the men which God had revealed to them, would that not be a choosing on the part of the church of that which God had designated to be the seven men to fill this position? It certainly would.

So there are two ways of choosing, just as there are two ways of destroying, two ways of being wrathful, two ways of punishing, two ways of these various things we saw in regards to God’s character.

There are two ways of choosing, just as we choose Christ. Who chose us first? Christ chooses us first and then we accept Him as our Savior. We don’t appoint Him; we don’t elect Him from a number of possibilities; we simply choose Him because He has offered to us to be chosen.

The Spirit of Prophecy goes on then to point out that this step was in the order of God as revealed in the immediate results of good that was seen.

When the church, back in the very earliest days of the ministry of Christ, chose Judas by human election, to be that twelfth disciple, that thing was not in the order of God, and it was not blessed and brought terrible results to the Christian church. So, therefore,

when we read here that this whole thing was in the order of God, and the fact that it was revealed in the immediate results for good, then we can believe that the choosing here was after God's order and organization and not after man's order and organization.

## **A Distribution of Responsibility**

It further goes on to say:

### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 91:**

The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel. Those to whom was given the responsibility of the general oversight of the church were not to lord it over God's heritage, but, as wise shepherds, were to "feed the flock of God,...being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3); and the deacons were to be "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom."

The principle that was revealed in God's order in this case was the distribution of responsibility. No one man was to bear the whole load.

Let's go back to the church in the wilderness, because reference is made here in the book *The Acts of the Apostles* to that, too. And let's see whether, in the wilderness, God did provide for a distribution of labor.

Upon Moses was the heaviest responsibility but was the total responsibility upon him? No, it wasn't. So far as the Priesthood was concerned, that was taken care of by Aaron and the Levites. When it came to the building of the Sanctuary, then the special gifts required were given to those craftsmen, Aholiab and so forth. And there was a very wide distribution of responsibility throughout the length and breadth of Israel.

And so likewise in the church of God today, we are to find that as God adds these workers to us, each of these folk will take on a different responsibility. To every one of you God has given a work. Don't come and ask me what that work is because I don't

know, unless we can see that work is really being taken on by yourself and being carried through by yourself.

At this camp meeting various responsibilities are being filled by various people. No one of us has appointed them that work. It's just been their work and they have gone ahead and done it and everything flows along with perfect harmony and efficiency. And so it is that various tasks are to be filled by various people upon whom God will lay that burden. And the church will, in turn, recognize what God is doing in the giving of those burdens to those people.

In the minds of some this may seem to indicate a whole lot of people going in all kinds of directions—not in any relationship to each other whatsoever. Wouldn't that be a funny body: to see an arm going off in this direction, a leg wandering off in this direction, the fingers going off over here somewhere, the ears going over the mountaintop? That would be a funny body, wouldn't it?

And if the church of God would be like that, it would also be a very strange body. When we understand individually how to be led by the Spirit of God in doing our work, then we'll move with the same perfect unity as a human body does.

I'd like you to do some observing. Next time you see the children out there at play—leaping, jumping, running and so forth or a man walking or a man working or any example of the human body in motion—just watch how every member moves in perfect harmony. It's beautiful, isn't it? As the leg reaches out to take the next step, the body moves forward, doesn't it? And this shoulder swings back and then this one swings forward, and everything moves together. We don't find the legs tripping over each other.

Of course, in a cripple it may, but in a healthy body such as the church of God is to be, every member works in perfect harmony with every other member. And when the church of God is filled with the Spirit of God that is exactly how it is going to be. And what is more, each member will have that profound respect for the work of the other person in the area where he is.

## A Modern Example

I'd like to just give an example of this in the world work. Over in Europe we have the work there is taken care of by Brother Wolfgang Meyer. He is a German by birth; but when he first heard the message in Australia, probably 1965 or 66, he was still a single man then. But shortly after he married a young Australian girl named Glenda Holbrook. In the meantime, I had gone to Europe and God had used me there to begin the work in that country. And it was already a well-established work.

When Wolfgang went back to Europe with his wife so she could have her first baby there, a boy eventually came along and they named him Timothy. And his plan was to let his father and mother and other relatives see his wife and the baby, then he was going to go back to Australia again. He had no plan nor intention of staying in Germany more than six months. He loved Australia, like many of us do, and he was glad to go back there and live even to this day but for the fact that his calling now is in Europe.

By divine appointment the time came when the responsibility of the work was laid upon Wolfgang in Europe. I didn't do it; the church didn't do it; but we all recognized that God had done it. And then I passed over to him that full responsibility. Year after year, at his invitation and desire, I go back there to assist him in the big camp meetings and so forth.

Let's look at the preacher. I am quite a number of years his senior. I have a vastly greater grasp of the message than he has; he learned it from me in the first case; he took over a field which I had developed; and I am the person who more or less has the oversight of the entire world field.

Under normal circumstances when I go to Europe, who would be in command? I would. That's how a General Conference President works and so forth. I'd be in command. But when I go to Europe, I go there recognizing that Wolfgang is God's man in that place and I go there as his servant. I look to him to indicate where

the work is most needful to be done and we just work together just like two cogs in a well-oiled piece of machinery.

Do you suppose that he and I have some bad quarrels? Bad competition? No! In all the years we have worked together, we have never said one cross word to each other. We have worked in the most perfect harmony and in this way God blesses the work. Does that sound like independent action? No, it's not.

We do not have two heads—not the head of the work in Germany nor the head of the work in Australia. We don't have two heads working together because two heads can't work together. We have two members working together. And it is something which I have always found great satisfaction in doing and seeing. It is something that gives me a real thrill that goes right through my whole being to see how two men under these circumstances can work together in such perfect harmony with no clash nor difficulty nor trouble whatsoever.

And this is what every member must learn to do and what every member will do when they have learned to be led by the Spirit of God as we must be in these last days. It takes faith; it takes real faith to believe in divine order and organization. Real faith! It means we have to trust each other and to recognize that God is the Leader of each person; and while God is leading a man, that man is safe in the care and keeping of God.

Spend some time thinking about history. And make a counting in your mind of each of those men whom you know was directly called by God: Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Isaac, Joshua, Samuel, and so on down the line. And find one, if you can, who was unfaithful in the end. It's almost impossible, if not impossible. And then make a list of those whom men called to their positions. And find one, if you can who was faithful in the end. That's worth doing.

## 6. Failure to Recognize the Gift

The failure of James and the church in Jerusalem to recognize Christ's gift *of* Paul and *in* Paul to the church, put Paul in Roman prisons to the day of his death (except a very short interval near the end), robbed the churches of Christ's wonderful revelations in the mystery of God, and hastened the rise of the mystery of iniquity.<sup>34</sup>

**W**HEN I first read this paragraph, I thought Jones was saying too much. I finally determined to check the story very carefully by turning back to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. And I have found that Jones had not said too much at all, but everything he said there was exactly true.

The chapter in *The Acts of the Apostles*, which covers this, is chapter 38 entitled "Paul a Prisoner" and the page is 399. I am going to go on and read from this chapter. The story begins at that point when Paul has come back from his final missionary journey to Asia Minor. First, let's pick up the story from the Bible:

### **Acts 21**

<sup>17</sup> And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

<sup>18</sup> And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

<sup>19</sup> And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

<sup>20</sup> And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

<sup>21</sup> And they are informed of you, that you teach all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

<sup>22</sup> What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that your are come.

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<sup>34</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 189.

<sup>23</sup> Do therefore this that we say to you: We have four men which have a vow on them;

<sup>24</sup> Take them, and purify yourself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning you, are nothing; but that you yourself also walk orderly, and keep the law.

<sup>25</sup> As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

<sup>26</sup> Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

<sup>27</sup> And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people and laid hands on him.

<sup>28</sup> Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and has polluted this holy place.

The story goes on to tell of the arrest of Paul as he is almost torn apart by the crazy mob; how he is rescued by the Roman Centurion, taken off to prison, thus to spend the rest of his days in the Roman prisons excepting for a very short period just before he was beheaded eventually.

In the book *The Acts of the Apostles* we are taken behind the scenes and there is unfolded to our wondering gaze the factors that led up to this imprisonment of Paul and the result, which we read in the book, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century*, by A. T. Jones.

Years before Paul was arrested, there was the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. In discussing the arrest of Paul, we are taken back by the Spirit of Prophecy—right back to things as they were at Pentecost in the thinking of the disciples and the leading

brethren. We're taken on down through the intervening years to see what factors led up to this thing happening at that point of time.

And so I turn to the book *The Acts of the Apostles*, and when I first read this chapter, I was amazed and startled and warned as I read what took place where such things should have never taken place.

We very naturally have the impression that the early church, filled with the Spirit at Pentecost was the model church, the church of love, the church of deep spiritual understanding, the church of deep spiritual power.

### **Paul's Trip to Jerusalem**

And yet, we find that right in that church, in that very condition were men within whom still was very much of the mystery of iniquity. We begin to read in chapter 38 "Paul a Prisoner":

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 399:**

##### **Acts 21**

<sup>17</sup> When we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

<sup>18</sup> And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

On this occasion, Paul and his companions formally presented to the leaders of the work at Jerusalem the contributions forwarded by the Gentile churches for the support of poor among their Jewish brethren.

Throughout this entire chapter there will be two actors in this story: one of these is Paul; the other will be called without names, apart from James, the leaders in Jerusalem. Paul needs no introduction to all of us. We know exactly who is meant by the apostle Paul. He was the messenger of God at that time.

But you may, perhaps, be a little bit doubtful as to who these leaders in Jerusalem were. They were not Jews in the Jewish church, which was opposed to the work of God altogether. Paul would not come and present to them the offerings received back

in Asia Minor. So, who then were these leaders in Jerusalem to whom Paul came and to whom he gave the offering given to him in Asia Minor? They were part of the Apostolic or the Christian church.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, wherever you find reference being made as to the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, you will know it refers not to the apostate Jews who hated the work of God and the work of Paul, but to the leaders in the Christian church. And one of those was James, the brother of Christ—the half brother because while James and Christ shared the same father, they did not have the same mother.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 399:**

The gathering of these contributions had cost the apostle and his fellow-workers much time, anxious thought, and wearisome labor. The sum, which far exceeded the expectations of the elders at Jerusalem, represented many sacrifices and even severe privations on the part of the Gentile believers.

The nearer we walk to God, the more we wish to reflect His spirit of giving. So these gifts represented sacrifices and even severe privations on the part of the Gentile believers.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 399-400:**

These freewill-offerings betokened the loyalty of the Gentile converts to the organized work of God throughout the world, and should have been received by all with grateful acknowledgment; yet it was apparent to Paul and his companions that even among those before whom they now stood were some who were unable to appreciate the spirit of brotherly love that had prompted the gifts.

Here we are down in Jerusalem just before the arrest of Paul. Here stands Paul before these leading brethren; there upon the table in front of them is this unexpectedly large contribution from the Gentile Christians.

Paul recognized that as the leading brethren looked upon these gifts, some of these men were unable to appreciate the spirit of

brotherly love that had prompted the gift. Why could they not appreciate the spirit? Because they did not have it themselves. They themselves were not so self-sacrificing in spirit; they themselves were far more concerned about their own security and future than they were about anything else.

I say this on the authority of what we shall read as we come down toward the end of the chapter. We'll find that Sister White says just what Jones says here, when Jones says: it is "but the manifestation of the natural against the spiritual."

What is "the natural"? It's a concern over personal safety, personal comfort, personal ambition, personal prestige, and all those kinds of things. It is, in short, the fear that the flesh is going to be hurt.

What's "the spiritual"? That's the call of God. The believers in the Gentile world had given until they had experienced severe privation through their giving. That's sacrificial, isn't it? Did those Gentiles Christians who suffered not just mere privations but severe privations in their giving, did they put the natural above the spiritual or the spiritual above the natural? The spiritual above the natural. Like God, the great giver, they gave what they had, knowing that God would resupply—not that they could then be secure in themselves, but so they could give more and still more.

I once knew a man who was quite exasperated because his wife had come out of a family of great givers. And she was forever giving away his money, his clothes, and all the rest to the needy. So, in his exasperation he said finally,

"Well, I can see I'm going to have to earn a lot more so we can give a lot more."

In the end, he was thankful he had married that woman because he learned to be a lot more unselfish than he had been previously; and he learned that the more his wife gave, the more

blessings came back in return and to give her more power to give more. And so it went on, and on, and on.

We must realize that every one of the gifts which God has given to us, He has given to us in charge, in custody, in trust so that we might, in turn, wisely impart those gifts again where they are needed.

### **The Leaders in Jerusalem**

But those leaders in Jerusalem were not of that kind of spirit. They placed the natural above the spiritual. That which prompted them to council Paul to go down and comply with the ceremonial requirements was a fear that if they did not, at least, give the impression to the Jewish leaders in the Jewish church that they still had respect for the ceremonial law, they would suffer the most severe and terrible persecution. And their flesh cried out in objection to that idea. And so in their experience, the natural was above the spiritual, and thus the mystery of iniquity found itself working.

At this point we are taken right back to the very beginning of the gospel work immediately after Pentecost. And I really appreciate the way in which this chapter has been constructed. First of all, it told about a contrasting attitude: the attitude of Paul and the believers of the Gentile world on the one side and the attitude and the spirit of the leaders in Jerusalem on the other side. And having painted that picture for us, then we are taken back and over the intervening years we are shown how each of these two spirits developed. And we are also shown what measures God took to correct that wrong spirit on the part of the leaders in Jerusalem.

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 400:**

In the earlier years of the gospel work among the Gentiles, some of the leading brethren at Jerusalem...

In what church? God's church, the Apostolic church, the early Christian church—but more than all of that—the church which

was filled with the Spirit, the church which had power to speak in tongues, to cleanse the lepers, heal the sick and cast out devils and even to raise the dead. Because Paul did that very thing when Eutychus fell out of the window that night and killed himself by the fall. We'll see now about these leading brethren in Jerusalem:

In the earlier years of the gospel work among the Gentiles, some of the leading brethren at Jerusalem, clinging to former prejudices and habits of thought, had not co-operated heartily with Paul and his associates.

Their thinking was still in what direction? Forwards or backwards? Backwards! They are “clinging to former prejudices and habits of thought.” They were doing that even though they had already been filled with the mighty outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. So these old ideas and feelings are quite a problem, aren't they?

In their anxiety to preserve a few meaningless forms and ceremonies, they had lost sight of the blessing that would come to them and to the cause they loved, through an effort to unite in one all parts of the Lord's work. Although desirous of safeguarding the best interests of the Christian church, they had failed to keep step with the advancing providences of God, and in their human wisdom, attempted to throw about workers many unnecessary restrictions.

That's the mystery of iniquity. They tried to make themselves heads over other workers, instead of remaining as members beside the other workers. And whenever a man tries in any way to put himself in the place of Christ as the head over another person, in any way to enter into the life of the other person, tell that person how to live, then there we see the working of the mystery of iniquity. And there it was—right within the Apostolic church at that time. Unbelievable, isn't it? But there it is. It's written there before our very eyes.

As we progress in this chapter, we're going to find that God recognized the presence of it, and God took very definite steps to

reveal to the minds of those men the wrong course they are pursuing, the wrong attitude that they were taking, to the point where those men became convicted and confessed that thing and turned away from that thing, but only temporarily.

Then later, they allowed these things to rise up again. And again God came to them and brought conviction to their hearts. But the next time they did not repent and turn aside. And that second failure put Paul in Roman prison until the day of his death and hastened the rise of that which was already there in the church at Jerusalem.

I used to think, until a few months ago, that this was the picture: Here was the Apostolic church and here was the pagan Roman religion—Babylon. And as the church fell away from the grace of Christ, the Babylonian principles came and united with that church, and at this point, the mystery of iniquity appeared in the church. That's what I used to think.

But now I know that the mystery of iniquity was already working in the hearts of the leaders in Jerusalem right here in the first days after Pentecost. And there, right within the Christian church, in the very heart of the spiritual power in the days just after Pentecost, we see the seed that became that tree which we call the papacy a few centuries later.

That is a warning to me to investigate my heart moment by moment to make sure that nothing of the mystery of iniquity is in my life. Because if those men, living as they were at a time of tremendous spiritual power, when the sick were being healed, the dead were being raised to life, thousands were being converted in a day, men and women spoke in tongues, and the glorious flood tide of revelation, the mystery of Christ was there; if in those conditions, the mystery of iniquity could be present, then what a safeguard or what a guardian we must put upon our own hearts and lives to make sure that nothing of that thing appears in us today. What a warning it is to us. A tremendous warning!

These leaders in Jerusalem were not in open rebellion against God, no, not even in conscious rebellion against God. Because it says on page 400:

Although desirous of safeguarding the best interests of the Christian church...

They wanted the church to prosper; they wished the message to go forward; they were models of zeal and note their piety and busy activity. But even though they had that interest and that zeal, and so forth, they still were laboring along wrong methods and along wrong principles. It is not enough to want to do the right thing, but we must do the right thing in the right way.

There is no doubt in the world that the man of *Romans 7* most earnestly desires to do the right thing, doesn't he? He cries out:

**Romans 7**

<sup>18</sup> For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Many folks seem to think that if we are zealous about being a Christian, if we have a desire to be a Christian, God accepts that in place of the real thing. They would say:

“It's not so important as to whether you do it this way or that way, providing you are sincere about it.”

I once read about the little girl who was going to bake a cake before and was very sincerely anxious to bake a good cake. And when her mother was out one day she went to work according to her ways and her knowledge. And despite the fact she was intensely sincere, the cake was an awful, awful sight—completely inedible.

