

Reasonably, that could not be what the Lord purposed by giving such instructions. When methods produce the wrong results, then it is wise and timely to examine the methods hitherto used to determine whether such are Scriptural or not.

²⁴ It must always be kept in mind that God's organization of his people is Theocratic, not democratic. The laws of his organization come from himself, the great Theocrat, Jehovah, the Supreme One. The laws of the organization do not draw their strength and validness from the voice or vote of the congregation and are not applied because of the consent of the governed. "For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us." (Isa. 33: 22, *Am. Stan. Ver.*) Quaintly put, a Theocratic organization is ruled from the top down (which means from the Most High God downward) and not from the bottom up (that is, from the people of the congregation upward). It is true that the Head of the church did say that the one sinned against, who fails to gain his brother, should at length tell the matter to the church or congregation. However, Jesus did not say that the entire congregation should sit like a body of Supreme Court justices of last appeal and should have the case fully aired, and then vote in democratic manner after hearing and arguing the case. The words of Jesus at Matthew 18: 15-17, as above quoted, go farther than the like words at Luke 17: 3, 4, above quoted. Jesus' words in both Scripture citations agree with the law at Leviticus 19: 17, 18: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord."

²⁵ At 1 Corinthians 6: 1-8, the apostle Paul argues against taking matters of difference between brethren into worldly courts, and says that the saints shall judge the world and angels and hence should be able to judge matters between themselves. Yet that is not saying that the entire congregation is constituted to sit as a court before which the cases of sin among the brethren against one another are to be submitted for final adjustment. Paul did not say that the entire congregation must consume time, attention and nervous energy in trying such cases, thereby focusing their attention upon sin and the due punishment of it. The congregation is the Lord's own. Therefore, when a brother has been sinned against by another and he finally brings it to the congregation and tells it, the Theocratic rule should be observed in the congregation.

²⁶ The matter for straightening out should not be aired before the whole congregation for judgment, and take up everybody's time and consideration. It should be quietly laid before the representative members of the congregation or company, the ones that are charged with the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the brethren and for the direction of their service to the Lord. The case recorded at Deuteronomy 21: 18-21 illustrates this way of proceeding in an orderly, Theocratic manner. The record reads: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the *elders of his city*, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the *elders of his city*, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." According to this procedure, the hearing of the case and the rendering of the decision should be confined to the representative brethren, as pictured by the city elders, not elective elders as in religious organizations, but elders who are such due to Christian knowledge, growth and experience. Their decision must be according to Theocratic law. After they render the decision, the congregation may hear about the matter and may concur in the decision and in the action due.

THE ORDERLY WAY

²⁷ This course is supported by the way the apostles John and Paul proceeded, with due consideration for Jehovah's Theocratic arrangement. At 3 John 9-11 it is written concerning a disturber that wanted to shine and be boss and lord it over others: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God." In taking such action, John acted as a representative of the great Theocrat and as one of the twelve foundations of the church built upon Christ Jesus the Rock. (Rev. 21: 14) The situation he took in hand was one where an individual was sinning against his brethren and

24 (a) What does it mean that God's organization of his people is Theocratic? (b) In a matter of trespass appealed to the church, what did Jesus not say respecting the course the church should take?

25. What is the apostle's argument at 1 Corinthians 6: 1-8, and why is it not an argument for a congregation to sit as a court?

26 How, then, should the matter for straightening out be laid before the congregation and handled, and how does the case at Deuteronomy 21: 18-21 illustrate this?

27. What are the facts concerning the conduct of Diotrephes in the church, and how did the apostle John take care of the situation?