

Christ The
All Sufficient
HEAD

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Author's Preface

The lectures contained herein were presented over a period of months to a congregation of believers in Barbados in 1985. The scriptural instruction is so valuable that we thought it best to put all the lectures together in a single volume.

The main focus of these lectures was on the first of all relations, between Creator and creature. Church organization is discussed to a lesser extent.

May God richly bless you as you study Christ's Headship over His body, the Church.

Elder P. Blackman

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INTRODUCTION

The Church Defined

It is by the word of God only, and by the study of the word of God only, that anyone can ever know what the Church is.

The 1888 messenger A. T. Jones states,

“It is the Church of God, not the Church of men. And it being the Church of God, only He can tell what it is.

And the Church, being only of the thought and conception of God, when He expresses that thought in telling what the Church is, then that thought in telling what the Church is, that thought as expressed in His word, will be as far above any idea or thought of any man, even as God is above man, and as the mind of God is greater than any mind of man.”

Therefore, in the study of this subject, as well as any other subject of the thought and word of God, the first thing for every person to do is to accept and follow implicitly the following instruction from God:

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,.... for My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9.

This being so, and “the things of God no man knoweth but the Spirit of God,” plainly it is only by the revelation of the Spirit of God that these things can be known as they ought by any man, except by the word of God, and the Spirit, taking these high and deep things of God and making them plain to us and putting them upon our minds and thus giving them to us as really as our own. For listen to what the word says:

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26.

Further, in John 15:13-15, it continues;

“Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends, ye are my friends..... henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.

And another word;

“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit... now we have received.... the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” 1 Cor. 2:9-12.

With these thoughts before us, let us study for, a few minutes, the word and thought of God on what the bible teaches The Church of God to be. Eph 1:22, 23. *“The Church is His body, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all.*

Who is He, whom the Church is the fullness of? Plainly, it must be God, since it is the Church of the Living God. This is seen in 1Ti 3:15: *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”*

So from this divine word we understand two everlasting truths.

1. the house of God is the church of the living God
2. it is the pillar and ground of truth.

Further let it be understood and cherished that the God of this house, this

Church, is living. Indeed He is the only living God. He is not a piece of wood or a bird or a fish made with men's hands. Oh praise the Lord he is the self-existent one, the eternal God. And yet more is there in that word. This house of God, His church, is the pillar and ground of truth. It cultivates, builds and exports truth. It does not embrace, encourage, nourish or sympathise with error but exposes and uproots it.

The divine word states "*The Church is His body, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all.*"

Can our minds fathom such a thought? The good news is that we can believe it, experience it and be benefited by it. I concur with messenger Jones that we might, with tremendous profit to all, stop right here in this study, and let each person here spend time in thinking and meditating and studying on this one question only, what is the fullness of the Living God? For whoever gets the fullest and best view of what the fullness of the Living God is, will have the fullest and best view of what is the Church of the Living God, for the Church is the fullness of Him.

Further, the divine word continues in Isaiah, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of water in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance... All nations before Him are as nothing, and are counted to Him as less than nothing and vanity." Isaiah 40: 15-17. I ask, how near to the fullness of all the oceans and seas is "a drop of a bucket"? And yet that is the measure of "all the nations" to the fullness of God, to the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, whose fullness is the Church. In Genesis 13, verse 16 we get the suggestion, the idea a glimpse of what is the fullness that is the Church. It reads;

"And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

The Church is the fullness of God, and the fullness of God manifest is the Church, so that the idea of the Church is the idea of God. Therefore the extent of a person's comprehension of this fullness- the Church- is the extent and height of His comprehension of God in reference to the Church.

In conclusion then, we shall examine the word of God only in confirming God's idea and truth of His Church.

"The House of God, is the Church of the Living God." 1 Tim. 3:15.

“But Christ was faithful over His own house, whose House we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Hebrews 3:6.

“Ye as lively stones are built up a Spiritual House.” 1 Peter 2:5.

Note carefully the house is a spiritual one composed of living stones. Therefore this house of God is a living house all who compose this house therefore have spiritual life, oh praise the Lord.

“Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief corner stone. In whom, all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Eph. 2:19-22.

Notice that this household of God, is composed citizens, groweth Holy Temple in the Lord there is no stagnation for it is the habitation of God through the Spirit.” Oh glorious thought.

“Ye are God’s building.” 1 Cor. 3:9. Oh what a privilege to be God’s building.

“I will build my Church.” Matt. 16:18.

So now we begin to get a glimpse of the Church and its fullness and that fullness that fills all in all.

And

“Christ loved this Church so much that He gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Eph. 5:25-27. “For the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in temples made by the word of God. Amen! and Amen!” Acts 7:48 and 1 Cor. 6:19,20.

CHAPTER 1

Two Great Commandments

Principles Of Love & Submission To Christ The Head

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” (Deu 6:4, 5)

“And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.” (Luk 10:27)

“Then went the Pharisees and took-counsel how they might entangle Him (Jesus) in His talk.” Matt. 22.15.

And to the question asked by the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians in verse 17, He proceeded to answer the question with the ease with which the mind of Christ operates. But the devil was still at His heels, for now He was confronted by the Sadducees, verses 23-28.

“The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.”

The mind of Christ dealt with them as it always deals with the devil, for it was the devil himself in them. He told them that they did not know the gospel and so were in error, verse 29.

“By the words of Christ the Sadducees were put to silence. They could not answer Him. Not a word had been spoken of which the least advantage could be taken for His condemnation. His adversaries had gained nothing but the contempt of the people.” D.A.531.

“But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto Him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first great commandment.” Verses 34–38.

The answer brings to view two principles;

- (i) The principle of government and
- (ii) The principle of individuality in religion. We shall briefly look at them in a moment.

Inspiration, commenting on this encounter states:

“The Pharisees, however, did not despair of driving Him to speak that which they could use against Him. They prevailed upon a certain learned scribe to question Jesus as to which of the ten precepts of the law was of the greatest importance.

The Pharisees had exalted the first four commandments, which point out the duty of man to his Maker, as of far greater consequence than the other six, which define man’s duty to his fellow man. As the result, they greatly failed of practical godliness. Jesus had shown the people their great deficiency, and had taught the necessity of good works, declaring that the tree is known by its fruits. For this reason He had been charged with exalting the last six commandments above the first four.

The lawyer approached Jesus with a direct question, 'Which is the first commandment of all?' The answer of Christ is direct and forcible: 'The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.' D.A. 531.

Is there a reason why this is the first commandment of all?

The 1888 Messenger A T Jones posits thus,

The terms 'man' and 'his Maker,' make distinctive the sphere of creature and Creator. God was all alone, and then He decided to create. And when He had created the first intelligent creature He thereby created the first relationship between creature and Creator.

Each intelligent creature owes to the Creator all that he is. This in turn and in the nature of things implies subjection and obedience on the part of the creature, and this is the principle of government. It is not the first of all the commandments because it was the first that was ever given, but simply because it exists in the nature of things as soon as a single intelligent creature exists. It is the first of all the commandments, simply because it is but the expression of the inherent obligation in the first relationship which can possibly exist between creature and Creator. It is first in the nature and circumstances and the existence of created intelligence. It is so in the supreme and most absolute sense. It stands as complete in the case of that one alone as though there were millions, and stands as complete in the case of each one in the succession of future millions as in the case of the first intelligent creature, as he stood alone in the universe. **This commandment stands absolutely alone and eternally complete, as the first obligation of every intelligent creature that can ever be. And this eternal truth distinguishes individuality in religion as an eternal and absolute principle.**

Jesus continued,

“The second is like the first, for it flows out of it, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ There is none other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Both these commandments it must now be clear are an expression of the principle of love. The first cannot be kept while the second is broken. When God has His rightful place on the throne of the heart, the right place will be given to our neighbour. We shall love him as ourselves and only as we love God supremely is it possible to love our neighbour impartially.

This second commandment brings to view another principle and follows on from the first. The principle is equality. When there was only one creature and the Creator, there was only one relationship. However, as soon as a second intelligent creature is created, an additional relationship comes into existence. In addition to the primary and original relationship of each to the Creator, since both owe equally their existence to the Creator, a secondary relationship also comes, that of each to the other. The secondary relationship is one of absolute equality.

And now, in the subjection and devotion of each individually to the Creator in the first and original relationship of all relationships, each of these honors the other. Therefore, in the nature of things in the existence of two intelligent creatures, inherent in that is the second principle of government (even family government), that is, the principle of mutuality of all subjects as equals. This is the second of all commandments, for the same reason that the first is the first of all commandments. A T Jones adds this thought, also, like the first, this is complete and absolute the moment that two intelligent creatures exist, and it can never be expanded nor can it be modified by the existence of the universe full of other intelligent creatures.

And so, each intelligent creature himself, alone, in his own individuality, is completely subject and devoted first of all to the Creator, because to Him he owes all. And in the subjection and devotion to the Creator first of all, each honors every other intelligent creature as his equal, as equally with himself occupying his place in the design of the Creator, and responsible individually and only to the Creator for the fulfillment of that design. [Rom.14]

Therefore, out of respect to the Creator, to his neighbour, and to himself, he loves his neighbour as himself.

CHAPTER 2

God The Leader Of His People

“The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
COL. 125.

In John 14:6 Jesus says He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Therefore we must understand that He must be the Eternal Way to God, the Eternal Truth about God and the Eternal Life of God.

Hebrews 13:8 says “*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*” But comprehend the term yesterday not as referring to twenty four hours ago but understand that it refers to eternity past. Therefore the way Jesus operated in the past with His people must be as unchanging as He is. Since this is so we can state with all confidence that “The principles of God’s dealing with men are ever the same.” G.C 343.

“No truth is more clearly taught in the bible than that God by His Holy Spirit especially directs His servants on earth in the great movements for the carrying forward of the work of salvation.” G.C 343. Since it is the truth, that that is how God operates, it must be an eternal and unchanging principle of truth by which He operates. Let us see how it was with Israel.

“Christ was the leader of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. Enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, He led and guided them. He preserved them from the perils of the wilderness, He brought them into the land of promise, and in the sight of all the nations that acknowledge not God, He established Israel as His own chosen possession, the Lord’s vineyard.

Christ was their instructor. As He had been with them in the wilderness, so He was still to be their teacher and guide.” C.O.L 256, 257. 1 Cor.10:1–4 confirms this truth.

The apostle Paul in 1Cor.11:3 state that Christ is the head of every man. The scriptures bare witness that Abel was righteous. Since this is so, it must mean that he lived by faith in Jesus, and it is impossible to live by faith in Jesus except He be your head. Abel accepted Christ as his head and this must be obvious since he presented his sacrifice in accordance with the Lord’s directions. The course of Cain shows what man will become apart from Christ. Christ is our hope. If we are apart from Christ He is not our head and we have no hope at all.

Of Enoch it is written that he lived 65 years and he begat a son, after he walked with God three hundred years. Enoch’s walk with God was not in a trance or a vision but in all duties of life... he was honored with special revelations from God... In the midst of a life of active labour, Enoch steadfastly maintained his communion with God. The greater and more pressing his labours, the more constant and earnest his prayers. Patriarchs & Prophets, 70 – 73.

From the above we see harmony in God’s operation with His people, collectively and individually. Now let us continue to follow the consistency of God. Let us read first, Ephesians 1:20 - 23.

*“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: **And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**”*

Can a man who needs redemption from sin be the head of the church? The reformer Wycliffe said, “so long as Christ is in Heaven, the church hath in Him the best pope. And that distance hindereth Him not in doing His deeds as He promiseth that He is with us always to the end of the world. We dare not put two heads lest the church be monstrous, therefore the head above is alone worthy of our confidence.”

Martin Luther said, “The head of the church militant is not any man, but Jesus Christ Himself. This I believe on the testimony of God’s word. Christ must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.” A.T. Jones Lessons From The Reformation 141 & 143.

The church has one head and needs no other. ‘Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father is the secure, unfailing, and all-sufficient refuge for the Church, to guide and enlighten it.

It stands to reason therefore that if Christ is the head to guide and enlighten His body, the Church, and is always present, it needs no substitute head or committee now or ever to make or give orders that must be given by the Head.

“We must obey orders that come from above.” There is danger in adopting worldly policy. How do we know when orders come from above? John 10:4, 27.

“And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

In the Review & Herald, Jan. 31st and Feb. 7th, 1893, Ellen White commenting states,

“There will be among us those who will so blind their eyes that they will fail to perceive the most wonderful and important truths for this time... They are false teachers, blind leaders of the blind. They divert attention from the very work to be done in this period of the world’s history.” and then she adds, “But those who follow their leader step by step will hear and recognise the voice of the true shepherd.”

Certainly it must be known that Christ on earth or in heaven can plan for and lead His Church better than any pope, president, priest or bishop ever can. The question is then, did He leave in order to give that place and opportunity to men as popes, kings, presidents, superintendents or committees or boards to do their worldly fiddling, sinful tricks?

The answer to this all-important question must and will be given by the Word of God. Let us look at Matt. 20:25,26.

It states,

“But Jesus called them unto him and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them (Gentiles’). But it shall not be so among you:”

Therefore, since it shall not be so among His disciples, anyone who does it or who allows it to be done to them has broken Christ’s word and allows himself to be a Gentile. And I now quote God’s messenger Ellen White:

“The Saviour did not commit the work of the gospel to Peter individually. At a later time the words that were spoken to Peter, He applied them directly to the Church. And the same in substance was spoken also to the twelve as representatives of the body of believers. If Jesus had delegated any special authority to one of His disciples above the others, we should not find them so often contending as to who should be the greatest. They would have submitted to the wish of their master and honoured the one whom He had chosen. Instead of appointing one to be their head, Christ said to His disciples ‘Be not ye called Rabbi, neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.’ Matthew 23:8,10.

“Now this solemn and profound truth is stated, ‘The head of every man is Christ. God who put all things under the Saviour’s feet gave Him to be head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.’ 1 Cor.11:3, Eph.1:22, 23. The Church is built upon Christ as its foundation, it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon men or be controlled by man. Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall

believe or do. This claim God does not sanction. The Saviour declares, all ye are brethren. All are exposed to temptation, and are liable to error. Upon no finite being can we depend for guidance. The Rock of faith is the living presence of Christ in the Church. Upon this the weakest may depend, and those who think themselves the strongest will prove to be the weakest unless they make Christ their efficiency. 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.' The Lord 'is the Rock, His work is perfect.' 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.' Jer.17:5, Deut.32:4, D.A. 366.

Clearly this has application to the first of all relationships and our duties under that relationship.

It need not be stated that this truth spoken by Jesus must be an unchanging principle by which heaven operates.

"Again Jesus explained to the disciples that His kingdom is not characterized by earthly dignity or display. At the feet of Jesus all these distinctions are forgotten. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, meet together with no thoughts of caste or worldly pre-eminence. All meet as blood bought souls, alike dependent upon One who has redeemed them to God." D.A. 386.

For the head of the Church says in John 14:19

"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more. But ye see me." Jesus said that the world cannot receive "the Spirit of Truth because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."

And the world knows him not because it sees him not. The world must see with the world's eye or else it will not know. But, thanks be to God, to all who are His, the head of the church says 'But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.' And by receiving him by his dwelling with us, and being in us, we see. Therefore, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, furthermore enter in. The bible gives us the eternal assurance that there is no variableness or shadow of turning yesterday, today or forever with God, therefore we can be sure that the way He operated in the past is the same as in the present because God is true, therefore He must be consistent.

As He was Israel's teacher He must be our teacher today,

As He was Israel's guide He must be our guide today,

As He was Israel's instructor He must be our instructor today.

The counsel to us is

“As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will keep the feet of the saint” Ministry of Healing 478,479.

And again,

“God is the teacher of His people.” Testimonies to Ministers, Vol.1, 478.

In conclusion we shall examine a few practices and God's way in the operation of these practices, proving God's amazing consistency in all things and those pertaining to His Church.

First we shall look at war. Was it God's will for Israel to fight?

“The Lord had never commanded them to go up and fight. It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands.” Patriarchs & Prophets, 392. Exod. 14:13,14, Joshua 24:12

Let us now read Matthew 5:44 and Proverbs 25:21,22, and see the character of God.

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” Matt. 5:44

“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.” Pro. 5:21,22

Therefore God is unchangingly loving and unchangingly kind in his saving efforts with man. Secondly let us see God's will as regards a king. Was it God's will for them to have a king? God explained to them in 1 Samuel chapter 8 the evils of having a human king, but they did not listen to God and He gave them their desire. He says in Hosea 13:11, “I gave them a king

in mine anger and took him away in my wrath.” What a word of inspiration! But this does not refer any arbitrary or direct action by God but to the outworking of their choices, the revealing of cause and effect.

Thirdly, what about the seventy elders chosen by Moses, which by the time of Christ was the Sanhedrin Council. Was this God’s will? Let us see.

“The Lord permitted Moses to choose for himself the most faithful and efficient men to share the responsibility with him. **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.**” P.P. 380.

Fourthly, alcoholic drinks, Deuteronomy 14:26. Did He sanction it? God gave them what they wanted but it was never His will. Ps. 78:29. *So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;* This is the character of our God, He will seek to save, but He will never force you to receive His salvation.

Fifthly, what was God’s will toward divorce? Jesus explains in Matt. 19:8, that it was not so from the beginning, but it was because of their hardness of heart. He has given one ground for divorce, unfaithfulness.

This mean that unfaithfulness is equated with death, since it is until death do you part, unfaithfulness (equals) can produce the severing of the marriage.

Therefore, it must be that wherever these systems operate we know it is not God’s will, but the people’s desires and hardness of heart and so it must even be now as it was then.

Jesus has always been head of His Church whenever He was allowed by His people to occupy that position. He was head of Israel, head of the Apostolic

church, the Reformation church, the Advent Movement, when they were connected to Him and lived by faith in Him.

And so, in 1863 when a human head took charge of the Advent Movement, when he stood in the place of God to the people, it meant that the people had separated from the real Head, their hearts were hardened and God gave them their desires. As in the days of Israel, the days of Moses, if they had manifested faith in God, He would have guided them continually in every emergency and the present evils would never have come with their distasteful profession of Christian living.

And so it is forever settled that Christ is the All-Sufficient Head of the Church, and it must be known that we must obey the orders that come from above, the voice of the true Shepherd. Because God hath raised Christ from the dead and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, of whom the whole family in Heaven and Earth is named. Eph.1:20, 22, 23; 3:15.

CHAPTER 3

God The Leader & Counselor In His Work

“Christ was the leader of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. Enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, He led and guided them. He preserved them from the perils of the wilderness, He brought them into the land of promise, and in the sight of all the nations that acknowledge not God, He established Israel as His own chosen possession, the Lord’s vineyard.

Christ was their instructor. As He had been with them in the wilderness, so He was still to be their teacher and guide.” C.O. L. 256, 257; 1Cor.10:1-4.

But has God changed in any way? Assuredly not! For the bible says He does not change. Further, the testimony states,

“The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” C.O.L. 125.

Today, if God must be our leader, we must surrender all and place ourselves under Christ’s command. We must surrender our will, we must give up our ways for His way. Let us consider Inspiration for a moment:

“Harmony and union existing among men of varied dispositions is the strongest witness that can be borne that God has sent His Son into the world to save sinners. It is our privilege to bear this witness. But in order to do this, we must place ourselves under Christ’s command. Our characters must be molded in harmony with His character, our wills must be surrendered to His will. Then we shall work together without a thought of collision.... Every man is to stand in his lot and place, exerting a right influence in thought, word and deed. When all God’s workers do this and not till then, His work will be a complete symmetrical whole.” TM.Vol.3, 246,247.

In the past whenever Israel placed themselves wholly under God’s leadership He worked mightily for them and He has not changed one inch. Therefore, anytime that God is not working mightily it is because the people are not wholly under His guidance. It was this way in 1904 and the Lord asked them to place themselves wholly under His guidance. At that time also, there was a controversy in the papers of various cities representing that there was strife in the Advent Church, for the leadership of it, between Sis. White and Bro. Kellogg. But Inspiration gave the answer for then, for now and for all time, it stated thus; “The Lord God of Heaven is our King. He is a leader whom we can safely follow, for He never makes a mistake. Let us honor God and His Son, through Whom He communicates with the world.” And now comes the pleading of the Lord for them not to lean on their own understanding, it states; “God would work mightily for His people today if they would place themselves wholly under His guidance. They need the constant abiding of the Holy Spirit. If there were more prayer in the councils of those bearing responsibilities, more humbling of the heart before God, we should see abundant evidence of divine leadership, and our work would make rapid progress.”

Then there is the secret of finishing the work rapidly. Let God lead, guide me O Thou great Jehovah Amen!

Brethren, if Christ is to be Lord at all, He must be Lord of all. We must give up our wisdom, which is foolishness anyway, so that Christ can have

His way in every aspect of our lives and of the work. He must be leader in all or none at all. Let us meditate on this counsel from the Wonderful Counselor Himself:

“When the Holy Spirit controls the minds of our church members, there will be seen in our churches a much higher standard in speech, in ministry, in spirituality, than is now seen. The church members will be refreshed by the water of life, and the labourers, working under one Head, even Christ, will reveal their master in spirit, in word, in deed, and will encourage one another to press forward in the grand, closing work in which we are engaged.”
T.T., Vol. 3, 214.

This is God’s way in His work, He has not changed.

When the publishing work started it met difficulties but God was leading and He gave counsel to His children not to be discouraged then, and the counsel is for us now, if we would allow Him to lead and direct His publishing work.

