

WHAT LATTER DAY SAINTS BELIEVE ABOUT
THE RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY

8:45 p.m. June 25
KRE, 1400 KC.
Berkeley, Calif.

If you lived today in Germany, or in any Nazi occupied country of Europe, you would not need to be very philosophical about the question of "authority" of any kind. In Nazi Europe there is a devastating authority of force, of terror, of violence, of compulsion. It is based on a foundation of lies and strengthened by the fiats of an ersatz state-inspired and state-sponsored religion. You obey the authority of force or you are liquidated in a concentration camp or before a firing squad.

But even the Nazis, with all their authority of force, have found it impossible to exterminate another kind of authority - the authority of "power". There is a difference between power and force, though the words are often used interchangeably. Some synonyms for "force" are: violence, coercion, restraint. Some synonyms for "power" are: strength, vigor, ability, capacity. Power comes from a word root meaning "to be able". And all over Nazi Europe today there are those who, in spite of the outwardly imposed authority of force, have the inward authority of power, vigor, energy, capacity, mental and spiritual, as well as physical. These are the patriots who fight on under cover, whose only authority is the ability or capacity for leadership. These are the Niemollers who defy the authority of force so successfully that even force must stop and reconsider. This authority of power is wielded in hope, in faith, in love.

But there is still a third kind of authority in Nazi Europe today, feeble though it may be. That is a "legal" authority, which says that according to national and international law the offenders against the humanity and the decency of the world will be tried, found guilty, and sentenced.

There are then, three kinds of authority, at least: namely, (1) an authority of force; (2) an authority of power; and (3) a legal authority. It is not always possible to separate these absolutely. They are often blended or interdependent. The authority of force always invokes a supposed authority of law. An authority of force or of law may or may not be accompanied by an authority of power.

The highest authority in the world is God, for He made the world. He also has all authority of power, for He is omnipotent. Except in rare cases, in dealing with wickedness and open rebellion, He does not stoop to use the authority of force. The authority of God, and that of Jesus, though certainly legal, are primarily the authority of power --- an authority of capacity and of strength in serving and helping unselfishly. Jesus said (Matthew 20:25,27) "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." This type of authority makes it possible for us to serve others with no thought of our own advancement in rank or station.

An authority of power is good and necessary, but it is not enough. A legal authority must accompany it --- a divine commission. Paul, in speaking of priesthood and its authority (Hebrews 5:4) writes, "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." May we note in passing that Aaron was called of God through God's prophet, Moses. He was not called by the people, for the people scarcely knew him. The call did not come to Aaron personally, for he doubted his own ability to fulfill the responsibility. Authority must come from God, through a legal channel of succession as typified by the priesthood of Moses, handed down in part to Aaron.

Authority can be, and many times is, delegated to someone else. The authority of the President of the United States, or of the clerk in the smallest town, is the authority of the people - you and me - delegated to those we have chosen and commissioned to perform certain tasks in our name. In the matter of priesthood authority, I think we may all agree that God is supreme. I think we can all agree, too, that he bestowed that authority on His Son, Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18 records the words of Jesus concerning his commission, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Christ, in turn, delegated his authority to the apostles. John 15:16 says, in the words of Jesus, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you."

Before Christ ascended he promised them another Comforter, the Holy Spirit of promise, which should guide them into all truth, and teach them all things. Without that Comforter, they were to have no authority to preach; for they were instructed to tarry in Jerusalem until it came to them, which it did on the day of Pentecost. Now the chain of authority is God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Apostles. Does the chain stop there? Was there no more authority after the apostles?

After Judas sought death as an escape, there was a vacancy among the twelve. The first chapter of Acts tells of the choosing and ordination of Matthias to fill the quorum or group. Acts 13:2 tells how the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." The next chapter in verse 14 then mentions the apostles, Barnabas and Saul. All in all, New Testament scripture makes mention of no less than NINE apostles in addition to the original twelve, indicating that the office of apostle was continued in the church even after the original twelve had suffered martyrdom.

But the chain of authority did not stop there. It extended on down to other ministers and officers in the New Testament church. Paul instructed Titus (1:5) to "ordain elders in every city." Paul himself had done the same on at least one portion of his journeyings. Stephen exercised authority, then because he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost, he was ordained, and proceeded to do "great miracles and wonders among the people".

So, our chain of authority has gone one link further. Did it continue? Consider this example. If a judge of the Supreme Court ignores the law and the constitution, and disregards the wishes of those who have chosen and commissioned him, he is impeached; he loses his authority. Any agent who fails to carry out the orders and wishes of his master, loses his commission. It would make no difference that he was a good fellow, well educated, likable, and efficient. All these things would help him in his work, if he had authority. But take away his commission and any act he does is no longer binding on his master, or efficacious for the one he serves.

This is what happened in the Christian church. Men forsook and perverted the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. They ignored and refused the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Clergy were chosen for political and practical reasons, rather than in the manner God chose Aaron. When men no longer revered but actually perverted the teachings ~~and~~ and ordinances of Christ and the Apostles, when they were no longer guided by the Holy Ghost, their authority died. Their authority of power diminished, too. No longer did the signs follow the believer; no longer were the promised gifts and fruits of the Spirit received in the church. Some authority from men remained, but authority from God was dead.

Our Catholic friends believe in the SUCCESSION of authority, and that it has come down to them in an unbroken line since the days of the apostles. Protestant churches believe that there was an apostasy during the Dark Ages. Their hope was based on the REFORMATION. But ~~the Reformation could not restore authority, or reconnect the missing links in the chain we have shown you tonight.~~ *But authority could not be renewed just by saying that other men had been called of God.* It was necessary to get back to God, and to receive a RESTORATION of authority, so that the links of the chain might again be forged in their proper order. Joseph Smith went direct to God when he prayed in the woods of Palmyra, New York, in 1820. He received the same instruction as did John; ~~XXXXX~~ "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." Angelic ministers restored the authority of priesthood in the name of Christ. As in the days of old, apostles were chosen, commissioned, and sent into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. Wherever they went, they added other links to the chain of power, ordaining other apostles, seventies, pastors, evangelists, teachers, deacons, and bishops under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit. These men were called not by the people whom they were to serve; not by themselves; but by someone already in authority, who could pass his authority along at the express command of God, as Moses was the instrument in calling and ordaining Aaron.

Does it not seem reasonable to believe that if authority was once followed by power, it will always be? That if any man claims authority but lacks power, he has no authority? If Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, delegation of even a portion of His authority should bring with it an accompanying power, ~~which like Stephen's would make it impossible to resist the wisdom and power by which the one in authority spoke, and which would bring the signs that follow the believer, the spiritual gifts of I Cor. 12, and the fruits of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:19.~~

Have you this kind of authority in your church? In this church, the ministry is called of God as was Aaron. The chain of authority, from the Restoration to now, is unbroken. The signs do follow. The power of that authority is manifested unto righteousness. The gifts of the Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit are enjoyed. Why not come and enjoy them with us?