And if you were to grow a garden or if you want to build a house, if you are going to make anything at all in life, you must not only want to do the right thing, but you must do it in the right way. That's a common law of humanity which is found everywhere.

Here, for instance, you may have two men with a piece of soil adjacent to each other with just a thin pencil line between them. The soil is identical; the sun is identical; the seasons are identical; the rain fall is identical. Everything is the same. One man grows a magnificent garden; the other one is a mixture of stunted flowers and great big wonderful weeds. What made the difference? The care and the procedure and the techniques involved.

And so, it's most important that we divorce from our minds that self-assurance that comes simply because we are zealous and sincere about what we do. That is not enough. We must examine ourselves and have the Lord take away from us every wrong procedure, every wrong attitude, every wrong concept, every wrong idea, so we can do God's work in God's own way. Remember this: God's ways are not our ways; neither are His thoughts our thoughts.<sup>35</sup> And what is our task? Our task is to learn the ways of God and to keep the ways of God as we read there in our *Psalms* this morning.

### **Failing to Keep Pace with Providence**

I would especially like you to observe a thought here:

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 400:**

Although desirous of safeguarding the best interests of the Christian church, they had failed to keep step with the advancing providences of God.

What is a providence of God? Is it a teaching or a happening? It's a happening. It is what God does among us. And God does things in order to teach us or to demonstrate to us what are His ways.

Let's examine what some of those providences were. There were certainly some very wonderful providences that did take place at this very time in the experience of the early Christian church.

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<sup>35</sup> **Isaiah 55** <sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

When Christ first met the apostles, they shared with the Jewish organization the belief that salvation was for the Jews and for none but the Jews. In fact, they believed that when the Messiah came He would put swords in their hands and they would go out and slay the Gentiles—not save them, but destroy them. That was their belief.

After three and a half years of patient ministry and the most wonderful teaching and very definite efforts on Christ’s part to take out of the minds of those men that strange and Satanic concept, when Christ went back to heaven, he left those men with that idea still firmly in their minds to the very last one of them. There was not one disciple at Pentecost who had yet come to believe that salvation was for the Gentiles as much as it was for the Jews.

Remember that Peter was sent by the Holy Spirit to Cornelius. When the Lord said to Peter, “Go and preach to those men,” what was his reaction? He was horrified at the thought. Preach to the Gentiles? An uncircumcised, unclean Gentile? A man doomed to be lost? “Why,” Peter said, “that just couldn’t be.” But he went, because the Spirit told him to go. Here is the account of his return:

**Acts 11**

<sup>1</sup> And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

<sup>2</sup> And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

<sup>3</sup> Saying, You went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them.

When Peter came back from this marvelous experience, his brethren waited for him with condemnation and with accusations, saying to him, “How could you do such a thing?” Therefore,

<sup>4</sup> Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them saying...

And he gave the account of it all, which runs right on down to verse 17. And the apostles and others then replied:

<sup>18</sup> When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

How did God then change the minds of these people? By teaching them by words? No. For three and a half years or more Christ had tried to teach those men by words and by His own example that the gospel was to go to the Gentiles, and it hadn't got through. How did God do it now? He did it by His providences. And the disciples in Jerusalem came to see at this point of time that God was prepared to save those who were not of the Jewish religion.

So these providences that opened up then before the minds of these men were something with which they did not keep pace. They did not keep step. They did, in part, to a certain extent, but not entirely. And, no doubt, the men that we read about here in *Acts* chapter 11 don't represent the entire family of believers at that time. While some did accept the opening providences of God, others did not. While they were prepared to admit the Gentiles could be saved, they were not prepared to admit the old ceremonial law was to be done away with.

### **The Rise of the Mystery of Iniquity**

There was a great dispute about this, and the next step was to try and impose upon the Gentiles the keeping of the law of the ceremonies and forms:

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 400:**

Although desirous of safeguarding the best interests of the Christian church, they had failed to keep step with the advancing providences of God, and in their human wisdom attempted to throw about workers many unnecessary restrictions.

Thus there arose a group of men who were unacquainted personally with the changing circumstances and peculiar needs met by laborers in distant fields, yet they insisted that they had the authority to direct their brethren in these fields to follow certain specified methods of labor. They felt as if the work of preaching

the gospel should be carried forward in harmony with their opinions.

What were these men trying to make themselves to be? Heads over other men. What should they have done so far as these men in distant fields were concerned? They should have left those men in distant fields completely alone to carry on their work under Christ's direction.

But they didn't do that. Instead they insisted, not just claimed, but they insisted that they had the authority to direct their brethren. And that insistence, that spirit, that attitude, was of the mystery of iniquity. Because whenever, just whenever, any man or any woman attempts to put himself in the place of Christ to another person, then that thing is of the mystery of iniquity. Every time!

We've marveled that this thing could be present in the church back there in the days of Pentecost. But don't forget that yesterday I read to you from *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 300, the prediction that in this last work, when the work does go forward under the power of the Holy Spirit to all the world, once again thousands are converted in a day, once again the sick are healed, once again miracles are wrought. Then Sister White says in that very time:

**Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300:**

There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world.

As they did that thing back there in the church with the first outpouring of Pentecostal power, we can know that that same thing will appear again. It just won't appear; it will be there. It will continue to be there when once again the mighty outpouring of the Spirit comes again. And inasmuch as we know it's coming and know what that thing is of—mainly the mystery of iniquity—

then what must we do about it personally? Have nothing to do with it.

What does this mean? It means that any time any person tries to come in and control you and tell you how to do the work God has given you to do, then if you submit to that man's control and come under his direction, then you are assisting in the building in the mystery of iniquity.

In the chapter "Reformation Christian Brotherliness" from the book *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century*, there's a very wonderful analysis on the part of A. T. Jones, in regard to that text where Jesus said:

**Matthew 20**

<sup>25</sup> ...the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them,

<sup>26</sup> But it shall not be so among you...

I really appreciate the explanation as given by A. T. Jones in respect to this. Because he shows that those who exercise authority are princes of the Gentiles and those who allow it to be done, make themselves to be Gentiles or unbelievers. But first let's go back to Christ's own words:

**Matthew 23**

<sup>8</sup> But be not you called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all you are brethren.

<sup>10</sup> Neither be you called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ.

It's surprising when you become alerted to these principles, how often they begin to spring up at you from out of the Word of God. And here we find that Jesus Christ expressed the same thought precisely as Paul takes up later in his declaration about the body. We have the witness of Christ and of Paul and now James also says:

**James 3**

<sup>1</sup> My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Jones points out:

*Many masters means greater condemnation. Any masters at all, means condemnation.*

There is no exercise of authority, there is no place for domination, *among Christians*: neither by Christians upon other Christians nor by Christians upon people *who are not Christians*.

For it is written: “The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you.*” *Matthew 20:25*<sup>36</sup>

Who spoke those words? Christ did. What a wonderful text that is. Let’s see how Jones develops that text in the following words:

*Note that it is “the princes of the Gentiles” that exercise dominion and authority over people; and it is “them”—the Gentiles—over whom this dominion and authority are exercised.*

*And even though dominion and authority be exercised by men in “the church,” they are still “princes of the Gentiles” who do it. Christians do not do it, for, “It shall not be so among you.”*

*And even though they be members of “the church,” over and upon whom this dominion and authority are exercised, and who allow it to be exercised over and upon “them,” they are Gentiles all the same. Christians do not allow it to be done: for, “It shall not be so among you.”*

*It is none but princes of the Gentiles who do it; it is none but Gentiles over and upon whom they do it; and it is none but Gentiles who allow it to be done over and upon them, in the church.*<sup>37</sup>

If you allow anyone in the church of God today to exercise dominion and authority over you, in that moment, you make that person to be a prince of the Gentiles to you and you make yourself to be a Gentile, in turn. And what is worse? You have made that person to be a prince over you in the place of Christ over

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<sup>36</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 13, “The Reformation Christian Brotherliness,” p. 247.

<sup>37</sup> *Idem.*, p. 247-248.

you. And, therefore, you are building the mystery of iniquity. And could you do worse? You couldn't. It's impossible!

### **Human Dominion Ends Paul's Ministry**

Steadfastly over the years, Paul refused to allow those men to exercise dominion over him. And when he totally refused that, then God prospered his work. But there came a time at last when Paul made one concession to those men. He did allow them to exercise dominion over him in one small thing. And when he did that, that was the end of his ministry as a free man.

Sister White says that God had not planned that the ministry of Paul should end so soon. Maybe he had years of work to do yet—twenty to twenty-five years to go. But because of their efforts to make themselves a prince of the Gentiles over him, and because he finally permitted that thing to be done over him, then his ministry was terminated at that point and he spent the rest of his days in prison, except for a very short period just before his execution.

This chapter we are now studying, brings out some fearful implications and warns us of the danger of making moves that are not according to the strict principles of God's truth. I'll read further now:

It cannot be done over or upon *Christians*: they will not allow it: for these have the word of their "Leader and Commander," "It shall not be so among you."

No man can be loyal to Christ, nor true to His word, who allows any man in "*the church*" or in the field of religion and faith to exercise any dominion or authority over or upon him. For Christ has commanded, "It shall not be so among you."<sup>38</sup>

How many of us here would obey the pope of Rome? Not one of us. But in principle, what's the difference? If somebody in the church, right beside you, right in this church, was to seek to come

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<sup>38</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 13, "The Reformation Christian Brotherliness," p. 248.

in and tell you how to run your life, how to do your missionary work, or the way you should work, and so forth, then hasn't that man become a pope to you, if you let him be?

If you won't obey the pope of Rome, then why obey this lesser pope that's beside us? In principle, what's the difference? The geography is different, the church membership is different, but the principle is the same.

Whosoever among Christians exercises such dominion or authority puts himself in the place of Christ. And whosoever allows it to be done to him, allows *man* to be to him in the place of Christ.<sup>39</sup>

We really want to understand that point. Those men in the Christian church—when they felt, when they insisted that they had the authority to direct their brethren in distant fields, to follow certain specified methods of labor, weren't those men attempting to exercise dominion and authority in the church at that time? And weren't they therefore putting themselves in the place of Christ?

### **1 Corinthians 7**

<sup>23</sup> You are bought with a price; be not the servants of men.

I believe in these lessons that God has for us today a very important principle we need to understand. And may God help us to understand it so we can come out on the right side in the last great conflict.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

## 7. Man in the Place of Christ

WE WILL read further now from A. T. Jones. We have been reading where he is discussing the words of Christ:

“The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, but it shall not be so among you.”

And he goes on to say:

Wherever such thing appears, he by whom it appears is a prince of the Gentiles and a prince of the Gentiles *in the place of Christ*. Whoever submits to it is a Gentile, and submits to a prince of the Gentiles in the place of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

This is precisely what a Roman Catholic church member does.

*That* is the whole story of the papacy. And whenever that thing is manifest in any church, it is just so much of the papacy there.

It is a fundamental principle of the Reformation that “the ecclesiastical power is exercised *only* by the *ministry of the Word*.”

Any ecclesiastical power ever, anywhere, that is exercised in any other wise than “only by the ministry of the Word” is not Christian, is not Reformation, but is papal.

Among Christians the only government in which man has any governing to do is self-government. Each one governs himself *only*, in the realm of his own spirit. And “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city.” *Proverbs* 16:32.

Each one governing himself in God through Christ by the Holy Spirit according to the will of God, there is no room for any other government. *Acts* 24:25.

And for any who profess the name of Christian but are not Christians and so cannot govern themselves in righteousness, but must be governed from without, there is an established and divinely recognized “power,” for the governing of all such—the “power” of “Caesar.”

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<sup>40</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 13, “Reformation Christian Brotherliness,” p. 248-249.

And in the scriptures there is nowhere recognized any *third* power beyond God and Caesar, but that is neither God nor Caesar, to come in and gather people together who cannot govern themselves and so must needs be “governed” by this interloper who is neither God nor Caesar but tries to be both God and Caesar and so can play the devil only.<sup>41</sup>

### **Only Two Powers: God and Caesar**

In the scriptures, there are two powers: the power of God in the church and the power of Caesar in the world. The power of God is for those who can govern themselves through the Holy Spirit unto Christ. To them it is the power of God and the church of God. For those who cannot govern themselves and so must be governed by somebody else, is another power called the power of Caesar.

But is there any other third power beyond those two? Should there be? No, there should not be. There is, but should there be? Does the scripture recognize any other third power? No, it doesn't. So it says here:

And in the scriptures, there is nowhere recognized any *third* power beyond God and Caesar, but that is neither God, nor Caesar.<sup>42</sup>

Think of the papacy, think of the churches today who soon will raise to the image of the beast, are they of God? No. Are they the power of the state? No. So they are neither God nor Caesar. The scriptures don't recognize this power to come in and gather people together who cannot govern themselves and so must needs be governed by this interloper who is neither God nor Caesar, but tries to be both God and Caesar.

In the image of the beast, is this not what the church is trying to be—both God and Caesar? Because they want to unite the

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<sup>41</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 13, “Reformation Christian Brotherliness,” p. 249-250.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem.*, p. 250.

church and the state—both together. But they can't do that and so what do they do? They can play the devil only. Because the ultimate form of the mystery of iniquity is when the church comes in and tries to take the place, not only of Christ to the people, but also of Caesar to the people. They want to have all the power—God's power and Caesar's power.

And, therefore, this is the ultimate Antichrist—the ultimate mystery of iniquity. And that is what is forming at this very present moment in this world today.

All duty that is ever to be rendered by men pertains either to God or to Caesar, and is to be rendered respectively to these accordingly: just *these two*. There is no other. *Matthew 22:21*.<sup>43</sup>

What then were the leaders in the Christian church back in the days of Pentecost trying to make themselves to be? Were they trying to make themselves Caesar? No, they weren't. Were they trying to make themselves Christ, though, in the church? Yes, they were.

### **The Jerusalem Council**

Let's read from where we last left off, where these men thought they had the authority to control the men in the field. Several years had passed since the time when they had that great council.

I am about to read about this great council that took place very soon after Pentecost when there were certain people who, while they were prepared to recognize that the gospel could go to the Gentiles, it could go to the Gentiles only if the Gentiles submitted to the ceremonial law. And this great council at Jerusalem was convened for the purpose of discussing this question. The council should never have had to be convened because the problem should never have existed at all. And so now we're taken back to a consideration of this great council:

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<sup>43</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 13, "Reformation Christian Brotherliness," p. 250.

### **The Acts of the Apostles, 400-401:**

Several years had passed since the brethren in Jerusalem, with representatives from other leading churches, gave careful consideration to the perplexing questions that had arisen over methods followed by those who were laboring for the Gentiles. As a result of this council, the brethren had united in making definite recommendations to the churches concerning certain rites and customs, including circumcision. It was at this general council that the brethren had also united in commending to the Christian churches Barnabas and Paul as laborers worthy of the full confidence of every believer.

Among those present at this meeting were some who had severely criticized the methods of labor followed by the apostles upon whom rested the chief burden of carrying the gospel to the Gentile world.

Again we have the two characters or these two actors in this story brought to view. One is a group of people; the other is an individual—well, more than an individual, mainly Paul but also Barnabas and Silas and Timothy and the others who labored together with Paul.

At this council there were those people about whom we have been speaking, those who had within them the mystery of iniquity to a certain extent; and also there were those such as Paul and the others. And these men had severally criticized the work of Paul and Barnabas and had sought to bring them under their control. And that's a very sad picture.

But it is followed by a sentence which begins with the word "but." And when you have painted before you a certain picture and the next sentence begins with the word "but," what do you expect to then see? A contrast. And if the picture has been black, then what kind of a contrast do we expect to see? A pleasing contrast. And so it says:

But during the council, their views of God's purpose had broadened, and they had united with their brethren in making

wise decisions which made possible the unification of the entire body of believers.

Isn't that beautiful? encouraging?—to see those men respond to conviction and put away their wrong ideas and to come into complete unification with the entire body of believers. And so, by these means, God turned the thinking of those men back there in the opposite direction. Now they were thinking forwards. Now they were leaving behind the old ideas and theories and going forward in the truth. So we feel very glad to read this part of the story.

### **A Reversion**

But it doesn't continue. And again our hearts are saddened and warned as we realize what could take place. The very next sentence says:

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:**

Afterward, when it became apparent that the converts among the Gentiles were increasing rapidly, there were a few of the leading brethren at Jerusalem who began to cherish anew their former prejudices against the methods of Paul and his associates.

Isn't that a tragic picture? And think of the circumstances under which it took place. By His providences, God had turned them about face. And here we find the work among the Gentiles being marvelously blessed by God and going forth with strong progress and impetus.

I want you to notice something here in passing. It says:

...when it became apparent that the converts among the Gentiles were increasing rapidly...

Look and see what the statement does not say. It does not merely say:

“Afterward, when *the membership* was increasing...”

It says:

“...when the converts *among the Gentiles* were increasing rapidly...”

Today, around the world there are many churches which can boast of a vastly increasing membership. And as they see this vastly increasing membership, they claim that this is due to God’s blessing; and they point to this as a witness that they are God’s people. But actually, if all they’re getting is members, and not converted people in the sense of being truly born-again Christians, then they are not increasing in strength; they are increasing in weakness.

Under Paul’s ministry, however, what kinds of converts were coming into the church from the Gentile world? Converted ones, born-again Christians. And every truly born-again child of God, who was added to the cause of God, brings strength to the cause of God, because it brings just that much more of God’s Spirit into the congregation. Whereas every unconverted soul who comes in brings in not strength but weakness, because he brings in just that much more of the mystery of iniquity into the church of God.