“In many cases the publishing work will have to be started on a small scale. It will have to contend with many difficulties and to be carried forward with few facilities. But none should be discouraged because of this. The world’s way is to begin its work with pomp and show and boasting, but all will come to nought. God’s way is to make the day of small things the beginning of the triumph of truth and righteousness. For this reason none need be elated by a properous beginning, or cast down by apparent feebleness. God is to His people riches and fullness and power as they look to the things that are not seen. To follow His direction is to choose the path of safety and true success. ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ 1John 5:4 T.T, Vol.3, 169.

Brethren, we should all fall prostrate and say, ‘I surrender all, lead on King, Jesus, lead on.’

In James chapter one we have the admonition to ask God for wisdom if we lack. In God’s dealings with Israel He gave them directions in every sphere of life. In buying, building, furnishing, choosing, He was their Counselor

whenever they submitted themselves to His leading, totally. Inspiration states:

“God can communicate with His people today and give them wisdom to do His will, even as He communicated with His people of old and gave them wisdom in building the tabernacle. In the construction of this building He gave a representation of His power and majesty... While the work is going forward, let them remember that as in the days of Noah and Moses God arranged every detail of the Ark and of the tabernacle, so in the building of His institutions today He Himself is watching the work done. Let them remember that the Great Master builder, by His word, by His Spirit, and by His providence designs to direct His work. They should take time to ask counsel of Him. All should realize their entire dependence upon God. Looking unto Jesus is ever to be our motto.” T.T., Vol.3, 119,120.

For in Psalm 32:8 He gives us the assurance, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye.”

Wherever there is centralization it is for domination and leads to disorganization, and wherever you see such disorganization it is the work of man. Inspiration testifies:

“The Lord is working for every part of His vineyard impartially. It is men who disorganize His work.” T.T., Vol.3, 121.

We need to keep God’s dealings with ancient Israel ever before us. In 1Cor.10:11 Paul tells us that all these things happened as examples for us on whom the ends of the world are come.

“The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel. Lest they should forget the history of the past He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old. We need often to

recount God's goodness to praise Him for His wonderful works." T.T., Vol.3, 30,31.

Have you consecrated yourself to God? Are you taking orders from Him? Are you idle?

"To those who are indifferent at this time Christ's warning is 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.' Rev. 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth mean's that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you." T.T., Vol.3, 15.

The house of God is sacred, when He leads us there for worship let us awake spiritually and physically. We should keep our minds stayed on God and communicate with Him. Consider this counsel; "Let none come to the place of worship to take a nap. There should be no sleeping in the house of God." T.T., Vol.3, 27.

"There are many whose names are on the church books but who are not under Christ's rule. They are not heeding His instruction or doing His work." C.O.L, 274.

We must give up our plans, our will, our way and take Christ's instruction for the work which He has given us. The battle of Armegeddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of Kings and Lord of Lords is soon to lead the armies of heaven. So then, what is our work if we are to be found doing Christ's work at this time? Here it is:

"We are to throw aside our narrow, selfish plans, remembering that we have a work of the largest magnitude and highest importance. In doing this work we are sounding the first, second and third angers messages, and thus being prepared FOR THE COMING OF THAT OTHER ANGEL FROM HEAVEN WHO IS TO LIGHTEN THE EARTH WITH HIS GLORY." T.T., Vol.3, 13.

Brethren, the time has come and now is the time that we should preach only the truth as it is in the word of God, whether it pleases other men or

displeases them. Our counsel must come from God, our message must bear His superscription. Our work is to proclaim to the world the first, second and third angel's messages. In the discharge of our duties we are neither to despise nor to fear our enemies. At this time when the mystery of lawlessness is fast reaching maturity and the wines of Babylon are enslaving the world, we must have and preach a message to free them. At the beginning of the gospel dispensation the world saw what the power of God can do when men obey orders that come from God instead of human devisings.

Accordingly it is written for our instruction in *Desire of Ages*, 826:

“In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their, message. Teach the people, He said, ‘to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these things are Christ's servants to teach. ‘The law and the prophets, with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ's name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom.”

Christ was their head, they were wholly under His command, and did nothing contrary to His orders. Even in the face of death, they would not disobey their leader. They were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise and not even death could move them from the truth or make them follow another course than that prescribed by Christ, the All-Sufficient Head of the Church. Christ was Lord of all and over all of them, and He wants us to keep back our wicked selves and let God be seen always so that He can move the world once more, as He did at Pentecost.

We are sure that this movement was raised up by God, we are also sure that the message is of God. We are sure that God has chosen and will continue

to choose His messengers to give His message. And so we can be sure that God has a health message to give us also. When God calls a people He gives them instruction in all things that they may be thoroughly furnished unto good work. Listen to Inspiration as it speaks,

“God gave to Israel instruction in all the principles essential to physical as well as moral health.” M.H. 185.

The Lord has said, if we would let Him lead, we would be the head and not the tail. There are many people who ask, ‘what will I eat if I stop eating meat.’ Some say good food is too expensive, others say they don’t have the knowledge to prepare good foods. Brethren, the word says, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally’... and the rejoicing of it all is the fact that we can depend on that word to accomplish all that we expect and trust it to do.

Inspiration gives us comfort, for it states thus:

“God is working in behalf of His people. He does not desire them to be without resources. He is bringing them back (are you coming with Him) to the diet originally given to man. Their diet is to consist of the foods made from the materials He has provided. The materials principally used in these foods will be fruits and grains and nuts, but various roots will also be used.

There are many minds in many places to whom the Lord will surely give knowledge of how to prepare foods that are healthful and palatable, if He sees that they will use this knowledge righteously.” T.T., Vol.3, 132,133.

We don’t have to wait on the world for any recipes or follow their recipes, because our wisdom will come from above. Inspiration speaks authoritatively for us;

“The Lord will teach many in all parts of the world to combine fruits, grains and vegetables into foods that will sustain life and will not bring disease. Those who have never seen the recipes for making the health foods now on the market will work intelligently, experimenting with the food productions of the earth and will be given light regarding the use of these productions. THE LORD WILL SHOW THEM WHAT TO DO. He

who gives skill and understanding to His people in one part of the world will give skill and understanding to His people in other parts of the world. It is His design that the food treasures of each country shall be so prepared that they can be used in the countries for which they are suited.

It will never pay to depend on America for the supply of health foods for other countries.... it is the Lord's design that the poorest people in every place shall be supplied with inexpensive, healthful foods." T.T., Vol.3, 132,133.

God will give His people tact to prepare wholesome food without eggs, milk, cream or butter because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. *ibid.*

"If ever there was a time when we needed the special guidance of the Holy Spirit it is now." T.T., Vol.3, 439.

Yes Brethren, Christ is the all-sufficient Head of the Church, He is the Wonderful Counselor in everything. Christ can better guide and instruct His Church than such monsters as hard-hearted church officials. His leading is the path of safety. We can say with the song-writer, I will follow Thee, my Saviour, wheresoever my lot may be, where Thou goest I will follow, Yes, my Lord, I will follow Thee. Though Thou ledest me through affliction, poor, forsaken though I be Thou wast destitute, afflicted, and I only follow Thee.'

Finally, brethren, you to whom the truths of God have been opened, what part will you play in the closing scenes of this world's history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realize the grand work of preparation that is going on in heaven and on earth? Who is preparing you at this time? Who is your teacher and counselor and leader?

"When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God." Selected Messages', Bk.1, 227.

Of John the Baptist it is written, "John was called to do a special work ... The Lord did not send him to the schools of the prophets and rabbis. He was called to do a-special work and the Lord gave him his message." (Isa. 40:3-5). This is the very message that must be given to our people, we are near the end of time, we must give that message as recorded in Isaiah 55:1. God

must be our teacher indeed, if we are to be fitted for the final work.

“No one is able to explain the scriptures without the aid of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to depend upon Him, and not upon man. We do not go deep enough in our search for truth. Every soul who believes present truth will be brought where he will be required to give a reason of the hope that is in him. They must be converted men and women. God can teach you more in one moment by His Holy Spirit than you could learn from the great men of earth.... and when we are brought before rulers, before authorities of the earth, we need not meditate beforehand of what we shall say. God will teach us in the day of our need. Now may God help us to come to the feet of Jesus and learn of Him, before we seek to become teachers, of others.” S.M. Bk.1, pg. 410,411; 415,416.

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen! By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you.... I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. Peace be unto you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen!”
1Peter 5:6,10-12,14.

CHAPTER 4

God's Way In His Church

From our first study we saw quite clearly that Christ is the All-Sufficient Head of the Church, and that we must obey orders that come from above. With this before us, let us find out by whose authority are appointments made in God's Church. In 1 Cor. 12 : 28 it states, "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of hearings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Further, the scriptures reveal

"For to me is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; 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: But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Cor.12 : 8 - 11.

Therefore it stands written in the New Testament as the statement of the New Testament order that:-

- (i) GOD in Christ is the builder of His Church - Not some men or an Organisation in place of Christ. However it is clear that Christ chooses and uses men who cooperate with and submits to him in the building of his Church. They work under Christ and not usurping the place of Christ.

- (ii) Christ Himself in Person through and by the Holy Spirit is the Head of every man, personally and individually - not through some Conference or Division. That is, no one or organization has power over the conscience of any one and must recognize that only to Christ is owed supreme loyalty.
- (iii) That by the 'one Spirit' it is 'the same God which worketh all in all.' 1 cor: 12:4-6
- (iv) That 'the manifestation of the Spirit' is given to 'every man' and given to 'every man to profit withal.' 1 cor 12 :7
- (v) That all these gifts, manifestations and admonitions-all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally (individually, personally, separately) as He will - not as some president or committee will. That is, God is the originator source and dispenser of these gifts and there are not under the purview of the human agent to give or with hold as he sees fit or to whom he sees fit. Anyone who receives a gift from God will act in harmony with the Head and will act in unison with the body in truth and righteousness.
- (vi) That as the Builder of His own Church which is His body 'God hath set the members, every one of them in the body (the Church) as it hath pleased Him.' As it hath pleased Him, not as it may please some committee, Church board or organized work. The point here is that the head knows the need of the body and he can organize it in righteousness that each member has his appropriate place and work.

This order is the way of God in the kingdom of God, wherein Christ by the Holy Spirit is the one King, the one Lord, and the one Sovereign, in and over each individual, and in and over the Church of Christ which is built together by God, "for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Furthermore, it is stated that "the kingdom of heaven is as a man taking a far journey, who called his servants and delivered unto them his goods..... to every man according to his (individual, separate, personal) ability." This Church is organized from Him and by Him, through the Holy Spirit. The divine word in the following passages is given for our instruction and guidance.

(Eph 4:15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

(Eph 4:16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

1Co 12: 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Therefore, whosoever belongs to Christ by personal faith belongs to the Church of Christ, which is His body, the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven; and from this Church NO Church board or body of men can ever dis-fellowship him. Our Head Christ in Matt: 18 have given counsel to settle personal differences among brethren. Where a profess believer rejects this counsel from Christ or acts contrary to it and refuses to submit he dis-fellowships himself from the body of Christ and the Church will publicly acknowledge before the body that the profess believer made such a choice and refuse to change that choice and did finally confirmed his choice.

Hence the unity of this Church and of the members thereof is the divine unity of the Spirit in the fellowship of the Father and Son - not an organizational unity, not even a unity of association. A unity that is spiritual, strong and as powerful as eternity. Let us read the following scriptural passages.

(Job 17:19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

(Job 17:20) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

(Job 17:21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

(Eph 1:9) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

(Eph 1:10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

(1Jn 1:3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

(1Jn 1:4) And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

(1Jn 1:5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

(1Jn 1:6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

As can be seen, this must be the way of Heaven, and God, since He is unchanging and since “the principles of God’s dealings with men are ever the same” it means that God has operated this way, whenever in His Church He is given His true position as Administrator in the Church through the Holy Spirit.

So, the question is: how did He appoint His messengers in the past? How was it with the selection of Moses and the prophets? Who selected them? And in our day, who selected Mrs. E.G. White and the other reformers? Was it not Christ by the Holy Spirit, dividing severally as He will? Inspiration answers most decisively for us:

“Moses was chosen by God as the messenger, of His covenant. The Lord called him up into the mountain, to receive his instruction for Israel. Today God chooses men as He chose Moses to be His messengers. These men are first to receive instruction from God, then they are to impart that which they have received, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Every word they speak must be spoken in truth. It is fearfully dangerous now to be unable to discern the truth. **Those who would proclaim the word of God must be men who know His will, they must be men of knowledge, able to**

instruct others. How can they speak clearly and intelligently of the things of God if they do not commune with Him. They must obtain wisdom from on high. They are to be instant in season, always prepared for whatever they may be called to do.

The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the-law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. **The people should counsel with him, for he is God's appointed messenger.** They should not only hear, but they should ask questions, that they may have a clear knowledge of-truth. He is not to withhold his knowledge from them, but is to regard it as a sacred trust, to be imparted to others. His mind is to be a treasure-house of good things, from which, whenever occasion demands, he can draw a "thus saith the Lord." (Review & Herald, October 13, 1904)

Therefore, if God chooses men today, as He chose Moses, to be His messengers, we can be sure that He chose all the patriarchs without any human machinery, that is, no human reasoning was involved, He chose the prophets without any committees or voting of men, that it was the same way with the apostles and Paul, and it must be the same way with the reformers and today that consistency must stand: For with God there is not even a shadow of turning. God's consistency can stand any test. The truth is only God can see the heart and knows the character of the human agent.

Now let us examine the case of Abraham - the scriptures say that the message of God came to Abraham,

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Genesis 12:1.

In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant.

"The call from heaven first came to Abraham while he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees and in obedience to it he removed to Haran. P.P. 108, 109.

By whose authority was Abraham ordained to the ministry? By God's calling and Abraham's response to that call, that is ordination. The public ceremony is the acknowledgement, confirmation, demonstration and acceptance by the body of what God has done for the body and his work and kingdom. And how does God prepare a person for ordination to his work?

“God has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction. It is in the heat of the furnace that the dross is separated from the true gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test, He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal, that it may reflect the radiance of his love. *It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these persons upon trial.... He gives them opportunity to correct their defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weaknesses, and teaches them to lean upon Him, for He is their only help and safeguard. Thus His object is obtained. They are educated, trained and disciplined, prepared to fulfill the grand purpose for which their powers were given them. When God calls them unto action, they are ready, and heavenly angels can unite with them in their work to be accomplished on earth.*” P.P. 111,112.

How was it with Noah?

“A hundred and twenty years before the flood, the Lord by a holy angel declared to Noah His purpose and directed him to build an ark.... God gave Noah the exact dimensions and explicit directions in regard to its construction in every particular. Human wisdom could not have devised a structure of so great strength and durability. God the Source, of all wisdom, knowledge, all grace in fact all good things, was the designer and Noah the dependent receiver was the master-builder. “By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Heb.11:7; P.P. 78, 79.

Next there was Elijah who was also chosen and taught by God. Elijah lived among the mountains of Gilead where God taught him and prepared him

for his ministry of the gospel.

In Prophets & Kings it is written thus,

“Among the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan, there dwelt in the days of Ahab, a man of faith and prayer whose fearless ministry was destined to check the rapid spread of apostasy in Israel.”

Further testimony states,

“To Elijah was entrusted the mission of delivering to Ahab Heaven’s message of judgment he did not seek to be the Lord’s messenger; the word of the Lord came to him, and jealous for the honor of God’s cause, he did not hesitate to obey the divine summons, though to obey seemed to invite-swift destruction at the hand of the wicked king. The prophet set out at once and travelled night and day until he reached Samaria. At the palace he solicited no admission, nor waited to be formally announced. Clad in the coarse garments usually worn by the prophets of the time, he passed the guards, apparently unnoticed, and stood for a moment before the astonished king.

Elijah made no apology for his abrupt appearance. A Greater than the ruler of Israel had commissioned him to speak; and lifting his hand toward heaven, he solemnly affirmed by the living God that the judgments of the Most High were about to fall upon Israel. “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand,” he declared, “there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” 1Kings 17:1.

It was only by the exercise of strong faith in the unfailing power of God’s word that Elijah delivered his message. Had he not possessed implicit confidence in the One whom he served, he would never have appeared before Ahab.” P.K. 119–121.

Brethren, God’s amazing consistency can withstand infinite investigation because “the principles of God’s dealing with men are ever the same” and “the rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Let us proceed to the call of Elisha.

Who called Elisha? Inspiration answers -

“God had bidden Elijah anoint another to be prophet in his stead. The command came from the head of the church. The directions must come from him who never makes a mistake. ‘Elisha, the son of Shaphat.... shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room’ (1 Kings 19:16), He had said; and in obedience to the command, Elijah went to find Elisha.”

How and by whom was Elisha prepared? Again Inspiration is amazingly consistent, for it is written thus,

“In the quietude of country life, under the teaching of God and nature and the discipline of useful work, he received the training in habits of simplicity and of obedience to his parents and to God that helped to fit him for the high position he was afterward to occupy.” P.K. 217, 218.

“Had Elislia asked Elijah what was expected of him – what would be his work he would have been answered: God knows, he will make it known to you. If you wait upon the Lord, He will answer your every question. **You may come with me if you have evidence that God has called you. Know for yourself that God stands back of me, and that it is His voice you hear.**”

It is therefore clear there are principles by which God calls and trains persons to be his servants. We all must have an experience with him who calls. We must hear his voice for that is the only certainty that he has called you.

The call comes to all including mothers, for it says “the mother who trains her children for Christ is as truly working for God as is the minister in the pulpit.” P.K. 219.

I hope that the fragments have been gathered up and nothing has been lost. In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be confirmed, and we have had more than two or three witnesses, and they will suffice.

From the above it is clearly seen that God calls, teaches, appoints and ordains His messengers to do His work and that every responsibility in the Church is the direct gift of God by Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost. If you receive a call from anyone in the body and you can, you must be sure you

hear the voice of God in that call. Like Elijah would have told Elisha, “*You may come with me if you have evidence that God has called you. Know for yourself that God stands back of me, and that it is His voice you hear.*” Further, we see that the membership of the Church, by the same Spirit are able to recognize the Gift upon the individual and accordingly also recognize that individual in the place and work in the Church, for which the Gift has prepared him.

Acts. 13:2–4. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. The members of the body head the voice of Christ the head and obeyed. For it is ever written in Eph. 4:11, “And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

But why did He give all these gifts to the Church? It is thus written in verse 12:

1. For the perfecting of the saints,
2. For the work of the ministry and
3. For the edifying of the Body of Christ.

And thus

“Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

And further as mentioned in verse 14:

“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.”

And the object of all this, which is God’s eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus is stated in these words in verse 15:

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”

And now let us read verse 16.

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

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 fit her for the Glorious Presentation.

Therefore, any failure of professed Christians to recognize Christ’s spiritual gifts will lead to the mystery of iniquity. For not to recognize Christ’s gifts in His brethren is only the manifestation of the Ishmael against the Isaac; of the will of men against the will of Christ, and of man instead of Christ - of man in the place of God in the Church.

Therefore the Advent Church, had it recognized Christ’s gift in the persons of Jones and Waggoner, to and in the Church would have witnessed a far different outcome from what now is. For it can be seen that the same mistake which the early Church made in respect of Paul, with the consequences that followed, were repeated by the Advent Church with similar results both to the messengers and the Church.

And I ask, brethren; what did the Advent people do to God’s messengers in 1888? I say, they killed them, crucified them, they scourged and persecuted them. That’s what the brethren did in 1888 to the messengers of God. Yet today their children are pleading innocence while accepting actions of their fathers. We need therefore to use the word of God, to put away the traditions and opinions of men and see the truth of God. What happened to Israel is an example for us. Matthew 23; 29-32.

Therefore, in the scriptures and according to the order of God, every responsibility in the Church is the direct gift of God by Jesus through the Holy Spirit. This point cannot be reasonably disputed.

Finally, A.T. Jones, a messenger called by God and taught of God, states thus in his book “Lessons from the Reformation,” 109:

“In the scriptures there is no such thing as appointments or election by men in the Church, nor in the Churches. There is ordination, but not election.”

And what is ordination?

“And ordination is the act of response of the members of the Body to the will of the Head: neither the endorsement nor legalizing of it. The public ceremony is part of the response of the body to the directions of the head.

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.”

Yes brethren, there is no place in God’s eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ, for anyone or any Organization which puts itself in the place of Christ.

The Church is subject unto Christ in everything, not His superior, not even His equal in anything. Eph. 5:24. God will yet have a people in this world. That Church that will be subject unto Christ in everything. God will have such a people.

“Out of all the Babylonian confusion of the two great falling 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. Rev.17:5; 18:4.” Lessons From the Reformation. 110.

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!” Rev. 22:20-21.

CHAPTER 5

Head Of All Things

Christ by the Holy Spirit is the one King, the one Lord and the one Sovereign, in and over each individual, and in and over the Church of Christ which is built together by God, “for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Thus Christ is not Head of the Church in only a general sense, but in the most particular sense. He is Head of the Church in the widest and most intricate sense, for God “gave him to be head over all things to the Church.” Eph.1:22. He is the head of everything that can ever pertain to the Church. For indeed he is the fullness of the Church and fills all in all.

Anything of which He is not the Head in the direct and full sense in which He is Head of the Church the thing does not reach the Church, that is it does not reach any one in the body who is connected to the head, even though that thing be done in the name of the Church. If He is not the Head of it, it springs from somebody else and is not of the Church or pertaining to the Church. And the Good News is that Christ is now sanctifying and cleansing the Church from all pollution “with the washing of water by the powerful word, that He may present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle nor any such thing, but holy and without blemish.”

On page 107 of the book “Lessons from the Reformation,” A.T. Jones states:

“And by the 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. And so the Powerful Word says “God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” 1 Cor.12:23.

