

The Work of Organization

It was at the ordination of the Twelve that the first step was taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to carry on His work on the earth. Of this ordination the record says, "He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." Mark 3:13, 14. {AA 18.1}

Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel. "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." This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons. {AA 89.1}

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 their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole. {AA 89.2}

To the early church had been entrusted a constantly enlarging work--that of establishing centers of light and blessing wherever there were honest souls willing to give themselves to the service of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel was to be world-wide in its extent, and the messengers of the cross **could not hope to fulfill their important mission unless they should remain united in the bonds of Christian unity**, and thus reveal to the world that they were one with Christ in God. Had not their divine Leader prayed to the Father, "Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are"? And had He not declared of His disciples, "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world"? Had He not pleaded with the Father that they might be "made perfect in one," "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me"? John 17:11, 14, 23, 21. Their spiritual life and power was dependent on a close connection with the One by whom they had been commissioned to preach the gospel. {AA 90.1}

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 labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go 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. {AA 90.2}

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" (1 Peter 5:2, 3); and the deacons were to be "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." These men were to take their position unitedly on the side of right and to maintain it with firmness and decision. Thus they would have a uniting influence upon the entire flock. {AA 91.1}

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 a wise use of the talents entrusted to him. Some were endowed by the Holy Spirit with special gifts --"first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:28. But all these classes of workers were to labor in harmony. {AA 91.2}

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one 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 gifts of healing 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 the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:4-12. {AA 92.1}

Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth. In the days of the theocracy, when Moses was endeavoring to carry alone burdens so heavy that he would soon have worn away under them, he was counseled by Jethro to plan for a wise distribution of responsibilities. "Be thou for the people to Godward," Jethro advised, "that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." Jethro further advised that men be appointed to act as "rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." These were to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." They were to "judge the people at all seasons," thus relieving Moses of the wearing responsibility of giving consideration to many minor matters that could be dealt with wisely by consecrated helpers. {AA 92.2}

The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church, should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle. "Every great matter they shall bring unto thee," Jethro proposed to Moses, "but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace." {AA 93.1}

In harmony with this plan, "Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves." Exodus 18:19-26. {AA 93.2}

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. {AA 95.2}

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 armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another. When dissension arose in a local church, as later it did arise in Antioch and elsewhere, and the believers were unable to come to an agreement among themselves, such matters were not permitted to create a division in the church, but were referred to a general council of the entire body of believers, made up of appointed delegates from the various local churches, with the apostles and elders in positions of leading responsibility. Thus the efforts of Satan to attack the church in isolated places were met by concerted action on the part of all, and the plans of the enemy to disrupt and destroy were thwarted. {AA 95.3}

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." I Corinthians 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 co-operating 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. {AA 96.1}

Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. When form and machinery take the pre-eminence, and a laborious task is made of carrying on the work that should be done with simplicity, evil will result, and little will be accomplished in proportion to the effort put forth. The object of organization is just the reverse of this; and should we disorganize, it would be like tearing down that which we have built up. Evil results have been seen, both in the Sabbath-school work and in the missionary society, because of making much of machinery while vital experience was lost sight of. In many of the imagined improvements that have been brought in, the mould of man has been placed upon the work. In the Sabbath-school, men and women have been accepted as officers and teachers, who have not been spiritually minded, and had no live interest in the work committed to their care; but matters can be set in order only through the aid of the Holy Spirit. The same evil has existed for years as now exists in our churches. Formality, pride, and love of display have taken the place of true piety and humble godliness. We might see a different order of things should a number consecrate themselves wholly to God, and then devote their talents to the Sabbath-school work, ever advancing in knowledge, and educating themselves so that they would be able to instruct others as to the best methods to employ in the work; but it is not for the workers to seek for methods by which they can make a show, consuming time in theatrical performances and musical display, for this benefits no one. It does no good to train the children to make speeches for special occasions. They should be won to Christ, and instead of expending time, money, and effort to make a display, let the whole effort be made to gather sheaves for the harvest. {CE 134.1}

But although these difficulties exist, will it abolish them to put an end to organization? I am sure that the Lord has wrought in the organization that has been perfected, and the fact that there are discouraging features in the work should not be thought a sufficient reason for disorganization. Much light was given to us in reference to the organization of churches, and yet we had a hard battle to fight in perfecting organization; but the victory was gained at last, and now shall the church be disorganized because of indifference, formality, and pride? Shall we go back to disorder because unconsecrated members of the church have placed upon the work the mould of man, and sought to fashion the church to meet a popular standard? {CE 135.2}

It is nearly forty years since organization was introduced among us as a people. [THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE IN THE SPRING OF 1902.] I was one of the number who had an experience in establishing it from the first. I know the difficulties that had to be met, the evils which it was designed to correct, and I have watched its influence in connection with the growth of the cause. At an early stage in the work, God gave us special light upon this point, and this light, together with the lessons that experience has taught us, should be carefully considered. {CET