There’s an old saying that “the proof of the pudding is in the eating.” And the proof of a certain line of or certain method of labor is evident by the results achieved by that means of labor. And so, as Paul out there pursued that course of labor, it brought tremendous results. And it was evident that wherever Paul went God was mightily with him and was blessing his work and his ministry; and this should have been and what it was to those men was a witness.

But they did not receive it as a witness; because at the very time when God witnessed to His presence with that apostle, these men began to cherish anew their former prejudices and habits of thought.

If we think back to the days of the journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land, what was the cry that went up again and

again? “Let’s go back!” That was the cry—repeated, incessant, “Let’s go back!” And we’ve thought to ourselves,

“Well, that’s understandable. Because those who cried were mostly of that mixed multitude who never had really left Egypt behind in their hearts. And they wanted to go back. That’s understandable.”

But in the Apostolic church with the mighty power of the Spirit, there were miracles being wrought—and the flood-tide of gospel light. And with the memory that the Jewish church had been the ones to crucify the Son of God, we would never think to find men there saying: “Let’s go back.” But lo, as we open the pages of Holy Writ, what do we find? The same thing. Men who are saying: “Let’s go back.” And who were they? Rank and file members? No, but the leaders in Jerusalem—the very last people who should have ever allowed their minds to go back to the old way of thinking. And yet the record says:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:**

Afterward, when it became apparent that the converts among the Gentiles were increasing rapidly, there were a few of the leading brethren at Jerusalem who began to cherish anew their former prejudices against the methods of Paul and his associates. These prejudices strengthened with the passing of the years.

**The Spirit of the Papacy**

So the prejudices became stronger and still stronger as time went by. Until a point of time was reached when, it says:

These prejudices strengthened with the passing of the years, until some of the leaders determined...

Note that word “determined.” They had made up their minds; they resolved; they set their wills to achieve a result. And what did they determine?

...that the work of preaching of the gospel must henceforth be conducted in accordance with their own ideas. If Paul would

conform his methods to certain policies which they advocated they would acknowledge and sustain his work; otherwise, they could no longer look upon it with favor or grant it their support.

What a tragic picture! Because, what more evidence could those men ask for that God was with Paul? God was blessing Paul? God was giving him success? God was directing his labors? And think about this: that if the God of heaven could trust Paul and bless Paul and support Paul, then what was the very least thing that any other believer could do in relation to this man? The same thing. The least they could do was to trust him. The least they could do was to support him, and leave him completely in God's care for God to work Paul as God saw fit.

Remember the occasion shortly after the resurrection of Christ, when they were walking beside the sea and Christ said to Peter, "Do you love me?" And after the third time, Peter saw John walking along on the shore, and Peter said to Jesus: "And what is he going to do?" What did Christ say in effect?

"That's none of your business. You do your work as I give your work to you to do. And John will do his work as I give him his work to do."

And if those leading brethren in Jerusalem back there had recognized what God was doing in Paul, if they had recognized God's gift of Paul, and in Paul, they would have stood back and said:

"We have our work to do; Paul has his work to do; leave him in God's hands and we'll turn to God ourselves to find out what we should do."

But these men said:

"No, that man Paul—we don't agree with what he is doing or how he is doing it; he's got to change; he must come under our direction and control and if he doesn't, then we're not going to support him or sustain him in his work any further."

These men were once again exhibiting the spirit of the papacy. They had come out of Babylon. What is Babylon? Confusion, or apostate religion. It is professedly Christian. Whereas atheism is professedly unchristian. Now was Israel back in those days professedly a nation of righteousness? Certainly they were. So, therefore, they were Babylon because they were not of God. That's for certain. They're not atheistic either, so, therefore, they were Babylon.

When God called the Christian believers out of the Jewish organization and, therefore, out of Babylon, they came out of Babylon to a large extent but not entirely. Likewise, over the last several days, we've been seeing that we had not, and probably have not yet either, come completely out of Babylon so far as our thinking is concerned.

In the past, we all held Babylonian ideas so far as God's character was concerned. And now we are learning more in regard to God's organization versus that of Babylon.

The ideas and theories that these Jewish church members brought with them from Babylon were Babylonish. They were papal! And while those men looked backwards toward Babylon in respect to those thoughts alone, look what they tried to do. They tried to rule their fellow men, didn't they?

And then, through the council, God opened their eyes and saved them from those ideas, and for a number of years, all went well. They made no attempt to control their brethren. They saw during that period that God was working through these men and God didn't need their help to run Paul. God could do that work very well himself.

But, then the time came when they again began to look backwards to the Babylonian ideas they had before, and as soon as they picked up those old ideas again, that even though they were still leaders in the Christian church, what were they then determined they would do so far as Paul was concerned? Rule him. Now this is significant.

## Deliverance from Old Ideas

While ever we allow our thoughts to remain back in the old ways that we knew all our lives up until the present time, we are going to find a disposition on our part to want to direct and control and rule our fellow men.

But as soon as God delivers us from those ideas, we shall be delivered from any disposition to rule our fellow man. We shall recognize that man as a member. He is perhaps the right hand; I am the left hand. And the right hand must be left by the left hand to be controlled by the Head—the same as the left hand is controlled by the same Head.

But remember as we go forth from this place: that old ideas die very hard. In the preaching of the Word here, you have found that the presentation of these great truths have been very convincing. But as you go back to your old way of life and the old temptations come to you and you find yourself with your old associates, there will always be the tendency of the old ideas to again come to the surface. We have been trained too long to think that way.

For instance, whenever you read in any part of the Spirit of Prophecy or the Bible where God says: “I will destroy,” then automatically you go to think in terms of man’s way of destruction. That’s a tendency. And you have to take your mind and give it little pushes, as you might say, and say to yourself: “No, no, no!” Remember and remind yourself, “God’s ways are not man’s ways.”<sup>44</sup> Keep telling yourself that!

Because if you let those old ideas come back again, then that is cherishing them; and they’ll become stronger and stronger and stronger until the time will come when you will determine that you must control your fellow men. It is inevitable because that very kind of thinking is the foundation of that very kind of activity. One is the root; the other is the fruit.

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<sup>44</sup> *Isaiah* 55:8-9.

And I see today a tremendous lesson for me personally in this thing; because, if those leaders back there in Jerusalem could be the victims of that kind of thinking which led to those kinds of actions, then doesn't that warn me of my danger? and you of your danger? Why, absolutely. And this chapter, "Paul a Prisoner," is well worth your time to read over a number of times, keeping the principle that we are studying here very clear in mind.

## **Losing Sight of God as the Teacher**

The next paragraph says:

### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:**

These men had lost sight of the fact that God is the teacher of His people; that every worker in His cause is to obtain an individual experience in following the divine Leader, not looking to man for direct guidance; that His workers are to be molded and fashioned, not after the man's ideas, but after the similitude of the divine.

Let's just look at the steps involved here:

1. They looked back to their old ideas and theories; they allowed themselves to think as they use to think. Those men thought men's thoughts. Every one of us in danger of that.
2. And as surely as they did that, then they came to the disposition, the natural disposition in them which was clad in the garments of an intense desire for the best interest of the church. A zeal to build the church up and to strengthen the church, that disposition was clad with those garments. Don't forget that. It was a wolf in sheep's clothing.
3. And that persuaded them, as they looked on the outward appearance and did not understand the underlying principle, that they were actually doing God's will, and unless this rebel—this obstinate Paul—could be brought under control, things would go very badly at last in the Christian church.

How mistaken they were!

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:**

...[They] had lost sight of the fact that God is the teacher of His people—that every worker in His cause is to obtain an individual experience in following the divine Leader, not looking to man for direct guidance; that His workers are to be molded and fashioned, not after man’s ideas, but after the similitude of the divine.

This doesn’t mean that we cannot counsel together and pray together and discuss problems together. But, it does mean that when it comes to the ultimate direction as to what you’re to do, and where you are to work, that is something you must obtain from God and God alone. I can’t tell you and no other member can tell you as a member, what you should do. Only the Head can do that.

**The Example of Paul**

Let’s turn now to Paul. We’ve been discussing the situation with those leaders, and we’ll now turn to Paul, the messenger of God at that time.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 402:**

In his ministry the apostle Paul had taught the people “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” The truths that he proclaimed had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit; “for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God...which things” declared Paul, “we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” *1 Corinthians* 2:4, 10-13.

Let’s read a paragraph which I think is extremely illuminating and wonderfully encouraging to every one of God’s true children. It is contained in the chapter, “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled”:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 671:**

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus thought to inspire them with the joy and hope that in-

spired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.

The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.

It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

When Paul went forth to minister, that's the power that went with him. That's the power that made his work successful. That's the power which when Paul preached the gospel, took sin from the lives of men and filled them with the living presence of God's Spirit. That, is what made that man's ministry a success.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 402:**

Throughout his ministry, Paul had looked to God for direct guidance. At the same time, he had been very careful to labor in harmony with the decisions of the general council at Jerusalem, and as a result the churches were "established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

With respect to this question of independence, you will notice that Paul did not work as an independent element. First of all, it says, "Throughout his ministry, Paul had looked to God for direct guidance." During these years, when the leaders began to cherish those old ideas and theories, and in that cherishing of old ideas and theories, they sought to take the place of Christ to Paul—to become his directors, his leaders, his guides, his counselors, his

controller, had Paul allowed himself to come under their dominion? No, he hadn't.

And Sister White says: "Throughout his ministry," in the entire period of it, Paul had looked to God for direct guidance—not to these men. And so, as Paul did that, God blessed him in spite of the efforts of those men to control him and dictate in his life.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 402:**

At the same time, he had been very careful to labor in harmony with the decisions of the general council at Jerusalem, and as a result, the churches were "established in the faith, and increased in number daily"

No true child of God will ever labor as an independent unit without any reference to what's going on around about them. No true child of God will ever come into the territory set down by God for another and begin to usurp the work of another even if the other person is neglecting his work. He won't do that.

And Paul would not do that; he understood the great principles of respect. When God places this man here, and that man there, then Paul respected that man as that man in that place. And one further reason why he did labor in harmony with this decision is because the decisions of that council were in response to the Spirit of God.

When you go back to study the chapter entitled: "Jew and Gentile" in the book *The Acts of the Apostles* you'll find this: The council got together because of this great question which should never have been. They should never have had to discuss this question about the ceremonial law. It was finished with. They should have known that but, because of the slowness of hearts and the unwillingness to really believe in and see the directions of God, many tried to enforce upon the Gentile believers the old rites and ceremonies, including circumcision.

When they got together, you'll find as you read the chapter, there was much discussion and some arguments. And finally, Peter stood up and said:

“Now look, what's all the argument about? The Holy Spirit has already settled this question. The Holy Spirit has already spoken on the matter, and all you have to do is obey what the Holy Spirit has revealed. Why look, the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the Gentile believers! They have spoken in tongues; they have become converted; they are now rejoicing in the salvation of Jesus Christ; and as the Holy Spirit reveals this to us, then can't you see that those men without the ceremonial law, have received the Grace of God just as much as any of us with the ceremonial law? So the question is settled!”

And the council said: “And so it is.” And that was the end of all argument and they went their various ways then, with the matter settled completely and finally, and so on. So naturally Paul did work in harmony with that council. Naturally. Now, I read further:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 402:**

And now, notwithstanding the lack of sympathy shown him by some, he found comfort in the consciousness that he had done his duty in encouraging in his converts a spirit of loyalty, generosity, and brotherly love, as revealed on this occasion in the liberal contributions which he was enabled to place before the Jewish elders.

Our story, then, brings us back at this point, to where Paul stands before those leaders in Jerusalem just before his arrest, and lays before them the accumulated gifts which have been sent in from the Gentile believers.

If you can feel as I do about this, there are some very real and precious lessons and counsel for us in this chapter and experience. And as we move on deeply into it, I'm sure we'll understand better just how we are to relate ourselves to God, His church, and to each other in the closing work of this world's history.

## 8. The End of Paul's Ministry

THE leaders in Jerusalem had become convicted at one time in respect to the fact that they had been taking a wrong attitude toward Paul in his labors; and then sadly, they turned around in their thinking and again behaved toward him worse than before.

### The Liberal Contributions

In the Spirit of Prophecy we are coming up to the actual presentation of the gifts once more and the declaration by Paul of what God had done through him in his ministry among the Gentiles, in Asia Minor.

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 402-403:**

After the presentation of the gifts, Paul “declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.” This recital of facts brought to the hearts of all, even of those who had been doubting, the conviction that the blessing of heaven had accompanied his labors. “When they heard it, they glorified the Lord.” They felt that the methods of labor pursued by the apostle bore the signet of Heaven.

The liberal contributions lying before them added weight to the testimony of the apostle concerning the faithfulness of the new churches established among the Gentiles. The men who, while numbered among those who were in charge of the work at Jerusalem, had urged that arbitrary measures of control be adopted, saw Paul’s ministry in a new light and were convinced that their own course had been wrong, that they had been held in bondage by Jewish customs and traditions, and that the work of the gospel had been greatly hindered by their failure to recognize that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by the death of Christ.

I mentioned earlier, that twice the Lord by His providences brought real conviction to the hearts of these men. First of all, back when this great council took place. And then, in spite of those convictions, they allowed the old ideas and theories to arise

again. And for the second time, the Lord through his providences brought to those men a very deep sense of conviction and a real consciousness that they had taken the wrong side in these mighty issues. We'll take the paragraph point by point, so as not to miss the main thoughts of it.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 402:**

This recital of facts brought to the hearts of all, even of those who had been doubting, the conviction that the blessing of heaven had accompanied his labors.

Even the opponents of Paul were convicted that God was working with Paul and through Paul. As a result, they “felt that the methods of labor pursued by the apostle bore the signet of heaven.” A signet is a seal. These men who “had urged, that arbitrary measures of control be adopted” now...

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 403:**

...saw Paul's ministry in a new light and were convinced that their own course had been wrong, that they had been held in bondage by Jewish customs and traditions, and that the work of the gospel had been greatly hindered by their failure to recognize that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by the death of Christ.

When we read how, as the Spirit of God is able to bring definite and specific conviction to men and men are brought to the place where they see they have been wrong, does this not give to us a sense of joy? Yes, it does. But at the same time, a sense of apprehension. Because it's one thing for a person to be convicted; it's another thing to do something about that.

So let's read on and see what these men did. Remember the first time they were convicted, they did come out on the right side. They did acknowledge their mistake, and for a time they did give to Paul their unqualified support. But now we come to the second time, let's see if they repeat the same procedures as before:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 403:**

This was the golden opportunity for all the leading brethren to confess frankly that God had wrought through Paul, and that at times they had erred in permitting the reports of his enemies to arouse their jealousy and prejudice.

This was the golden opportunity because, first of all, Paul was there in person and they could make this acknowledgment right there before him.

And secondly, it was the golden opportunity, because the Spirit had brought that conviction to them which would make their confession very real, specific, and acceptable. This was the golden opportunity.

**Counsel Based on Fear and Prejudice**

However, the next sentence begins with that unfortunate word: “But instead.” So what are we now going to see? The opportunity taken or rejected? Rejected.

But instead of uniting in an effort to do justice to the one who had been injured, they gave him counsel which showed that they still cherished a feeling that Paul should be held largely responsible for the existing prejudice. They did not stand nobly in his defense, endeavoring to show the disaffected ones where they were wrong, but sought to effect a compromise by counseling him to pursue a course which in their opinion would remove all cause for misapprehension.

This is a very tragic story indeed, from this point on. It’s a story of a great and precious opportunity that was not taken, a very deep conviction of God that was rejected, a call to repentance which was not heeded, and it stands, at this point, just like 1888 in the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s history.

From this point on, as we shall shortly read, the certainty of the rise of the papacy was assured. Up till this point it could have gone either way. But from this point on the rise of the papacy was a certainty. Nothing could stop it now.

## **Acts 21**

<sup>20</sup> And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law;

<sup>21</sup> And they are informed of you, that you teach all the Jews, which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

<sup>22</sup> What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that you are come.

<sup>23</sup> Do therefore this that we say to you.

Do you observe something in that verse that stands out rather startling in view of our studies? It was their idea. Do, therefore, not “what God would have you do,” but “what we say to you.” And then follows that instruction, that bargain for Paul to go and fulfill this particular application of the ceremonial law.

### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 404:**

The brethren hoped that Paul, by following the course suggested, might give a decisive contradiction to the false reports concerning him. They assured him that the decision of the former council concerning the Gentile converts and the ceremonial law, still held good. But the advice now given was not consistent with that decision.

Remember that back there in the council that it was recognized that the ceremonial law was a thing of the past. And now these men were saying:

“Look, Paul, we recognize that the decisions made back then in regards to the ceremonial law still hold good, that law is finished with. But go and keep it just the same.”

It was not consistent; it was a flat contradiction!

### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 404:**

The Spirit of God did not prompt this instruction; it was the fruit of cowardice.

If the Spirit of God did not prompt this decision, who did? Satan did. He made the suggestion, and the flesh of these men found that suggestion to be very acceptable.