“Wherefore he saith, when He ascended up on High He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men; and He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.” Eph.4:8,11.

And the powerful Word speaks clearly for our understanding. “For to me is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of Spirits, to another diverse kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues, but all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” 1 Cor. 12:8–11

Let it be forever fixed in our minds, that all these are set in the Church by God Himself. It is true he may direct it through the body or specific servants of the body Acts 13:. But the directions must be from the head. The truth is that no other person can do it. It is impossible for a man or any association of men to make a true apostle, prophet, messenger, servant or teacher.

We shall now examine the case of the apostle Paul from the Word of God, that WORD that is so dependable.

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by MAN, but by Jesus Christ, and GOD the Father, who raised him from the dead). But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, FOR I NEITHER RECEIVED IT OF MAN, NEITHER WAS I TAUGHT IT, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Gal.1:1,11,12,16.

“At that time many of the converts were persecuted and scattered, and many found their way to Damascus. The chief

priests and rulers wanted to spread this work of persecution further afield from Jerusalem. “For the special work that they desired to have done at Damascus, Saul offered his services. Breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he went unto the high priest and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any of this way, whether they be men or women, he might bring them to Jerusalem bound.”

On the last day of the journey “at midday” “suddenly” there shone a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun (Acts. 26:13), too glorious for mortal eyes to bear: blind and bewildered, Saul fell prostrate to the ground. Saul heard a voice saying unto him, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ And he said, ‘who art thou, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’

Filled with fear, and almost blinded by the intensity of the light, the companions of Saul heard a voice, but saw no man. But Saul understood the words that were spoken, and to him was clearly revealed the one who spoke – even the SON OF GOD. **In the glorious Being who stood before him he saw the crucified One.** Upon the soul of the stricken Jew the image of the Saviour’s countenance was imprinted forever. The words spoken struck home to his heart with appalling force. Into the dark chambers of his mind there poured a flood of light, revealing the ignorance and error of his former life and his present need of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

He saw that his convictions of right and of his own duty had been based largely on his implicit confidence in the priests and rulers. Now that Jesus Himself stood revealed (Gal.1:12) Saul was convinced of the truthfulness of the claims made by the disciples. In that hour of heavenly illumination Saul’s mind acted with remarkable rapidity. What a revelation was all this to the Persecutor! A. A. 111,113,114.

“For three days Saul was without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. These days of soul agony were to him as years. These days of close self-examination and of heart humiliation were

spent in lonely seclusion. He had no desire to appeal to the unconverted Jews, with whom he had planned to unite in persecuting the believers, for he knew that they would not even listen to his story. Thus he seemed to be shut away from all human sympathy. His only hope of help was in a merciful God, and to him he appealed in brokenness of heart.” A.A. 117.

The Apostle Paul when as Saul the Persecutor, was fearless, he made havoc of the Church of God, he wasted it, destroyed it and was on his way to Damascus breathing threatening and slaughter as he testifies. But now he was a servant of God, and the zeal, perseverance, courage, and stern purpose was now to be used to make havoc and waste the kingdom of Satan. Inspiration testifies thus:

“Paul had formerly been known as a zealous defender of the Jewish religion and an outstanding persecutor of the followers of Jesus. Courageous, independent, persevering, his talents and training would have enabled him to serve in almost any capacity. He could reason with extraordinary clearness, and by his withering sarcasm could place an opponent in no enviable light. An eloquent speaker and a severe critic, Paul, with his stern purpose and undaunted courage, possessed the very qualifications needed in the Early Church.” A.A, 124.

Could any group or committee produce such a change in any one? Indeed he would never have been chosen for such a work. Indeed he was given a devilish work by human selection. That of persecuting the saints.

After a little while, however, the opposition became so fierce, God did not allow him to continue his work there. The scripture tells us that **a messenger from heaven bade him leave for a time** and he went to Arabia where he communed with God. Yes, brethren, God does set some to be apostles in His Church. He did set Paul and outline his work for him. For the apostle Paul himself, filled with the Holy Ghost says, when he was on his way to Damascus Jesus Himself declared to him,

“I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I

send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and FROM THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Acts. 26:16–18. As he pondered these things in his heart, Paul understood more and more clearly the meaning of his call,– “to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. 1 Cor.1:1. **His call had come not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God, the Father.** Gal.1:1.” A.A. 126–127. And so the word is found in 1 John 2:27:

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and you have need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

It may not be on the Damascus road; it may not be in Ur of the Chaldees or amidst the mountains of Gilead but we must all hear his voice in the call.

Let us continue with the word; it states that “God hath set some in the church first apostles, secondarily prophets, with that in mind we shall now proceed to the call and work of the prophet Jonah:

Jonah was given a very heavy responsibility for which God had prepared him. He was the very material needed for that great city Ninevah. It was one of the greatest cities and it was the capital of the Assyrian realm. The city was a center of crime and wickedness. Ninevah was called the blood city, full of lies and robbery, but even that city was not wholly given over to evil. God saw that there were some, even in that city, who, if opportunity were given them to learn the way of the living God, would follow him. And so, in his wisdom, God revealed Himself to them in an unmistakable manner to lead them, if possible, to repentance.

The eternal purpose of God for Ninevah was now about to be worked out, and a messenger of God’s own choosing must meet this situation, and meet it he did. Every nation must have a opportunity to repent. Inspiration records it thus: “the instrument chosen for this work was the prophet Jonah, the son

Amittai to him came the word of the Lord: 'Arise, go to Ninevah, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me.' Jonah 1:1,2; P.& K., 266.

Ninevah was very wicked, Jonah reasoned that it would serve no useful purpose proclaiming such a message in the proud city, and so he encouraged doubts and he was overwhelmed with discouragement and as such fled to Tarshish. In Prophets & Kings, 266 is stated:

"In the charge given him, Jonah had been entrusted with a heavy responsibility, yet He who had bidden him to was able to sustain his servant and grant him success. Had the prophet obeyed unquestioningly, he would have been spared many bitter experiences, and would have been blessed abundantly. Yet in the hour of Jonah's despair the Lord did not desert him. Through a series of trials and strange providences, the prophet's confidence in God and in His infinite power to save was to be revived."

And now Jonah, with faith renewed, was ready to preach the message God had given him. The record states:

"Once more the servant of God was commissioned to warn Ninevah. The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, arise, go unto Ninevah, that great city, and preach unto it, the preaching I bid thee.' This time he did not stop to question or doubt, but obeyed unhesitatingly. He arose and went unto Ninevah, according to the word of God." Jonah 3:1-3.

As Jonah entered the City he began at once to 'cry against it' the message, 'yet forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown.' Jonah 3:4. From street to street he went, sounding the note of warning." P.& K. 269,270.

Well we all know the story, Ninevah believed the message, repented and the destruction was averted. Jonah was discouraged at the result, caring more for his reputation than for the salvation of souls. But the Lord was not finished with His prophet yet, and God finally taught him an object lesson.

(Jon 4:7) But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

(Jon 4:8) And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

(Jon 4:9) And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

(Jon 4:10) Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

(Jon 4:11) And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

Even though the event predicted did not come to pass, yet the message of warning was nonetheless from God. Christ, during his earthly ministry, referred to the good wrought by the preaching of the prophet Jonah in Ninevah, in comparison with the professed people of God in His day. Matt.12:40, 41.

As we proceed to the call of Ezra let us bear this counsel in mind.

“God has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction. It is in the heart of the furnace that the dross is separated from the true gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test, He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal, that it may reflect the radiance of His love. It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and he puts these persons upon trial. He gives them opportunity to correct their defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weaknesses, and teaches them to lean upon Him, for He is their only help and safeguard. Thus His object is obtained. They are educated, trained and disciplined, prepared to fulfill the grand purpose for which their powers were given them. When God calls them into action, they are ready, and heavenly angels can unite with them in their work to be accomplished on earth.” P. P. 111,112.

Now in closing, let us consider the appointment of Ezra. Inspiration must speak, loudly, clearly and authoritatively for our admonition and instruction:

“God chose Ezra to be the instrument of good to Israel, that he might put honor upon the priesthood, the glory of which had been greatly eclipsed during the captivity. Ezra developed a man of extraordinary learning and became “a ready scribe in the law of Moses.” Ezra 7:6. These qualifications made him an eminent man in the Medo-Persian kingdom.” P.K, 609.

At this time Artaxerxes Longimanus was reigning and he recognised Ezra as a man appointed by God for a special work, for this is exactly what the word says. “During his (the king’s) long rule he often showed favour to God’s people, **and in his trusted and well-beloved Jewish friends, Ezra and Nehemiah, he recognised men of God’s appointment, raised up for a special work.**” P.K. 607.

Ezra was familiar with all the science of the kingdom but he was not satisfied with his spiritual condition he longed to be closer to God, he desired wisdom to know and carry out the divine will. “And so he ‘prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it.’ Ezra 7:10. This led him to apply himself diligently to a study of the history of God’s people, as recorded in the writings of the Prophets and Kings. He searched the historical and poetical books of the bible to learn why the Lord had permitted Jerusalem to be destroyed and His people carried captive into a heathen land. Ezra endeavoured to gain a heart preparation for the work which he believed was before him. He sought God earnestly that he might be a wise teacher in Israel. As he learned to yield mind and will to divine control there were brought into his life the principles of true sanctification, which, in later years, had a molding influence, not only upon the youth who sought his instruction, but upon all others associated with him.” P.K. 608,609.

Ezra knew he was called of God, and by the leadings of God he prepared himself for his work. For the word says “God hath set some in the church first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. And so God set Ezra in His church to be a teacher. For

this is what the word says. “Ezra became a mouthpiece for God, educating those about him in the principles that govern heaven. During the remaining years of his life, whether near the court of the King of Medo–Persia or at Jerusalem, his principal work was that of a teacher. As he communicated to others the truth he learned, his capacity for labor increased. He became a man of piety and zeal. He was the Lord’s witness to the world of the power of Bible Truth to enoble the daily life. The efforts of Ezra to revive an interest in the study of the scriptures were given permanency by his painstaking, lifelong work of preserving and multiplying the sacred writing. He gathered all the copies of the Law that he could find and had these transcribed and distributed. The pure word, thus multiplied and placed in the hands of many people, gave knowledge that was of inestimable value.” P.K, 609.

Such was the man of God’s choosing, Ezra, responding to the call of God, (not of men, neither after any man) was ordained to the ministry as a teacher of the people. Inspiration tells us that the king was so impressed with the integrity of Ezra that he made him a special representative of Medo–Persia. Ezra knew the word of God to such heights that the king Artaxerxes refers to him—as “the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel;” “a scribe of the law of the God of heaven.” P.K, 610; Ezra 7:11.

“Ezra’s motives were high and holy in all that he did he was actuated by a deep love for souls. The compassion and tenderness that he revealed toward those who had sinned, either willfully or through ignorance, should be an object lesson to all who seek to bring about reforms. The servants of God are to be as firm as a rock where right principles are involved; and yet, withal, they are to manifest sympathy and forbearance. Like Ezra, they are to teach transgressors the way of life by inculcating principles that are the foundation of all right doing.” P.K. 623.

Such was the life and times of the teacher Ezra, and we can trust that word, for it came by Inspiration.

Finally,

“the lesson is for God’s messengers today, when the cities of the nations are as verily in need of a knowledge of the attributes and purposes of the true God as were the Ninevites of old. Christ’s ambassadors are to point men to the nobler world, which has largely been lost sight of. According to the reaching of the Holy Scriptures, the only city that will endure is the city whose builder and maker is God.”

“God’s messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord would cheer every such worker with the same message that He gave to the apostle Paul in wicked Corinth: ‘Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.’ P.K. 274.276.

Therefore God, “having, made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” Eph.1:9, 11.

To God be the glory, great things He have taught us and great our rejoicing when Jesus we see.

CHAPTER 6

Bearing The Divine Credentials

The Call & The Work

In this study we shall be re-affirming the principles we have studied before and seeking a deeper understanding of them as we seek to be Spirit-controlled for the finishing of the work, without any human devising. That is we shall be trusting to the divine provisions to unite us with heaven and with one another and wholly on divine power to make us effective messengers of the gospel in the final work.

We shall now look at the 'Call of Isaiah. We must take special note of the background situation. We must take note that God chooses the messenger to fit the situation. Let the Holy Spirit open our eyes to these truths as we enter on this study. We shall first examine the background situation that was prevailing before Isaiah was called by God.

“The long reign of Uzziah in the land of Judah and Benjamin was characterized by a prosperity greater than that of any other ruler since the death of Solomon, nearly two centuries before. For many years the king ruled with discretion. Under the blessing of Heaven his armies regained some of the territory that had been lost in former years.... Commerce revived, and the riches flowed into Jerusalem. Uzziah’s name “spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. 2 Chron. 26:15.

This outward prosperity, however, was not accompanied by a corresponding revival of spiritual power. The temple services were continued as in former years, and multitudes assembled to worship the living God, but pride and formality gradually took the place of humility and sincerity. Of Uzziah himself it is written: ‘When he was strong, his heart was smitten with a divine judgment. Leprosy appeared on his forehead. Neither his exalted position nor his long life of service could be pleaded as an excuse for the presumptuous sin by which he marred the closing years of his reign, and brought upon himself the judgment of Heaven.

God is no respecter of persons. ‘The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.’ Numbers 15:30; P. K. 303,304.

“The reign of Uzziah was drawing to a close, and Jotham, his son, was already bearing many of the burdens of the state, when Isaiah, of the royal line was called, while yet a young man, to the prophetic mission. The times in which Isaiah was to labor were fraught with peculiar peril to the people of God. The prophet was to witness the invasion of Judah by the combined armies of Northern Israel and of Syria. He was to Behold the Assyrian host encamped before the chief cities of the kingdom. During his lifetime, Samaria was to fall, and the ten tribes of Israel were to be scattered among the nations. The divine protection was being removed, and the Assyrian forces were about to overspread the land of Judah.

But the dangers from without, overwhelming though they seemed, were not so serious as the dangers from within. It was the perversity of his people that brought to the Lord’s servant the greatest perplexity and the deepest depression. Many of the evils which were hastening the swift destruction of the northern kingdom, and which had recently been denounced in unmistakable terms, by Hosea and Amos, were fast corrupting the kingdom of Judah.

The outlook was particularly discouraging as regards the social

conditions of the people. In their desire for gain, men were adding house to house and field to field. Isa.5:8. Justice was perverted, and no pity was shown the poor. Of these evils God declared, 'the spoil of the poor is in your houses.' 'Ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor.' Isa.3:14,15. Even the magistrates, whose duty it was to protect the helpless, turned a deaf ear to the cries of the poor and needy, the widows and the fatherless. Isa.10:1,2. Iniquitous practices had become so prevalent among all classes that the few who remained true to God were often tempted to lose heart and to give way to discouragement and despair. It seemed as if God's purpose for Israel was about to fail and that the rebellious nation was to suffer a fate similar to that of Sodom and Gamorrah." P.& K. 305, 306.

That is the background, those were the conditions existing then, time was running out, God needed a messenger. He must be the right one he must have the very qualifications needed for this mission. Was there anyone left who could be found. To all human vision there was no one, but God knew one and He called Him. That one was Isaiah. The responsibility was enormous and when God called Isaiah he shrank from it. Isaiah saw the work and he saw himself and he saw only divine power could accomplish that work. He understood that this work could not be undertaken without divine provision for its execution and success. It was the same with Moses, Elijah, Elisha and others who were called by God to be instruments in his hand. That fact must be constantly recognized moment by moment. Inspiration writes thus;

"In the face of such conditions it is not surprising that when Isaiah was called to bear to Judah God's messages of warning and reproof, he shrank from the responsibility. But God did something for Isaiah which only He could do. He shewed him a vision (Isaiah 6:1-3) and what Isaiah saw assured him of the success of his mission. He saw that it was not by might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord."

Oh let it be believed and received that the divine call is upheld by divine power to accomplish the divine mission.

Inspiration further informs us thus;

“As Isaiah beheld this Revelation of the glory and majesty of his Lord, he was overwhelmed with a sense of the purity and holiness of God. How sharp the contrast between the matchless perfection of his Creator, and the sinful course of those who, with himself, had long been numbered among the chosen people of Israel and Judah. ‘Woe is me!’ he cried, ‘for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: **for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.**’ Isa.6:5. Standing, as it were, in the full light of the divine presence within the inner sanctuary, **he realized that if left to his own imperfection and inefficiency, he would be utterly unable to accomplish the mission to which he had been called.** But a seraph was sent to relieve him of his distress and to fit him for his great mission. A living coal from the altar was laid upon his lips, with the words, ‘Lo, this hath touched thine lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.’ Then the voice of God was heard saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ and Isaiah responded, ‘Here am I, send me.’ Isa.6:7

What a marvellous change. A couple of hours before the responsibility had appeared to be too much, he is shown the glory and power of God, he stands anointed of God; the responsibility still great, but the zeal of the Spirit was in his heart and he, like David against Goliath, would go in the name of the Lord. The seraph told him to go and gave him his message as is found in Isaiah 6:9,10.

Inspiration comments thus,

“the prophet’s duty was plain, he was to lift up his voice in protest against the prevailing evils but he decided not to undertake the work without some assurance of hope. ‘Lord, how long?’ he inquired. Isa.6:11. ‘Are none of thy chosen people ever to understand and repent and be healed?’

His burden of soul in behalf of erring Judah was not to be borne in vain. His mission was not to be wholly fruitless. Yet the evils that had been multiplying for many generations could not be removed in his day. What a mission was Isaiah’s. “Throughout his lifetime he must be a patient, courageous teacher – a prophet of hope as well as of doom. The divine purpose finally

accomplished, the full fruitage of his efforts, and of the labors of all God's faithful messengers, would appear. A remnant shall be saved.... The ten tribes of the northern kingdom were soon to be scattered among the nations and their cities left desolate, the destroying armies of hostile nations were to sweep over their land again and again, even Jerusalem was finally to fall, and Judah was to be carried away captive, yet the promised land was not to remain wholly forsaken forever. The assurance of the heavenly visitant to Isaiah was: 'In it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten, as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.' Isaiah 6:13. This assurance of the final fulfillment of God's purpose brought courage to the heart of Isaiah. What, though earthly powers array themselves against Judah? What, though the Lord's messenger meet with opposition and resistance? **Isaiah had seen the King, the Lord of hosts, he had heard the song of the seraphim, 'the whole earth is full of His glory.' He had the promise that the messages of Jehovah to backsliding Judah would be accompanied by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and the prophet was nerved for the work before him. Throughout his long and arduous mission he carried with him the memory of this vision.** For sixty years or more he stood before the children of Judah as a prophet of hope, waxing bolder and still bolder in his predictions of the future triumph of the Church." P.& K., pp. 307-310.

Brethren, when I think of Isaiah's mission I think of the Loud Cry. When I look at the fearful responsibility that was before Isaiah, I think of the responsibilities before the remnant. But God made Isaiah equal to the task and sent him forward. That he will do for us. This experience teaches so much, to us who will learn, for it says to us that He who calls us is able to do it.

Isaiah was called by God, prepared by God, given his message by God and sent by God, the very word that he spoke was given him by God, and he was sustained by God.

As we now move on to the experience of Jeremiah, we shall learn many lessons which will be of tremendous benefit for the future, especially for those of us who will go through the Final Crisis. In this experience we

shall look at Jeremiah's call, his response, the background against which he worked, his message, the response to his message, his reaction to those responses and God's care of him through it all.

Jeremiah was called of God to the prophetic office while still a youth, in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. A member of the levitical priesthood, Jeremiah had been trained from childhood for holy service. In those happy years of preparation he little realized that he had been ordained from birth to be a prophet unto the nations, **and when the divine call came he was overwhelmed with a sense of his unworthiness.** 'Ah, Lord God,' he exclaimed, 'Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.' Jer.1:5,6.

In the youthful Jeremiah, God saw one who would be true to his trust and who would stand for the right against great opposition. In childhood he had proved faithful, and now he was to endure hardness, as a good soldier of the cross.

'Say not, I am a child,' the Lord bade His chosen messenger, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee. Gird up thy loins and arise and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces: lest I confound thee before them. For Behold, I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar and brazen wall against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee.' Jer.1:7,8,17-19.

For forty years Jeremiah was to stand before the nation as a witness for truth and righteousness. In a time of unparalleled apostasy he was to exemplify in life and character, the worship of the only true God. During the terrible sieges of Jerusalem he was to be the mouthpiece of Jehovah.

Of his call to the prophetic mission, Jeremiah himself wrote: "The Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me,

‘Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.’ Jer.1:9,10.

Thank God for the words, ‘to build and to plant.’ By these words Jeremiah was assured of the Lord’s purpose to restore and to heal.

As a wise master-builder, Jeremiah at the very beginning of his life work, sought to encourage the men of Judah to lay the foundations of their spiritual life broad and deep, by making a thorough work of repentance. Long had they been building with material likened by the apostle Paul to wood, hay and stubble, and by Jeremiah himself, to dross. “Reprobate silver shall men call them,” he declared of the impenitent nation, “because the Lord hath rejected them.” Jer.6:30. Now they were urged to begin building wisely and for eternity, casting aside the rubbish of apostasy and unbelief, and using as foundation material, the pure gold, the refined silver, the precious stones – faith and obedience and good works – which, alone, are acceptable in the sight of a holy God.

Through Jeremiah the word of the Lord to His people was:

“Return, thou backsliding Israel ...and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep mine anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou has transgressed against the Lord thy God... Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you. “Thou shalt call me, ‘my Father;’ and shalt not turn away from me. Return ye backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings.” Jer.3:12-14,19,22.