192.1}

My husband, with Elders Joseph Bates, Stephen Pierce, Hiram Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, was among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. {CET 192.3}

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood, it was discussed and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one, as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed. {CET 192.4}

As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable. {CET 195.2}

Yet there was strong feeling against it among our people. The First-day Adventists were opposed to organization, and most of the Seventh-day Adventists entertained the same ideas. We sought the Lord with earnest prayer that we might understand His will, and light was given by His Spirit, that there must be order and thorough discipline in the church,--that **organization was essential**. System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe. **Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God's people on the earth.** {CET 195.3}

Do not place over the children young, inexperienced teachers who have no managing ability; for their efforts will tend to disorganization. Order is heaven's first law, and every school should in this respect be a model of heaven. {CT 174.3}

The church must be organized to carry out and enforce order, or it will scatter into fragments.--I was shown that some have been fearing they should become Babylon if they organize; but the churches in Central New York have been perfect Babylon, confusion. And now unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future.--RH Aug. 27, 1861. {PaM 41.1}

We had a hard struggle in establishing organization. Notwithstanding that the Lord gave testimony after testimony upon this point, the opposition was strong, and it had to be met again and again. But we knew that the Lord God of Israel was leading us, and guiding by His providence. We engaged in the work of organization, and marked prosperity attended this advance movement. {CET 195.4}

As the development of the work called upon us to engage in new enterprises, we were prepared to enter upon them. The Lord directed our minds to the importance of the educational work. We saw the need of schools, that our children might receive instruction free from the errors of false philosophy, that their training might be in harmony with the principles of the word of God. The need of a health institution had been urged upon us, both for the help and instruction of our own people and as a means of blessing and enlightenment to others. This enterprise also was carried forward. All this was missionary work of the highest order. {CET 197.1}

Our work was not sustained by large gifts or legacies; for we have few wealthy men among us. What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The **system of organization has proved a**

grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to the Bible plan. The body "has been compacted by that which every joint supplieth." As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual. {CET 197.2}

Let none entertain the thought that we can **dispense with organization.** It has cost us much study and many prayers for wisdom that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled. At God's command, "Go forward," we advanced when the difficulties to be surmounted made the advance seem impossible. We know how much it has cost to work out God's plans in the past, which have made us as a people what we are. Then let everyone be exceedingly careful not to unsettle minds in regard to those things that God has ordained for our prosperity and success in advancing His cause. {CET 197.3}

Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire the cooperation of the heavenly messengers, must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high, will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God can co-operate with them. But **never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder.** All these evils are the result of Satan's efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy our courage, and prevent successful action. {CET 199.1}

Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with Heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from Heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God, and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality; that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united, and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order for them to strike out for themselves, and choose their own course, independent of their brethren. {CET 201.1}

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and another having faith and views entirely opposite; each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases, without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren? {CET 201.2}

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit. {CET 203.1}

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. . . . We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and Heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {CET 203.2}

CHAPTER 33, "ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT," IS SELECTED FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE BULLETIN, 1893, PAGES 22-24; REVIEW AND HERALD, 1884, JUNE 3; 1892, JULY 26; "TESTIMONIES FOR THE CHURCH," VOLUME 3, PAGES 446 AND 447; "TESTIMONIES," SERIES B, NO. 2, PAGES 56 AND 57; AND "GOSPEL WORKERS," PAGE 303. {CET 259.9}

Nehemiah

“1 ¶ And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, [that] wine [was] before him: and I took up the wine, and gave [it] unto the king. Now I had not been [beforetime] sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why [is] thy countenance sad, seeing thou [art] not sick? this [is] nothing [else] but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres, [lieth] waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which [appertained] to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. 9 ¶ Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard [of it], it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. 11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. 12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I [any] man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither [was there any] beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. 13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king’s pool: but [there was] no place for the beast [that was] under me to pass. 15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and [so] returned. 16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told [it] to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. 17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we [are]

in, how Jerusalem [lieth] waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. 18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for [this] good [work]. 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard [it], they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What [is] this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? 20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." (Ne 2:1-20 AV)

His request to the king had been so favorably received that Nehemiah was encouraged to ask for still further assistance. To give dignity and authority to his mission, as well as to provide protection on the journey, he asked for and secured a military escort. He obtained royal letters to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates, the territory through which he must pass on his way to Judea; and he obtained, also, a letter to the keeper of the king's forest in the mountains of Lebanon, directing him to furnish such timber as would be needed. That there might be no occasion for complaint that he had exceeded his commission, Nehemiah was careful to have the authority and privileges accorded him, clearly defined. {PK 633.2}