### **The Natural Against the Spiritual**

Coming back to A. T. Jones again, I'd like to note here with you his comment in respect to this when he says as follows:

And the failure of professed Christians, to recognize Christ's spiritual gifts, is always of the mystery of iniquity. For it is but the manifestation of the natural against the spiritual, of the will of man against the will of Christ, and of *man* instead of *Christ*—of man in the place of God—in *the church*.<sup>45</sup>

We're going to investigate every word that A. T. Jones says there, in the light of the Spirit of Prophecy, and see if every word he says is the truth. But we will first go back to *The Acts of the Apostles*, and here it says: "it was the fruit of cowardice." In what way was it the fruit of cowardice? In the following way:

#### **The Acts of the Apostles, p. 404-405:**

The leaders of the church in Jerusalem knew that by non-conformity to the ceremonial law, Christians would bring upon themselves the hatred of the Jews and expose themselves to persecution. The Sanhedrin was doing its utmost to hinder the progress of the gospel. Men were chosen by this body to follow up the apostles, especially Paul, and in every possible way to oppose their work. Should the believers in Christ be condemned before the Sanhedrin as breakers of the law, they would suffer swift and severe punishment as apostates from the Jewish faith.

Let's look at the situation. God's call was the spiritual side in this particular connection. And God's call to those men involved that they, first of all, make a confession to Paul of the wrong course which they had pursued. But that confession would have been more than just verbal; it would demand, on their part, a certain change of behavior so far as the future was concerned. And

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<sup>45</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 189.

that change of behavior involved a total rejection from that point onward of the ceremonial law.

The moment that they knew that this was involved in that confession, then at that very moment Satan's call came to them. And Satan's call came through the flesh or through the natural. And that call also came to those men as they stood there before the apostle Paul. So, here were two great pressures. The call of the flesh said to them:

“Now look here! Be careful! If you come right out and repudiate the ceremonial law and pay no more heed to it and obey it no longer, then that will provide the Sanhedrin with just what they are waiting for. And then will come the sword and persecution until many of you shall suffer fearfully and many others shall die.”

It doesn't matter how converted you may be; you still will not find that persecution is a very pleasant experience. How many of you would like to be taken out now and burned slowly to death at the stake? You can go first as far as I am concerned. I'd be glad to go last, if at all. Not one of us would ever enjoy persecution. And the flesh has got all the laws of self-preservation; it will always draw back and exert tremendous pressure upon a person in an hour like this.

So then, as A. T. Jones says, here was “the natural” against “the spiritual.” And so Satan's call, which told them that if they gave up the ceremonial law they would suffer persecution, was pitted against the call of the spiritual, which said: Even if you do suffer persecution,

### **Matthew 28**

<sup>20</sup> Lo, I am with you, even unto the end.

And so those men found the pressure pulling this way and the pressure pulling the other way. If those men had truly understood the principles that we are learning here today and lived by those principles, they would have recognized that Paul was a messen-

ger directly called of God, directly endowed by God with the Spirit, directly led and empowered by God and blessed by God in all his ministry; and they would never have dared to give that man the least council whatsoever, would they? They would have left him completely alone. They would have said to him:

“God has blessed your work and, brother, we pray God will still go on blessing it. Go as the Lord leads you to where He needs you to do that work.”

When they failed to recognize Christ’s spiritual gift in that man, then that lack of recognition led them to dare to reject the call of the Spirit to fight the call of the flesh. And in so doing, the moment they did that then, straightaway they set about to tell Paul what to do.

What I want you to see is this: That every time, every single time, that we lose the abiding presence of God’s Spirit, every time we choose the natural in preference to the spiritual then, straightaway, our actions will be in harmony with the mystery of iniquity.

In the history of this movement, predominately at least, and particularly as far as the American field has been concerned, we have been completely free in this country from any form of human election in this movement. And God has blessed the work consequently as He always will.

But over the years, throughout the world field, down in Australia, up here in America, over in Europe, and South Africa, every time a person loses his spiritual experience and his grip upon the message, one of the very first things that they rise up against is this form of organization, and they begin to cry out. One of the first cries they make is:

“One man movement, one man dictatorship, all the control in the hands of one person.”

Then they begin to call for committees, presidents, voting, and so forth.

### **Taking the Place of Christ**

And back there, when those men chose “the natural” above “the spiritual,” then the very moment that they chose that, what did they then do as far as Paul was concerned? They sought to control him, to direct him, to indicate to him what he should do. And they even went so far as to say here, in the Word of God,

#### **Acts 21**

<sup>23</sup> Do therefore this that we say to you.

Let’s read again what Jones says:

And the failure of professed Christians to recognize Christ’s spiritual gifts is always of the mystery of iniquity. For it is the manifestation of the natural against the spiritual, of the will of man against the will of Christ, and of *man* instead of *Christ*—of man in the place of God—in *the church*.<sup>46</sup>

Was this a case of man’s will against the will of Christ? Certainly. Did Christ want Paul to go back under the ceremonial law? Not at all. But those men did. Those men put themselves in the place of Christ to Paul, a “man in the place of God—in the church.”

How clearly this experience lays out before us the sad story of how the mystery of iniquity was present right there in the church at that time; and when this decision was taken, it opened the door to its full and total development.

### **The Removal of the Gift of Paul**

In *The Acts of the Apostles* the blame is laid entirely upon the leaders in Jerusalem. And the attitude taken toward Paul is one of kindness and sympathy.

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<sup>46</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, “The Reformation Guidance of the Church,” p. 189.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 405:**

When we think of Paul's great desire to be in harmony with his brethren, his tenderness toward the weak in the faith, his reverence for the apostles who had been with Christ, and for James, the brother of the Lord, and his purpose to become all things to all men so far as he could without sacrificing principle—when we think of all this, it is less surprising that he was constrained to deviate from the firm, decided course that he had hitherto followed.

But instead of accomplishing the desired object, his efforts for conciliation only precipitated the crisis, hastened his predicted sufferings, and resulted in separating him from his brethren, depriving the church of one of its strongest pillars, and bringing sorrow to Christian hearts in every land.

Just compare the Spirit of Prophecy to A. T. Jones:

The failure of James and the church in Jerusalem to recognize Christ's gift *of* Paul and *in* Paul to the church, put Paul in Roman prisons until the day of his death.<sup>47</sup>

Sister White says that what was done there...

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 405-406:**

...resulted in separating Paul from his brethren, depriving the church of one of its strongest pillars, and bringing sorrow to Christian hearts in every land.

It goes on for the next several pages to recount the story of Paul's arrest and imprisonment; and that's simply a story of history. So, I'll pass on to page 417. At the top of the page, we have a paragraph, which, first of all, refers to the Jews themselves. I'll read it because the same reproof that was given to the Jewish church belonged at this time to the church in Jerusalem—the Apostolic church.

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<sup>47</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 189.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 417:**

Christ told the Jews at Nazareth a fearful truth when He declared that with backsliding Israel there was no safety for the faithful messenger of God. They would not know his worth or appreciate his labors. While the Jewish leaders professed to have a great zeal for the honor of God and the good of Israel, they were enemies of both. By precept and example they were leading the people farther and farther from obedience to God—leading them where He could not be their defense in the day of trouble.

We come down to the Apostolic church in the following words:

The Saviour's words of reproof to the men of Nazareth applied, in the case of Paul, not only to the unbelieving Jews, but to his own brethren in the faith. Had the leaders in the church fully surrendered their feeling of bitterness toward the apostle, and accepted him as one specially called of God to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, the Lord would have spared him to them. God had not ordained that Paul's labors should so soon end, but He did not work a miracle to counteract the train of circumstances to which the course of the leaders in the church at Jerusalem had given rise.

Let's compare this with what we previously read:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:**

These prejudices strengthened with the passing of the years, until some of the leaders determined that the work of preaching the gospel must henceforth be conducted in accordance with their own ideas. If Paul would conform his methods to certain policies, which they advocated, they would acknowledge and sustain his work; otherwise, they could not longer look upon it with favor or grant it their support.

When God sends a messenger, as God sent Paul among those folk back there in that day, then God expects His people to participate in the work by giving their support to that man's work. When those men back there withdrew their support from Paul's ministry—by that action, what were they saying? They wanted to get rid of him, they wanted him removed. Because when you

withdraw your support from a worker, and everybody does that, what happens to the worker? He must stop working, because he cannot preach the gospel and at the same time earn his support. As Paul says:

**1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>14</sup> Those who preach the gospel must live by the gospel.

When those men back there withdrew their support from Paul, giving him neither financial nor moral support, they declared before God:

“We want that man out of the ministry unless he is prepared to conform to our ideas of service.”

That’s what they were saying in plain terms. When the church expresses before God what the church wants, then God will give the church what that church desires. And when the church, back in those days, were brought for the second time face to face with this great issue and on the second occasion said to Paul:

“We still want you to do what we say.”

Then God said to himself:

“Aha, now I know their minds; now I know what they want. They do not want that man among them as I have sent him. They want him as they want him to be—not as I have sent him.”

And the Lord said:

“I respect their wishes. If they don’t want him then they shall not have him.”

And so it was that God permitted Paul be removed forever from the church of that day. He was never given back to the church. And nobody was ever raised up to take his place. Because, if God had supplied someone to take the place of Paul, it would have been another Paul—another man who preached just what Paul preached, believed just what Paul believed, worked as Paul worked. And if the people didn’t want the first Paul, would they

want the second one? Obviously, not. So that vacancy was never again filled.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 417:**

Had the leaders in the church, fully surrendered their feelings of bitterness, toward the apostle, and accepted him as one especially called of God to bear the Gospel to the Gentiles, the Lord would have spared him to them.

Did the church need Paul? Most definitely they did. Did they know it? No, they didn't. They thought they would be far better off without him, than they would with him. They didn't mind the person being there, provided the person wasn't the same person that they knew Paul to be.

He needed to modify himself, bend a little in their direction, sacrifice some of his principles, and come under their control. Then, that Paul, they would be glad to have. But the Paul they did have? Him, they did not want. And so God acknowledged their wishes and took him away into Roman prisons and finally to be beheaded.

I wonder how much longer Paul would have ministered if this had not been so? Because Sister White says:

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 417:**

God had not ordained that Paul's labors should, so soon, end.

I wonder how much longer it might have been? A year? Much more than that, surely. Five, ten, maybe fifteen years of labor. And if that mighty preacher of the mystery of God had been laboring fifteen more years, what might have been the effect and result of that kind of ministry compared to what was? We are warned of that in the next paragraph:

The same spirit is still leading to the same results. A neglect to appreciate and improve the provisions of divine grace has deprived the church of many a blessing.

How true this is back in 1888. God brought to that church a tremendous opportunity of blessing, but the church failed to ap-

preciate it and improve the opportunity. And look what has been lost by the church as a result.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 418:**

Satan is constantly working through his agents to dishearten and destroy those whom God has chosen to accomplish a great and good work.

Every one of us today, all the members in this movement have been chosen by God to accomplish a great and a good work in the last days. We are the channels that God is preparing through which He will soon show forth the outflow of His redeeming grace in full and final display. So these words, I want you to remember for your own comfort and encouragement. Because Satan will constantly work through his agents to dishearten and discourage and destroy those whom God has chosen to accomplish a great and a good work.

They may be ready to sacrifice even life itself for the advancement of the cause of Christ, yet the great deceiver will suggest to their brethren doubts concerning them which, if entertained, would undermine confidence in their integrity of character, and thus cripple their usefulness. Too often he succeeds in bringing upon them through their own brethren, such sorrow of heart that God graciously interposes to give His persecuted servants rest. After, the hands are folded upon the pulseless breast, when the voice of warning and encouragement is silent, then the obdurate may be aroused to see and prize the blessings they have cast from them. Their death may accomplish that which their life has failed to do.

But not always. I read those words for your blessing because the day has come for you to experience the truth of them in your own life's story.

**Hastening the Rise of the Mystery of Iniquity**

Consider very carefully what the leaders in Jerusalem must have said to each other, with smiling faces, when Paul was taken prisoner and sent off to Rome. Remember that all the way along, they

had disapproved of his course of action. They insisted he was wrong, and they were right. And furthermore, they told themselves,

“After all, we are the leaders of God’s church here in Jerusalem. So, therefore, we are God-led and God blessed. We are right and, therefore, Paul is wrong.”

When Paul was taken prisoner, can’t you hear them say:

“Aha, see! See what’s happened to Paul? If God was with Paul as Paul claimed God was with him, then why is Paul in prison and we are free? If we are wrong, why aren’t we in the prison?”

Can’t you hear their reasoning back then? They reasoned that way. And how much more wrong could they have been! They couldn’t have been more wrong, could they? We must be very careful how we interpret some things that God allows to be done in this old world because we can be just as wrong as those leaders were back at that point of time.

Consider what would be the effect upon those men, when having pursued a certain course of action, which course of action can be described only as being the mystery of iniquity, then when they came to that conviction, rejected that conviction, chose to follow after the way of the flesh, which is also the mystery of iniquity, and as a result saw their desires fulfilled in Paul’s imprisonment, then what would that do as far as their belief and position was concerned? It would establish them; it would confirm them in their position. What they had of the mystery of iniquity before, would now become that much more confirmed in their thinking and belief.

A. T. Jones says that this action upon their path “hastened the rise of the mystery of iniquity”:

The failure of James and the church in Jerusalem to recognize Christ’s gift *of* Paul and *in* Paul to the church put Paul in Roman prisons to the day of his death (except a very short interval near the end), robbed the churches of Christ’s wonderful revelations

in the mystery of God, and hastened the rise of the mystery of iniquity. *Galatians* 2:12; *Acts* 21:18--; *2 Timothy* 1:15; 4:16; *Galatians* 1:15-16; *Ephesians* 3:2-5; *Colossians* 1:26-29; *2 Thessalonians* 2:3-10.<sup>48</sup>

Up till this time, the apostle Paul had been the greatest living exponent of the mystery of God in the world. And what is the only answer to the mystery of iniquity? The mystery of God. The only way for me to be delivered from the mystery of iniquity is to understand and experience the mystery of God. And to understand the mystery of God, I need to hear that great teaching preached to me by those to whom God has given the special power to preach that thing. Back in Paul's day, Paul was that man.

So when that man was removed from the church, then the preaching of the doctrine of the mystery of God was removed with him and, therefore, the power that would not only hold back the mystery of iniquity but tend to reduce the mystery of iniquity was gone. And the mystery of iniquity was then let free to work in the church and develop and grow and grow as it did.

I said this morning, that from this chapter I had seen that I was mistaken in my previous view that the mystery of iniquity was the result of the coming together of the apostate Christian church with paganism. I came to learn that the mystery of iniquity was already in the church way back here at Pentecost shortly after the cross of Calvary.

And that thing, as a seed in the church, quietly, solidly and certainly grew and grew, until it caused the apostasy. So that inward apostasy—one stream of the mystery of iniquity simply met with another stream of the mystery of iniquity—and the two together went ahead to build that awful and fearful thing—the papacy.

What a solemn and fearful warning, therefore, comes to us in the story of Paul as prisoner back there in the days of the Jews.

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<sup>48</sup> A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th-16th Century* (1913), Chapter 9, "The Reformation Guidance of the Church," p. 189.

How startling and surprising it is to find that right there in the very heart of the work, among those leaders in Jerusalem, there was that spirit, that attitude which made them to be princes of the Gentiles and caused there to raise in the church that dreadful apostasy which resulted in those centuries of the dark ages—from way back in Paul’s own day, as he stated, it “does already work.” 2 *Thessalonians* 2:7. And the mystery of iniquity continued working right down to 1798, for almost two thousand years.

### **Consequences Often Unfold Slowly**

One thing which has deeply impressed me as I read the word of God, is this: decisions made in one day may not bring very much effect in that day, or shortly after. But the full reaping, the full harvest of that decision might be two or three hundred or thousand years away.

In the history of the French Revolution, Sister White makes the point that what took place there was the coming to full flower of the decisions made by against the Reformation three hundred years before:

#### **The Great Controversy, p. 265:**

In the sixteenth century the Reformation, presenting an open Bible to the people, had sought admission to all the countries of Europe...

In one country, though the light found entrance, it was not comprehended by the darkness. For centuries, truth and error struggled for the mastery. At last the evil triumphed, and the truth of Heaven was thrust out...The nation was left to reap the results of the course which she had chosen. The restraint of God’s Spirit was removed from a people that had despised the gift of His grace. Evil was permitted to come to maturity. And all the world saw the fruit of willful rejection of the light.

The war against the Bible, carried forward for so many centuries in France, culminated in the scenes of the Revolution. That terrible outbreaking was but the legitimate result of Rome’s suppression of the Scriptures.

If the leaders way back then could have looked down the years and seen the results of that course of action, then they might have made a very different decision at that point of time. So, likewise, if those leaders in Jerusalem, who were so earnest to see God's work advance, could have seen there the full outworking of the choice they made at that point of time, I'm sure they would not have made it.

But now, you and I today have the advantage of all the unfolding of history in the past. And we can see today the outworking of choices made in the past. And, if we make the same choices Paul did back there and the same choice as those leading brethren did back there, then what will our future be? Another papacy, isn't that right?

It might not come in our lifetimes. It might be in our children's children's lifetime because time will tarry again, if we make those kinds of decisions. And so, therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we plainly make decisions, which will not cause us to repeat their history. We must learn from their mistake to make the right choice today.

You have read in the *News Review* that there came a crisis down in Australia. That crisis came as a wonderfully exact repetition of this whole history back in the Jewish church. And I found myself very much in Paul's position. The leading brethren in "Jerusalem" (which today is Palmwoods as the world center of the work today, as Jerusalem was back there) were counseling me to return and go back to the original form we had in church organization. It was to me something of a perplexity.

But as I read the story of Paul, and saw how that I was in the exact same position as Paul was there, it was easy then to see what to do—very easy. It gave me the courage to do it. And I must say the Lord has really blessed in that decision ever since that point of time.