Jeremiah called them all repeatedly to the counsels given in Deuteronomy. More than any other of the prophets, he emphasized the teachings of the Mosaic law and showed how these might bring the highest spiritual blessing to the nation and to every individual heart.

“Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein,” he pleaded, “and ye shall find rest for your souls.” Jer.6:16.

Thus the prophet stood firmly for the sound principles of right living so clearly outlined in the book of the law. But the conditions prevailing in the land of Judah were such that only by the most decided measures could a change for the better be brought about, therefore he labored most earnestly in behalf of the impenitent.

“Break up your fallow ground,” he pleaded, “and sow not among thorns.” O, Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.” Jer. 4:3,14.

But by the great mass of the people the call to repentance and reformation was unheeded. From the beginning of Jehoiakim’s reign, Jeremiah had little hope of saving his beloved land from destruction and the people from captivity. Yet he was not permitted to remain silent while utter ruin threatened the kingdom. ***Those who had remained loyal to God must be encouraged, to persevere in right doing, and sinners must, if possible, be induced to turn from iniquity.***

The crisis demanded a public and far-reaching effort. Jeremiah was commanded by the Lord to stand in the court of the temple and speak to all the people of Judah who might pass in and out. From the messages given him he must diminish not a word, that sinners in Zion might have the fullest possible opportunity to hearken and to turn from the evil ways.

The prophet obeyed, he stood in the gate of the Lord’s house and there lifted his voice in warning and entreaty. Under the inspiration of the Almighty he declared the message as found in Jer.7:2–7.

Thus it was that “in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem” the message of Jeremiah to Judah was, “hear ye the words of this covenant,” – the plain precepts of Jehovah as recorded in the sacred scriptures, – “and do them.” Jer.11:6. And this is the message he proclaimed as he stood in the temple courts in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.

Israel's experience from the days of the Exodus was briefly reviewed. God's covenant with them had been 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.' Shamelessly and repeatedly had this covenant been broken. The chosen nation had 'walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.' Jer.7:23,24,

'Why,' the Lord enquired, 'is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?' Jer.8:5. 'The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgement of the Lord.' 'Shall I not visit them for these things?' saith the Lord, 'shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?' Jer.7:28; 8:7; 9:9.

Oh, what a terrible condition, was it worthwhile to send them any messengers at all? Would you want to go to such a people? Intercession for them was almost past, as can be seen in Jeremiah 15:1,2.

Jeremiah's message to priests and people aroused the antagonism of many. With boisterous denunciation they cried out, 'why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, 'this house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant?' And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord. Tidings of the words of Jeremiah were carried to the princes of Judah, and they hastened from the palace of the king to the temple, to learn for themselves the truth of the matter. And after they had a good long look, this is what those priests said, "Then spake the priest and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, this man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." But the Lord did not leave Jeremiah speechless. Jeremiah responded as recorded in Jer.26:12-15.

"Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and

against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.”

Had the prophet been intimidated by the threatening attitude of those high in authority, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life; but the courage with which he delivered the solemn warning commanded the respect of the people and turned the princes of Israel in his favour. They reasoned with the priests and false prophets, showing them how unwise would be the extreme measures they advocated, and their words produced a reaction in the minds of the people. Thus God raised up defenders for his servant. From the day of his call to the close of his ministry, Jeremiah stood before Judah as a tower and a fortress “against which the wrath of man could not prevail.” ‘They shall fight against thee,’ the Lord had forewarned His servant, ‘but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee,’ saith the Lord. ‘And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible. Jer.6:27; 15:20,21.

Naturally of a timid and shrinking disposition, Jeremiah longed for the peace and quiet of a life of retirement, where he need not witness the continued impenitence of his beloved nation.

‘O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! O, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them!’ Jer.9:1,2.

Cruel were the mockings he was called upon to endure. So says Lamentations 3:14 and Jer.20:7,10.

But the faithful prophet was daily strengthened to endure.

“When called to drink of the cup of tribulation and sorrow, and when tempted in his misery to say, “My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord,” he recalled the providences of God in his behalf and triumphantly exclaimed; “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: Great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” Lam.3:18; 22–26. EGW 407–421

That was the ministry of Jeremiah. So it was with Abraham, Noah, Elijah, Elisha, Paul, Jonah, Ezra and Isaiah. God was their head, they followed His directions and fulfilled the task for which he had called them. He has called us to finish the work which they started. Will we listen to Him that the work may be completed?

My prayer is that we would. May we have the pleasure, since it is our privilege to finish the work.

CHAPTER 7

God's Word The Only Authority

“The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own.” D.A. 324.

That is the everlasting truth. I believe it, will always believe it and preach it every day and everywhere. The Reformers knew this truth and they lived and died for this truth.

Huss said,

“I place myself on the immovable foundation, the chief corner stone, which is the truth, the way, and the life, our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Martin Luther knew this truth for he said, when asked if he would retract,

Since your most serene majesty and your high mightiness require from me a clear, simple and precise answer, I will give you one and it is this: ***I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils***, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I

have quoted, and ***unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience.*** Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen." G.C. 160.

The question is, 'where do you stand brethren?' This question demands our full attention, for we are on the borders of the Eternal world. When Martin Luther was pressed further he said,

"I have no other reply to make than that which I have already made." G.C. 161.

The question comes to us, 'will one's reply change when the pressure increases?'

After his departure he wrote,

"In all the affairs of this present life, my fidelity shall be unshaken, for here to lose or to gain is of no consequence to salvation. ***But when eternal interests are concerned, God wills not that man should submit unto man. For such submission in spiritual matters is a real worship, and ought to be rendered solely to the Creator.***" G.C. 167.

What was Martyn Luther saying? He was saying that the duty which every creature owes to the creator cannot be demanded by or given to any individual, group, committee or council. That faith relationship between creator and creature constitutes the first great commandment and is beyond the realm of human decision or legislation. Therefore to yield your faith is truly to render worship to another.

You may give up your rights but never your faith. 1 cor; 9; 19-23. Jesus gave up his right not to pay the temple tax and provided payment for Peter and himself. He gave up his right but not his faith.

And even after he was ex-communicated, he was asked to preach and he went into the pulpit and said, "I never pledged myself to chain up the word of God, nor will I." G.C. 167. Brethren, that is where I stand now, and with Christ as my head I will stand therein forever.

Inspiration speaks thus,

“I write this that all may know that there is no controversy among Seventh-day Adventists over the question of leadership. The Lord God of Heaven is our king. He is a leader whom we can safely follow, for He never makes a mistake.... God would work mightily for His people today if they would place themselves wholly under His guidance.... The Lord calls for men of genuine faith and sound minds, men who recognize the distinction between the true and the false. Each one should be on his guard, studying and practicing the lessons given in the seventeenth chapter of John, and preserving a living faith in the truth for this time. We need that self—control which will enable us to bring our habits into harmony with the prayer of Christ.” T.T. Vol.3, pg. 242,243. (1904)

And since “the head of every man is Christ,” and “the Church is built upon Christ as its foundation,” “it is to obey Christ as its Head,” and “it is not to depend upon man or be controlled by man,.” D.A. 414.

A.T. Jones knew this truth, as the other Reformers did, and as you and I know it now. For he states many claim that a position of trust in the Church gives them authority to dictate ‘what other men shall believe and what they shall do this claim God does not sanction.’ That is where I stand, and that is what I preach from the Bible. A position of trust in the Church never gives to any man or any company of men any authority to dictate what any man should believe or what he should do. And when men in position in a Church do make the claim, as they make the claim, that they have authority to dictate or to decide what other men shall believe or what they shall do, then I am ready to say to all people just as the book says, this claim God does not sanction.” It is eternally right and I will hold to it and preach it.” A.A.F. E.C.14; D.A. 414.

And why is this eternally so? Because “the Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He each someone else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally.”D.A. 668

Certainly this point has to do with the individual’s responsibility to God. Why? Because the church in its organized capacity has instructions from the Head to preserve order and righteous government in the Body.

And since it is the truth of Christianity, that the Lord will teach you your duty just as willingly as He will teach any other one his duty, it must be that He will teach me my duty far more willingly than He will teach someone else my duty. And so I say brethren, since God says so, believe Him, believe in Him, live with Him, talk with Him, trust Him. Believe that He will, expect that He will, and then let Him speak His mysteries to you personally. That is what the Reformers knew, believed and taught, that is what the Advent pioneers believed and taught, that is what the messengers of 1888 believed and preached. That is what I believe that is what I preach everywhere and to everyone for evermore because it is the truth of Christianity.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the very essence of Christianity, without Jesus there is no Christianity, He must be our example in everything or nothing.

Since Jesus learnt just as we must learn and lived by faith in His Father as we must live by faith in God through Him, it must mean that His Father spoke His mysteries to Him personally. As Jesus followed those instructions from His Father, we shall see what developed between Jesus and the Church leaders of His day.

Let Inspiration speak:

To avoid useless conflict with the leaders at Jerusalem, He had restricted His labors to Galilee. His apparent neglect of the great religious assemblies, and the enmity manifested toward Him by the priests and rabbis, were a cause of perplexity to the people about Him, and even to His own disciples and His kindred. In His teachings He had dwelt upon the blessings of obedience to the law of God, and yet He Himself seemed to be indifferent to the service which had been divinely established. His mingling with publicans and others of ill repute, His disregard of the rabbinical observances, and the freedom with which He set aside the traditional requirements concerning the Sabbath, all seeming to place Him in antagonism to the religious authorities, excited much questioning. His brothers thought it a mistake for Him to alienate the great and learned men of the nation. They felt that these men must be in the right, and that Jesus was at fault in placing Himself in antagonism to them." D.A. 450.

In examining this passage we must ask and answer these questions:-

1. Why did Jesus limit his work to Galilee? The word says it was to avoid useless conflict with the leaders at Jerusalem. Did he not have the right to labour where ever he wanted to? But he gave up that right at that time for a higher reason , without giving up his faith.
2. Why did he neglect of the great religious assemblies? It was for the furtherance of the gospel work. He was avoiding unnecessary controversy.
3. Was it a mistake for Jesus to alienate the great and learned men of the nation? No. They rejected Jesus, he did not reject them.
4. Was Jesus at fault in placing Himself in antagonism to them?

Answer - It was the leaders who placed themselves in antagonism against Christ.

But there were those who thought that He was. And why did they think so? It was just because “they felt that these men must be right.” And why did they feel that these men must be in the right? It was just because they were “the religious authorities,” “the leaders at Jerusalem.” Just because these men occupied positions and places, they “must be in the right,” and, of course, just because they were men in positions, Jesus must be in the wrong and “at fault” in placing Himself in antagonism to them. But in all this Jesus was not at fault in any sense whatsoever, He was eternally right all the time, and the real antagonism was not at all on His part. Therefore, disagreement with church leaders and religious authorities, even to occupy an attitude of antagonism to them, is never, in itself, any evidence of error or fault. Therefore no man, no association or combination of men ever has any authority because of any official position or place in the Church of Christ, or in any church professing to be the Church of Christ. The leaders, the under shepherds must let the authority of the word of God speak loudly in the church of God. That word must be the guide, it must uphold and defend their every action. Hence it is the authority of the word of God constantly set forth in his church by his messengers. And when any man or set of men does have authority in any church, other than the word of God it is because that church is only of men and not of Christ. And it is always better to be out of all such churches. We have the authority of Christ on that in Matthew 20:25-26.

Inspiration agrees

“In the kingdoms of the world, position meant self-aggrandisement. The people were supposed to exist for the benefit of the ruling classes. Influence, wealth, education, were so many means of gaining control of the masses for the use of the leaders.... ***Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak.*** Power, position, talent, education, placed their possessor under greater obligation to serve his fellows...

In matters of conscience, the soul must be left untrammled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.” D.A. 550.

Again this emphasizes clearly the duty we owe to God is paramount and cannot be compromised in any situation. This is clearly different from being asked to defer or undertake a missionary trip. It is clearly different to being asked to shift a class to a new location or be quiet when some one else is speaking promoting church order. The principles for good church order are mentioned in 1 cor ; 14.

Further, it is stated that,

“in all matters where principle is involved, let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression “ no compulsion of manner.” D.A. 550

So then, where there is lordly oppression and compulsion of manner and where any man or combination of men tries to prescribe another's duty it is because it is not Christ's kingdom, but only the kingdom of men. Again we are specifically referring to the which is due to God and not man.

The question is, “whom do we obey?” The testimony is, “we must obey orders that come from above.” Where did the early disciples get their orders from? - from above. Matt. 28:18,19.

Accordingly it is written in D.A. 826:

“In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, ‘to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.’ The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the old testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. ***There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ’s servants to teach.*** “The law and the prophets,” with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. ***Christ’s name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognised in His kingdom.***”

So it is very plain that in the teaching that Christ has commanded us to teach, there is no room for tradition, no place for men’s theories and conclusions, not even for church legislation or rules. Therefore, in the name of truth, if Christ’s servants are not to teach such, then I ask, what good is there and what is the use of such things and by whose authority do they require us to teach such things.

Inspiration answers most authoritatively for us;

“God declares, I will be glorified in My people,’ but the self-confident management of men has resulted in putting God aside and accepting the devisings of men.” [Special Testimonies – Series B, No.10, pg.16 & 17].

And Inspiration continues further:

“For years there has been a growing tendency for men to be placed in positions of responsibility to ***lord it over God’s heritage, thus removing from church members their keen sense of the need for divine instruction and an appreciation of the privilege with God regarding this duty.*** This order of things must be changed. There must be a reform.” pg.13.

Further, I quote;

“In my early experiences in the message, I was called to meet this evil. During my labors in Europe and Australia, and more recently at the San Jose camp meeting in 1905, I had to bear my testimony of warning against it, because souls were being led to look to man for wisdom, instead of looking to God who is our Wisdom, and Sanctification, and our Righteousness. And now (1907) the same message has again been given me, more definite and decisive, because there has been a deeper offense to the Spirit of God.” *ibid.*

The organize body has its place and work, but this word makes it plain that the first of all relationships is required if this evil is to be overcome. And God requires it.

And since it is an evil to look to men for wisdom, and since the continuance of it gives a deeper offense to Spirit of God, then any man or set of men in the church who put themselves in the place of God and their devisings in place of His wisdom, ought to be told by us that we have chosen God as our Counselor.

*“Every church member should understand that God is the One to Whom to look for an understanding of **individual duty**. It is right that brethren should counsel together; but when Men arrange just what their brethren shall do, let them answer that they have chosen the Lord as their Counselor.*

Those who will humbly seek Him will find His grace sufficient. **But when one man allows another to step in between him and his duty that God has pointed out to him, giving to man his confidence and accepting him as guide, then he steps from the true platform to a false and dangerous one.** Such a man, instead of growing and developing, will loss his spirituality. There is no power in any man to remedy the defective character. Individually our hope and trust must be in one who is more than human.” *Ibid.*

We see clearly therefore that this first of all relationships cannot be superseded by the visible body- that creator creature relationship has its own place among the body and in spite of the body.

Let it be known that our hope and trust must be in our High Priest presently in the Most Holy Place, by His ministry remedying every defect in our characters and sanctifying us for the glorious presentation. Therefore brethren, when God points out your duty and men who put themselves in the place of God oppose it, whom should we obey? This word gives the answer.

“As his work (William Miller) tended to build up the churches, it was for a time regarded with favor. But as ministers and religious leaders decided against the advent doctrine and desired to suppress all agitation of the subject, they did not only opposed it from the pulpit, but denied their members the privilege of attending preaching upon the second advent, or even of speaking of their hope in the social meetings of the church. Thus the believers found themselves in a position of great trial and perplexity. *They loved their churches and were loath to separate from them; but as they saw the testimony of God’s word suppressed and their right to investigate the prophecies denied they felt that **loyalty to God forbade them to submit.*** Those who sought to shut out the testimony of God’s word they could not regard as constituting the church of Christ, “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Hence they felt themselves justified in separating from their former connection. In the summer of 1844 about fifty thousand withdrew from the churches.” G.C. 376.

No one can forbid anyone from studying the word of God. Where ever any duty is owed to God it cannot be demanded by the visible church or civil power to be given to either.

Let us now learn a very important lesson from the 1844 experience. The testimony states;

“but we need not expand this painful subject. Suffice it that the evidence thickens and rolls heavily upon us, to show that the churches generally are becoming sadly degenerate. They have gone far from the Lord, and He has withdrawn Himself from them.”

Such a condition never exists without cause in the church itself. The spiritual darkness which falls upon nations, upon churches

and individuals, is due, not to an arbitrary withdrawal of the succors of divine grace on the part of God, but to neglect or rejection of divine light on the part of men." G.C. .377.

The lesson of truth is this: When the Faithful and True Witness announced to the Advent movement that they were lukewarm and sadly degenerate, it meant that the reason for this condition was that they had gone far from God, and that they had neglected or rejected divine light and therefore, as long as they remained in that condition it showed a continual neglect or rejection of divine light. Since this is so we must learn now that only continual attention to present truth and total acceptance of further light will keep us united to the vine.

Brethren, from the testimony presented it must be clear to all of us that in God's church only the Head of the church has authority and His authority alone should we obey. This authority may be administered by the church in its organized capacity to the extent and scope given in the word. We will say like Wycliffe on his death bed, when we are charged with error and heresy and all the other devilish demands of religious authorities;

"With whom, think you," he finally said, "are ye contending? With an old man on the brink of his grave? No! with truth - truth which is stronger than you, and will overcome you." G.C. 90. And like Martin Luther, when our friends ask us to leave the position God has placed us in because of opposition, we will reply, "I am like Jeremiah, a man of strife and contention; but the more their threats increase, the more my joy is multiplied." G.C. 135.

And so, brethren, be it ever known that,

"the soul that is yielded to Christ, becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own." D.A. 324.

No one should be given that reverence or worship which is due to God alone.

May this truth be riveted in our minds since God, "having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth; even in Him." Eph.1:9,10.

CHAPTER 8

The Church & The Word

The Protestant Reformation opposed two abuses of **man in matters of faith**. **The first is the intrusion of the state, and the second the arbitrary authority of the church**. In place of these abuses, **Protestantism puts the power of conscience** (Daniel 3 and 6) **and the authority of the word of God above the visible church**. (Acts 3,4 & 5).

This second abuse, the arbitrary authority of the church, has not been nearly so much discussed, it is very little understood, and it is not at all recognized in or by anything in this world that claims to be the church.

Every person is happy and willing to oppose the first abuse, the intrusion of the state, but no denomination is willing to even discuss the second. So, in order then to study and discuss this intelligently, let us first understand the terms. Authority is the “right to command and enforce obedience, the right to act by virtue of office, station or relation.

Arbitrary is “not regulated by fixed rule or law, subject to individual will or judgment, exercised according to one’s will or caprice.” So then, as to authority itself; the church professes to be of God and to be caring for the people of God, what authority then, what right, over the people of God, to command and enforce obedience has the church. To find the truth we must look to the word of God, and when we turn to this word we find it plainly stated by the Lord Jesus Himself that any exercise of authority by Christians is forbidden. Here is the word in Mat. 20:25,26.

“But Jesus called them unto Him and said, ye know that 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.”

Now when authority is “the right to command and to enforce obedience,” and Christ has positively forbidden all “right to command and to enforce obedience,” has forbidden any and all exercise of authority,” what right has any leader to do what Christ has forbidden. Now Christ has given gifts to his church. He has set some apostles teachers etc. but these gifts and ministries has a divine purpose. There are given not for domination or giving right to have dominion over but to serve one another out of love to the creator.

And further He states the reason why it should be so.

“It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Matt.20:26-28.

So it stands confirmed that Christians and the churches are not in the world to rule but only to serve, not to command but only to serve, even as their Master came not to be served but to give service to the extent of giving His very life to rescue us from death and give us liberty. That is indeed the liberty of lovingly serving, which is our spiritual service. (Rom.12:1).

Next we may ask if any Christian or church has any right to act because of office, position, or relation. The answer is just, none at all, because the office or position or station of all Christians is only ‘that of servant. And it is free service, and freely chosen service, loved and loving service.

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” Galatians 5:13.

But in service to one another reproof and rebuke must be given when demanded by the word of God. This loving service manifested in correcting a member is not because of power but because of our relation to Christ.

It is never in the jurisdiction of a servant to rule, so long as he is in the position of a servant. But that is exactly the position of all of God’s children

in the world. Prov.30: 21,22 states,

“For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear, for a servant when he reigneth.”

And so the only way that any professing to be a Christian or the church can even have in this world any office, station or position other than that of a servant is to assume it, which in fact is usurpation. And any usurpation by any man or group of men is the revelation of the spirit of Satan and its reign can only be the reign of the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity. But why is this so? The answer is because Christians in the church of Christ and of God are all equal. There, there are no masters, nor is there room for any. However there must be and is room for the working and place for the gifts given in the church in its organized capacity for the guidance and building up of his kingdom on earth. Under shepherds care for the sheep not rule or dominate them.

“But be ye not called rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters for one is your masters, even Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matt.23:8-12.

As the apostle so clearly states in 1 cor 1 : 30 we are helpers of your joy rather than dominion over your faith. These passages speaks clearly to the first of all relationships, between creator and creature which can be otherwise stated as individuality in religion. Man must not put himself in the position of God to a believer nor should the believer allow such to be done to him.

Therefore who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Rom.14:4. The word is “God has never given a hint in his word that he has appointed any man to be head of the church.” G.C. 51. On the contrary the sure word is,

“Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people and gave him to be head over all things to the church. And he is the Head of the Church which is his body. Isa. 55:4; Eph.1:22,23; Col.1:18.

