

◆◆◆◆ The Authority of God's Ministry ◆◆◆◆

By J. F. Curtis

We shall endeavor to show that God's ministry have a divine call and are given divine authority to teach or preach, and to officiate in the ordinances of the gospel of Christ.

The first announcement of John the Baptist, in the *Bible*, reads:

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."—Saint John 1: 6, 7.

To be sent of God as a minister for Christ gave John the Baptist a distinction that was of great value not only to himself but to others.

To possess the knowledge that God had chosen and appointed him to preach the gospel whereby all could come to Christ would give him the courage to face the world and tell them the way of salvation and light. It would place him in a position where no opposition would cause him to hesitate to affirm this heaven-sent message.

In the gospel according to Saint Mark, he says of John the Baptist:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

He then adds:

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan confessing their sins."

Speaking of Christ, John said:

"There cometh one mightier than I, after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

To reject the teaching of John the Baptist was to reject the counsel of God, for Luke records these words:

"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."

Obedience to the message of this man, sent of God, would bring salvation. To reject it would bring condemnation.

Speaking of authority, Jesus once said to his apostles:

"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

Jesus had taught them the gospel and men thus selected of Christ were to declare this message to the people. It was and is God's way of warning

the people, and inviting them to come to Christ and be saved.

Jesus was sent of the Father. Here is his own statement. He says:

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Upon one occasion in the temple the authority of Jesus was questioned by the chief priests and the elders of the people. They asked him:

"By what authority doest thou these things and who gave thee this authority? Jesus questioning them said: The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, of men; we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We can not tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

The question Jesus asked these men is very important. He wanted them to answer whether the baptism of John was of heaven, or of men, but they refused to answer his question. John was sent of God and had the right or authority to preach and baptize. The Father in heaven approved of John's work as was shown when he baptized the Christ. The Father said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus knew that John had the authority to baptize him, therefore he came to John for the ordinance of baptism. In the nineteenth chapter of Acts, mention is made of some baptisms which were only of men and not of God so rebaptism was necessary to make them legal. Evidently some one had heard of the baptism of John the Baptist and not understanding the question of authority, or priesthood, proceeded without authority to baptize some of the people at Ephesus. Later the Apostle Paul came to Ephesus and asked those thus baptized: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism."

Paul, knowing that these people were mistaken, explained to them the preaching or teaching of John. When the people properly understood John's teaching, Paul or Saul, who had also been sent of God with authority to baptize baptized these people in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul

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covered *beneath a hill* which was covered with shrubs and small trees"; and you will remember page 625: 25, 30, *Book of Mormon*, says: "That great city Moronihah have I covered with earth," not that we are saying this is Moronihah, but at the time of the crucifixion this sort of thing occurred to many cities.

Doctor Sylvanus Morley, of the Carnegie expedition, writes of strange V-shaped ceilings in an uncovered Mayan ruin, the outside of which was decorated with X-shaped stones in alternate latticed panels, and rows of short columns (similar to the Hall of Columns at Karnak): Maya laborers, he said, "combined old methods with new in restoring the temple of their ancestors. They dug the white 'sakhah' out of 'pockets' in the ground to mix with American cement. They burned limestone in the woods as of old, and drew water from an ancient well . . . the rock sides of which still bear the grooves of Maya ropes. . . . Indians ran . . . carrying water on their heads, whistling shrill Maya tunes through leaves in their mouths. . . . One Maya master mason called for a stone of ten and a half inches to fit a space . . . and it was found . . . among the scattered heap of dressed stones excavated from the tree-covered mound. . . . One strong-limbed Indian carried the capstones for the roof on his head, walking up the ladder like a statue, and not touching the stone which it had taken three men to lift up and lay tenderly on his hat. Once at the top three other Indians lifted it off and placed it on the ancient plaster marks."

Every year new discoveries among the forested ruins of Mexico and Central America confirm statements to be found in the *Book of Mormon*, giving further evidence of the divinity of its origin. There is an unlimited wealth of testimony at this time.

"FOLLOW THE GLEAM"

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disappointment, but though they may have died with their dreams unfulfilled, yet who would dare say that they had failed? While man keeps his vision on the Star, while his hopes and ideals still guide him, he can not suffer defeat, but if he drops his gaze downwards, if he flees from the hidden dangers ahead, then, and only then has he failed.

Each one of us has his own Star to follow, his own dreams, hopes and ideals to realize. Like the Persian Princes we must ever follow the Gleam! Shadows of the ruined past may haunt us, the hopelessness and danger of our task may leave us desolate, or the pleasures and flatteries of the world may entice us, but in spite of all, the Star must prevail! Though we may pass through the Slough of Despond, though in the darkest night of sorrow our trembling hand may grope in vain for one to guide, though down in the deepest depths of the

Valley of the Shadow of Death, yet if we lift our eyes we see through murk and mist and shadow, that radiant Star of Hope, that leads man to the very portals of Eternity to lay his homage at the feet of God. Said Ingersoll at the graveside of his brother: "We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word. But in the night of Death, Hope sees a Star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing."