Paul, down through those years, refused to follow their directions. But when he finally did it, then he gave Satan the opportunity to terminate his ministry and bring that work to an end.

## Summary

How I pray that each one of us will so learn the great lessons to be found in this chapter, that we will:

- hate the mystery of iniquity with all our hearts and souls, and spirits;
- come out of Babylon as we have never come out before, taking steps further and further away from that great system of apostasy;
- learn the lessons that come to us from the past and make decisions day by day in regard to these great issues that will keep us always on the side of God and make us triumphant victors in this last great conflict.

Because truly, only those will stand successfully as God's servants in this last great conflict who while fully revealing the character of God, will thereby have nothing of the mystery of iniquity, but only the fullness of the mystery of God.

This study on church order and organization is only a continuation and extension of the study earlier in the week of God's character. It's all the same story. And I said to one of my brothers today that we are busy studying church order and organization, but what are we doing really? We are studying the gospel. This is the gospel!

And as you've come to recognize, it's impossible in this movement to study anything in the Bible without it being the gospel of Jesus Christ: be it prophecy, doctrine, history as we have it before us now—anything you would like to name. Everywhere there is only one message throughout the whole book and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So I trust that these few thoughts today, will help us to understand the issues of the hour.

## 9. The Price of Human Election

**B**EFORE we begin to draw the parallel of which I spoke earlier between our own experience today and that of the Apostle Paul back there, I wish to take up from the Bible some more instances of human election and the rather sad results of what took place in consequence of the stepping aside of those folk from the direct way of God.

Already, we have seen what took place when Christ chose eleven and men chose the one. The outcome was very clear and sharp and distinct.

### **Kadesh Barnea**

In the book of *Numbers* there is a second witness to this great truth. The Bible says,

#### **Matthew 18**

<sup>16</sup> ...in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

#### **2 Corinthians 13**

<sup>1</sup> This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

#### **Deuteronomy 19**

<sup>15</sup> One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

#### **1 Timothy 5**

<sup>19</sup> Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

And the Old Testament must provide the witness as much as the New. We're going to find that we don't have merely one or two or three, but quite a number of witnesses in the Word of God to make very clear to us the disastrous results of turning aside

from divine Leadership to human leadership. In the first verse in this chapter we have the following words:

### **Numbers 13**

<sup>1</sup> And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Send your men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall you send a man, every one a ruler among them.

<sup>3</sup> And Moses by the commandment of the Lord sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

According to these verses then, it was God's plan that the twelve spies should go into the Promised Land. Let's turn to *Deuteronomy* and the story begins to unfold a little further:

### **Deuteronomy 1**

<sup>19</sup> And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great a terrible wilderness, which you say by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh Barnea.

<sup>20</sup> And I said unto you, You are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God does give unto us.

<sup>21</sup> Behold, the Lord your God has set the land before you: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has said unto you; fear not, neither be discouraged.

<sup>22</sup> And you came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and what cities we shall come.

<sup>23</sup> And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe.

And they went. Whose idea was it? Man's idea. How then, do we reconcile the two? I think you know the answer already. Back in *Numbers*, chapter 13, God is simply instructing man as to how to do things man's way. In the book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, we are told the full story of what did take place:

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 387:**

Eleven days after leaving Mount Horeb the Hebrew host encamped at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from the borders of the Promised Land. Here it was proposed by the people that spies be sent up to survey the country. The matter was presented before the Lord by Moses, and permission was granted, with the direction that one of the rulers of each tribe should be selected for this purpose.

The men were chosen as had been directed, and Moses bade them go and see the country, what it was, its situation and natural advantages; and the people that dwelt therein, whether they were strong or weak, few or many; also to observe the nature of the soil and its productiveness and to bring of the fruit of the land.

So then, the sequence is finally revealed for us in this chapter. First of all, the people of Israel came to the borders of the Promised Land. God said to them:

“Now you have come to this place, go in and possess it.”

That was the word of God to them, but the people said:

“No, we want first of all to send some spies to search out the land.”

So Moses went to God and said to God:

“This is what the people want.”

And God said:

“Very well, if that is what the people want, do what they want, but I will tell you how to do it.”

So God gave them directions on how best to do it man’s way. And so these twelve men were sent into the Promised Land.

Up until this point, all the way from Egypt across the Red Sea, down to Mount Sinai, and now up to Kadesh Barnea, where they now were on the borders of the Promised Land, the people of Is-

rael had been led by God, in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. And this God was not God the Father, it was Christ in person. So Jesus Christ was the God who was there in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

At that time, therefore, Jesus was the Head of the church over all things in that church. And it was He who decided whether they would stay or go on, and by what way they would go. He was their leader and their director. And the duty of the people was simply to follow day by day where the cloud led them.

If you had been there, and you came to Moses one night and said to him:

“Moses, do we stay here tomorrow or go on tomorrow?”

He would say:

“I don’t know, wait till the morning, and watch the cloud. That will tell you.”

Because Moses, was not the Head of the people of Israel. He was another member along with the rest. Certainly, he occupied a position of greater responsibility. He did a larger work, than any of the rest. For he was God’s special mouthpiece to Israel, but nothing more than that. He was not a president, he was not a king, he was not a ruler, and he was not a lawmaker.

Clear proof for that comes to us from the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, where we find the following comments so far as the situation in Israel, up until the time when the Jews desired a king:

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603:**

The government of Israel was administered in the name and by the authority of God. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. This was, and continued to be, the condition of Israel’s existence as a nation. From age to age men inspired by God were sent to instruct the people and to direct in the enforcement of the laws.

And note the words:

The work of Moses...was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation.

So they were not lawmakers, they were simply administrators of what God himself had already given to them. So, Moses did not decide day by day where the children of Israel should go.

With unflinching care and with infallible perfection, God or Jesus Christ as their Head had led that vast body of people safely and securely through the wilderness and brought them, as promised, right to the borders of the Promised Land.

### **Moses and the Seventy Elders**

Up until that point, what had been the one and only system of order and organization so far as the church was concerned? Human election or divine appointment? Divine appointment, but with the exception of the tragic selection by Moses of the seventy elders.

In the same book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, we find the story of the events which led up to the selection by Moses of the seventy elders. The people were back to their old habitual practice of complaining and murmuring. I think they wanted flesh at this point of time, and the mixed multitude were the biggest problem:

#### **Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 379-380:**

The heart of Moses sunk, He had pleaded that Israel should not be destroyed, even though his own posterity might then become a great nation. In his love for them he had prayed that his name might be blotted from the book of life rather than that they should be left to perish. He had imperiled all for them, and this was their response. All their hardships, even their imaginary sufferings, they charged upon him; and their wicked murmurings made doubly heavy the burden of care and responsibility under which he staggered. In his distress he was tempted even to distrust God. His prayer was almost a complaint.

## **Numbers 11**

<sup>11</sup> Wherefore have You afflicted your servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in your sight, that You lay the burden of all this people upon me?

<sup>13</sup> Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat.

<sup>14</sup> I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

Once again we find that, whenever the church cries out to God for something, even though it be in a lack of faith, God will always give to a church or to the individual the freedom of his own choice. Over and over again does this come true.

- When the people wanted a king, God gave them a king.
- When Moses complained to God that he wanted helpers, God gave him helpers.
- When the church wanted to get rid of Paul, God let Paul go from them.

What a solemn warning there is in that for us—never to come to God asking for something which will be, because of our lack of faith, not for our own good. In this instance, what was Moses saying?

“I can’t bear all this alone; there must be helpers and assistants.”

### **Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 380:**

The Lord hearkened to his prayer, and directed him to summon seventy men of the elders of Israel—men not only advanced in years, but possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience.

## **Numbers 11**

<sup>16</sup> And bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, [He said,] that they may stand there with you.

<sup>17</sup> And I will come down and talk with you there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon you, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that your bear it not yourself alone.

The Lord permitted Moses to choose for himself the most faithful and efficient men to share the responsibility with him.

Before I go one word further, I want you to notice the sequence here. Up until this point of time Moses had, as God's ordained messenger, operated exclusively by divine appointment. But here, we come to a point where he loses faith in God, and he complains to God. And when he lost faith in God, then straightaway, what did he call for? Human elections. And the pattern of history is:

The people of God walk with Him in living faith and God alone is the Head and Guide in the church. And then comes a loss of faith, and as surely as there is a falling away, what do the people go back to? Human election. And here that great man of God, Moses, did that, surprising as it may seem. And so the Lord permitted Moses; it wasn't God's plan; it wasn't God's wish; it was Moses' wish. And in response to his lack of faith, God...

**Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 380:**

...permitted Moses to choose for himself the most faithful and efficient men to share the responsibility with him.

The nearer men walk to God, the clearer and sharper are their perceptions, and the better are they able to assess the value of the character of men who are to bear burdens. And of all the people in his day, Moses walked the nearest to God, and therefore had the sharpest perception. Therefore, this would be the most ideal situation for human election, because the man with the best judgment in the whole camp of Israel made the selection of these seventy men. So, therefore, if ever human election was going to work this must be the time. Let's read on and see the results:

Their influence would assist in holding in check the violence of the people, and quelling insurrection; yet serious evils would eventually result from their promotion. They would never have been chosen had Moses manifested faith corresponding to the evidences he had witnessed of God's power and goodness.

But he had magnified his own burdens and services, almost losing sight of the fact that he was only the instrument by which

God had wrought. He was not excusable in indulging, in the slightest degree, the spirit of murmuring that was the curse of Israel. Had he relied fully upon God, the Lord would have guided him continually and would have given him strength for every emergency.

Let's look at the picture. Here was living faith and here was a loss of faith. I won't say lack of faith, because that seems to carry the idea of no faith at all. If you lack something, you just don't have it, do you? But there had been a loss of faith, and that means a percentage loss, not a total loss, of faith on the part of Moses who had much faith. When there was faith, we have divine appointment only. When we have loss of faith, what do we have? Human election. When we have divine appointment, we have only success. When we have human election, what do we have? Failure—which is an evil thing.

The witness of the Word of God tells us this story over and over again—in the case Moses, in the case of the twelve apostles, in the case of Paul back in his day, and as we shall see in a moment, likewise, in the case of the story at Kadesh Barnea.

Apart from this particular situation here with Moses at that time, the children of Israel had been led exclusively by divine appointment up to the very borders of the Promised Land.

### **Appointment of the Magistrates**

You may raise the question here, what about Moses appointing those seventy magistrates at the advice of Jethro? It's very simple. As we read from A. T. Jones, there are two kinds of government. There is, first of all, the church. And the church is for those who can govern themselves, by the Spirit under Jesus Christ the Head.

What else do we have? We have Caesar. And Caesar in this place doesn't simply represent the Roman government; it represents any kind of government such as the U. S. government, the Australian government, the German government, the British government, and so forth. Back in the days of Moses, Caesar symbolized the civil government of that people, and that government

was recognized by God, as Jones puts it, to govern those who could not govern themselves, and therefore had to be governed by somebody else.

In the church where Christ is the Head and every man is his own governor by the Spirit under Christ, we have the system of divine appointment. But where you have Caesar, then you have the system of human election. Therefore, wasn't Moses entirely in the right in choosing seventy magistrates for the civil side of the business? Human election is the principle that operates where men must be governed because they can't govern themselves. So we must distinguish between the seventy magistrates, and the seventy elders. It is a different situation altogether. And this distinction, I think, is quite important.

### **Back to Kadesh Barnea**

We come back to Kadesh Barnea. They had come out from the land of Egypt; they had gone down to the peninsula of Sinai and had come up to Kadesh Barnea, which was on the very borders of the Promised Land on the west side of the Dead Sea. From Kadesh Barnea, there was just a short journey up into the actual Promised Land. When they got there, the people said:

“We want to change the order of our way of doing things. We want to have a committee of men, and this committee of men will go and do for us what God previously had done for us.”

Let's look again at what the people said:

#### **Deuteronomy 1**

<sup>22</sup> And you came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us.

Who had previously gone before them? God had. The people now wanted men to go where God had previously gone. Was this putting men in the place of Christ in the church? Most certainly. So they said:

## **Deuteronomy 1**

<sup>22</sup> ...We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come.

Who had already done that for them? God had done it. So, again, they were putting men in the place of Christ.

<sup>22</sup> ...and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come.

So the people said, “We want these men now.” And this committee of men—twelve they turned out to be, under God’s direction one from each of the tribes as representative of all of the people; the only tribe not included was Levi, the thirteenth tribe;—were to do for Israel that which Christ was to have done and had previously done. Because, up until this moment, Christ had decided day by day by what way they would go. But now they called upon God to have a change in the order of things, so that men should stand in the place of Christ to them, and to do the work of Christ to them.

When those twelve men accepted that responsibility, what did they become to those people? They became “princes of the Gentiles” over them. And what did those people become? They became Gentiles. And so we see those people setting up the mystery of iniquity right there in the church of God on the very borders of the Promised Land.

So those men went in to spy out the land, and ten of them came back with a very adverse report, while only two of them came back with a good report, namely: Caleb and Joshua.

One thing, which is very strange, is Moses’ response:

<sup>23</sup> And the saying pleased me well.

Isn’t that strange? I wonder why Moses was pleased about it? Apparently, he didn’t understand the implications. Somewhere

Moses failed to really see or perhaps, because of the people's unbelief, God did not reveal to Moses the real nature of this thing.



Let's look at the results. Back to those ten men. Previously, the people had said:

“These men will bring us back what we are to do.”

And those men came back and said to the people:

“You can’t go in there. Those men are too big for you, and the land is an impossible proposition—better we had died back in the land of Egypt.”

Then the people stood by what they had said and they followed those men instead of turning back to God. What was the result? Think about it. Not one of those people who cried out for that human committee to take the place of God—not one of them ever saw the Promised Land. What a fearful outworking of their decision. If they had obeyed the voice of God when the Lord said,

“Go up and possess the land,”

—then how many of them would have occupied the Promised Land? Every single one of them. But, they said to the Lord:

“Let’s change the divine order to human election; let’s have a committee of men to lead us and to guide us, to make our decisions for us, to do our planning and so forth, to determine which way we shall travel.”

When they made that decision and set up the mystery of iniquity in the place of the mystery of God, then they closed the doors to the land of Canaan against themselves. And that is a lesson for us today. We don’t dare disregard the warning of it.

The Levites were not involved. They were an unnumbered tribe. And the word says:

#### **Numbers 14**

<sup>26</sup> And the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

<sup>27</sup> How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

<sup>28</sup> Say unto them, As truly as I live, says the Lord, as you have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you:

<sup>29</sup> Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and *all that were numbered of you*, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

<sup>30</sup> Doubtless you shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Remember, Levi was not a numbered tribe. That's very easy to prove by going back to *Numbers* 2 and you will see that Levi was the thirteenth, or unnumbered tribe.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, there was no Levite among the twelve spies; every tribe but Levi had a representative in that journey into the Promised Land—so, the Levites were not included in this curse.

Mind you, some of the older ones certainly would have died in the wilderness, too; but many of them passed through Kadesh Barnea for the second time and deep into the Promised Land. That's very clear and plain.

### **The Work Could Have Been Finished**

Let's come back to the Apostolic church again. Remember how Paul had said:

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Paul expected, in the earlier days of his ministry, that the work should be finished in the days of the Apostolic church. And could it have been? Most certainly, it could have been. But, you say to me:

“If that is so, why do we have the great prophecies in the Old Testament of the 2,300 days and so forth?”

Those prophecies were written because God knew what was going to be, not in the light of what could have been. And, if the people of Israel had done what they could have done, then God would have never said 2,300 days...

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<sup>49</sup> **Numbers** 2 <sup>33</sup> But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses.

## **Daniel 8**

<sup>14</sup> ...then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

See the distinction? They could have gone in, but God knew they would not, so He wrote the prophecy in harmony with what they did not do.

So that church could have gone into the heavenly Canaan exactly as ancient Israel could have gone directly into the Promised Land. When the leading brethren in Jerusalem insisted and determined on maintaining the spirit of the mystery of iniquity to control Paul and made that decision against their conviction, when Paul came back to Jerusalem for the last time, then that decision at that point made it impossible for any one of them to see translation.

Instead, just as the Israelites did, every one of them went down to their graves. And that was bad enough, but beyond their deaths, down into the centuries, that which they had begun, kept on working and growing and developing until it became the flood tide of papal dogmas and iniquity.

Think very carefully today: How would any of us in this group at this moment care to make a decision as those men made that decision and have the outworking of that decision be the rise again, of the mystery of iniquity in the church of God today? You could hardly do a worse thing to God's cause, could you?

We, today, are in the blessed position to be able to see the whole span of those centuries, to see the making of that decision and the full outworking of that decision. And as we thus see the full outworking, we can be saved from passing along the same pathway, making the same mistake and bringing the same terrible and disastrous woes upon the earth.

### **Review of the Witnesses**

So, let's count the witnesses we have found so far. The first one we saw was the human election involved in the appointment of the twelve disciples, when Judas was elected, by himself, with the

support of the apostles. What was the result? He became a betrayer. It became a very sad and disastrous thing for the church of God.

But all those men appointed by divine appointment went on to become a great blessing to the church. Whereas, the one man appointed by human election became the betrayer of Christ and today possesses a name that is more abhorred than perhaps any other name in history.

Come back to Moses' day, and once again we have a mixture in the camp of Israel where we have part divine appointment and part human election. Moses—by divine appointment, Aaron and his sons—by divine appointment, the Levites—by divine appointment; but the seventy elders—by human election. Once again on the side of divine appointment, what do we find? Success, blessings, and so forth. On the side of human election, what do we find? Serious evils resulting from this thing.

