

THE CHURCH'S ORDINATION

– *DECEMBER 13.* – MATTHEW 28:16-20; LUKE 24:36-49. –

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

– Matthew 28:20.

TODAY'S Study relates to the commission, or authorization of service, which Jesus appointed to His Church in His discourses during the forty days following His resurrection. First we have the Master's words on the evening after His journey with two of His disciples to the village of Emmaus, near Jerusalem. Then we have a part of the general commission which Jesus gave just before He parted from His disciples and was received up into Heaven.

The lessons of that journey to Emmaus and of subsequent appearances must have been very valuable to all the followers of Christ at that time. He said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you [while I was yet the Man Christ Jesus, before My resurrection change], how all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The Evangelist sums up in few words conversation and Scriptural exposition which probably occupied at least an hour. We are not told what these expositions were which opened their eyes of understanding, but we can surmise. He probably explained to them the significance of the Passover lamb that was killed at that time of the year, and showed that He was the Antitype of that lamb. He probably explained to them the true significance of the

Passover – that in the type the first-born of Israel were passed over, and subsequently represented by the tribe of Levi, including the priests; and that the antitype of these first-borns is the Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven – all the saintly followers of Jesus who will be of the Royal Priesthood, and the antitypical Levites, their servants, in the work of the world's uplift during Messiah's Kingdom.

The Master doubtless also gave them some suggestions respecting the antitypical Atonement Day and "the better sacrifices" – that He Himself began "the better sacrifices," which would be continued in His disciples; and that, the sacrifices being finished, the Atonement blessings would go forth from the High Priest to all the earth, during Messiah's Kingdom of a thousand years.

POWER FROM ON HIGH PROMISED

Whatever features of the great Plan the Master unfolded, we have the assurance that His auditors were deeply interested. Their sadness disappeared. Their first thoughts were merely that they had lost their blessed Master, His counsels, His instructions; but now, through this enlightenment, their hearts burned with a fresh inspiration of knowledge. They saw heights, depths, lengths and breadths that they had never dreamed of in God's Plan. They saw that the death of Jesus was necessary for the carrying out of all the hopes and prospects inspired by the promises of God. They saw that they themselves were privileged also, not only to suffer with Him, but also to be glorified.

The concluding part of the Master's Message on that occasion was, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you." The Father had promised in various types that the Church, the Bride of Christ, would receive the Holy Spirit from Jesus, their Head. It was typified, for instance, in the holy oil which, poured upon the head

of Aaron, typifying Jesus, flowed down upon the body of Aaron, typifying the anointing of the Church.

This promise of the Divine acceptance of the Church was all-important. Without it the disciples would have no commission, and could not be ambassadors for God. Jesus indeed had sent out The Twelve, and afterwards the Seventy; but they were His personal representatives, and He had given them of His own spirit, His own power, by which they worked miracles, cast out devils, etc. But they had never been recognized of the Father. As we read, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) They must wait for this begetting and anointing of the Holy Spirit. It alone could imbue or qualify them for the Divine service – to be God's ambassadors and representatives.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS"

St. Matthew's account of our Lord's benediction upon His disciples and His commissioning of them to declare His Message, is full of interest to us. By His appointment the Eleven met Him in a mountain in Galilee. For a few moments only He appeared to them. They worshiped, some fully convinced, others wavering. It was for the convincing of such waverers that Jesus remained during the forty days. And we are sure that He fully accomplished His work of convincing the Eleven; for they were all of one heart and one mind when they waited in the upper room for the Pentecostal blessing.

Jesus came near to them, and declared that full authority had been given unto Him in respect to both Heavenly things and earthly things. Unless they could realize this, it would be impossible for them properly to represent Him before the world. He had not this power and authority previously, during His earthly ministry. He was then in process of trial as respects His faithful loyalty even unto death, even unto the death of the cross. But after He had demonstrated His loyalty, the Father had raised Him from the dead

to a glorious fulness of power. He was thus declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. He wished His disciples to know that He was no longer under the human limitations or under the limitations of the Death Covenant. That work He had finished. He had entered into the blessing, the reward. He had experienced His change and now had all power, not only in respect to earthly things, but also in respect to Heavenly things.

Prophecy had declared that unto Him all would bow, both those in Heaven and those on earth. He had entered into the condition where this prophecy would soon begin to be fulfilled. He had ascended up on High, where all the angels worshiped, gave heed to Him as the Father's exalted One. Not yet is the latter part of the promise fulfilled – that all on earth should bow to Him. The time for such a recognition will be during His Messianic Kingdom of a thousand years. As now, all who come to a true knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God gladly bow their knee to Him as the Father's Representative, so gladly the world will come to recognize the Only Begotten and render obedience to Him.

Eventually every knee shall bow and every tongue confess; for, according to the Divine arrangement all who fail to appreciate the glorified Son of God at that time will be destroyed – counted unworthy of any further blessings and favor of God, who has bestowed upon Christ all the blessings which He designs for the fallen race. **[R5588 : page 364]**

"GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH"

Here is the commission. Primarily it belonged to the eleven Apostles, but subsequently it included St. Paul, who took the place of Judas and who was "not one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles." (2 Corinthians 11:5.) The Apostles, and they alone, are authorized as mouthpieces of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church to the world. All that has been told us of Apostolic Bishops being successors of The Twelve is false, unscriptural. They had no

successors; they are with us yet. The Master's Message through them is given us in the New Testament, of which one of them wrote, "The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished." (2 Timothy 3:16,17.) To the Apostles was given the great work of inaugurating the Church. They were endowed with the power at Pentecost.