In the Head, not in the body, nor in the members, is the place of intelligence, judgement, decision and will. It is in the head which is Christ, where is

the seat of authority, of intelligence, of decision, and of will. Therefore it is the head only, never the body, who can “command and require obedience.” And this he has the right to do forever, because of his position, for he is the commander and leader to the people, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the sole sovereign in and of the Church, and in and over all things to the Church. The instruction is we must obey the voice of the true Shepherd.

Hence the word of God forever settles the position of Christians and the Church. The Church is subject unto Christ all the time in everything (Eph.5:24) not ruler. AMEN!

This was the living principle in Daniel, the three Hebrew boys, the disciples, the Waldensian Christians, the other reformers and so it must be with us. They recognized God’s authority as the only authority in the Church. This authority is by and through his word and administers by his servants as representatives of an the stead of the head. For “when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, *ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God*, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” 1 Thess.2:13.

In the Dark Ages

“popery had become the world’s despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control. For hundreds of years the doctrines of Rome had been extensively and implicitly received, its rites reverently performed, its festivals generally observed. Its clergy were honored and liberally sustained. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons, or writings she sought to destroy. G.C. 60,61.

But thank the Lord they were and they are those who have the word of God above the authority of men in the Church.

“In Great Britain primitive Christianity had very early taken root. The gospel received by the Britons in the first centuries was then uncorrupted by Romish apostasy. But Rome had fixed her eyes on Britain, and resolved to bring it under her supremacy. In the

sixth century her missionaries undertook the conversion of the heathen Saxons. They were received with favour by the proud barbarians, and they induced many thousands to profess the Romish faith. As the work progressed, the papal leaders and their converts encountered the primitive Christians. A striking contrast was presented. The latter were simple, humble, and scriptural in character, doctrine and manners, while the former manifested the superstition, pomp, and arrogance of popery. ***The emissary of Rome demanded that these Christian churches acknowledge the supremacy of the sovereign pontiff. The Britons meekly replied that they desired to love all men, but that the pope was not entitled to supremacy in the church, and they could render to him only that submission which was due to every follower of Christ.*** Repeated attempts were made to secure their allegiance to Rome, but these humble Christians, amazed at the pride displayed by her emissaries steadfastly replied that they knew no other master than Christ." G.C. 62,63.

These Christians realize that the submission which belongs to God cannot be given to man. Hence it is clear that the submission which was being demanded by the Romish emissary was that which must be given to God alone and not to any human head.

Next were the Waldensian Christians, we shall see how they responded to the authority of men;

"But of those who resisted the encroachments of the papal power, the Waldenses stood foremost. In the very land where popery had fixed its seat, there its falsehood and corruption were most steadfastly resisted. ***They were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith.*** A Separation took place. Those who adhered to the ancient faith NOW withdrew, some forsaking their native Alps, raised the banner of truth in foreign lands; others retreated to the secluded glens and rocky fastnesses of the mountains, and there ***preserved their freedom to worship God.*** Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers. ***They contended for the faith of the Apostolic Church, the faith once delivered unto the saints.***" G.C. 64.

And because of this they counted it joy to suffer for Christ's sake.

"They indulged NO repining because of the hardships of their lot, they were never lonely amid the mountain solitudes. They thanked God that he had provided for them an asylum from the wrath and cruelty of men. They rejoiced in their freedom to worship before him. Pure, simple and fervent was the piety of these followers of Christ. The principles of truth they valued above houses and lands, friends, kindred, even life itself. The Waldenses had sacrificed their worldly prosperity for the truth's sake, and with persevering patience they toiled for their daily bread." G.C. 66,67.

Such was a people who lived in the Piedmont Valley, *a peaceable, quiet and pious people, who suffered because they would worship God according to the Scriptures instead of according to the will of the Pope.* "There the Waldenses witnessed for God centuries before the birth of Luther. Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and is to be carried forward to the close of time by those who also are willing to suffer all things for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus." Rev.1:19; G.C. 78.

Now we shall consider one of the greatest of the reformers, who was given his work by God (G.C. 92), Wycliffe.

In the fourteenth century arose in England the,

"Morning Star of the Reformation." John Wycliffe was the herald of reform not for England alone, but for all Christendom. **The Great Protest against Rome** which it was permitted him to utter was never to be silenced. **That protest opened the struggle which was to result in the Emancipation of individuals, of churches and of nations.** Like after reformers, Wycliffe did not, at the opening of his work, foresee whither it would lead him. He did not set himself deliberately in opposition to Rome. But devotion to truth could not but bring him in conflict with falsehood. He saw that Rome had forsaken the word of God for human tradition, *he demanded that the bible be restored to the people and its*

authority be again established in the Church. Wycliffe was a keen detector of error, and he struck fearlessly against many of the abuses sanctioned by the authority of Rome.” G.C. 80–82.

Wycliffe continued his attacks against the papacy as the false Catholic Church. The anger of the papacy was awakened and hurled against him. The word says “the papal thunders were soon hurled against him. Three bulls were dispatched to England – to the university, to the King, and to the prelates, all commanding immediate and decisive measures to silence the teacher of heresy.” G.C. 85.

God’s providence delivered him from this situation and he continued his labors pointing men to the Prince of Peace.

However, unceasing toil, study and the assaults of his enemies had told upon his strength and made him prematurely old. He was attacked by a dangerous illness. The tidings brought great joy to friars. Representatives from the four religious orders, with four Civil Officers, gathered about the supposed dying man.

“You have death on your lips,”–they said. “Be touched by your faults, and retract in our presence all that you have said to our injury.” The reformer listened in silence, then he bade his attendant raise him in his bed, and, gazing steadily upon them as they stood waiting for his recantation, he said, in the firm, strong voice which had so caused them to tremble, “I shall not die, but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars. Astonished and abashed THE MONKS HURRIED FROM THE ROOM.” G.C. 87,88.

Without success, again the papal leaders plotted to silence the reformer’s voice. Before three tribunals he was successively summoned for trial, but without success. Then he was again brought to trial and now before the highest Ecclesiastical tribunal in the Kingdom. Here no favour would be shown to heresy. Here at last Rome would triumph, and the reformer’s work would be stopped. So thought the papists.

But this fundamental question must be asked and answered with a decisiveness that will forever be imprinted on our minds. The question is,

what right had this Ecclesiastical tribunal, because of position, office or status, to summon Wycliffe to a tribunal *for his faith?*

The answer is, forever just none at all. For the Head speaketh expressly, “but be ye not called rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ and all ye are brethren. But whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Matt.23:20: Wycliffe knew this truth, he knew who was his head, and he knew whose authority he should obey and God vindicated his servant in this stand. The record says, “But Wycliffe did not retract; he would not dissemble. He fearlessly maintained his teachings and repelled the accusations of his persecutors. Losing sight of himself, of his position, of the occasion, he summoned his hearers before the divine tribunal, and weighed their sophistries and deceptions in the balances of eternal truth. The power of the Holy Spirit was felt in the council room. A spell from God was upon the hearers. They seemed to have no power to leave the place. The charge of heresy which they had brought against him, he with convincing power threw back upon themselves.” Wycliffe knew they had no Authority from the head-of the Church because he himself was now speaking, with authority from Christ, which they could not gainsay at all.

Finally he said, “with whom, think ye, are ye contending? With an old man on the brink of his grave? No! with Truth - Truth which is stronger than you, and will overcome you.” G.C. 90. And so God has constantly shown that no Christian, no church calling itself Christian or any assembly or association of men even claiming to represent Christ has any authority because of position, station or office to command anybody to do anything, and has clearly shown that the position of every Christian and the Christian Church in the world is to serve, its position only that of a servant. And by His word He clearly states that Christ, who He has given to be the Commander, Leader and Head of the Church, has “all authority in heaven and on earth.” (Matt.28:19) and since Christ has all there isn’t any for anyone else at all to possess in and off themselves.

As we conclude we shall further confirm by Inspiration that God’s word is the only authority which must rule in his body. The question always was and now is, whose authority shall we obey, God’s authority or the traditions of men? As we just saw, Wycliffe was brought to that position, he faced that same question, but, thank God he chose God’s word. Another reformer was brought to decide upon this same question.

“For the last time, Huss was brought before the council. It was a vast and brilliant assembly – the Emperor, the princes of the Empire, the royal deputies, the cardinals, bishops and priest and an immense crowd who had come as spectators of the events of the day. Being again exhorted to retract, he replied, turning toward the people. “With what face, then, should I behold the heavens? How should I look on those multitudes of men to whom I have preached the pure gospel? No; I esteem their salvation more than this poor body, now appointed unto death.” He was now led to the stake and fastened to it. Again the question came as to whose authority he would obey. Listen to what the word says. “When he had been fastened to the stake, and all was ready for the fire to be lighted, the martyr was once more exhorted to save himself by renouncing his errors: ‘What errors,’ said Huss, shall I renounce? I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all that I have written and preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin and perdition, and therefore most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have written and preached.” G.C. 108,109.

Huss had the first of all commandments in his heart and hence not even fire could sever the first of all relationships, and refuse to give to man that which was due to the Creator alone. That was Huss, dying rather than to obey the ‘authority’ of men in the place of the authority of God. Another martyr, Jerome, faced that demanding question also, as all of us must face it very soon in the world. Some of us with the same results as with Huss and Jerome. Jerome stood for truth, but when the pressure came he surrendered to it, he later repented of it and gave his life for the truth. While in prison before his final sentence, many dignitaries visited him requesting him to submit to the ‘authority’ of men who had put themselves in the place of God.

“Again the storm of rage burst out, and Jerome was hurried to prison. He was visited by dignitaries of the Church and urged to submit himself to the council. The most brilliant prospects were presented before him as the reward of renouncing his opposition to Rome. But like his master when offered the glory of the world, Jerome remained steadfast. He said, ‘prove to me from the Holy Scriptures that I am in error and I will abjure it. Are the traditions of men more worthy of faith than the gospel

of our Saviour? Paul did not exhort those to whom he wrote to listen to the tradition of men, but said, “search the scriptures.”

Sentence was now passed upon him, he was led to the same spot as Huss before him to suffer the same fate. When the executioner, about to kindle the pile, stepped behind him, the Martyr exclaimed: “Come forward boldly, apply the fire before my face. Had I been afraid, I should not be here.” G.C.114,115. So perished God’s faithful light-bearers with this testimony. “Both bore themselves with constant mind when their last hour approached. They prepared for the fire as if they were going to a marriage feast. They utter no cry of pain.”

We shall now turn to Acts for our final witness for this case.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put [them] in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide....And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, [even] by him doth this man stand here before you whole.... And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them [is] manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny [it]. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.... And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders

had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou [art] God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, ...And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, Acts 4:1-3, 5-8, 10,14,15-20,23-25,27,29;

Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set [them] before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:25-29.

Then it is forever fixed by the word of God. We should obey God's word rather than man's 'authority.' Yes brethren, the question is and always will be, whose authority shall we bow to? (Dan.3&6). The apostles' answer must be our answer, for it is the only right answer. We are in the time when the Reformation shall close gloriously. The Reformation answer must be ours. Here it is:

"I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless they render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen." G.C. 160.

When you come to this point the same word to you is, "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33. Amen!

CHAPTER 9

Christ The Foundation & Master-builder Of His Church

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1Cor. 3:11.

The Scriptures further state:

“Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste.” Isaiah 28: 16.

As is written in 1Peter 2:4,5

“To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of man but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

A house is built out of dead material. But the spiritual temple of God which he is preparing for His dwelling place, is built of living material, living stones. These stones, you and I, are first taken from the quarry as any stones would be.

The testimony states

“The Mighty Cleaver of truth has taken them, The people of

God, out of the world as rough stones that are to be hewed and squared, and polished for the heavenly building?” Danger in adopting worldly policy. pg. 6

The testimony states that the Mighty Cleaver of truth takes us out of the world as rough stones are taken out of the quarry, but it is God’s Eternal purpose in Christ to build us up for a habitation of God, a spiritual temple, a heavenly building. But what is the agency by which this work is to be done?

“They must be hewed by the prophets with reproof, warning, admonition and advice, that they may be fashioned after the Divine Pattern; this is the specified work of the Comforter to transform heart and character that men may keep the way of the Lord.” HISTORICAL SKETCHES TO FOREIGN MISSIONS, pg.137. Hosea 6:4,5).

So God hews us by the prophets, reproves, rebukes, instructs, disciplines, to fit us for the place in the heavenly building.

Now we must learn a very important lesson on character building considering the way in which the original temple was built. So let us turn to 1 Kings 6:7.

“And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the Land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord. And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building,”

Thus it was, before the material was put together to form the literal temple, it had been all fitted, every stone was ready for its place, polished, hewed and tested. When the material was brought to the place where the temple was to be erected, all that was necessary to be done was the putting of each one in the place for which it had been prepared, and then the whole temple grew up, a shapely, beautiful structure. Hence it is absolutely necessary that we submit to the Comforter to do his work, otherwise the stones will be rejected, because this building is to go up together without the sound of any tool, as the one of old. But let us consider Amos 9:11 and Acts 15:14-16 and see what the Master Builder purposed in Christ.

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.” Amos 9:11

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.” Act 15:14-16

Now let us consider this statement found on pages 136 & 137 from HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

“The Jewish temple was built of hewn stones quarried out of the mountains, and every stone was fitted for its place in the temple, hewed, polished and tested, before it was brought to the ground, the building went together without the sound of ax or hammer. This building represents God’s spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. These are not lead substances, to be fitted by hammer and chisel. They are living stones, quarried out from the world by the truth, and the Great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple, is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple. When completed, this temple will be PERFECT in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men, for its builder and maker is God.

Let no one think that there need not be a stroke placed upon him. There is no person, no nation that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified.

But as the word says only those who have been gathered out of the world by the Cleaver of Truth can be living stones. For if a man is not born of God, he cannot be part of God’s temple. For John 3:3 says, ‘Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

The question is, how do we become sons of God, and hence lively stones? The answer is clearly given in John 1:11-13. For it is written:

“He came to His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become Sons of God. Even to them that believe in His name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Brethren let us note carefully what this scripture says, for it says plainly that it is those who receive Him. Not those who receive doctrines, or creeds of men about Him, only those who receive Him He gives power to become Sons of God.

In John 5:39,40 Jesus said to the Jews:

“Ye search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.”

So it is clear from the above that the Jews had the scriptures that tell about Christ, but they did not have Christ, (John 5:42), they would not come to Him, hence they were without Him. And since they would not come to Him or receive Him, He could not give to them the power to become Sons of God. And so they were always and only the sons of the devil and so only liars and murderers. (Acts 2:23; 4:10)

So let it be forever known that there is no sonship of God with the scriptures, and yet less with the doctrines, church manuals and opinions of men. But let it be forever known and cherished, that it is those who receive Him, Christ the Head, by the Holy Spirit, He gives power, right and privilege to become Sons of God. And the rejoicing of it all is that to these living stones, He does give that power. Therefore it is written in the scriptures for us that the “believers were the more added to the Lord” by the ministry of the gospel of the apostles. Acts 5:14.

For the word says the believers were added not to the Church, but to the Lord, for not by any ministry of any man or set of men can anybody ever be added to the Church of God.

The scriptures clearly show that by the preaching of the word, men are brought to believe on Christ and to receive Him, and so receive power to be His Sons. Then by baptism in water the believer publicly declares that he is

joined to Christ in the spiritual union of marriage. Romans 7:4; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:4,5,8.

Thus the believer being added to the Lord by the preaching of the word, then the Lord added to the Church daily such as were being saved. Acts 2:47.

Hence not by any decision of men, or voting of men is any man added to the Church of God. Therefore it stands written for us, that as by faith in Christ and baptism, believers are added to the Lord, so by faith in Christ and baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Lord adds them to His Church.

“For by one Spirit we are all baptized unto one body - the Church. And verily, verily, I say unto thee except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” 1Cor.12:21; John 3:5.

No man nor any association of men can ever by any possibility add anybody to this Church and thank God they cannot cut off or cast out anyone from this Church.

Why? For “it is the Church of God, it is the body of Christ. It is the home of the Holy Spirit, and only God and Christ and the Spirit rule there. And these rule in righteousness and holiness and in the tenderness of infinite Love and Compassion.

However men do cast out of such ‘Churches’ those who do not please them. And so such ‘Churches’ are only the ‘Churches’ of men, and the truth is that it is far better to be out of all such things than to be in them.

But this is not so in the Church of the Living God of which we are living stones and of which Christ is the Head.

For He Himself says in John 6:37, “he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” It is further written in 1 Cor.12:21, where the Head, speaking of His body says, “the head cannot say to the feet,” nor to any other member, “I have no need of you.” For this is the message of John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, (that includes you and me) that He gave (NOT lent) His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Brethren, that is the word of God and we can depend on that word!
Brethren, Christ who is the Head of the ‘Church, who God gave to the

human race forever, loved every soul so dearly and needs and wants us so very much, that He gave Himself on the cross for us. And we can depend on the word of God, for Christ, will never and can never say to you or me or anyone else, “I have no need of you.” 1 Cor.12:21.

“But cruel and hard-hearted church officials, church councils, and conferences can say it proudly and readily, that they don’t need you or they don’t need me. These same church officials never died for you or me or anybody else and they never will.”
LFR. 101 A.T. Jones

The prophet Ezekiel -in Ezekiel 34:1-5 speaks of these same cruel hard-hearted Church officials saying:

“These feed themselves, but feed not the flocks, these eat the fat and clothe themselves with the wool, and kill them that are fed, but they feed not the flock. These strengthen not the diseased, nor heal that which is sick, neither bind up the broken, nor bring again that which is driven away, nor seek that is lost, but with force and cruelty do they rule them. These thrust with the side and with shoulder, and push all the diseased with their horns, till they have scattered their abroad.”

And the amazing thing is that this type of ministry, unlike that of the true disciple of Christ, does not accomplish much. And we ought to know why it does not.

Inspiration is most precise:

“The reason why our preachers accomplish so little is that they do not walk with God. He is a day’s journey from most of them.”
T. Vol.1, pg.434.

But we rejoice to know that our Head wants us so much that when we are cast out and driven away by men, he immediately comes looking for us. And when he has found us, He reveals Himself to us, and teaches us how to believe on Him and how to worship Him as never before. John 9:34-38. (put in this text) And He has committed this ministry of reconciliation to His servants. He continues to hew and chisel us to fit us for our position in His temple.

And all who have been cast out and driven away take courage, for our Gracious Lord and Head says in Isaiah 66:5

“Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.”

Further the scriptures bring us comfort, for it says:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” Luke 6:22,23.

Here then, says A.T. Jones:

“Is the individual believer, by the ministry of the Gospel ‘added to the Lord,’ and by the Lord added to the Church? Wherever any such individual may be ‘he is a member of God’s church, and wherever two or three of these may be together, Christ their Head, is in the midst of them, and there is a Church, and there is the Church in that place.” Lessons From The Reformation, pg.102.

Accordingly brethren, Christ is the foundation, Christ is the Head, the whole building is built upon Him, and so groweth up unto an Holy Temple in the Lord.” And so, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.”

Only God through Christ by the Holy Spirit builds the spiritual body of Christ, the temple of God, which is the Church. The fact is, only He can do it and he will do it; and is doing it, glory to God!

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,....

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children—by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed,

ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise....

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named....

In whom ye also are builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Eph.3:20; 1:5, 13; 3:14,15; 2:22.

May we submit to God to fit us to be a living stone in His temple.

CHAPTER 10

The Building Continues

When the seventy years of captivity of God's people in Babylon ended in 536 B.C. the people of God were released as prophecy had foretold, "not for price or reward." Isaiah 45:1-13. They went up to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, Ezra 1:2-4. During the next sixteen years the devil opposed this work with a certain degree of success until 520 B.C. when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began to call the people again to the building of the temple. Zechariah 3:1 reveals who the real opponent of God's work all that time. The battle is always in the unseen between Christ and Satan before it is manifested openly in this world. But oppose as he did he could not stop the temple from reaching completion. Then the worship was established. But Satan wasn't finished yet, he had failed to stop the temple from being rebuilt, but he decided to sweep away in one day and in one stroke all of God's people in the Persian Empire. (Read the whole book of Esther).

The devil knew that behind the building of this temple was a greater purpose to be revealed. That is why he tried so hard to prevent it. And while this temple was being rebuilt God's greater purpose in the temple and its building was revealed.

In Zechariah chapter 3, verse 8 the angel of the Lord said to Joshua the high priest, "Behold I will bring forth my servant the branch." The testimony continues, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts saying, Behold the man whose

name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place and he shall build the temple of the Lord. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord and he shall bear the glory. And he shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Zech.6:12-.13.

But who is this man whose name is the branch, My servant the Branch?

Jeremiah says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and He shall reign as king and prosper ... and this is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness. Jer.23:5-6. And at the naming of John the Baptist his father Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost prophesied saying, “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. (Luke 3:3-6), to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of sins.” Through the tender mercies of our God whereby the Branch from on high hath visited us. Luke 1:76-78, (margin). In Matthew chapter 16:18, the Head Himself says, “I will build My church.” So then, it is clear that the branch of prophesy is none other than Jesus Christ who is ordained of the Father to build His Church.

But, you may ask how is it done? Inspiration answers most comfortingly,

“the Mighty Cleaver of has truth has taken them, the people of God, out of the world as rough stones that are to be hewed, an polished for the heavenly building.” *Danger in Adopting Worldly Policy*, page 6.