We come down to Kadesh Barnea. Up until this point, there had been divine direction for Israel. Now there is a changing over from divine guidance to human guidance. What is the result? Disaster!—forty years of wandering in the wilderness and a million corpses lying in the desert. What a dreadful outworking of that decision.

We come down to Paul's day and here again, we see the insistence of leading men toward human direction, human control, human planning and human guidance in the church in the place of the guidance of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. Again, what was the result? Possibly a hundred million dead down through the centuries—thousands upon thousands of people tortured, Christian after Christian becoming martyrs and the great stranglehold of the papacy down there in the Middle Ages.

In these last days, we see in our own history up to this point, that God and God alone has been the leader of this people, that we've fellowshiped together as members—even though I as the one who has the larger responsibility, have been preaching this

word. I don't believe and I hope I haven't been a master to any of you. And if, so far, God has led us in this way, has so marvelously blessed us and opened more and more light to us, how could we, in the light of all that, go back to human election? Could we do it? Never.

And may God, through these great lessons of the past, give us such clear perceptions that we will never depart from these principles, that we'll find that we are a people whom the Lord can use, because they will not turn to human planning.

**Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300:**

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.

When men rise among us who want to control and dictate what moves shall be done, let's give them no sympathy and no support. Let's give them no footing at all in our thinking or in our beliefs. Let us let them know that their suggestions will have no place whatsoever among the true people of God.

This is my prayer as we come to this stage of our study, that the Lord will so bless us that this may be our future, and we avoid those terrible mistakes made by the men of the past.

Remember that we are not better than they. We are just as weak, if not weaker. We are just as frail, if not frailer. We are just as prone to make mistakes, if not more so. The only thing, which will take us through where they failed, is that we shall learn by their mistakes not to repeat them.

And when heaven comes, we will thank those men that they did pass over this ground to teach us the lessons that we might succeed where they failed.

## 10. The Crisis Over Divine Order

**W**E CAME into a situation in the group in Australia where there was an untidy condition in which we had part divine Leadership and order and part human organization.

Remember that in the history of Paul, it was some of the leading brethren in Jerusalem that were the ones that caused the difficulty back at that time. And already I've mentioned to you the name of Charlie Morgan who, as a leading brother in the Jerusalem center of today, likewise began to be in serious difficulty.

I don't intend to say a great deal about personalities anymore than I absolutely have to. But I do want to trace the cause to the effect in this particular situation to understand better just what we were dealing with in our problems down there.

### **The Beginning of the Trouble**

Over the years, we have been aware of the fact that there were certain difficulties that Charlie was wrestling with and we recognized his need of help and prayed most earnestly for him in this particular area. But tragically, the time came when we began to be aware that his experience was seriously slipping. We knew from the following evidences:

Many times he would come across to our place, especially on Sabbath afternoon, and we would sit down, for two or three hours, sometimes, and just discuss spiritual things. And we would have a very fine experience and fellowship together. But there came a time when, as certain difficulties began to press his life, that it became increasingly difficult to engage in a spiritual conversation with him. This distressed us very greatly.

At the same time, we began to get some letters back from far distant believers, with the following request, in regard to their tape recorder studies, which they were getting from Sabbath to Sabbath. In Australia, we run a service for believers in outpost

positions. We record the Sabbath School and church service every week at Palmwoods and send this around on kind of a circuit—each believer listening to it on Sabbath and mailing it to the next one, and so on until it comes back to us to be re-recorded.

During my absence, Brother Morgan always took the church service, and very often the Sabbath School lesson. And a time came when believers in these far-flung places began to request that we would not send any more studies by Brother Morgan because they had lost all spiritual interest for them. I won't say more, as I do not wish to speak about personalities.

But then, as fellowship began to break down in spite of our efforts to repair the breach, it grew worse and worse. The time came when, at the last camp meeting, one or two people began to raise questions as to why the committee was not meeting as a proper and official committee every three months or six months, or yearly at least, to plan the work and do all these kind of things.

There was a bit of stir around the camp meeting, and so I approached the two committee members who were staying on the campground, Brother Cameron and Brother Hunter. We sat down and we reviewed very carefully the history of our past and we agreed that we had left things in a very untidy state of affairs; and that this thing ought to be corrected—corrected by doing away with everything that had been put there by human election, and leaving God to run the movement; each one acting his part in regards to direction, counseling together at times and praying together, but leaving the decisions always in God's hands.

Shortly after camp, I went to Charlie Morgan again to discuss the problems which were besetting him in relationship with us, and in the course of the conversation I also laid the same matter before him. And at first, remembering the stand he had taken previously, he agreed with the position I had laid down.

A few weeks later he called me on the telephone and said that he had very carefully restudied the whole organization question and felt that we were in a very wrong position and needed to go

back to the same kind of organizational structure as was found in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And what is more, he had done some searching in the Spirit of Prophecy, and had three or four pages of statements to present to me. Well, I was interested to hear them.

Then, there began quite a succession of interesting happenings after that. Before he came to present them to me, Brother Hunter came up from Grafton—about seven miles south from where we live—and he also had this same long list of statements. We sat down together, and I said to him,

“Well, if those statements apply to our position today, then obviously, we have to go back to that kind of organizational structure. But I want to know if that is so, why God led us as He did in our past history in the experience in which I related to you this morning.”

So, after doing more careful study into the matter, we began to find the evidences which I have been outlining to you in these studies.

In the meantime, we had a man working for us as a gardener. His name is Jack Sleman. And Christina Ferguson whom many of you folks know, she was a Californian sister who was living in the old house there by our place. These two folk got together a great deal and unfortunately both of them seemed to have something of a grudge against life, especially Jack. He seemed to be very anti-government, anti-organization, anti-everything. And he seemed to be very disappointed in life, he has not made anything of himself. He said that with his own lips, so I can say it without fear of misinterpreting what his position is. And these two folks got together and murmured their discontent to each other until they really were in quite a bad frame of mind.

Then, about this time, Charlie Morgan, seeing that I was not going to yield too easily or at all to his proposition in regard to organization, began to travel among the believers. First very quietly but the word came back to us and I let him do it. I didn't chase

after him. Because I had my work to do and I do what is at hand to be done. The result was that very soon he had stirred up a lot of questions in the minds of people within a radius of about three or four hundred miles of home.

The agitation became more and more intense until finally, as we had another meeting together and got nowhere altogether, I said to him,

“Well, I simply can’t continue to labor under these conditions. I have to know just what the believers want and plan to do, so far as organizational structure is concerned. And so, what we must do now is to gather together as many of the believers as is possible here in Palmwoods over a weekend, as soon as possible, and then lay before them the situation as it stands.

“You can present all of your evidences to your case; and I will present the truth as I see it to be the truth, and then the church must decide what it understands to be God’s will in this matter and make their choice in one way or the other. So, we either have totally divine order and organization or totally a human organization under God. It must be one or the other—no hybrids or mixes in between.”

And I assured him that I wouldn’t put any pressure on the church. I would simply lay out the case before them, and then they could make the decision. Whatever they wanted, God would give them and I certainly wouldn’t stand in their way either.

Well, he heartily agreed with this, and thought it was a very splendid idea, apparently because he thought his case was so strong and that the believers stood behind him anyway, that things would go the way he thought they should go. So, I went back to work and intimated to all the believers within six hundred miles of the intended meeting.

I said to Charlie Morgan,

“Now you are the one who is challenging an established position, so you should go first in this presentation.”

He said,

“No, you go first and when you are finished, I may ask you a few questions and make a few recommendations and I may present a few statements, but you go first.”

“Very well,” I said, “If you wish, I will go first.”

So, the believers gathered together.

### **Background of the Five Objectors**

Now just for a little background, I'd like to describe the five people or the positions of the five people that joined together in this mood to restructure the organization of the group down there in Australia: There was Charlie Morgan and his wife, Kathy. They were very strongly together in this position.

But they looked to a certain woman who was a widow as their main supporter. This was Mrs. Woolrich. Before her husband died, Mrs. Woolrich was married to a man who was a Jew, and this man had put together some rather personal views in regards to the atonement. After his death, Sister Woolrich took upon herself the burden of carrying on for her husband's sake, the doctrines which he had espoused.

I'm not very clear what she does believe, but apparently she denies totally that the atonement began back in 1844 even though *The Great Controversy*, most explicitly says it does. And when shown these statements, she opens up the Spirit of Prophecy and she reads the statements, and she says:

“How dare Sister White write such things. How dare she!”

If I had a person backing my cause with those kind of sentiments, I would wonder about my cause, wouldn't you? I certainly would.

Back in *Ezekiel* 28, it says in regard to Lucifer, that his wisdom was corrupted because of his brightness or because of his pride in his brightness. And I have always seen that the wisdom of those who turn away from the pure principles of scripture does become

corrupted. They can't think straight anymore. You watch and see if this isn't true.

Maybe some of you have already observed this in respect to some of those folk who have left us. Once they could reason so intelligently, so solidly, and suddenly they lose that reasoning power and their thinking is so distorted, it is unbelievable.

And so, I noticed too, that when Charlie Morgan lost his spiritual experience, he also lost his sense of spiritual values and he very strongly acclaimed Mrs. Woolrich of being a very fine Christian woman. But, I could never class as a fine Christian person one who disparaged Christ's messenger. Because the Spirit of Prophecy tells me that if you reject Christ's messenger (which Sister White was), then who do you reject? You reject Christ. And if you reject Christ, can you be a Christian? Impossible.

So this, then, was the main support which Charlie Morgan had and that gave me tremendous confidence to know that our position could not be so wrong after all.

Then, there was Jack Sleman and Christina Ferguson and I must class both of these as evil surmisers on the following basis: When Ellis Hunter came up to visit us, he went to talk to Jack. And Jack said to Ellis:

"I'm very worried about things here. There are so many things going on in this place that if you just knew about them, you would just be horrified."

And Ellis said,

"Well, what are they?"

And so, Jack then painted a long list of terrible grievances against me personally and against Margaret also. And Ellis said to him,

"Well, that is serious."

Then he said,

“What proof do you have that these things are so?”

And Jack said,

“I have no proof at all; I only think that these things are true. I’ve got no proof, but I’m looking for it.”

And Christina gave the same answer. That is just plain evil surmising, isn’t it? And those are the kind of people that join together in what I would describe as a rebellion, as an attempt to undo what God has been building up over all these years. And I mention this because the attitude and the approach of people that stand in regard to God’s truth is a very important factor in these considerations.

### **The Gathering in June**

So on this weekend early in June, the believers came together. And I made up my mind I would not exclude anybody: all the new ones who had just come into the faith together with all the old ones. I said to myself,

“They’ll have to face it sooner or later, so better sooner than later.”

And so they came. We had about fifty believers present there on this weekend. As you have seen, the presentation of this subject is very much the preaching of the gospel; so I have no qualms about preaching it on the Sabbath day. We started at eleven o’clock in the morning, and I continued all through the afternoon, and finally completed my work shortly, in the early evening study at seven o’clock that night.

What I presented to them was exactly what you have heard here, although not by any means as powerful, because the message has become that much clearer and plainer in my mind since I first gave that first presentation. When I finished, I said to the believers:

“Are there any questions that you would like to ask or any comments that you would like to make?”

And I included, too:

“Did anybody else wish to raise any objection to this position?”

So I invited questions, comments, or objections. I got no questions, I got no comments, I got no objections. What I got was a wonderful testimony meeting. I hadn't even asked for it. And the believers came to their feet one after another to testify that they were one hundred percent for divine Leadership. There was only one Head and that was Jesus Christ, and no one else but He.

And they wanted to be finished with committees, voting, presidents, and all those kind of things, forever. Because they remembered the words of A. T. Jones in the *1893 General Conference Bulletin*, where he points out that you don't have to hear both sides of the question when it is a matter of truth and error:

And then another way the people have of getting at the truth is to hear both sides of it. You have heard that thing yourself. “That is one side,” they say, “but now I want to hear the other side before I decide.” What is one side of the truth? Well, here is one side of the truth, and there is the other side of the truth. Then where is the truth? You get on the either side of the truth and it is error. I have heard one side, and I want to hear another side of it! Then how can I tell what is the truth, anyhow?

But suppose I have heard actual truth (and that is the need of it), and I am not satisfied until I hear the other side. What is the other side? Taking this one side to be the truth, what is the other side? Error. Then we can decide best what is truth by hearing a lot of lies, can we?

“Well,” says one, “I have heard your side of it, and it looks to me as though it were true, but I want to hear the other side!” The truth is the word of God. Then he proposes by waiting to hear the other side, to know whether it is true or not by comparing it with a lot of lies and thus make a lot of lies a test of the truth.

We do not want to hear the other side. All we want is the truth.<sup>50</sup>

When it is a question of a quarrel between two different people, then certainly, you must hear both sides of the question. But, when it comes to the truth, we don't have to hear all the error before we accept the truth.

For instance, how many of you heard all the arguments of Sunday, the Friday keeping, the Wednesday keeping, the Monday keeping, and all the other days' keeping, before you accepted the Sabbath? All we had to hear was the Sabbath truth and that was enough, wasn't it? As the word comes to truth and error, you don't need to hear both sides of the question. You need to hear the truth and the truth only, and that is sufficient for one to make the decision.

Yesterday and today I presented what I believe and, I think what you folk believe to be truth on this great question. Charlie would object that it is unfair that he wasn't given a chance to be free to present his side of the question. But, that's not necessary. Of course, if you folk want to hear him, he would jump at the opportunity to come and tell it to you. And that is your freedom, too.

But these folk down there on that Saturday night, they testified that as far as they were concerned they had heard all they wanted to hear and they were one hundred percent for divine Leadership and direction.

But I knew that there were only three of the five people present. But for some strange reason that night, Charlie Morgan and his wife didn't come. I don't know why, but they didn't come. But Jack Sleman was there, and so were the other two ladies. So I said:

“But now, is there anybody who wishes to speak on the other side?”

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<sup>50</sup> A. T. Jones, *1893 General Conference Bulletin*, Study 1.

And Jack Sleman stood to his feet and said:

“Yes, I do.”

“Well,” the believers said, “do it now.”

But he wouldn't do it then; he wanted to wait until the morning. So, I said to them all,

“Now, don't push him because he has his freedom. If he would rather speak in the morning, that's his freedom. Let him do it in the morning.”

And so, they resisted from the urging and we planned to meet the next morning at 8:00 am. I wish that you all could have been there, I really do.

I might mention that the whole program was tape recorded from the beginning on Sabbath morning, right straight through: every last comment, objection, question, argument, and everything else which came up. So, if you want to hear it all, then we can supply it to you from Australia, if you just write down there and request it.

You might not get it back too quickly, because our tape orders are a little bit behind. There are so many tape orders that we put out down there, it is quite tremendous. But we will be glad to send it. The best way is to send one copy of it, I suppose, and then it can be passed around between you in the circuit basis, if you want to hear it all.

### **The Morning Meeting**

At the morning Jack Sleman presented his case first. And we listened to it through, but the general comment of most of our folk was that it was rather confused. Sometimes he was supporting our position, and sometimes he was against it. We didn't really see and know what was on his mind.

And then Charlie Morgan followed him. And he spoke, I suppose, for an hour; presenting all these statements that applied to

the Seventh-day Adventist Church in her apostate condition which we understand to be God's instruction to them to organize the church which, having lost the Spirit, could not govern themselves under the Spirit.

He also used *Acts*, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter and tried to use that to prove that the early church personally chose these men and, therefore, we should do it too. When he was finished and sat down, I stood up and I said to the folks:

“Now I have no more to say. I'm not going to answer these arguments because yesterday I presented the case as I see it. You have heard that, and you have heard this. Now, I want to know how you feel about it. Do you want to hear more, because Charlie said he had a lot more to present? Or have you heard enough to make a decision now or what do you want to do?”

And those believers were absolutely spontaneous and instantaneous in a declaration that they'd heard all they wanted to hear. They knew what they believed, where they stood, and were prepared to make that stand.

Well, then Mrs. Woolrich spoke up and said:

“It's not fair that you had all the time you wanted. Why can't Charlie have all the time he wanted?”

And I said:

“Yes, he can, provided that everybody wants to hear him. He has the freedom to speak, but they also have the freedom not listen if they don't want to.”

And so, after about ten minutes of discussion, I again put the question to them. And again the answer came back just as quickly, just as firmly, they had heard all they wanted to hear and were prepared to take their stand as they believed. So, the time came then, when they would make their declaration. Then I explained very carefully:

“We are not casting a vote. In the casting of a vote, you are agreeing to abide by whatever the majority decides. There is a vast difference between that and declaring where you stand according to your own convictions. So when you make this a declaration of your convictions, you stand by those convictions no matter what the majority does.”

It is the same as when Joshua said to the people:

### **Joshua 24**

<sup>15</sup> Choose you this day, whom you will serve.

And all we were calling the folk to do was to declare what they believed to be the truth. So hurrying to explain this, I then asked them to be very careful to make this a personal conviction and not to stand for the one or the other because their neighbor did or didn't as the case may be.

I didn't really know just how deep their convictions were, but I asked all those who believed in their hearts that we should do according to God's way of order and organization to raise their hands. I was astonished at the swiftness and the firmness and the positiveness with which every one but those five raised their hand in instant declaration on where they stood on this question. Nobody looked to the left, no one looked to the right, no one looked behind them. They all looked straight-ahead and said,

“Here, I stand.”

Just like that! It was inspiring to say the least. It was a tremendous thing. And never in my life have I seen such a wonderful affirmation by the church of God as I saw that day.