The undying urge within tells us that we *must* follow the gleam, no matter what it cost. Let our motto be framed in those immortal words, "To seek, to strive, to find, but not to yield."

THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S MINISTRY

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had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

In the name of the Lord Jesus, is by his authority. We might ask, Was the first baptism of these people of heaven or of men. It must have been only of men, otherwise it would not have had to be performed over again or "In the name of the Lord Jesus." But Paul's baptisms were of heaven and God by his Spirit approved of what Paul did, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit followed.

On another occasion, in Matthew, 9th chapter, when Jesus "saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Here are the facts. Ministers were needed among the people. The disciples were commanded to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send more laborers into his harvest. (Matthew 9: 38.)

In Acts, 13th chapter, the Holy Ghost from heaven said: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This was when they were called to be apostles as stated in Acts 14: 14.

Later, in Acts 20: 28, Paul, speaking to the elders of Ephesus, said:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

God knoweth the hearts of men. He has the right to select whom he will for his ministry. Speaking of a God-appointed ministry (1 Corinthians 7: 17), Paul says:

"But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches."

Paul waited for God to call or appoint men to the ministry, then Paul knew whom to ordain. Jesus gave his twelve disciples power and authority:

"And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."—Luke 9: 1, 2.

In the sixth verse we read: "And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere."

In Hebrews 9: 11 Paul says: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come."

Christ was a high priest of the Melchisedec order.

In Hebrews 3: 1 Paul says of Christ that he is an apostle and high priest.

In Hebrews 5: 1 mention is made of other high priests who were ordained for men in things pertaining to God.

In the year 60 A. D. the Apostle Peter made a statement concerning priesthood. He said:

"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."—1 Peter 2: 5.

Again in the ninth verse he says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood."

Some individuals have claimed that there was no priesthood after Christ, but the statement of the Apostle Peter gives us to understand that the authority of the priesthood was still in the church at the time he wrote his epistle, which is dated A. D. 60.

In Matthew 16: 19 Christ gave to Peter the authority to bind on earth, and it would be bound in heaven, and what he loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven Christ had taught his disciples the gospel law whereby this authority should or was to be exercised.

The question of Jesus concerning the baptism of John, whether it was of heaven, or of men, is made more clear, knowing that the ministers for Christ were given power, in harmony with the law to bind on earth, and it would be bound in heaven. In Luke, 10th chapter, Jesus selected seventy missionaries and gave them power and authority and sent them forth two by two. Even the devils were subject to them through the name of Christ. In this they rejoiced, but Jesus said unto them: "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

The priesthood of God was in the New Testament Church, and by this authority, these seventy missionaries had been legally baptized and their names were recorded in heaven. The words of Jesus to his disciples are in place here. He says:

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."—Saint John 15: 16.

Jesus spent all night in prayer before he selected the twelve apostles. Divine line in the selecting of men for the ministry is needed today as well as in New Testament times.

Paul, the apostle, speaking in prophecy, foretells a great change that was to take place in the church. In 2 Timothy 4: 3, 4, he says:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

We should bear in mind that the church of Jesus Christ, or kingdom of God, is a divine institution, having divine authority, or priesthood, to carry on the Master's work, and when men heap to themselves teachers, to teach contrary to Christ's teachings, these men are not the authorized ministers of Christ, and they do not have power or authority to bind on earth and have it bound in heaven.

A great apostasy of the church was foretold by Paul to take place before the second coming of Christ. In 2 Thessalonians 2: 3, 4, he says:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Under this condition of the church the blessing and direction of God through the Holy Spirit would be withheld and the great apostasy, which had been foretold, would take place.

Today we have many Protestant churches protesting against false doctrines, which were introduced during the Dark Ages.

Notwithstanding all this corruption of false teachers and false doctrine, Jesus has left on record the statement that the same gospel that he taught to men would be preached again before his second coming.

John the Revelator, while wrapped in vision on the Isle of Patmos, not only saw the great apostasy that was to take place but in Revelations 14: 6 he saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven restoring the gospel to earth again, that it might be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples.

John was shown that an angel was to come, and our belief is that this prophecy has been fulfilled by John the Baptist coming again as Jesus said he would do in Matthew 17: 11 and by this authority and priesthood from heaven Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were appointed of God and ordained to be ministers for Christ to preach his gospel and to officiate in his ordinances that the way of Christ might be made plain to the children of men and that their names might be recorded in heaven.