Further, another testimony states,

“the Jewish temple was built of hewn stones quarried out of the mountains, and every stone was fitted for its place in the temple, hewed, polished and tested, before it was brought to Jerusalem. And when all were brought to the ground, the building went up together without the sound of ax or hammer. ***THIS BUILDING REPRESENTS GOD’S SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. These are not lead substances, to be fitted by hammer and chisel. They are living stones quarried out from the world by the truth,***

and the Great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple. When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men, for its builder and maker is God.” Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions, pg.136,137.

“Therefore, we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophet, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” Eph.2:19-21.

Christ, the apostle and High Priest of our profession is the Builder of the House of God. Heb.3:1,3. Whose house are we, and the House of God is the church of the living God. Heb.3:6, 1 Tim.3:5. Yes brethren, the testimony is “He shall build the temple of the Lord, even He shall build the temple of the Lord.” Inspiration had foretold it, “After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, saith the Lord who doeth all these things. Acts 15:17. And now the question is, when did the Branch begin to build His church?

At Pentecost, and in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the open building of this temple was begun by the Branch, the true and divinely given builder. And the building of that temple, so wondrously begun, went mightily on for a period and then the mystery of iniquity, through a false gospel, a false temple and a false worship, began the work to supplant the mystery of God in and of the true gospel, and thus to frustrate the building of the temple and the walls of the glorious Jerusalem which is above and free and the mother of us all.

We shall now examine more closely the building of this temple as related in Acts chapter 15. It has been shown that Christ, the Branch, is the builder of the tabernacle of David. It will be shown in passing now, why no one but the Branch could ever be builder of this Church.

In Eph.1:22 we are told that we are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Now, the question is what are the dimensions

of this House of God? How extensive must be its capacity, to be such a temple and such a habitation of God that it should reflect and express all the fullness of God. Eph.1;22,23.

And who could be the builder? What man or men could possibly build the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, that shall contain Him, so as to express all the fullness of God? Long ago men were challenged on this very point. “Who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and earth cannot contain Him?” 2 Chron.2:6. “Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded.” 2 Chron.6:18.

“The heaven is My throne and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye will build unto Me?” Isa.66:1.

“The Most High dwelleth not in the temples made with hands as saith the prophets.” Acts.7:48.

Therefore, any man or group of men who undertake to build this church in that very thing show their own utter ignorance of all that is the church in truth. And the truth is that they never do build Him an house because they always set aside the foundation stone, Acts 4:11. So then, they always build to themselves an house where in the place of God themselves shall sit and reign and rule utterly and totally, unlike God. The church is the house of God, it is built only for the habitation of God, the place which He has made for him who is equal with God, and therefore able and capable of compassing and understanding and truly expressing the thought of God in His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Eph.1:9, 10.

When this eternal purpose was purposed in Christ Jesus, not a man was around, and this shows how totally impossible it is for any other than Christ, to be the builder of the Church. And so it is written,

“He shall build the temple of the Lord, even He shall build the temple of the Lord and He shall bear the glory.” Zech. 6:12,13.

We shall now return to Acts chap.15 to examine the building of this temple and its opposition from the principalities and powers of this world as it was in olden times. At Pentecost, by the preaching of the true gospel, the true temple was being rebuilt, Acts chap. 2. We shall look at verses 36-39, for it states,

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.

*For the promise is unto you.... Even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”
Also Acts 16:31 and 15:11.*

A short while after this, all the Spirit-filled Christians, except the apostles, were scattered from Jerusalem and these went everywhere preaching the true gospel. “On reaching Antioch in Syria, from which place they had been sent forth on their mission, Paul and Barnabas took the opportunity to assemble the believers and rehearse all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.” Acts.14:27.

“While the apostles united with the ministers and lay members at Antioch in an earnest effort to win many souls to Christ, certain Jewish believers from Judea of the sect of the Pharisees succeeded in introducing a question that soon lead to widespread controversy in the church and brought consternation to the believing Gentiles.

With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law. And this was said to people who were already saved by faith in Jesus. Paul and Barnabas met this false doctrine with promptness and opposed the introduction of the subject to the Gentiles.

In the church at Antioch the consideration of the question of circumcision resulted in much discussion and contention. And when they could not maintain their false gospel against the true gospel preached by Paul and Barnabas they fell back on Authority, saying that what they preached was held by the apostles and the church that was in Jerusalem, whence they had come with the sanction of those apostles and that church. When they thus shifted their ground of defense from the merit and

strength of what they preached to the ground of authority of the church, this put the apostles and the church at Jerusalem in their place in the question in contention. Therefore the members of the church, fearing division among them would be the outcome of continued discussion, decided to send Paul and Barnabas with certain other among them (Titus), Gal.2:1, to Jerusalem to lay the matter before the apostles and elders.

“The various points involved in the settlement of the main question at issue seemed to present before the council insurmountable difficulties. But the Holy Spirit had, in reality, already settled this question, upon the decision of which seemed to depend the prosperity, if not the very existence (building) of the Christian church.” “When there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, men and brethren, ye know how a good while ago God made choice among us, that, the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe.” He reasoned that the Holy Spirit had decided the matter under consideration by descending with equal power upon the uncircumcised Gentiles and the circumcised Jews. He recounted his vision of Acts 10. With the explanation of verse 15, he further stated his astonishment when, in speaking the words of truth to those assembled in Cornelius’ house, he witnessed the Holy Spirit taking possession of his hearers, Gentiles as well as Jews.” As he on that occasion related how the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles he declared,

“For as much then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?” Acts.11:17.

Now with equal fervor and force he said, ***“God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*** Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. ***But we believe that through the grace of God we shall be saved, even as they.*** After they held their peace, James answered saying, men and brethren, hearken

unto me. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name, and to this the words of the prophets agree as it is written; After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up. The residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Acts 15:7-17. A.O.A 188-193

This story tells that through the preaching of the true gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, the tabernacle of David was being rebuilt.

And since it was Unto David that God would raise the righteous branch, who should build the temple of the Lord, it is perfectly plain that, “the temple of the Lord” that was to be built by the branch of the prophets, and “the tabernacle of David” that was being built by that very “branch” through the preaching of the true gospel, are the one and the same thing. Amen! And this building is God’s spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. They are living stones, quarried out of the world by the truth, and the great Master builder, the Lord of the temple, the Branch, is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple. When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men, for its builder and maker is God.

But the building continues, “More than eighteen centuries have passed since the apostles rested from their labours, but the history of their toils and sacrifices for Christ’s sake is still among the most precious treasures of the church. This history, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit, was recorded in order that by it the followers of Christ in every age might be impelled to greater zeal and earnestness in the cause of the Saviour. The disciples were men who knew how to speak and pray sincerely, men who could take hold of the might of the strength of Israel. How closely they stood by His throne. Jehovah was their God. His

honour was their honour. His truth was their truth. The opening labours of the Christian church were attended by hardship and bitter grief. In their work the disciples constantly encountered privation, calumny and persecution, but they counted not their lives dear unto themselves and rejoiced that they were called to suffer for Christ.

Upon the foundation that Christ Himself had laid, the apostles built the church of God. In the scriptures the figure of the erection of a temple is frequently used to illustrate the building of the church. ***Zechariah refers to Christ as the Branch... He speaks of the Gentiles as helping in the work. "They that are afar off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord." And Isaiah declares, "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls."*** Zech.6:12,15; Isa.60:10. In the quarry of the Jewish and Gentile world the apostle laboured, bringing out stones to lay upon the foundation. To the Corinthians he wrote,

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1Cor. 3:10-13.

The apostles built upon a sure foundation, even the Rock of Ages. To this foundation they brought stones that they quarried from the world the without hindrance did the builders labour. Their work was made exceedingly difficult by the opposition of the enemies of Christ. They had to contend with the bigotry, prejudice and hatred of those who were building upon a false foundation. Many who wrought as builders of the church could be likened to the builders of the wall in Nehemiah's day, of whom it is written:

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought

in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.” Neh.4:17.

Kings and governors, priests and rulers, sought to destroy the temple of God. But in the face of imprisonment, torture and death, faithful men carried forward the work, and the structure grew, beautiful and symmetrical. At times the workmen were almost blinded by the mists of superstition that settled around them. At times they were almost overpowered by the violence of their opponents. But with unfaltering faith and unflinching courage they pressed on with the work.

One after another the foremost of the builders fell by the hand of the enemies. Stephen was stoned, James was slain by the sword, Paul was beheaded, Peter was crucified, John was exiled. Yet the church grew. New workers took the place of those who fell, and stone after stone was added to the building. Thus slowly ascended the temple of the Church of God. The enemy of righteousness left nothing undone in his effort to stop the work committed to the Lord’s builders. “But God left not Himself without witness.” Acts.14:17. Workers were raised up who ably defended the faith once delivered to the saints. History bears record to the fortitude and heroism of these men. Like the apostles, many of them fell at their post, but the building of the temple went steadily forward. The workmen were slain, but the work advanced. The Waldenses, John Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome, Martin Luther and Zwingli, Cramer, Latimer and Knox, the Huguenots, John and Charles Wesley, and a host of others brought to the foundation material that will endure throughout eternity. And in later years those who have so nobly endeavoured to promote the circulation of God’s word, and those who by their service in heathen lands have prepared the way for the proclamation of the last great message – these also have helped to rear the structure.

Through the ages that have passed since the days of the apostles, the building of God’s temple has never ceased. We may look back through the centuries and see the living stones of which it is composed gleaming like jets of light through the darkness of error and superstition. Throughout eternity these

precious jewels will shine with increasing luster, testifying to the power of the truth of God. The flashing light of these polished stones reveals the strong contrast between light and darkness, between the gold of truth and the dross of error.

Paul and the other apostles, and all the righteous who have lived since then, have acted their part in the building of the temple. But the structure is not yet complete. We who are living in this age have a work to do, a part to act. We are to bring to the foundation material that will stand the test of fire, gold, silver and precious stones, “polished after the similitude of a palace.” Psa.144:12. To those who thus build for God, Paul speaks words of encouragement and warning, “If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” 1 Cor.3:14–15. ***The Christian who faithfully presents the word of life, leading men and women into the way of holiness and peace, is bringing to the foundation material that will endure, and in the kingdom of God he will be honored as a wise builder.***

Of the apostles it is written, “They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” Mark 16:20. As Christ sent forth his disciples, so today He sends forth the members of His Church. The same power that the apostles had is for them. If they will make God their strength, He will work with them, and they shall not labour in vain. A.O.A 593–600

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us.... Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will.... In whom ye are also builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit.... Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!” Eph.3:20,21; 1:5; 2:22.

CHAPTER 11

Building Amidst Opposition

In our previous studies of this aspect, we have found that Christ is the foundation of the Church of God, and He was made the foundation by the Father. 1Cor.3:11 and Isa.28:16. We further learnt that every member of this church is built on that foundation. 1Pet.2:4,5.

We also learnt that the building of the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times. We saw how persistent the opposition of Satan was. We shall see even clearer now, and we must, how persistent is the opposition of SATAN, (principalities and powers in high places) against the builder of this temple and secondarily against the temple itself.

We shall take a brief look at the Exodus from Babylon towards Jerusalem for the rebuilding of the temple.

The seventy years of captivity ended in 536 B.C., which was the first year of the reign of Cyrus, the king of Media and Persia. Ezra chapter 1:2-4 gives us the details concerning Cyrus' own conviction of what was written by Isaiah in Isa.45:1-13.

They finally reached Jerusalem and on the first day of the seventh month and an altar was erected and the regular worship was begun, and about six months after they arrived the foundation of the temple was laid. Ezra chapter 3 gives the details.

But would Satan allow this worship and work of God to go on unchallenged? He is an irreversible enemy of God, and will be until his end shall come. And so Satan opposed the rebuilding of this temple for he understood the important lesson it would teach those who were willing to be taught of heavenly realities. Satan was not pleased with the progress being made for God and so, through the descendants of some heathen tribes, he worked to impede the work already started.

Ezra 4:1-3 gives this introduction of Satan's ploy.

"Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord, then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, let us build with you, for we seek your God, as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither."

The question is, were they interested in building a temple unto the Lord? The voice of Inspiration speaks loudly for all who will hear. Listen; "But had the Jewish leaders accepted this offer of assistance, they would have opened the door for the entrance of idolatry.

"They discerned the insincerity of the Samaritans. They realized that help gained through an alliance with these men would be as nothing in comparison with the blessing they might expect to receive by following the plain commands of Jehovah." P.K.,508.

Then came the reply from God's faithful servants,

"But Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, ***ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel***, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us."

As these adversaries saw that their political scheming was not succeeding their real spirit was revealed, the spirit of the king of spiritual Babylon, Satan himself. They weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, vrs.4,5. We should note the spirit of enmity which seemed to be so loving when they made the offer to help. James 4:4 is the word of God to us now. Let us heed it now or the

consequences will be disastrous to our eternal salvation.

The opposition and devilry was powerful, so powerful that it took all the resources of heaven to overcome. Daniel, the tenth chapter, reveals this intriguing battle. It was the third year of Cyrus' reign, Daniel was the number two man in the whole world (Dan.6:2) and being a man greatly beloved of God was very interested in the progress of the work at Jerusalem. He plainly saw all the mysterious workings of the evil one, all the trickery, lying and bribery employed against the work! But against all of this he could employ none of those things. The truth is that he could and did do better and we can do better. He appealed to the God of heaven. Dan.10:2,11-13,20.

Yes brethren, those verses tell of the fierceness of the conflict, the deceitful working of the bribed counsellors was so great that God did not dare to leave Cyrus alone with them. And when the Angel must go to answer Daniels' anxious pleading, another mighty one, Michael, the first of the princes, must take his place while he is gone.

All of this continued all the days of Cyrus even to the reign of Darius, king of Persia. Inspiration is in agreement, for it says:

“For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus, and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel aid. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days, Gabriel declares, but, lo, Michael, one of the Chief Princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. **All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained, the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years.**” P.K. 572.

This was a time of wonderful opportunity for the Jews. They should have spared no effort to restore the temple and its services, and to reestablish themselves in their Judean homes. But in the day of God's power many proved unwilling.

For over a year the temple was neglected and well-nigh forsaken. The people dwelt in their homes and strove to attain temporal prosperity, but their

situation was deplorable.... Spiritually as well as temporally, the Israelites were in a pitiable state.

So long had they chosen to make personal interest first, while viewing with apathy the Lord's temple in ruins, that many had lost sight of God's purpose in restoring them in Judea, and these were saying; the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Haggai 1:2.11 P.K. 572,573.

To those who had become discouraged the Lord spoke..

[Is it] time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house [lie] waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages [to put it] into a bag with holes. Haggai 1:4-6

But in all this the people were still blind as to the mysterious power that was raging such a war against their work. And so God revealed who the real opposer was then and is now. Zec.3:1. That tells us that Satan is the real master-schemer, and the subtle trickster through it all. This also makes plain the fact that the conflict has a higher and wider field of battle than the actions of men against men. The real warring factions are the unseen powers and agencies.

Ezra 4:11-16 and 17-22 reveal the work stoppage, the mighty working of evil forces against God. But the work restarted and also the opposition, but in vain. Ezra 5:3-5. Seeing that they could not stop the work they went directly to the King with the matter, with all their conspiring and scheming. Ezra 5:7-17.

But those who held on to God and obeyed His word got the victory, without any help or alliance from their adversaries. Ezra 6:1-13, 14,15. Inspiration sums up the victory this way: "And they builded and finished it, and this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." Satan had failed to stop-the rebuilding of the temple and the reestablishing of the services. But he would come with another master-plan. Leave the temple and wipe out all the worshippers in one decisive stroke and rid the world of

all worship of God. This is revealed in the book of Esther.

But again, in spite of this satanic craft his failure was the more complete and his defeat the more overwhelming than before.

And now God would show his greater purpose - that of the building of the spiritual temple. The True Builder of the temple was revealed. For the word says;

“Behold I will bring forth my servant, the branch, He shall build the temple of the Lord.” Zec.3:8; 6:12.

In Acts 15 after consideration of a critical question the apostle James, in summing up the situation, said that the preaching of the gospel, the conversion of souls, was the rebuilding of the temple of David that was fallen down. In making this point he quoted Amos 9:11 For he said: “After this I will return and will build again, the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, *saith the Lord who doeth all these things.*” Acts 15:16,17.

We understand from this study how persistently Satan was at the right hand to frustrate every purpose, and to hinder every effort. And when the temple was finished he employed all his cunning and all the power in the world to exterminate in one day all of God’s people, so that there would only be an empty temple, and the work be all in vain. But God revealed His greater purpose by calling their attention to the branch. Thus it is plain that the record of the rebuilding of the temple and of Satan’s resistance to it, is a prophecy of the building of the true temple by the branch, who is Christ.

Galatians 4:4 tells us that the builder came in the fulness of time, and Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. Rev.12:4,9; Matt.2:13-16. And when Christ publicly declared that he was the one to come, the forces of evil, headed by their chief, united to frustrate His purposes, and never held up until Christ was dead. John 1:26-34; Matt.27:40-50. But Christ went into Satan’s prison house, came out, took the keys from him and has kept them ever since.

The word says that God raised Him from the dead and put Him even at His right hand to be the builder of the temple unto its perfect finishing. And when at Pentecost the Branch began to build the tabernacle, satan sought to

break down the very building itself. Acts.4:5,6,21,25,26; 6:9-13; 7:57-60; 8:1-3.

And even after 1260 years of Satanic fury he still cannot stop the building of the temple, 2 Thess.2:9,10; Matt.24:24; Mark 13:22. We shall look further into Inspiration to show how stiff the opposition was, is, and shall be, but the building grew and will grow unto the perfect finishing .

The history of the early church testified to the fulfillment of the Saviour's words. The powers of earth hell arrayed themselves against Christ in the person of His followers. The fires of persecution were kindled. Christians were stripped of their possessions and driven from their homes. They endured a great fight of afflictions. They had trials of cruel mockings and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments. Great numbers sealed their testimony with their blood. Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike slain without mercy. ...They were condemned as rebels against the empire, as foes of religion, and pests to society. Great numbers were thrown to wild beasts or burned alive in the amphitheaters. Some were crucified; others were covered with the skins of wild animals and thrust into the arena to be torn by dogs. Their punishment was often made the chief entertainment at public fetes. Vast multitudes assembled to enjoy the sight and greeted their dying agonies with laughter and applause... They were forced to seek concealment in desolate and solitary places. Destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied. Though deprived of every comfort, shut away from the light of the sun, making their home in the dark but friendly bosom of the earth, they uttered no complaint. With words of faith, patience, and hope they encouraged one another to endure privation and distress. ***The loss of every earthly blessing could not force them to renounce their belief in Christ.*** Trials and persecution were but steps bringing them nearer their rest and their reward. Like God's servants of old, many were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Looking upward by faith, they saw Christ and angels leaning over the battlements of heaven, gazing upon them with the deepest interest and regarding their steadfastness with approval. A voice came down to them from the throne of God: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Rev.2:10. G.C 39-42

In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when the faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase.... Thousands were imprisoned and slain, but others sprang up to fill their places. And those who were martyred for their faith were secured to Christ and accounted of Him as conquerors. They had fought the good fight, and they were to receive the crown of glory when Christ should come. The sufferings which they endured brought Christians nearer to one another and to their Redeemer. Their living example and dying testimony were a constant witness for the truth; and where least expected, the subjects of Satan were leaving his service and enlisting under the banner of Christ." G.C 39-42.

Oh, what a wonderful prophecy in Zechariah concerning Him "whose name is the branch," says the prophet, "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His (the Father's) throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zec. 6:12,13. "He shall build the temple of the Lord." By His sacrifice and mediation Christ is both the foundation and builder of the Church of God. The apostle Paul points to Him as the Chief Cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph.2:20-22; G.C 415,416. Oh, what a blessed truth.

But we are not through yet, for 1 Cor.3:9 states, "ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. Inspiration picks up the theme, for it says;

“The figure represents human character, which is to be wrought upon, point by point. Each day God works with His building, stroke upon stroke, to perfect the structure, that it may become a holy temple for Him. ***Man is to cooperate with God. Each worker is to become just what God designs him to be, building his life with pure, noble deeds, that in the end his character may be a symmetrical structure, a fair temple, honored by God and man.*** There is to be no fault in the building, for it is the Lord’s. Every stone must be perfectly laid, that it may endure the pressure placed upon it. (fiery trials). One stone laid wrong will affect the whole building. To you and to every other worker God gives the warning, take heed how you build, that your building may stand the test of storm and tempest, because it is founded on the eternal Rock. Place the stone on the sure foundation, that you may make ready for the day of test and trial, when all will be seen just as they are. T.T. Vol 3. pp. 89

This warning God presents to me as especially necessary for your welfare.

His Church on earth is to assume divine proportions before the world, as a temple built of living stones, each one reflecting light ... It is built of stone, making a firm, solid building. Not all the stones are of the same form or shape. Some are large, some are small, but each has its place to fill. And the value of each stone is determined by the light that it reflects. This is God’s plan. He desires all his workers to fill their appointed places in the work for this time.” T.T.,Vol.3, pp.89,90.

Inspiration further informs us that, “ye are God’s husbandry.” As one takes pleasure in the cultivation of a garden so the Lord takes pleasure in His believing sons and daughters. A garden demands constant labour. The weeds must be removed, new plants must be set out, branches that are making too rapid a development must be pruned back. So the Lord works for His garden, the plants of the Lord. ***He cannot take pleasure in any development that does not reveal the graces of the character of Christ... God forbid that we should neglect to learn the trade of character building. Those who enter the work of God without hiding self in Christ will soon disconnect themselves from the Master’s building.***

In your work of character building be sure that Christ is your director. It makes a great difference whether you are labourers together with God or whether you are labourers together against God. Whether it is your highest ambition to magnify God, or to magnify yourself and your plans. Christ declares, without me ye can do nothing - nothing that will be approved by God. *Study your motives carefully, and make sure that you are not working in your own wisdom, apart from Christ.*

With pure, noble, upright deeds every man is to build. The result of his work will be a symmetrical structure, a fair temple honoured by God and men. Many are busily engaged gathering wood, hay and stubble. But this will all be consumed, leaving nothing to prepare souls for the great day when every work is to be tried. Many will find that the work that has occupied their time and attention has perished with the using, and that they themselves have barely been saved, as by fire.