When I called for those who felt the other way to raise their hands, Mrs. Woolrich instantly did. Jack Sleman raised his rather slowly. Christina stole a glance at Jack and when she saw his hand go up, she put hers up, too. But Charlie and Kathy Morgan didn't raise theirs at all. Then I said to them,

“We must, first of all, leave the question of undoing the past until we determine what we shall do in the future.”

So having come to the place where the church there was determined to carry on under God’s leadership alone, I then said,

“It is not enough to make confession of where we stand, we must now act upon that and act in harmony with that. And that means undoing that which in the past was done by human election.”

And they saw the point and they agreed to that.

I mentioned this morning the story of Saul and how he had the people there ask for a king, and God gave them a king. Then later, the people repented of their king and confessed to God they should never have had a king, but they still kept him. And from that time on, King Saul went from trouble to trouble and disaster to disaster in his reign in the land of Israel.

So, I was most anxious that we did not repeat that mistake. Most anxiously, we didn’t stop with merely confessing the wrongs of the past, but go right on to undo the wrongs of the past. Therefore, the committee was disbanded as a functioning body; and then the positions of each person who was working there in the print shop was taken up one by one.

But the one who had been the real center of personal attack in this whole thing was my wife, Margaret. For some reason—I think principally because when I am away, she has to carry the main burden of the work, and had to stand very firmly on principle a few times,—she was particularly disliked, or I may even use the word hated by the group who wanted to change things back to human organization and election.

And so, when her name came up for question to determine as to whether in the past she had been chosen by human election or divine appointment, not very much was said. Then brother Dixon stood to his feet and said:

“Now look, I know that there are a number of people here today who feel that Margaret is unfit to be in her position. And I think that is only right and proper for them to stand up and say so because this meeting is called to clear these things up.”

He was quite right, of course. Well, that really put the “fat in the fire.” And from that moment on, things really began to move in a most remarkable fashion—instantly.

“Well,” I said, “yes, good. If people have something to say, just say it now; don’t say it later. Say it now.”

And instantly Mrs. Woolrich stood up and said:

“Yes, I’ll speak.”

And she declared that Margaret, in her view, was totally unfit to be in the position she occupied. She described her as a slanderer, as a gossip monger, and all these kind of things.

“Well,” I said very quietly, “Now Mrs. Woolrich, as based on the Word of God, if you have a charge against an elder or worker in the cause of God, you must support that with two or three eye witnesses.”

All the rest of the five quickly affirmed that what Mrs. Woolrich said was the truth. They really weren’t giving an eyewitness account; they were just expressing their view in the matter. An eyewitness account means that you say that you personally saw, on this particular occasion, that this was done. And the other person testifies:

“I was there, and I saw it happen the same way.”

At this moment things were taken completely out of my hands and out of Margaret’s too, for that matter. Because when these five had said this, then Ron Shay stood up. He’s a young man who has come in from the Episcopalian Church, we call it the Church of England down there, who directly came out to this movement and has a very fine experience in this message; and he and his

young wife lived, I think, for about three years side by side with us in a little trailer house, and then down the path into the print shop, until they got their house built and so they had first hand observation of our living, day by day.

So instantly, Ron Shay stood to his feet and said to the group:

“I challenge the right of Mrs. Woolrich to witness at all in this room. She is not a believer in this message; she is not even a Seventh-day Adventist. She doesn’t even believe the Spirit of Prophecy. So what right does she have to witness in this room?”

Young Larry who many of you folk know, likewise stood up and supported that contention; but neither of them were able to carry a great deal of weight at the moment. They did start something off though.

But then Brother Ellis Hunter rose to his feet. And Brother Ellis Hunter is as Charlie Morgan also was. He is one of the members who were with us right from the very beginning back in Australia, and one of the men that I look to as one the leading spiritual pillars of the faith in that country. And he rose, at this point, to his feet.

And it’s impossible to really describe the way he rose. He seemed to rise up with a dignity and almost a majesty that commanded an instant respect around the whole room. And I know that he rose that day in the living power of the Spirit of God. And he spoke. He began to speak in a quiet, but very telling way. And he said to the group there:

“It has been my experience to spend many, many hours speaking with Mrs. Woolrich. I want to say today that she is not a Seventh-day Adventist, she is not a believer in this message; and she has no right whatsoever to speak in this congregation.”

He went on to tell a few more things that go back and support this, and without directly saying so, he conveyed the thought that the accuser was the one who was accusing for the very things she herself was doing.

Well, Mrs. Woolrich was standing up behind him, prepared to, I suppose, lever some more darts at us, and as Ellis spoke, she just sat down and never said another word and in a few minutes vanished from the room and I have never seen her since.

I don't know how many of you folk have read the last few *Messenger* articles by Wolfgang Meyer on the "Judgment of God." He points out that in the great judgment day, God will not say one word in His own defense or vindication; not one word. But those who have been recipients of His ministry, are the ones who will testify for Him. You and I will testify for Him. Christ will testify for Him, but God will never say a word. And that was the situation that day.

Believer after believer stood to their feet almost in indignation at the accusations which had been heaped against us. And people who lived right there in the home with us, who knew us personally, said they had not found us to be what these other folks said that we were.

In the end, Jack Sleman and Charlie Morgan both stood to their feet and almost apologized for what they had been saying previously. But they did not confess the erroneous charges they had made, but simply said:

"Well, if in the future, things will be improved then they would be very happy to go along with things as they were."

As I said, if you want to hear all of this in detail, it's all there on tape. I'm just giving you a very short summary of it.

About this time, Charlie excused himself and left. And after he had gone we just finalized the last few matters in the meeting, and then concluded about 2:00 pm on Sunday afternoon and all the folk went home.

### **Charlie Morgan's Activities**

For a short time, Charlie didn't come to our meetings. And we never saw him anymore. We figured that he had recognized the

fact that he had lost the day; that things were not going to go the way he thought they should; and, consequently, he would just go his own way and recognize the fact that the church had made their stand and there was no good in doing much about it.

But after two or three weeks he began to get over the shock apparently, and began to travel again. At Wallumbah he did find some support from two families; and this, I did not find surprising. In the first case, he found support from Brother Race whose articles you have read in the *Messenger* a few times.

Over the last twelve months this man has come up with a very strange doctrine. He is now teaching, without a doubt, that which is as much as adultery and just as much the doctrine of Antichrist as Babylon herself, because he is teaching that, while Christ came in sinful flesh, he came with sinless blood. And that's the doctrine of Antichrist, with modifications, or a variation to the theme.

I will explain to you the basis of this theory. It is as follows: He once saw a television program when he was out visiting one of his sons, his unbelieving sons. And he never watches television. But on this program was a scientific study of the way in which a baby is carried in the mother's womb. And as you all know, once a baby is conceived, the actual blood stream of the mother never passes through the baby's body at all. It has a blood stream of its own.

From that, he reasoned that the mother makes no blood contribution to the baby whatsoever. So, therefore, there is nothing of Mary's blood in Jesus, only of God's blood in Jesus. So, therefore, he has sinless blood but sinful flesh.

But the truly scientific fact of the case is this: That when the baby is conceived, both the mother and the father then give the child their contribution so far as the blood stream is concerned. And this is true by the fact that a baby may have his father's blood type or his mother's blood type or a mixture of both. That is the simple fact of the case.

And when the baby is carried in his mother's womb, the father's blood stream doesn't flow through the baby then either, if you think about it. So on the basis of this misunderstanding of physiology and because he also has certain unconquered problems in his life, he picked up this doctrine, presented it to me, and before he even presented to me he said:

"Fred won't accept this—no way."

How right he was. And he told me that this was the great light that would finish the work. And even though I patiently sat there with him for a number of hours and tried to show him the wrong physiological basis for his argument even, he wouldn't see it because he said:

"This is the truth."

When a man departs from God's truth to that extent and holds the doctrine of Antichrist which is the mystery of iniquity, then what kind of organization will he accept? The organization of the mystery of iniquity.

So when Charlie went to him, it was impossible for him to do anything else but to accept Charlie's position. And I knew that.

And with the second family in Wallumbah, there was a situation about three years ago, where they became involved with another family. It was the kind of situation where it was impossible for this to happen without both sides being guilty. Both sides had to be guilty.

But, while the other family came right and made a complete open confession of what they had done, and faced the truth about themselves, this other family would not face the truth about themselves. And so when they came out on the wrong side of that test, when this test came, they were still on the wrong side. And naturally they too took up the side of Charlie Morgan. But that's the limit of it.

So far as the rest of Australia was concerned, every believer is absolutely solid and decided on this great question. Later I spent some time in Sydney, laid the whole case before the folks there and again down in South Australia, up in North Queensland, and all these folk are just as clear on this question as they can be.

But when down in Wallumbah, Charlie made the statement that he felt that it was his absolute responsibility to save this movement from the evil influence of Margaret and myself, and that he must travel the length and breadth of Australia and see all the believers. And if the letters he would write to America were not sufficient, if those letters didn't do the work, he would even come to America.

He can come, if he wants to, as far as I am concerned. Any of you who wish to take that line can also do so if you wish, because that's your freedom and your freedom entirely. But I know this, that he will not get very far in his efforts. Like all of those who have risen up before him, they will blaze for a short time across the sky and then go out never to be seen again.

In the meantime, it is interesting to note that very serious troubles have been afflicting him. For instance, his second youngest son, who must be between thirty-five and forty years of age, who has lived quite a real bad worldly life—he is quite a solid drinker,—had a trucking business. He was hauling sand and gravel. It is not the first one he has had because over the years the father has financed him in a number of these things. And I think Charlie has lost to the tune of something like thirty or maybe forty thousand dollars because of the irresponsibility of his boy.

So once again last year this son appeared with another truck. And we said:

“Surely Charlie hasn't financed him again.”

Well, the newspaper headlines came out the other day that this man was facing a very serious charge because he had done some fraudulent thing about the truck. He hadn't kept up payments,

and sold it or something. And I don't know what happened for sure. A big court case was scheduled to happen in Townsend, up in North Queensland. Charlie had to make a rush trip up there and the court case was postponed and is due sometime about the present moment. What is going to happen, we don't know.

In the meantime, this young man, Ian, went fishing one night with dynamite up at a dam. That is about twenty miles from our home. And with him was another friend, and they got their fuses mixed up or something, and the explosion went off in the hand of the friend, blew his hand off, and he was taken to a hospital. And it is very doubtful if he will come out with his eyesight anymore.

Down in north New South Wales, the brother I mentioned that didn't face the truth about himself a few years ago, suffered a very serious accident and is now in the hospital with a broken back. So these folk are finally having more trouble than they can handle at the moment and they are very preoccupied with these kinds of things.

### **The Aftermath**

I might mention, by way of interest to you, that when I came face to face with this great question as to what I would do, I saw the parallel between our experience today and the experience of Paul. And as I saw there, the situation in which Paul stood and the results of his wrong choice and their wrong choice, imagine what courage that gave me to take the right stand on this question.

I might mention too, that considerable financial pressure is placed upon me in this matter. And I would say that there is about seven to eight thousand dollars of money which is not coming into this cause, because of the stand I have taken. I never mention names in connection with tithe because that is very improper, but one of the people involved in this down there in Australia has recently sold his property and he told one of our folk up north that he had four thousand dollars that he wouldn't pay into this movement unless things went his way. I said:

“That’s okay; it doesn’t move me in the least because the very moment I begin to bend to the pressure of money, that’s the end of my ministry as an effective worker! And the Lord can take care of our needs. That’s His responsibility. My task is to preach the truth, not to worry about money.”

Another family, I know,—well, another group of people, who were very disturbed over the subject of God’s character here, I think have about three thousand dollars in tithe money which they likewise have failed to turn in because of my stand on this question. And so these are some of the experiences we have been through.

I should mention too, that toward the end of last year, Charlie wrote letters to North Queensland, in which he said quite plainly that this message and this work would be blessed no more. There would be no more increase in membership; it wouldn’t advance or progress in any way until either Fred and Margaret were put out of their positions or they are brought under control. And he also said this verbally around Palmwoods as well.

He had hardly written this letter and got it into print as to his position and view when the work over here in the Washington, D. C. area was just really opening up so beautifully.

I had scarcely got home, and the work in Australia had begun to open up until, in the space of a bare six months, twenty-five souls had come into the movement and they are still coming in. That is the largest increase we have ever had in six months in the whole history of this movement before. We are accustomed to maybe seven or eight new believers a year in Australia. And here was twenty-five in six months or really three months, when they all came in and there were a few additional ones who came in since that time.

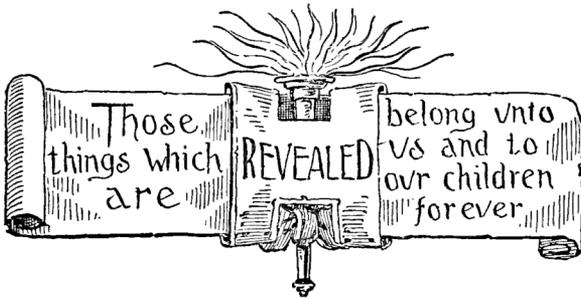
Well, what do you suppose he said?

“That’s the devil at work.”

That's what he said. But I know it isn't because those folks came in with the same living experience as before and I think this weeks meetings have testified to you folks, that I haven't lost my way spiritually, but the light is growing clearer and brighter.

I hate to talk about people. I loathe it. But this history is something you should be familiar with because it is a development of the great controversy. In the Bible God names people, talks about their course of action, and I think I have done this without attacking their characters anyway whatsoever. I hope I have. If there are any questions you would like on this matter, I will be very glad to answer them.

I should mention finally, in closing, that we made our decision back in 1966 to let God run the movement alone. The work has prospered wonderfully since that day. And in 1974, when we affirmed that decision, that's when the work has really begun to go ahead since that time, wonderfully to go ahead!



# Appendix A: The Reformation Guidance of the Church

By A. T. Jones

From: *The Reformation: 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Century*. Also published under the title, *Lessons from the Reformation*.

THE Reformers knew Christ's *guidance* of the Church as truly as they knew His headship of the Church. They knew that by the Holy Spirit the Lord Jesus personally guides the Church and personally guides each individual person who is of the Church.

## The Spirit to Everyone

In this they knew that the Holy Spirit is given to each individual Christian, and that by the Spirit the Lord Jesus gives himself personally to each individual Christian.

The Roman doctrine is that the Holy Spirit is given to "the church" and that "the church" bestows the Spirit on the individual in the ceremony of "confirmation."

By the light and power of God's truth, the Reformers were made free from that Romish superstition and monopoly. Wycliffe said:

Christ ever lives near the Father and is the most ready to intercede for us, *imparting himself* to the soul of *every wayfaring pilgrim* who loves Him.

Matthias said:

It is Jesus Christ himself, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever dwells in His Church, *and in each*, even *most insignificant portion* of it, holding together, sustaining and vitalizing the whole *and all the parts, directly* and from *within*, giving growth outwardly to the whole *and to each*, even the *most insignificant part*.

He is, therefore, himself the spirit and life of His Church, His mystical body.

Hus said:

Christ alone, on whom the heavenly dove descended as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, can bestow the baptism of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, in the absence of a visible Pope, inspired prophets to predict the future bridegroom of the Church, strengthened the apostles to spread the Gospel of Christ through all the world, led idolaters to the worship of the one only God, and *ceases not, even until now*, to instruct the Bride *and all her sons*, to make them *certain of all things* and guide them in all things that are necessary for salvation.

The Church has all that it needs, in the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and *ought to require nothing else. Nothing else can be a substitute for that.*

Accordingly, the Church is sufficiently provided for in the invisible guidance, and should need no visible one by which she might be made dependent.

Let us see in the Scriptures how truly and how fully in this they had the truth of God. At Pentecost, in the presence of that great outpouring of the Spirit, Peter said to the multitude:

### **Acts 2**

<sup>38</sup> ...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>38</sup> The promise is to you and to your children, and to *all them that are afar off*: even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

And further it is written:

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>7</sup> The manifestation of the Spirit is *given to every man* to profit withal.

<sup>11</sup> ...dividing to *every man, severally*, as *He* will.

<sup>13</sup> ...we have been *all* made to drink into one Spirit.

## **Luke 11**

<sup>13</sup> If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* shall your heavenly Father *give the Holy Spirit* to them that ask Him!

## **The Head of Each One**

All that Christ is to the Church He is to each individual who is of the Church. He is the Head of the Church. He is likewise the Head of each individual in the Church.

## **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>3</sup> I would have you know that the Head of every man is Christ.

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>18</sup> He is the Head of the body...

And in the very nature of things, *in that* He is Head of each particular member of the body.

## **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

## **Ephesians 5**

<sup>30</sup> For we are members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones.

When Christ shed forth the Spirit at Pentecost, He gave Him to all—to each individual personally, as well as to the Church as a whole.

When He by the Spirit came to the Church here, He came to each individual as truly as He came to the Church, and became the Head of each individual as truly as He is Head of the Church.

Indeed He is Head of the Church by being Head of each individual who is of the Church. First, Head of the individual; then Head of the *assembly* of these, of whom He is already the Head individually.

## **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>3</sup> ...the Head of every man is Christ.

### **Matthew 18**

<sup>20</sup> Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>22</sup> You are *built together* for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>18</sup> And He is the Head of the body...

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>22</sup> ...the Church,

<sup>23</sup> Which is...the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Thus Christ is not Head of the Church in only a general sense, but in the *most particular sense*. He is not Head by occupying the *chief position* and having charge of “the large affairs” of the Church, with the “details” left to others.