This example of wise forethought and resolute action should be a lesson to all Christians. God's children are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligent and provident care. They encounter many difficulties and often hinder the working of Providence in their behalf, because they regard prudence and painstaking effort as having little to do with religion. Nehemiah did not regard his duty done when he had wept and prayed before the Lord. He united his petitions with holy endeavor, putting forth earnest, prayerful efforts for the success of the enterprise in which he was engaged. Careful consideration and well-matured plans are as essential to the carrying forward of sacred enterprises today as in the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. {PK 633.3}

Nehemiah did not depend upon uncertainty. The means that he lacked he solicited from those who were able to bestow. And the Lord is still willing to move upon the hearts of those in possession of His goods, in behalf of the cause of truth. Those who labor for Him are to avail themselves of the help that He prompts men to give. These gifts may open ways by which the light of truth shall go to many benighted lands. The donors may have no faith in Christ, no acquaintance with His word; but their gifts are not on this account to be refused. {PK 634.1}

The minister, the missionary, the teacher, will find their influence with the people greatly increased when it is manifest that they possess the knowledge and skill required for the practical duties of everyday life. And often the success, perhaps the very life, of the missionary depends on his knowledge of practical things. The ability to prepare food, to deal with accidents and emergencies, to treat disease, to build a house, or a church if need be--often these make all the difference between success and failure in his lifework. {Ed 221.1}

Nehemiah had often poured out his soul in behalf of his people. But now as he prayed a holy purpose formed in his mind. He resolved that if he could obtain the consent of the king, and the necessary aid in procuring implements and material, he would himself undertake the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and restoring Israel's national strength. And he asked the Lord to grant him favor in the sight of the king, that this plan might be carried out. "Prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day," he entreated, "and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." {PK 629.3}

This state of things might have been prevented had the rulers exercised their authority; but a desire to advance their own interests had led them to favor the ungodly. Nehemiah fearlessly rebuked them for their neglect of duty. "What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?" he sternly demanded. "Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." He then gave

command that "when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath," they should be shut, and not opened again till the Sabbath was past; and having more confidence in his own servants than in those that the magistrates of Jerusalem might appoint, he stationed them at the gates to see that his orders were enforced. {PK 671.2}

The success attending Nehemiah's efforts shows what prayer, faith, and wise, energetic action will accomplish. Nehemiah was not a priest; he was not a prophet; he made no pretension to high title. He was a reformer raised up for an important time. It was his aim to set his people right with God. Inspired with a great purpose, he bent every energy of his being to its accomplishment. High, unbending integrity marked his efforts. As he came into contact with evil and opposition to right he took so determined a stand that the people were roused to labor with fresh zeal and courage. They could not but recognize his loyalty, his patriotism, and his deep love for God; and, seeing this, they were willing to follow where he led. {PK 675.3}

The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day was a symbol, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. {PK 677.2}

The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law--the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. {PK 677.3}

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14. {PK 678.1}

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the **law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform** and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12. {PK 678.2}

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." Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus they were authorized by the church, not only to **teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority.** {AA 160.2}

No Monopoly
in the Health Food Work

When there is presented before any church or any company of believers in any country the

proposition to bind those who handle the health foods to a contract to conform to certain restrictions which man has made, the answer is always to be, No. God's work is not bound. {HFM 46.3}

Last night I had a time of great suffering. My flesh seemed as cold as marble. I slept for a while without dreaming, then scenes in the work in America passed before me. Methods and plans were being formed into agreements to be presented to our people. In these agreements there were terms and conditions which must not be subscribed to by our people. Early next morning I warned Dr. Caro and Brother Sharp to be on their guard, because a letter would soon come to them containing certain propositions, and requiring their signature to these propositions before they should receive means to help them in their work. {19MR 160.2}

Dr. Kellogg and his united workers framed these propositions, but God did not inspire them. And on no account must our brethren bind themselves to carry out these propositions. I was instructed that we know little of what is before us, and that God has forbidden us to bind ourselves by contract in order to secure means. {19MR 160.3}

Thus saith the Lord: I have a work for Dr. Kellogg to do, but he is not to go beyond the work given him. The Lord loves him, and will save him if he will walk humbly with Him. But **no yokes** are to be framed by himself or any other man for God's people. Tell Brethren Sharp and Caro that they must not give their **signatures** to the terms made. The future is in God's hands. He does not encourage any binding about of His workmen. Let man fear and tremble to place himself where God should be. **Let man keep his hands off of his fellow workmen.** Strange things will take place. The Lord will turn and overturn. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.--Ms 175, 1899.

Ellen G. White Estate Washington, D. C. May 12, 1988. Entire Ms. {19MR 160.4}

God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men. {8T 236.3}

Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference. {8T 236.4}