The long expected day of God will test every man's work...

The pleasure of self-indulgence will perish as stubble, while the gold of steadfast principle, maintained at any cost, will endure forever.

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, Vol.6, E.G. White Comments, pp.1086–1088. In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors.

“Upon the foundation that Christ Himself had laid, the apostles built the Church of God. In the quarry of the Jewish and Gentile world the apostles labored, bringing out stones to lay upon the foundation. The apostles built upon a sure-foundation, even the Rock of Ages. To this foundation they brought the stones that they quarried from the world. Not without hindrance did the builders labour. Their work was made exceeding difficult by the opposition of the enemies of Christ. ***One after another the builders fell by the hand of the enemy. Stephen was stoned, James was slain by the sword, Paul was beheaded, Peter was crucified, John was exiled. Yet the church grew. New workers took the place of those who fell, and stone after stone was added to the building. Thus slowly ascended the temple of the Church of God.***

Centuries of fierce persecution followed the establishment of the Christian church but there were never wanting men who counted the work of building God's temple dearer than life itself. So says Heb.11:36-38.

Through the ages that have passed since the day of the apostles, the building of God's temple has never ceased. Paul and the other apostles, and all the righteous who have lived since then have acted their part in the building of the temple. But the structure is not yet complete. We who are living in this age have a work to do, a part to act. If the church will put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, withdrawing from all allegiance with the world, there is before her the dawn of a bright and glorious day.

The disciples were men who knew to speak and pray sincerely... Jehovah was their God. His honour was their honour. His truth was their truth.

As those who have spent their lives in the service of Christ draw near to the close of their earthly ministry, they will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to recount the experiences they have had in connection with the work of God. The record of His wonderful dealings with His people, of His great goodness in delivering them from trial, should be repeated to those newly come to the faith. God desires the old and tried labourers to stand in their place, doing their part to save men and women from being swept downward by the mighty current of evil, he desires them to keep the armour on till he bids them lay it down." A.A. 607, 610; 630-634.

That is where we are now. In spite of all that Satan could do through the ages. The building of the temple then, and now, in spite of all he is doing and will do, will go on unto its perfect finishing, so says Rev.10:5-7; Rom.9:28. And when it is finished Satan finally seeks to waste it in one stroke. Rev.17:8-14; 13:11-17; 11:7-12. But he fails finally and totally and the blessed work of the branch, the heaven-ordained builder of the temple, goes on, not only unto its perfect finishing but also unto its glorious presentation, its presentation to God and to Himself in the universal assembly and church of the first-born as the gloriously perfected thought of God in the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, to gather in one all things in Christ,

both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. Eph.3:9-11; 1:10.

Rev.14:2 and 19:6-8 sets the joy before us; Eph.5:25-27 says we are without spot. In that day the joy that was set before the builder is found and he sings praises in the midst of the church, Psa .22:22, Heb.2:12, and every creature praises God. Rev.5:13.

At last the temple of God is finished, the tabernacle of David is a fact, the Church of the living God is known, the universe is in harmony, time has ceased to be and eternity abides.

And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever. Rev.22:3-5.

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the righteousness of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” 2 Pet.1:2,3.

“Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.” Job 22:21.

CHAPTER 12

Church Organization & The Place Of The Holy Spirit

So far in these lectures we have learnt that God hath put all things under Christ's feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Eph.1:22,23.

We have also seen that God by the Holy Spirit selects His messengers today as in the past. For the testimony says, "Moses was chosen by God as the messenger of His covenant. The Lord called him up into the mountain to receive his instruction for Israel. Today God chooses men as He chose Moses, to be His messengers.

Further, when a man accepts Christ he takes his orders from Christ,

"The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own." *Desire of Ages*, pg.324.

This does not mean he acts independently in and to the body of Christ. In fact there is greater cooperation in and with the body of Christ. What it means though is that in matters of worship which is due to God alone he hears Christ's voice above every other.

Hence Christ must be the builder of His church, for the word of God says,

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11.

“When this temple is completed it will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men, for its builder and maker is God.” Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions, pg.137.

And so, in God’s church where Christ is Head, the one who calls, the Source of orders, The Builder, it is clear that He must be organizer.

Through the centuries men have attempted to organize the church of God as they think it should be and have only and always succeeded in producing a devilish despotic system with men dominating others. But it could not be otherwise because the devil is always the originator of these false systems. It is the Cain principle rejecting God’s way in preference for their own. Yet all these organizations where ever they have operated claimed to be the true church and therefore claim to practice true church organization. Yet all that they do all this without the Holy Spirit and without the Christian spirit. How do we know? The bible enlightens us. When Christ and his truth is rejected by a church, that church has experience a moral fall, its standing before God is changed. They have accepted darkness rather than light and the Holy Spirit is lost. But the very truth is that it is impossible for it to be the true Church of God without the Holy Spirit and its fruit.

The important question we need to ask is, in God’s church who is the organizer? During this study we shall see clearly what church organization by men produces and what church organization by God through the Holy Spirit has produced and will produce again. In Gal.3:22 it is stated, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (self-government).” Inspiration further states in 2Cor.3:17, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty” - liberty of thought, liberty of speech, liberty of action all within the confines of divine law. This is the Christian spirit. And this is the spirit that rules and is manifested in every church that is Christian. In James 3:17 Inspiration defines the workings of this Spirit thus:

“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

In the realm of Babylon church organization is constituted after the earthly and worldly sort. It's really the plans and processes of men coming from their own imagination. This is so for having rejected the truth they have not the spirit or the gifts for the organization of the church. In such an organization therefore it is the rule of men instead of the Spirit of God. People are thought to accept it, and unreservedly submit to it, which in truth is to submit to the rules of men, or be separated from their organization and from these men who hold the offices and presume to hold the keys to open and shut heaven.

And when the organization is progressing, loyalty to the will and workings of those men who hold the offices is required from all, and any member who is not conforming to it is commanded to do so. And if in obedience to Christ in His Spirit and in His truth, or in his Christian liberty to think and speak and act, he does not do so, he is separated from the organization and is not recognized by that church as of the brethren, and so is completely excluded from that church. Further, the other brethren are told not to fellowship with him or they will be separated also. And the mischief of this devilish theory is that separation from that church organization is conveyed to mean the loss of everlasting life.

But let us reflect a bit on what we just read and see what they make a man eternally lost for:

Imagine this; for a man's disagreement with another man or some men for obeying the truth of God instead of the tradition and customs of men. For such a man is deliberately deprived of everlasting life. Now, not even the devil could be more cruel than that, to put such a penalty for such an offence as that, which in truth is no offence at all, either to God or man as was the case with Daniel in the lion's den. Imagine eternal death for obeying God instead of man or for even disagreement with men. Yet, in brief, that is exactly the process in and of the first such church organization, the false Catholic church, and every other structure that is called church organization. And the sad thing about it all is, that the Protestant churches (false prophets, Rev.16:13-16) have joined the act too, and do boast as proudly as their mother has done.

But let Inspiration enlighten us, for it says:

“It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism, that the Pope is

the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the Pope has been given the very title of Deity. He has been styled 'Lord God, the Pope,' and has been declared infallible. He demands homage of all men. But those who fear and reverence God meet this heaven daring assumption as Christ met solicitations of the wily foe. ***'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'*** Luke 4:8. **God has never given a hint in His word that He has appointed any man to be head of the church.** The doctrine of Papal supremacy is directly opposed to the teaching of the scripture. **The Pope can have no power over Christ's church except by usurpation."** G.C. 50-51.

This is very significant. To the head belongs homage, worship and service. The pope therefore pretends to be God. This also is profoundly clear as to why no creature can qualify to be the head of the Church.

Some Protestants have repudiated the Roman Church with her false system, as the 'man of sin,' 'the mystery of iniquity,' 'the son of perdition,' and 'the beast' (Thess.2:3, 7; Rev.13:2) and yet proceed to build a church of their own on the same principles and after the same pattern and, not surprisingly, but sadly, do the same things with their own church organization.

Past history testifies to it, and present history is repeating it. It has been done to you and it has been done to me by that part of Babylon that is lukewarm. They appoint a man from among themselves, who they say is not and can never be perfect to be their head, and say that we must pay him homage or be cast out, while they by practice claim infallibility for him and his headquarters, saying we should accept whatever comes from him and his headquarters as right, when it is dead wrong. Brethren, they may hide from this truth, but thanks be to God, they cannot hide this truth, for it says,

"God has never given a hint in His word that He has appointed any man to be head of the church." G.C. 51.

And so, the practice of presidential supremacy is directly opposed to the scriptures. And just as the pope can have no power over Christ's church except by usurpation, just so no president can have any power over Christ's church except by usurpation.

Further, the testimony states, “Romanists have persisted in bringing against Protestants the charge of heresy and willful separation from the true church. But these accusations apply rather to themselves. These are the ones who laid down the banner of Christ and departed from ‘the faith once delivered to the saints.’” *ibid.*

But not only Romanists have made such a groundless charge, but lukewarm Babylon has made such a charge as groundless as that of her mother.

Still, some of these false organizations have enough discernment to see the enormity of this devilish claim that separation from their organization means eternal loss, and so they say that in their case dis-fellowship only means separation from the organization and fellowship with other believers. But if that be true, it is a plain admission that their organization is not the true one, but a mere recreational club. And the greatest contradiction of all is that they yet preach, professing to be calling people out of Babylon, saying that they have the truth without which no man can be saved.

We shall now examine some evidences from scripture, learning God’s way of organization when the Holy Spirit is given his rightful place all the time. Thus it was at Pentecost when the man whose name is the Branch (Jer.23:5,6) began to organize His church until He should return to take her home.

The eleven apostles, whom the Lord left, were men who had been personally selected and called by the Lord Himself to follow Him. They had all been in close relation to Him and been taught by Him for more than three years. They had been ordained by Him unto, in and for this ministry of the gospel as workers together with God in His building and organizing of His temple. Yet they were not allowed to preach a word or to do a thing in that ministry to which they had been called, taught, ordained and commissioned, but were to tarry in Jerusalem until imbued with power from on high. They had to wait for the promise of the Father in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, by whom they should receive power for the ministry. This qualifies a man for the ministry of the gospel, and this alone qualifies all men, nothing else. At Pentecost the baptism came and the Holy Spirit took his place, which was the first place of all, in all and through all. Inspiration instructs us thus;

“Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit’s teaching they received the final qualification and went forth to their life work. No

longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of one accord, of one heart and of one soul." Acts.2:46; 4:32; A.A. 37.

There was not a thread of human devising at Pentecost. We shall see more of it revealed in the early chapters of the book of Acts, before men put themselves in the place of God and their machinery in the place of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts is told very much of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the early church. And so, let us with humility and singleness of purpose learn the truths therein.

In Acts chapter 2 is described the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. The gospel was proclaimed with power from on high. The apostles were mocked, scorned and jailed. Others said they were drunk. But Peter, taking his words from the Holy Spirit, told them that it was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel as confirmed in Acts 2:1-4; 16-21. The power of the gospel pricked their hearts and to their soul-searching question found in verse 37, Peter gave them heaven's answer in verse 38. Indeed the Spirit was given His rightful place in the church and oh, what a result!

In chapter 3, of the book of Acts, the wonderful working of the Spirit in all and through them all is again displayed. Let us examine verses 1-6. We see here highlighted, a man healed, not by the vote of men, for all the votes of men could not have done it, nor by the will of men but by the power of God. A multitude of people have now gathered and now the order comes from above to Peter to preach the gospel to them (vs.12-26). We see next that Peter and John were arrested and tried, (chap.4). The Great Council, with its pomp and pride and ignorance sat and proceeded to interrogate the apostles according to the testimony of Scripture in verse 7.

Further, it states that Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, gave Heaven's reply in verses 8-11. Truly the Holy Spirit was first in all and overall as it occurred. And so the Council could say nothing against it, and they let them go, and they went to their own company, prayed and were all filled with the Holy Spirit, (vs.14, 21, 31).

Let us consider Acts.4:34.

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold

On page 65 of “Acts of the Apostles,” Inspiration comments thus,

“This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit Covetousness had no place in their lives.”

In the fifth chapter of Acts we are told the story of Ananias and Sapphira in contrast to this spirit of liberality. Inspiration informs us thus,

“Deep conviction had rested upon all present, and under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, Ananias and Sapphira had made a pledge to give to the Lord the proceeds from the sale of certain property. Afterward, Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness. They began to regret their promise and soon lost the sweet influence of the blessing that had warmed their hearts with a desire to do large things in the behalf of the cause of Christ. They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over, and decided not to fulfill their pledge. They saw, however, that those who parted with their possessions to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, were held in high esteem among the believers, and, ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated to God, **THEY DELIBERATELY DECIDED TO—SELL THEIR PROPERTY AND PRETEND TO GIVE ALL THE PROCEEDS INTO THE GENERAL FUND, BUT REALLY TO KEEP A LARGE SHARE FOR THEMSELVES.** Thus they would secure their living from the common store and at the same time gain the high esteem of their brethren. But God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practised fraud in their dealing with God; they **LIED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT....** When Ananias came with his offering, Peter said, ‘why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost thou hast not lied unto men but unto God.’ A.A. pg. 66,67. They both lied to the Holy Spirit, but how? Where was the Holy Spirit? The answer is that the Holy Spirit had taken His place in the church, the first place in all, overall and through all of them. Christ was Head, the Holy Spirit spoke

through Peter, and so Ananias and Sapphira, answering falsely, lied to God the Holy Spirit. Acts. 5:1-4; 7-9.

The apostles were again all arrested and put into prison, (vs.17-18).

Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them forth, and gave them their orders to go stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life, (vs.19,20).

But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

They were again arrested and brought before the council and all the senate of the children of Israel, where Peter and all the other apostles preached the everlasting gospel and declared it openly as it is written in verses 27-32.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straightly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

What a wonder-working Spirit, wonderful in working, excellent in organizing.

This is the place of the Holy Spirit in God's organization, first place of all, in all, over all and through all.

Let Christians again so recognize and yield to the sovereignty and reign and guidance of the Holy Spirit over and in themselves and over all things in and to the church. Then again will the experience of individuals of the church prove to be what it was at the first, for He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen!

CHAPTER 13

The Guidance Of The Holy Spirit

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” The spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The infinite one revealed Himself in power to His Church.

Christ had said to His disciples,

“It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him to you.” John 16:7.

Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the Heavenly Gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity.

‘The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. **And there appeared unto them, cloven tongues like as fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,**

and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance... The Holy Spirit did for them what they could not accomplish for themselves in a whole life time.” A.A. 37–39.

So went the word of God everywhere to every man with the power of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit was in His place which is the first place in all and over all.

As the disciples proclaimed the truths of the gospel in Jerusalem, God bore witness to their word, and a multitude believed. Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter. The record declares, neither was there any among them that lacked, and it tells how the need was filled.

“Those among the believers who had money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the emergency. Selling their houses or their lands, they brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

The testimony further adds;

“this liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were of one heart and one soul.” A.A. 65.

That was the influence of the Holy Spirit, so gentle and so mercifully loving. But now a problem developed. The principalities and powers of this world were working to set up the false temple and the mystery of iniquity, and to take the place of the Holy Spirit in the church of God.

“In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians, against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” Acts. 6:1.

The early church was made up of many classes of people of various nationalities. At the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Acts.2:5.

Among those, of the Hebrew faith who were gathered at Jerusalem were some commonly known as Grecians, between whom and the Jews of Palestine, there had long existed distrust and even antagonism.

The hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles were softened and united by Christian love. ***Despite former prejudices, all were in harmony with one another. Satan knew that so long "as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth; and he sought to take advantage of former habits of thought, in the hope that thereby he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion.*** Thus it came to pass that as the disciples were multiplied, the enemy succeeded in arousing the suspicions of some who had formerly been in the habit of looking with jealousy on their brethren in the faith and of finding fault with their spiritual leaders and so, "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews."

The cause of complaint was an alleged neglect of the Greek widows in the daily, distribution of assistance. Any inequality would have been contrary to the Spirit of the gospel, yet Satan had succeeded in arousing suspicion. Prompt measures must now be taken to remove all occasion for dissatisfaction, lest the enemy triumph in his effort to bring about a division among the believers.

The disciples of Jesus had reached a crisis in their experience. Under the wise leadership of the apostles, who laboured unitedly in the power of the Holy Spirit, the work committed to the gospel messengers was developing rapidly. The church was continually enlarging, and this growth in membership brought increasingly heavy burdens upon those in charge. No one man, or even one set of men, could continue to bear these burdens alone, without imperiling the future prosperity of the church. "Wherefore, brethren," they said, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word."

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

That this step was in the order of God is revealed in the results for good that were seen. “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.” Acts 6:7. This ingathering of souls was due both to the greater freedom secured by the apostles and to the zeal and power shown by the seven deacons. ***Their spiritual life and power was dependent on a close connection with the One by whom they had been commissioned to preach the gospel.***

Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the co-operation of angels of Heaven. With the help of these divine agencies they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict, they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labour unitedly, Heavenly messengers would be before them, opening the way, hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ. So long as they remained united, the church would go forth ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ Song of Solomon 6:10. Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world.

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 ensamples to the flock.” (1Peter 5:2,3). “And the deacons were to be men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.”

Later in the history of the early church, when in various parts of the ***world many groups of believers had been formed into churches***, the organization of the church was further perfected, ***so that order and harmonious action might be maintained***. Every member was exhorted to act well his part. Each was to make wise use of the talents entrusted to him. ***Some were endowed by the Holy Spirit with special gifts***, first apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” 1 Cor.12:28. ***But all these classes of workers were to labour in harmony.***

Are you called to a position of trust? Then listen to this counsel to Solomon, as one called to occupy a position of leading responsibility, David gave a special charge:

“Thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a perfect mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts, if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee, but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee... be strong.” 1 Chron.28:9,10.

The same principles of piety and justice that were to guide the rulers among God’s people in the time of Moses and of David, were also to be followed by those given the oversight of the newly organized church of God in the gospel dispensation. In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament scriptures. They maintained that he who is called to stand in a position of leading responsibility in the church, must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince

the gainsayers. Titus 1:7-9.

The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armour of God. The company of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the Saints.” 1 Cor.14:33. He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality cooperating with the divine, ***every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit***, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God. A.O.A 87-95

We shall now examine the life of Stephen, one of the seven deacons, which show conclusively that his was an appointment of God through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Stephen was a born-again Christian in God’s organization. Stephen, the foremost of the seven deacons, was a man of deep piety and broad faith. **He was very active in the cause of Christ and boldly proclaimed his faith.** Learned rabbis and doctors of the Law engaged in public discussion with him, confidently expecting an easy victory. But “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.” Not only did he speak in the power of the Holy Spirit but it was plain that he was a student of the prophecies... and utterly defeated his opponents. To him was the promise fulfilled, “settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist.” Luke 21:14,15.

John 3:34 tells us that “the man that God sends, speaks the words of God.” And why, because they are taught by God first and then sent to give the message He gives them.

Many false witnesses were gathered by the Jews against Stephen. Saul of Tarsus was present and took a leading part against Stephen. He brought the weight of eloquence and logic of the rabbis to bear upon the case, to convince the people that Stephen was preaching delusive and dangerous doctrines,

but in Stephen he met one who had a full understanding of the purposes of God in the spreading of the gospel to other nations.

We shall now notice two important points which prove conclusively that the seven deacons were chosen by God and that in the case of Stephen the Holy Spirit occupied first place.

When Stephen stood face to face with his judges to answer to the charge of blasphemy, a holy radiance shone upon his countenance, and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Many who beheld this light trembled and veiled their faces, but the stubborn unbelief and prejudice of the rulers did not waver.

When Stephen was questioned as to the truth of the charges against him, he began his defense in a clear, thrilling voice, which ran through the council hall. In words that held the assembly spellbound, he proceeded to rehearse the history of the chosen people, (Acts.7). *He connected Jesus Christ with all the Jewish history. He referred to the building of the temple by Solomon, and to the prophecies of both Solomon and Isaiah. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in the temple made with hands, as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool, what house will ye build me? Saith the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hands made all these things.*

When Stephen reached this point, there was tumult among the people. When he connected Christ with the prophecies and spoke as he did of the temple, the priest, pretending to be horror-stricken, rent his robe. To Stephen this act was a signal that his voice would soon be silenced forever. *He saw the resistance that met his words and knew that he was giving his last testimony.* Although in the midst of his sermon, he abruptly concluded it. Suddenly, breaking away from the train of history that he was following, and turning upon his infuriated judges, he cried, “ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the Law ‘by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

At this, priests and rulers were beside themselves with anger ... but he did not waver. For him the enraged priests and excited mob had no terror. The

scene before him faded from his vision. To him the gates of Heaven were ajar, and looking in, he saw the glory of the Courts of God, and Christ, as if just risen from His throne, standing ready to sustain His servant. In words of triumph Stephen exclaimed, ‘Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.’