### **Head Over All to the Church**

He is Head of the Church in the widest and most intricate sense; for God,

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>22</sup> ...gave Him to be Head over *all things* to the Church.

He is the Head of everything that can ever pertain “*to*” the Church.

*Anything* of which He is not the Head *in the direct and full sense* in which He is Head of the Church—that thing does not reach the Church. Even though it be done in the name of the church, and as if in behalf of the church, if *He* is not the Head of it, it pertains to something else, it springs from *somebody else*, and comes just so far short of being *of* the Church or of pertaining “*to*” the Church.

And this is eternally right. In the eternal purpose, the Church is to be the expression of the fullness of all the perfections of God.

To the Church this is expressed, and can be expressed, *only from Christ* in whom all fullness dwells.

For *anything* of which He is not the Head and spring to reach the Church, or to be of the Church, would be only to mar or stain the divine perfection of the Church. And Christ is now engaged in sanctifying and cleansing the Church from all these things,

### **Ephesians 5**

<sup>26</sup> ...with the washing of water *by the Word*,

<sup>27</sup> That He may present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot nor wrinkle *nor any such thing*, but holy and without blemish.

The blessed work of preparing the Church for this glorious Presentation, the Lord Jesus *began* with the beginning of the Reformation, and He will now *finish* it. For we are *now* in the time of the finishing of the Mystery of God. He began it according to the original standard in His Word, and He will so finish it.

### **The Gifts of the Spirit**

And by that Word the whole operation in, the whole administration of, the affairs and interests that pertain to the Church—of “all things to the Church”—is Christ’s from God through the Spirit. As it is written:

#### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>4</sup> There are diversities of gifts, but the same *Spirit*.

<sup>5</sup> There are differences of administrations, but the same *Lord*.

<sup>6</sup> There are diversities of operations, but it is the same *God* which works all in all.

By gracious gifts from God through the Spirit, Christ himself, personally and directly, keeps His own divine mind and hand “over *all things to the Church*.” Therefore, in the Church of the Scriptures every responsibility is the gift of Christ direct by the Spirit; and is thus set in the Church by God himself personally.

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>8</sup> Wherefore when He ascended up on high, He...gave gifts unto men.

<sup>11</sup> And He gave some—apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

And so,

## **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>28</sup> God has set some in the Church. First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

<sup>8</sup> For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit;

<sup>9</sup> To another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

<sup>10</sup> To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

<sup>11</sup> But *all these* work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

The responsibility of “elders” or “bishops” is included in the gift of “governments”; for the word denotes a helmsman or pilot, who guides a ship. Yet in addition to this we are told plainly that *this* responsibility, as the others, is *the gift of the Spirit*. Paul, talking to elders only,<sup>51</sup> said to them:

## **Acts 20**

<sup>28</sup> Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which *the Holy Ghost has made you overseers*.

The responsibility of “deacon” is included in the gift of “helps”; for the word “deacon” signifies “a servant.”<sup>52</sup>

And all of this care of Christ in these gracious gifts, is for a double purpose. *First:*

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<sup>51</sup> Acts 20:17.

<sup>52</sup> Romans 16:1.

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>12</sup> for the perfecting of the saints, for the work perfecting of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

And *this*,

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

And the *second* purpose, the consequence of the first, is:

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>14</sup> *That you be no more children*, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

Thus Christ supplies all that is needed to bring the Church to perfection, and so protect her from all the powers of deception, and thus prepare her for the glorious Presentation.

## **The Recognition of the Gifts**

It should be repeated, that it may not be forgotten, that every responsibility in the Church is the direct gift of God by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

And the membership of the Church, by the Spirit are to be able to recognize the gift upon the individual and accordingly to recognize that individual in the place and work in the Church for which the gift has prepared him.<sup>53</sup>

For the Church is the body of Christ. And the will of the Head can be truly manifested *as that will is in Him*, only by the response, *in spirit* and in *the Spirit*, of the members of the body.<sup>54</sup>

The failure of James and the church in Jerusalem to recognize Christ's gift *of* Paul and *in* Paul to the Church, put Paul in Roman prisons to the day of his death (except a very short interval near the end), robbed the churches of Christ's wonderful revelations in

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<sup>53</sup> Acts 13:2-4; 6:3-5.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 6:10; Psalm 103:20; Ezekiel 1:20.

the mystery of God, and hastened the rise of the mystery of iniquity.<sup>55</sup>

And the failure of professed Christians to recognize Christ's spiritual gifts, is always of the mystery of iniquity. For it is but the manifestation of the natural against the spiritual, of the will of man against the will of Christ, and of *man* instead of *Christ*—of man in the place of God—in *the Church*.

Therefore, again let it be said: In the Scriptures and according to the order of God every responsibility in the church is the direct gift of God by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

### **Ordination vs. Election**

In the Scriptures there is no such thing as appointment or election *by men* in the Church, nor in the churches. There is *ordination*, but not election. And the ordination is the *act of response* of the members of the body to the will of their Head: *not* the endorsement nor the legalizing of it.

Elections came in from Greece, by those Greeks who in the “falling away,” had not the Spirit, and so had lost their Head. Appointments came in from Rome, when the Greek political system in church affairs was imperialized and the bishop of Rome became the head.

The Reformation threw off the Greco-Roman heathen political *naturalism*, and restored the *spiritual principle* of the divine order.

But there has been another falling away. Again the spiritual principle has been lost. In every denomination of professed Protestants the Greco-Roman naturalistic principle of human election and appointment prevails.

Yet they are not consistent even in this inconsistency. Only *some* of the responsibilities that rightly pertain to the Church are

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<sup>55</sup> *Galatians* 2:13; *Acts* 21:18—end; *2 Timothy* 1:15; 4:16; *Galatians* 1:15-16; *Ephesians* 3:2-5; *Colossians* 1:26-29; *2 Thessalonians* 2:3-10.

allowed to be subject to election or appointment: as deacons, elders, and others of “helps” or “governments.”

Evangelists, pastors, and teachers, stand in a sort of “twilight zone”—of the gift of God in a sense, but of no standing till “authorized” by appointment or vote of *men*.

Apostles, prophets, miracles, tongues, and all the rest are left wholly to God as *His* gifts: or even *denied to Him*, and *left out altogether*, as belonging only to primitive Christian times.

But when *men* can elect or appoint *some* of God’s gifts, why not all? If men have any authority at all, upon any ground or under any plea, to elect or appoint *any* of these, they have equal authority to elect or appoint all.

### **Usurping the Place of Christ**

When every responsibility known to the Scriptures, that pertains to the Church, is the direct gift of God by the Spirit himself in His own divine administration and kingdom, then what superior right or wisdom can *men* have *above God* to discriminate among them?

But deeper than that, what right can *men* have under any possible plea to assume any authority or control in the matter? It is all of the realm of God. All here relates exclusively to the kingdom of God. In all these things Christ is conducting the affairs of His own House.

What colossal presumption it is, then, for finite, fleeting *men* to assume to exercise dominion and authority *there!*

While Jesus was with His Church here those forty days after His resurrection, “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” what an arrogantly disrespectful and presumptuous thing it would have been for the disciples, *with Him present*, to take upon themselves the conducting of the affairs of His kingdom—and of course according to their thinking concerning the kingdom!

And how *much more* would it have been arrogantly disrespectful and presumptuous in them to do such thing *after Pentecost* when He was *more present* than He was in those forty days!!

And such only is it ever for anybody. Has not God sufficiently characterized that thing at its first appearance in the world—in the awful branding that He gave it as:

## 2 Thessalonians 2

<sup>3</sup> ...that man of sin...the son of perdition;

<sup>7</sup> ...the mystery of iniquity...

<sup>8</sup> ...that Wicked...

<sup>4</sup> Who opposes and *exalts himself* above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that *he as God* sits in the temple of God showing himself that *he is God*.

No, no, no. “The Church is *subject* unto Christ in *every thing*”: *not His superior*, nor even His *equal*, in any thing.<sup>56</sup> God will yet have *in this world* that Church that will be “subject unto Christ in *everything*.”

Out of all the Babylonish confusion of the two great fallings away *combined*, Christ calls all of His own *unto himself*, in *His own Church* which He is *now* sanctifying and cleansing with the washing of water *by the Word*, *preparatory* to her glorious Presentation.<sup>57</sup>



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<sup>56</sup> *Ephesians* 5:24.

<sup>57</sup> *Revelation* 17:5; 18:4.

# Appendix B: Important Decision

F. T. Wright

The News Review, June 1974

**I**N THE early days of this movement, as is always the case in every young movement raised by the Lord, there was the natural tendency to build an organizational structure like that of the church from which we had come. So it was that we started out to organize by using the system of human elections and appointment. This was the system employed in the churches from which we had come and in truth we knew no other system anyway even though the initial positions occupied in the work had been of divine and not of human appointment.

## **1964 – Human Election**

So it was that as we gathered together in July 1964 in New Zealand for a series of meetings just prior to my departure for the United States for the first time, that the believers addressed themselves to the fact that they believed that there was need for a full time worker in New Zealand seeing that I had transferred back to Australia and left the position of a full time worker in New Zealand vacant. The name of Brother Parsons was nominated and duly voted into the position by the vote of the people.

Six months later in Australia, we met for the first camp meeting here in this country and several afternoons were devoted to business meetings in which decisions were taken again by the vote of the people. This was when it was voted to give the publishing work a name, to appoint a committee to manage the affairs of the publishing department and so on.

## **1966 – A Correction**

But two years later there transpired events too long and involved to relate in full here, wherein the Lord taught us in clear terms that the organizational structure of this last work and movement was to be different from that of the church from which we had come.

Those events surrounded the fact that Ken Morgan had been killed and there was a vacancy in the print shop which all felt needed to be filled at once. Naturally this was to go to the vote of the people but the Lord agitated the minds of one or two of us to have some serious misgivings about this.

The result was that I spent a long time in prayer seeking for divine direction and wisdom as to how this matter was to be handled and the answer came that the voting system is a political system which has neither part nor place in the true church of God. I saw that if Moses for instance had submitted the decisions for travel to the voice of the people then they would certainly have returned to the land of Egypt and God's plans would have been destroyed.

I saw too that the period of the loud cry will be a time when the foolish virgins will outnumber the wise, yet the foolish having as much voting power as the wise per individual, and yet not possessing the self-sacrificing spirit of living faith which will enable them to make the right decisions will thus vote the calls of God out of possibility of fulfillment.

I saw that the issue back in 1966 was as to whether the Lord was going to be allowed to run this movement or whether we were going to take the work into our own hands. When these facts and principles were laid before the people they acknowledged the truth of them and there was no vote taken and none has ever been taken since. The movement has simply gone forward as the Lord has given the directions and as we have followed. The result has been blessings and progress beyond our grandest hopes and expectations.

### **1974 – A Challenge**

But each and every time that there arises in the movement someone or the other whose grip on the message is losing its spiritual power, this organizational structure has been challenged. Each time the movement has emerged the stronger while those who have persisted in their desires to go back to that from which the

Lord brought us, have foundered in their experience and soon have been lost sight of.

Another such challenge to the movement arose in the early months of this year. Just as there were those in the early Jewish church who agitated a return to the old ideas of the separation between Jew and Gentile and the adherence to the practices of the old ceremonial law so there were those who agitated that we go back to the old organizational structure from which we came.

The result of that agitation back there was that a council was called at Jerusalem and that settled the question. So again a council of believers was called to settle the matter here at this time likewise. That group met on the Sabbath and Sunday of June 1.

As the material to be covered was a study of the gospel, we met together on this on the Sabbath morning and through the Sabbath afternoon during which the principles were laid down from the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and from A. T. Jones. The material covered from A. T. Jones appears in the *Messenger* for this month and we commend it to all for their close study.<sup>58</sup>

So clear and convincing was this material that the believers were ready to make their decision on the matter as soon as they had heard this. This was quite proper and right for it is not necessary to hear both sides of a question of truth before making the decision. We have but to hear the truth and that is sufficient. When it comes to the matter of a human incident and complaint then it is necessary to hear both sides of the story but not in the case of God's truth. This point is well set forth in the *1893 Bulletin* by A. T. Jones.

However, those who desired to have us go back to that from which the Lord had brought us desired to present their position and so time was given to them. This was Sunday morning. There

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<sup>58</sup> This article was "Reformation Guidance of the Church" from A. T. Jones' book, *Lessons from the Reformation*. It was reprinted in the July 1974 *Messenger of Living Righteousness*, and is also included in the previous Appendix section.

were two spokesmen representing five people while the whole of the rest were very clear and firm on the matter and had no intention of going back when the Lord says only "Forward." Consequently, the two speakers did not find a very responsive audience.

When they had spoken for an hour or so, the question was then put to the believers assembled as to whether they desired to hear more but they emphatically stated that they had heard enough. One voice called for equal time for those who desired the changes and some discussion ensued for about ten minutes. Then, once again, the question was put as to whether they desired to hear more and again with as equal decisiveness they declared that they had heard enough.

So then the call was made for the decision to be taken as to where the believers stood in respect to this question. Never in my life have I seen a church so definite and clear in its convictions over a matter. All but the five who had sought the change let it be known in the clearest of terms that they wanted nothing of the return to that from which the Lord had brought us. They knew that the Holy Spirit has already settled the question in that the providences of the Lord have turned us back from the way in which we were headed. They knew that the Lord is the head of this church and that He alone is the one who is to make the decisions and to lead us on to the end.

So the matter ended so far as this group here is concerned. The believers assembled were from Grafton, Brisbane, Murwillumbah, Palmwoods, Biloela and the south coast of Queensland. Altogether there were some forty believers present. In the meantime the other groups of believers have made like decisions as they have heard the evidence presented to them.

Thus is being fulfilled the promise of God when He says,

**Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300:**

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.

In this last work in which we are now engaged then, there is to be no human planning whatsoever. It is to be all of God exactly as A. T. Jones has outlined in the chapter printed in the July *Messenger*.

May the Lord help each believer to really see and to understand these principles and to stand by them wholly and forever. As I pass from camp meeting to camp meeting this year the principles accepted at this meeting in Australia will be laid open to all the believers in turn so that each can make his or her choice in the matter intelligently and freely.



# Appendix C: The Voting Question

F. T. Wright

The News Review, July 1974

**I**N THE *News Review* of last month, there was the report of the very important meeting held in Palmwoods to discuss the question as to how the church of God is to be guided in these last days. The issue lay between divine guidance on the one hand and human election on the other.

Now a question has arisen out of this for which there needs to be made some clarification. The question arises simply because there has been a failure to understand certain very important distinctions. These we shall seek to make plain herewith so that none will have any problem in understanding them.

In the discussions which took place it was made clear that the principle of government involving human election was dependent upon decisions being made by the vote of the people. Those who stood for divine leadership alone therefore rejected the principle of decision by vote. Yet, toward the end of the meeting, the believers were asked to show by the raising of their hands to declare as to where they stood on the question. By this means it was learned that all but five stood very firmly on the side of divine appointment, guidance and planning.

Those who oppose this, charge us with serious inconsistency, for they say that this was voting. Further, they say that a decision had to be reached and how else could it be reached but by the people declaring by the vote. Therefore, our very actions, they say, deny that for which we had stood.

But is this really so? Did we really take a vote on this occasion? Let us examine what was done to see if this was so.

Firstly, then, what is voting? Voting is that system wherein everyone accepts and follows the will of the majority—"to enact or authorize" [Webster]. So close can that majority be at times that but one vote will decide the question.

Now, no reader should have any difficulty in seeing that this is a clear definition of the voting system. In the very moment one realizes that this is the truth about voting, then, in that moment, one must realize that this is not for the church. We cannot trust any questions to the will of the majority, or the minority either. How often in the past the majority has been wrong, quite wrong. One instance alone is in respect to the church when the Messiah came.

Having seen then that voting is government by the majority, let us see if this is what took place in the meeting at Palmwoods.

When a spiritual crisis comes to the church of God, in which one must form convictions, God expects His people to declare very clearly where they stand and where they will go on standing irrespective of the will of the majority. That declaration may be made in a number of ways—by the show of the raised hand, by a verbal speech, by a written statement or by some physical moves, but whichever way it may be, it is not the casting of a vote for submission to a majority decision. It is the declaration of where one stands on this spiritual issue, not the submitting to the will of the majority.

At Palmwoods, things had developed to the place where a very lively question was before us—divine appointment or human election—which question left no room for neutrality. The believers were asked if they were ready to declare their convictions on this issue. This they did. Had the majority stood on the opposite side there would have been a complete separation between the two parties because the two systems of government cannot operate side by side.

And it is a fact that those who at that meeting declared for human election have retained those convictions, and have expressed determination to visit privately every believer in Australia.

They are very active and determined, and have expressed intentions to visit also the United States believers should letters and tapes fail to achieve the desired result.

However, the believers in Australia and New Zealand have already taken their stand on the question, and but for an odd one we expect to see no real success for their efforts. In the past we have had to contend with these kinds of elements in the movement and they have always come to nothing. Personal character attack has always been a strong factor in their method of working, and it is so once again. The presence of this factor at once makes their cause suspect, and all should faithfully follow the instructions given in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 386.

In the meantime, despite their gloomy predictions that the work can never be blessed until their way of doing things is introduced, the work is going forward more strongly than ever. The whole experience has proved to be a very valuable stepping stone on to higher ground.

In fact, there is the very strong belief in many hearts that the Lord has been working to get the house in strict working order in preparation for the loud cry. That long-awaited day is certainly nearer now than ever it has been before.

