Divine Provision for Settlement of Difficulties Between Individuals

Furthermore, the Lord has always made provision for difficulties arising between individuals when the assembly as such is not directly involved. In Israel separate judges were appointed to make decisions. As judges they stood alone and judged apart from the witnesses or the accused. God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:40) and never mixes up the witnesses or the accused with the judge in making the decision. The divinely given instructions are as follows:

2. Plea and plea -- a dispute as to the boundary of property, or other possessions. The landmark might have been removed (Deut. 19:14).  
3. Stroke and stroke -- a question of injury between two persons, or the measure of penalty for the guilty (Ex. 21:18-19 and 26-27, Deut. 25:1-3).

None of these pertains to assembly issues as such, but to difficulties between individuals. Judgment is then referred to Gods center -- the place in which He chose to place His Name (Deut. 12:5). Shiloh was later designated as that center. There was but one such center in all Israel. Now every company gathered to the Lords Name is Gods center (Matt. 18:20). There is no one assembly today that is more Gods center than another. Two or three, or two or three hundred, thus gathered have the Lords authority in the midst. If brothers in a local gathering have problems between them, they do not have to go far for Gods center. In Israel it was different -- Shiloh was Gods center when they entered the land; later Jerusalem became that center. The individuals involved present their case and the judge hears all on the basis of Deut. 1:16-17 and he (the judge), in this instance aided by the priests the Levites, pronounces final judgment which is binding on all (v. 12). Judgment being thus given at Gods center with His authority (v. 12), it was a serious matter not to abide by it.

Today this authority is in the assembly as gathered to the Lords Name, the Lord being in administratively.

Responsibility Between Assemblies

The responsibility between assemblies is rather set forth in Deut. 13:12-18:

If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, that certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the cause be hard in the eyes of that city, then shalt thou deal well with that man." (Deut. 13:12-18).

Today that is more Gods center than another. Two or three, or two or three hundred, thus gathered have the Lords authority in the midst. If brothers in a local gathering have problems between them, they do not have to go far for Gods center. In Israel it was different -- Shiloh was Gods center when they entered the land; later Jerusalem became that center. The individuals involved present their case and the judge hears all on the basis of Deut. 1:16-17 and he (the judge), in this instance aided by the priests the Levites, pronounces final judgment which is binding on all (v. 12). Judgment being thus given at Gods center with His authority (v. 12), it was a serious matter not to abide by it.

Today this authority is in the assembly as gathered to the Lords Name, the Lord being in the midst. Deut. 13:17 is not one assembly appealing to another assembly, but rather individuals looking to Gods center for judgment.
2 Tim. 2:17-18 this same man is associated with “error” (gone astray, missed the mark). He did not deny the resurrection; he only held and taught that it was past already. He seemed to have a semi-

from that gathering, the brother with me made a

words indeed! The assembly did take our advice and acted on it. When we left our work was fin-

as brothers and if you feel that our advice should be acted on you must submit it to the assembly for

produces consequences. The Corinthians did not deny directly the resurrection of Christ, but the apostle infers or concludes that by denying the resurrection of the dead they are in result denying the resurrection (1 Cor.15:12-13). From this we learn that the consequential inferences of a doc-

treasure demand the same attention as a direct state-

Lack of Discernment Is Due to Our Low State

Why is it that we have difficulty in discerning evil doctrine in our midst? Why is it that we do not hold Matt.18:18 as firmly as the gathered saints of yesteryear? Have the Philistines put out our eyes, by worldliness and lack of subjection to the Word, as they did to Samson?

"There is one body." A believer received by one assembly is received everywhere, and if put out he is out everywhere. We do not eat an ordi-

nary meal with such (1 Cor.5:11). The apostle did not need to tell them not to eat the Lord’s supper with such, for they were to “put away from among” themselves that wicked person. But Paul did not want the discipline of the assembly weak-

ened by social activities where the person so put out would be treated as though nothing was wrong. “... With such an one no not to eat.” JND points out that if such were hungry he could in grace feed him, but would not sit down and eat with him. Where is this faithfulness today? We have become as Samson, blinded to what is so clear in the Word. Evil doctrine, because it under-

mines the Person and work of Christ, is more serious than the heinous crime at Corinth.

Can anyone hold that the “error of Balaam” was not evil? Did not God’s wrath fall on Balaam? (Num. 31:8; Jude 11.) Paul delivered Hymenaeus to Satan because of blasphemy (1 Tim. 1:20). In 2 Tim. 2:17-18 this same man is associated with “error” (gone astray, missed the mark). He did not deny the resurrection; he only held and taught that it was past already. He seemed to have a sim-

bination of Scriptural support for this in Matt. 27:52-53. It is clear to the simple that to say that the resurrection is past already is a subtle denial of resurrection. This error is against the Lord ( Isa.32:6).

When erroneous doctrine is set forth it also produces consequences. The Corinthians did not deny directly the resurrection of Christ, but the apostle infers or concludes that by denying the resurrection of the dead they are in result denying the resurrection (1 Cor.15:12-13). From this we learn that the consequential inferences of a doc-

treasure demand the same attention as a direct state-

What Do We Learn from Deut. 17:8-13?"