After the death of Stephen, Saul was elected a member of the Sanhedrin Council in consideration of the part he had acted on that occasion. For a time he was a mighty instrument in the hands of Satan to carry out his rebellion against the Son of God. But soon this relentless persecutor was to be employed in building up the church that he was now tearing down. A mightier than Satan had chosen Saul to take the place of the martyred Stephen to preach and suffer for His name.

From the above, it is clear that in the organization of the early church the Holy Spirit occupied the first place over all. We shall further emphasize this truth by studying the eighth chapter of Acts, dealing with the experience of Philip.

The eighth chapter tells of the preaching of Philip in Samaria, (vrs.5-13) and how they received the Holy Ghost, (vrs.14-17) and the Holy Ghost reading the heart of Simon (vrs.18-23). We see next that Philip received orders from above to go down to Gaza (vr.26), where, when he arrived, a man in a chariot was just passing and reading in the book of Isaiah, what is now the fifty-third chapter, at this point Philip received further orders from above, which said, “go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” (vr.29).

Philip, under the control of the Holy Ghost, ran thither to him and asked him, “understandest thou what thou readest?” The eunuch, under the conviction of the Holy Ghost, requested that he sit with him (vrs.31 -34). Then Philip opened the scriptures and preached Jesus to him, he believed and was baptized and went on his way rejoicing in the Lord (vrs.35-39). I believe it is unmistakably clear to us now, that when the Holy Ghost is given his rightful place in the Church of God, the work of God advances by leaps and bounds.

And now, we shall look at a story with a present application to us which if we lose sight of it, shall cause us to miss the road to the crisis as the Jews missed the road to the righteousness of God, and the result was, that they went about trying to establish their own righteousness which, as they

finally found out, equals nothing. In our case we shall become as the other denominations are, only Social Clubs. God forbid such to come upon us..

In Isaiah 61:3, we see reference to the people of God being called trees, “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified.”

In the book of Judges, chapter 9 and verses 8-15, we find this account;

“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them and they said unto the olive tree, ‘reign thou over us.’ But the olive tree said unto them, ‘should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?’ And the trees said to the fig tree, ‘come thou, and reign over us.’ But the fig tree—said unto them, ‘should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?’ Then said the trees unto the vine, ‘come thou, and reign over us.’ And the vine said unto them, ‘should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?’”

And so, not finding any tree that was willing to be head of ‘ their organization because they were busy honouring God and blessing men, they then appealed to one that was good for nothing, only fit to be burned; the bramble or thornbush.

“Then said all the trees to the bramble, come thou and reign over us. And the bramble, said unto the trees, if in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust under my shadow, and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.”

Can anyone sit down in the shade of a thornbush with any safety or comfort? Yet that they did this very thing, or else be burnt, were the only terms of the bargain. That is, they were to put themselves in an arrangement where they were certain to be pricked, and if they refused that, then they were certain to be burnt.

They asked Gideon with his son and grandson to rule over them. But Gideon’s answer must be our answer and given as promptly as he did:

*“I will not rule over you, neither shall my sons rule over you. **The Lord shall rule over you.**” Judges 8:23.*

Was not Gideon chosen by God to lead them? Yes. But he understood the

difference between leading, serving and ruling over them. He understood he was not called to rule but to serve. He also understood what his relation to the people must be and the relation of the people to God and he held that balance without fear or favour.

All the time the Lord was solemnly protesting against it, and even outlined before them what would be the evil result, and the oppressions of their king and their kingdom. But they would not listen and still insisted, 'nay, but we will have a king over us.' 1 Sam.8:19.

And so the Lord allowed them to have their persistent way. Yet He declared, "they have rejected me, that I should not rule over them." 1Sam.8:7.

They rejected God to be 'like all the nations.' And it was not surprising that they speedily became like all the nations that rejected God, and finally sealed it all, and their doom, with the desperate exclamation; 'We have no king but Caesar.'

Brethren, is there in this any warning, or any lesson for God's people in this time? I ask, where is there any difference in principle between their call for a king then, that they might be like all the other nations, and the call now for a priest, bishop, cardinal, reverend or president (king) that they might be like all the other denominations. I ask respectfully and sincerely, that we meditate on the lessons therein for the situation always besets us, for the devil is still around.

From only this sketch of the Acts of the Apostles it is perfectly plain that the one thing that stands out clear and prominent above all other things is that the Holy Spirit was then the Grand Sovereign, reigning and guiding person in the church and of the church. Secondly, it is seen that the Christians recognized and gladly yielded that sovereignty and reign and guidance to the Holy Spirit. If they had not done this the record could not have been what it is, for it is certain that the experience would not have been what it was. ***Such only is the rightful place of the Holy Spirit in individuals and in the church, and He needs only that Christians yield to Him that place and recognize Him in that place, to prove Himself to be all that He ever was in the place that is supremely His.***

For further study read A.A., chaps.9,10 &11; Col.1:25-29; 2Cor.6:3,4-10; Acts. 6,7,8.

CHAPTER 14

The Reign, Rule & Workings Of The Holy Spirit

These are the final days in which we live. You do not have to believe that, you do not have to live as though it is a fact, as a matter of fact, you do not have to give it any consideration at all. For all our unbelief and neglect, this one thing is certain, Christ will come very shortly. God has given us much light in the last two years. Have we been faithful to it? He has sent us light on the gospel, illuminating our dark minds and bringing us out of lukewarmness. God has started a reformation here. In this study we shall seek a deeper understanding of God's idea of church organization. For if we learn this lesson, we would have learnt to recognize and yield to the sovereignty, reign and guidance of the Holy Spirit over the church and over us individually. When we have learnt that lesson well then our experience will prove to be what it was for those at Pentecost, for Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, Amen!

We shall now turn our attention to Acts chapter 10, vs.1-6. Inspiration comments thus,

“It was while Peter was still at Joppa that he was called by God to take the gospel to Cornelius in Caesarea. Cornelius was a Roman Centurion, he was a man of wealth and noble birth, and his position was one of trust and honor. A heathen by birth, training and education, through contact with the Jews he had

gained a knowledge of God, and he worshipped Him with a true heart, showing the sincerity of his faith by compassion to the poor. He was known far and near for his beneficence, and his righteous life made him of good repute among both Jews and Gentiles. His influence was a blessing to all with whom he came in contact. The inspired record describes him as a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

Believing in God as the Creator of heaven and earth, Cornelius revered Him, acknowledged His authority, and sought His counsel in all the affairs of life. He was faithful to Jehovah in his home life and in his official duties. He had erected the altar of God in his home, for he dared not attempt to carry out his plans or to bear his responsibilities without the help of God.

Though Cornelius believed the prophecies and was looking for the Messiah to come, he had not a knowledge of the gospel as revealed in the life and death of Christ. He was not a member of the Jewish church and would have been looked upon by the rabbis as a heathen and unclean. But the same Holy Watcher who said of Abraham, 'I know him,' knew Cornelius also, and sent a message direct from heaven to him.

The angel appeared to Cornelius while he was at prayer. As the Centurion heard himself addressed by name, he was afraid, yet he knew that the messenger had come from God, and he said, 'What is it, Lord?' The angel answered, 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.'

The explicitness of these directions, in which was named even the occupation of the man with whom Peter was staying, shows that Heaven is acquainted with the history and business of men in every station of life. God is familiar with the experience and work of the humble laborer, as well as with that of the king upon his throne.

The message said “send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon.” Cornelius was gladly obedient to the vision. When the angel had gone, the centurion “called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.” AA 134

These servants departed on the following day filled with happiness while doing their master’s bidding. As they approached Joppa the Holy Spirit prepared Peter for their reception. Verses 9 and 10 of this chapter tell us that Peter went up on the housetop to pray and fell into a trance. In verses 11-16 God gave Peter a vision to prepare him for the servants of Cornelius. Let us follow the workings of the Holy Spirit further. He had just taken care of Cornelius, now He must work with Peter.

“The angel, after his interview with Cornelius, went to Peter, in Joppa. At the time, Peter was praying upon the housetop of his lodging, and we read that ‘he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance.’ It was not for physical food alone that Peter hungered. As from the housetop he viewed the city of Joppa and the surrounding country he hungered for the salvation of his countrymen. He had an intense desire to point out to them from the scriptures the prophecies relating to the sufferings and death of Christ.”

At this point when the work of God was foremost in his mind, God opened up a way to work.

“This vision conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. It revealed to him the purpose of God – that by the death of Christ the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews to the blessings of salvation. As yet none of the disciples had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. In their minds the middle wall of partition, broken down by the death of Christ, still existed, and their labors had been confined to the Jews, for they had looked upon the Gentiles as excluded from the blessings of the gospel. Now the Lord was seeking to teach Peter the worldwide extent of the divine plan.

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against

the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training. By the vision of the sheet and its contents He sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God's sight, that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel." A.A.134-137

But let us continue with the wonder working Holy Spirit and learn the lessons found therein. Verses 17-21 bring to view another lesson. Peter had received a vision, after Cornelius had been spoken to, men were on their way to Peter when he received his interview. Now, Peter did not understand what it all meant. He doubted. As he doubted the men arrived and were calling for him, he however was not aware that men were downstairs asking for him. It was now the right time for Peter to go downstairs, he could not understand anything before the men had arrived, and just when he was about to give himself a problem by worrying, it is seen that the Lord delivered him from it by sending him down to the men who would give him light on what he had seen.

Inspiration speaks thus:

"While Peter was meditating on the meaning of the vision, the men sent from Cornelius arrived at Joppa and stood before the gate of his lodging house. Then the Spirit said to Peter, 'Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.' To Peter this was a trying command, and it was with reluctance at every step that he undertook the duty laid upon him, but he dared not disobey." A.A. 137.

Verse 21 tells us that he went down to the men, disclosed his identity and inquired of them their mission. In verse 22 the servants revealed the events and their mission. They lodged until the morning and then departed, so says verse 23.

Verses 24-27 bring to view the reception of Peter by Cornelius, Peter's response to that reception and also that many people were on hand who were invited by Cornelius while he waited for Peter. Inspiration comments thus, "In obedience to the direction just received from God, the apostle promised

to go with them. On the following morning he set out for Caesarea, accompanied by six of his brethren. These were to be witnesses of all that he should say or do while visiting the Gentiles, for Peter knew that he would be called to account for so direct a violation of the Jewish teachings.

As Peter entered the house of the Gentiles, Cornelius did not salute him as an ordinary visitor, but as one honored of Heaven and sent to him by God. It is an eastern custom to bow before a prince or other high dignitary and for children to bow before their parents; but *Cornelius, overwhelmed with reverence for the one sent by God to teach him, fell at the apostle's feet and worshipped him. Peter was horror-stricken, and he lifted the centurion up, saying, 'Stand up; I myself also am a man.'*

While the messengers of Cornelius had been gone upon their errand, the centurion 'had called together his kinsmen and near friends,' that they as well as he might hear the preaching of the gospel. When Peter arrived, he found a large company eagerly waiting to listen to his words."

Who had done the work to bring these people together? It allows only one answer, the wonder-working Holy Spirit. It is clear that the Spirit had impressed the mind of Cornelius to do such a work for others. Then can He not work now as He worked then? Assuredly so!

We go on further; in verses 28 & 29 Peter shows caution with well known prejudice, but is confident that God had directed him there. In verses 30-32 Cornelius rehearses reassuringly to Peter the events of four days already gone, and in verse 33 tells Peter that he and all gathered *were waiting patiently and eagerly to hear what God had to tell them through him.* Now the way was fully prepared, the Holy Spirit took full control of the proceedings, as he spoke the gospel of Christ through Peter, vs.34-43. Then the Spirit confirms all that was said and done by descending on all gathered there, vs.44, and vs.45-48 testify that the fullness of the Spirit is joy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Inspiration shall now enlighten us further on this experience. Let us pray for wisdom now to understand and be enlightened, for it is very necessary for us right now.

"To those assembled, Peter spoke first of the custom of the Jews, saying that it was looked upon as unlawful for Jews to mingle

socially with the Gentiles, that to do this involved ceremonial defilement. (Acts 10:28). Cornelius then related his experience and the words of the angel concluding with verse 33.

Peter said, 'of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.' Then to the company of attentive hearers the apostle preached' Christ - His life, His miracles, His betrayal and crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension, and His work in Heaven as man's representative and advocate. As Peter pointed those present to Jesus as the sinner's only hope, he himself understood more fully the meaning of the vision he had seen, and his heart glowed with the spirit of truth that he was presenting.

Suddenly the discourse was interrupted by the descent of the Holy Spirit. 'While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

'Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.'

Thus was the gospel brought to those who had been strangers and foreigners, making them fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God. The conversion of Cornelius and his household was but the first fruits of a harvest to be gathered in. From this household a wide-spread work of grace was carried on in that heathen city." A.A., pp.138-140.

When the headship of Christ is accepted and the Holy Spirit given its rightful place in the believer's life, then its wonderful workings will be seen and known among the general body of believers.

Then it must be forever settled that the only way prejudice can be broken down and souls won to Christ is by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit. Then, brethren let Him have His place over all and in all that pertains to the church. Now and always. For only as this is done will these results be repeated once more.

Inspiration continues,

“Because Cornelius was living in obedience to all the instruction he had received, God so ordered that he was given more truth. A messenger from the courts of heaven was sent to the Roman officer and to Peter in order that Cornelius might be brought into touch with one who could lead him into greater light.” A.A.141.

But a problem now confronted Peter, which God had foreseen and had already solved. Acts 11:1-18. The brethren in Judea heard that Peter went into the house of a Gentile and preached. They were surprised and offended. Vs.1-3.

Peter then laid the whole matter before them as found in vrs.4-14. In verse 15 he states, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning, then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us*, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?”

“On hearing this account, the brethren were silenced. Convinced that Peter’s course was in direct fulfillment of the plan of God, and that their prejudices and exclusiveness contrary to the spirit of the gospel, they glorified God, saying hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.’ AMEN!

Thus, without controversy, prejudice was broken down, the exclusiveness established by the custom of ages was abandoned, and the way was opened for the gospel to be proclaimed the Gentiles.” Praise the Lord!

We shall briefly look at chapters 13-15 before we conclude with chapter 16.

Chapter 13, vrs.2-4 tells of the *Holy Spirit saying to the church at Antioch*, ‘separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them and they being sent by the Holy Ghost. Here in is a principle of church organization for us to consider as divine and divinely given for us.

Act 13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

In verse 7 we see how God works to save souls while in vs.8 we see Satan

seeking to destroy them.

“Not without a struggle does Satan allow the kingdom of God to be built up in the earth. The forces of evil are engaged in unceasing warfare against the agencies appointed for the spread of the gospel, and these powers of darkness are especially active when the truth is proclaimed before men of repute and sterling integrity. Thus it was when Sergius Paulus, the deputy of Cyprus, was listening to the gospel message. The deputy had sent for the apostles, that he might be instructed in the message they had come to bear, and now the forces of evil, working through the sorcerer Elymas, sought with their baleful suggestions to turn him from the faith and so thwart the purpose of God.” A.A. 170(167).

The chapter further tells of Paul, full of the Holy Ghost, rebuking the sorcerer. The apostles later went to Antioch in Pisidia preaching the gospel and being “filled with joy and the Holy Ghost. When we are in agreement with the Holy Spirit we can count it all joy in tribulations and we respect the liberty that the Spirit brings to every believer in Jesus Christ. What is clearly seen here is that we must constantly keep in mind that we are in a great controversy which is much bigger than you or I and the forces of evil are stronger than mere human. Hence divine power is needed at every stage in the controversy. The Holy Spirit is our power and source of victory.

Acts chapter 16 can be looked at in many ways, but we shall look at it in three areas:-

1. Paul and Timothy received their orders from above.
2. They met the devil following the directions of God and overcame him.
3. The jailer and his family were saved after Paul was jailed.

What does that tell us? God will have to permit some of us to go to jail to save prisoners and prison officers.

“The time had come for the gospel to be proclaimed beyond the confines of Asia Minor. The way was being prepared for Paul and his fellow workers to cross over into Europe.” Now Paul got

the signal from God. Vs.9-15 gives us the details.

“As the messengers of the cross went about their work of teaching, a woman possessed of a spirit of divination followed them, crying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation.’ And this did she many days.”

This woman was a special agent of Satan and had brought to her masters much gain by soothsaying. Her influence had brought help to strengthen idolatry. Satan knew that his kingdom was being invaded, and he resorted to this means of opposing the work of God, hoping to mingle his sophistry with the truths taught by those who were proclaiming the gospel message. The words of recommendation uttered by this woman were an injury to the cause of truth, distracting the minds of the people from the teachings of the apostles and bringing disrepute upon the gospel, and by them many were led to believe that the men who spoke with the spirit and power of God were actuated by the same spirit as this emissary of Satan.

For some time the apostles endured this opposition, *then under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost Paul commanded the evil spirit to leave the woman.* The immediate silence testified that the apostles were the servants of God and that the demon had acknowledged them to be such and had obeyed their command. But the devil was not through yet. Vs.19-24 describes the workings of Satan in contrast with the providence of God working to save souls.

“The apostles suffered extreme torture because of the painful position in which they were left, but they did not murmur. Instead, in the utter darkness and desolation of the dungeon, they encouraged each other by words of prayer and sang praises to God because they were found worthy to suffer shame for His sake. Their hearts were cheered by a deep and earnest love for the cause of their Redeemer. Paul thought of the persecution he had been instrumental in bringing upon the Disciples of Christ, and he rejoiced that his eyes had been opened to see, and his heart to feel, the power of the glorious truths which once he despised.

With astonishment the other prisoners heard the sound of prayer and singing rising from the inner prison. They had been accustomed to hear shrieks and moans, cursing and swearing, breaking the silence of the night, but never before had they heard words of prayer and praise ascending from that gloomy cell. Guards and prisoners marvelled and asked themselves who these men could be, who, cold, hungry, and tortured, could yet rejoice.”

Next we note from vs.26-34 the wonderful way of God. God had not forgotten to be gracious to His servants.

“All Heaven was interested in the men who were suffering for Christ’s sake, and angels were sent to visit the prison. At their tread the earth trembled. The heavily bolted prison doors were thrown open, the chains and fetters fell from the hands and feet of the prisoners, and a bright light flooded the prison.

The keeper of the jail had heard with amazement the prayers and songs of the imprisoned apostles. When they were led in, he had seen their swollen and bleeding wounds, and had himself caused their feet to be fastened in the stocks. He had expected to bear from them bitter groans and imprecations, but he heard instead songs of joy and praise. With these songs in his ears the jailer had fallen into a sleep from which he was awakened by the earthquake and the shaking of the prison walls. Starting up in alarm, he saw with dismay that all the prison doors were open, and the fear flashed upon him that the prisoners had escaped. He remembered with what explicit charge Paul and Silas had been entrusted to his care the night before, and he was certain that death would be the penalty of apparent unfaithfulness. In the bitterness of his spirit he felt that it was better for him to die by his own hand than to submit to a disgraceful execution. Drawing his sword, he was about to kill himself, when Paul’s voice was heard in the words of cheer, ‘Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.’ **Everyone was in his place, restrained by the power of God exerted through one fellow prisoner.**

The severity with which the jailer had treated the apostles had not aroused their resentment. **Paul and Silas had the spirit of**

Christ, not the spirit of revenge. Their hearts filled with the love of the Saviour, had no room for malice against their persecutors.

The jailer dropped his sword and, calling for lights, hastened into the inner dungeon. He would see what manner of men these were who repaid with kindness the cruelty with which they had been treated. Reaching the place where the apostles were, **and casting himself before them out into the open court, he asked their forgiveness.** Then, bringing them out into the open court, he inquired, ‘sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ With deep humility he asked the apostles to show him the way of life. ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house,’ they answered; and they spake unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in his house.”

The jailer then washed the wounds of the apostles and ministered to them, after which he was **baptized** by them, with all his household. A sanctifying influence diffused itself among the inmates of the prison, and the minds of all were opened to listen to the truths spoken by the apostles. They were convinced that the God whom these men served had miraculously released them from bondage. The apostles did not regard as in vain their labors in Philippi. They had met much opposition and persecution, but the intervention of Providence in their behalf, and the conversion of the jailer and his household, more than atoned for the disgrace and suffering they had endured. **The news of their unjust imprisonment and miraculous deliverance became known through all that region, and this brought the work of the apostles to the notice of a large number who otherwise would not have been reached.** The church at Philippi did not escape persecution. Paul told them., ‘unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake here the same conflict which ye saw in me.’ Yet such was their steadfastness in the faith that he declared, “I thank very, God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship gospel from the first day until now.” Phil.1:29,30,3–5. At the present time, when the end of all things earthly is rapidly approaching, Satan is putting forth desperate efforts to

ensnare the world. He is devising many plans to occupy minds and to divert attention from the truth essential to salvation. The arch-deceiver is at work to introduce elements of confusion and rebellion, and men are being fired with a zeal that is not according to knowledge.

Wickedness is reaching a height never before attained, and yet many ministers of the gospel are crying, 'peace and safety.' But God's faithful messengers are to go steadily forward with their work. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they are to advance fearlessly and victoriously, never ceasing their warfare until every soul within their reach shall have received the message of truth for this time." A.A. 219-228.

When the Holy Spirit is allowed His rightful place in the church of God we shall say like the people back there, "we never saw it on this fashion." Mark 2:12. "We have seen strange things today." Lk.5:26. Eph.4:4-16. What a wonderful counselor we have as head of the church, just let him be our head individually. What a wonderful gift of and in the Holy Spirit by our head to his church. Let us appreciate the gift. Not by might but by My Spirit saith the Lord. It is the power of right by which all things will be subdued. Today, this very moment Jesus says to you and I and every other one receive ye the Holy spirit. To God be the glory great things he hath done.

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