

churches and who had the authority to make officers and to remove officers, to rebuke people for sin, to examine accusations against them, to set things in order. Now there certainly is no autonomy in the local churches there. Now of course, we recognize the fact that here was a situation where a man inspired of the Lord, was appointed

(10.75) And I think we recognize the fact that there is great danger in authority from individuals because of the sin in individuals and the danger of their falling away. It is a matter which must be carefully regulated and thought out. How much of the individual's right before God he shall give up to the ~~local~~ local church? How much of the local church's authority before God it is right for it to give up to a higher group, or a higher body or a higher individual? It is a matter to be thought out - we don't have a specific command. But it is definitely taught by example - that in the Apostolic Age there was such a thing as an authority over various local churches coming from outside. That is definitely taught and that's all I'm saying. I'm not trying to lay down a rule as to what should be today but I'm saying that there is no principle in the Scripture - at least in these books, of the autonomy of the local church. There is a principle of the right of the individual Christian to refuse to allow another Christian, regardless of his position - be it in a local church, be it in a national body, be it in an international body - to lord it over him. But there is the (11.75) of Christians working together in groups and having some system that will promote good order within the groups and all through history we have the constant alternation between two tendencies. We have the tendency on the one hand to see the inefficiency of a chaotic sort of a system where every man does that which is right in his own eyes and to develop more and more a system in which you have some wonderful man like General Booth of the Salvation Army or John Wesley who was the absolute autocrat and dictator of the Methodist Church during his life - some wonderful man like that leads a tremendous movement and accomplishes five times ~~the~~ what could have been accomplished by the same group without his leadership. And we have a tendency then to develop a highly centralized, extremely efficient group. And then a group falls into the leadership along the way falls into sin and arrogance and despotism comes in. People react violently against the sin that is among them and we react to the other extreme of the autonomy of the