But while Jesus appointed especially the Twelve Apostles to be His mouthpieces to the Church, and declared that whatsoever they would bind on earth we might know was bound in Heaven, and that whatsoever they would declare was not bound on earth was not bound in the sight of Heaven, nevertheless the Lord arranged that each member of the Church should be His representative, and that each in proportion to his opportunity and ability might have a share in proclaiming the Gospel Message. Whoever receives the Spirit of begetting, the anointing, is included in the statement of Isa. 61:1-3 as a member of the Body of Christ, under the anointed Head, Jesus.

Thus we read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath appointed Me to bind up the broken-hearted," etc. Everyone who receives the Holy Spirit is thus ordained, or authorized, to preach, according to his or her opportunity or limitation of circumstances or conditions. One limitation of the Apostle is that the sisters are not to teach in public. (1 Tim. 2:12.) Nevertheless there are plenty of opportunities for all.

Evidently, therefore, a great mistake has been made in the arrangement of a clergy class, who declare themselves to be the only ones who are ordained, or authorized, to preach or to teach God's Message. Jesus and the Apostles knew nothing of a clergy class or of a laity class. On the contrary, our Lord declared, "All ye are brethren; and One is your Master, even Christ." And the Master

and His twelve Apostles especially forbade anything approaching a lordship amongst His followers, anything like a clerical class.

THE CHURCH'S COMMISSION

The Message given is, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples from all nations." The commission is not to make the nations disciples, but, as elsewhere expressed, to gather out of all nations those willing to be disciples of Christ, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, noble or base. A disciple of Christ is a follower, one who learns, one who copies. Jesus defined this discipleship, saying, "If any man will come after Me [be My disciple], let him deny himself [set himself aside, ignore himself, his talent, his will, his wealth, his everything – discipleship first], and let him take up his cross and follow Me."

The intimation is that all true followers of Christ, all true disciples, will find the path in which the Lord will lead a difficult one, in which their own wills must be continually crossed, opposed – a way in which they will continually have difficulty according to the flesh. However, the promise is that eventually, "Where I am [in Heaven or in Kingdom glory], there shall My disciple be."

While the Church of Christ has properly viewed water immersion as a symbol of death to the world, death to self, and of rising to newness of life as members of Christ, the Body of Christ, nevertheless the water baptism is only a picture of the true. So here it is stated that our commission is not water baptism, but baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "Into the name of" signifies into accord with, into fellowship with. All of Christ's disciples are to recognize the Father's name as standing for righteousness; and they are to become dead to every other principle than that which His name represents, and to be thoroughly immersed into that name of righteousness, justice, truth.

Ignoring all other names, such as Lutherans or Wesleyans or Calvinists, or State Church names, such as Roman Catholics or Anglican Catholics or Greek Catholics, these are to be thoroughly immersed into the name of Christ and to recognize His name and to be His members, His Body, His Church. Furthermore, they are to be immersed into the name of, the recognition of, the Holy Spirit – their own spirit, their own wills being dead. Their own aims, hopes and prospects are to be ignored. God's holy will, God's mind, God's holy purpose, are to be their will and purpose.

Thus we see our commission as respects all people of all nations who have an ear to hear our Message. We are to make them disciples and to immerse them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are to teach them to observe all things whatsoever Jesus commands. This is the extent of our authority. We are not to organize human systems and to call them kingdoms, churches, or other names. We are merely to prepare the followers of Jesus, co-operating with God, who will work in them to will and to do His good pleasure.

"UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD"

"And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." His words have been understood to signify that the world is to come to an end; whereas what the Master really said, according to the Greek, is that He would be with His people, even to the end of the Age – down to the time when this Gospel Age will have accomplished its Divinely purposed mission of gathering out a sufficient number of disciples of Christ to complete the Divine purpose – until the Gospel Message shall have accomplished the sanctification through obedience to the Truth of a proper number to complete the Bride of Christ in glory, the Royal Priesthood. Then the end of the Age will come. Then will come the Master Himself, to gather His Elect, to glorify them with Himself, to

establish His Kingdom, to bless the world of mankind – the non-elect.

[R5586 : page 364]

"A LITTLE WHILE"

How long, O Lord, till I am meet
To hold with Thee communion sweet?
How long until Thine eyes shall see
The Spirit's fruits *complete* in me?

When shall I come to Thee, my Lord,
As promised in Thy blessed Word?
When shall I see Thee as Thou art,
And satisfy my longing heart?

Ah, then, how mean will seem these toys,
These transitory, earthly joys!
How short appear this dreary way,
When night hath turned to endless day!

Then, peace, my soul, be strong, my heart,
And bravely strive to do thy part;
"A little while," He soon shall come,
And say, "Enough, my child, come home!"

NOV. 22, 1914.
GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT.

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