NEWS OF CHURCH AND HOME

Address all news and letters to Editors of the Herald, Box 237, Independence, Missouri. Correspondents are requested to make their letters brief. The Editors reserve the right, on account of space limitations, to shorten all letters as circumstances require.

Independence

Stone Church

Though rain marred some of the plans of carol singers the day before Christmas, and though the deep snow of two weeks ago was completely gone by Christmas Eve, the spirit of joy and gladness characteristic of Christmas festivities, was apparent from the opening bell of the church school Sunday morning, Christmas Day, until noon.

The Christmas program given by the primary, junior, and intermediate departments of the school, began at ten thirty. Commencing with the processional, "*O Worship the King*," youthful voices sang the Holy Story for more than an hour. Six choruses from the departments presented carol after carol to the enjoyment of the congregation. The music was grouped attractively about such other program numbers as readings and stories. To the following choruses and leaders the congregation is indebted for a large part of the entertainment: Primary boys' chorus and primary girls' chorus directed by Mrs. J. T. Westwood, sr.; junior chorus and Clematis Chorus, directed by Mrs. J. R. Lentell; Boys' Choir, directed by J. Glenn Fairbanks and Miss Marcine Smith, and Cantatina Chorus led by Mrs. Bertha Burgess.

Handel's oratoria, "*The Messiah*," was enjoyed in the late afternoon by a crowd of music lovers. The performance beginning at four thirty was broadcast over KMBC by one hundred and twenty-five voices of the Independence Messiah Choir, directed by Paul N. Craig. This was the fifteenth annual presentation of "*The Messiah*," and again the crowd thrilled to some of the magnificent choruses of the composition. The able work of the following soloists was much appreciated: Mrs. Nell Atkinson Kelley, soprano; Mrs. May Burgess, contralto; Edward Brackenbury, tenor, and Albert Brackenbury, bass. Accompanists were Robert and George Miller, organist and pianist, respectively.

Another joyous occasion of the holiday season was the wedding of Miss Pauline Crawford and John J. Watkins, at the Stone Church, Wednesday evening, December 28. The ceremony was performed by President F. M. Smith. The bride was attended by Miss Bormann as maid of honor, and Miss Eloise Watkins and Miss Mary Nigh as bridesmaids. Betty Ann Watkins was the ringbearer, and Jane Darlene Watkins, the flower girl. Ivan Dillee acted as best man for Mr. Watkins and groomsmen were Paul Holler and Thomas Williams. Paul Carpenter, Charles Williams, Albert Baird and Paul Tandy were ushers. Preceding the ceremony Mrs. Hazel Scott Withee, or-

ganist, Frank White, violinist, Delta Maurine Nace, soprano, and Miss Larena Bullard, soprano, gave a program, and after the ceremony a reception was held in the church dining hall. The bride is a niece of Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Loar, and the bridegroom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Watkins.

Second Church

Saturday evening, December 24, "*An Old-fashioned Christmas*," was presented by the children and a ladies' choir composed of teachers from the primary department. The program was primarily for amusement. The climax of the entertainment was reached with the entrance of Santa Claus who distributed treats to the children.

The church school on Christmas Day was opened by an organ and piano prelude, played by Palace McPherson and Billie McPherson. A vocal solo, "*I Heard the Bells On Christmas Ring*," was sung by Mildred Fulk.

The eleven o'clock service was opened by the choir singing "*Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*," followed by a short organ interlude played by Mrs. Gladys Inman. Nadine Inman and Ruth Bolt sang, "*Away in a Manger*." A violin-cello solo entitled, "*Elegie*," by Joseph Schravessande was played by Milford Nace accompanied on the piano by Miss Delta Nace.

Elder E. J. Gleazer, the speaker, was introduced by Pastor William Inman. Brother Gleazer took as his text Luke 2: 11. Brother R. L. Conyers gave both the opening and closing prayers.

Sunday night at eight o'clock a pageant, "*Where the Young Child Lay*," was presented by the young people of the branch. The cast was large and the production was well received by the audience.

Walnut Park Church

Services Sunday, December 25, were affected in a number of ways by the fact that it was Christmas Day. Evidently many remained home from Sunday school to engage in other activities typical of the Christmas season. The report showed approximately a fifty per cent attendance, 225 present, and 224 absent.

The children, however, were out in full force at the eleven o'clock service, which consisted of a program especially for them. Numbers given were: "*Silent Night*," by a boys' and girls' chorus; a Christmas story told by Ruth Bryant, "*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Morn*," by the chorus; sermonet based on Van Dyke's, "*The Other Wise Man*," by Pastor Frank McDonald, and "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*," by the chorus. The concluding number of this program, probably the most appealing to some of