

sonality; secondly, that this personality, through an indwelling of God or His Spirit, which was unique before and after, up to the end of all time, became the Son of God who reveals the Father and became also the beginner of a new mankind; and, thirdly, that in the future state of perfection a similar indwelling of God has to be realized, though in a copied and therefore secondary form, in all people whom Christ has redeemed.'

Here it is evident that the essential thing is the indwelling of the Spirit. And Dr. LOOFS draws our attention to it. He recalls 'a prominent passage of Romans,' in which St. Paul says of Christ: 'who was born of the seed of David according to the

flesh . . . declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.' He would like to be content with that as the final expression of his Christology. He envies WENDT, who is content with it. But he is not himself sure what is meant by the 'spirit of holiness.' He is not sure what the Holy Spirit is. 'My last refuge therefore is the term which Paul strongly emphasizes in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, "the mystery of Christ." And what is this mystery? "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," that is the mystery. It would be attempting impossible things if beyond that we tried to understand the historical person of Christ.'

Authority and the Individual.

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It is no unusual thing, where the problem of religious authority is debated, to hear of the authority of reason, placed alongside of the authority of Bible and Church. Not, of course, as though in the outlining of a doctrine of authority it were assumed that these three elements must have equal justice done to them and that no one of the three can or should hold a position superior to either or both of the other two; but because it is assumed that the principle of authority is, however powerfully condensed and however limited in the scope of its operations, present within the individual consciousness or reason, a fact of personality with its own claims and rights deserving full consideration and respect.

I would begin by saying that, leaving for the moment the religious question on one side, the authority of any individual is strictly limited by the character of the subject-matter on which that authority is exercised. The less human that subject-matter may be, that is, the less intimately related it is to general human needs and interests, to the formulation of purposes co-extensive with national or universal and not merely individual well-being, the more positive and authoritative does an individual's authority become. Darwin is a

greater authority, in the strict sense of the word, on obscure phenomena in connexion with the lives of plants and animals than he is when dealing with the whole field of evolution; and this not merely because the area of his inquiries is more circumscribed, but because it is more self-contained, possessing far fewer relationships to other facts which have to be borne in mind, which may lie within the province of history or metaphysics, rather than of botany or zoology, and lead to more legitimate questionings of the correctness of his analysis and the truth of his deductions. We know well that on some exceedingly obscure matters there are only two or three authorities, and that when they agree their authority is as absolute as any authority well can be. It is the authority of exact knowledge where exact knowledge is possible.

But in the great and universal interests of human life no individual authority of this kind is possible. Neither in politics, nor in art, nor in the philosophy of history, nor in social life and intercourse, with its resultant judgments of persons and its canons of taste in things, is it to be found. Here and there some one by convincing proofs of his knowledge and, still more, of his insight and judicious-

ness acquires an influence which is akin to authority. Yet with such a one it is not the man as an individual, but in detachment from individuality, who wields authority. He synthesizes within himself powers and qualities which belong to humanity but are commonly split up among individuals. As for the ordinary people we meet, we should never dream of ascribing to them any authority at all.

This position has various results, one of the most obvious being a democratic theory of politics; how does it affect religion and religious authority?

One thing is perfectly clear: religion belongs to the class, and is, indeed, with the one exception of the simple desire to live, the most eminent representative of the class, of universal human interests. It is no region for the specialist, though some of the problems bound up with it may be. It would seem as though the authority of any individual were almost negligible. He may be his own authority inasmuch as he may say, 'Though Church or Bible tell me this, I, in virtue of my reason or conscience, reject what I am told, and I am prepared to back my opinion against theirs,' but he can hardly expect that any one else will pay much attention to him; and if he takes the whole matter really seriously, he may, indeed, feel that he himself is of such an individuality, in respect of his own reason and conscience, as to be unable to accept such and such doctrines, but he may also realize that there is nothing approaching to an adequate guarantee that he is right in so doing, that the truth is with him rather than with others.

If this were all it would be necessary to conclude that the authority of the individual, which is his own private judgment, has no place at all in religion, that an individual is never safe when he stands alone, and rarely safe except when he shouts with the largest crowd; that is, attaches himself to the religious experience which seems to him probably most widely generalized and least particular. But I think there are considerations which should make us pause.

First, there is the peculiar character of religion. Man feels that religion makes a claim upon him and has a purpose for him as an individual in a quite unique way. Irreligious and non-moral people will admit that if they really believed that religion had any reality, any true place in the world, it would be necessary, or at least a duty, for them to adjust their own personalities to it. The State has some interest in the character of each

citizen, but it is limited in extent and, on the whole, inclines to be negative rather than positive. A political party or any association of men for furthering some particular end will be careless of the character of the personalities attached to it, save in so far as they help or hinder the achievement of that end. It is clap-trap to say that a great artist cannot be a bad man; historically, this view is quite absurd. But religion in its claim upon the individual, claims him entirely and always. He remains of permanent interest and value as an individual, as a feeling, willing, and reasoning person.

This is no security for the correctness of his desires, his actions, or his beliefs; but it implies a personal responsibility which, if taken seriously, approaches to the idea of authority and enables him to contribute something definitely his own to the common stock of religious experience. There is an 'auctoritas'—the Latin word is here far better than the English—about his conclusions which deserves recognition and consideration.

And, secondly, there is the historic fact that the progress of religion from lower to higher forms has at particular crises owed itself very largely to individuals. Such individuals have not been completely original, but religion has, first within their souls, and then in action upon others, taken on forms or centred in ideas which have reacted with overwhelming force on the religion of the day. The religious authority of the age has been linked up with some personal contribution rather than with the generalized current conceptions. The light which lighteneth every man coming into the world has blazed up in such warmth and power in an individual that neither he nor his contemporaries can doubt that in his words is to be heard the voice of God.

Yet even here we must not exaggerate. An individual contribution to religion, whether by way of profound or mystical experience, or by way of intellectual illumination, can be appraised only after its effects are fully seen, and its relation to the more generalized experience and belief properly judged. It is no part of this short paper to try to set in their true correspondence as authoritative within Christianity, Bible, Church, and Individual. But this at least may be said—Bible, Church, and Individual, whatever authority they possess, they possess in virtue of the supremely authoritative revelation which created them. This revelation cul-

minated in the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. The New Testament writings, the Christian Church, and the Christian Individual all flow from this. This, I believe, is matter of simple historical fact, however explained. This dependence and this secondary authority is qualitatively expressed most perfectly in the writings of the New Testament, quantitatively in the Church. To both of these

the individual is inferior. Their scale is incomparably greater than his. But he has his place, and an influence which may rise almost to authority, as he views both New Testament and Church in the light of that which made them, and in its power interprets the one and guides the other with an insight and towards a goal which reveals that he too, like men of old, possesses the mind of Christ.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

LUKE XIV. 18.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse.

1. CHRIST was at a feast in a Pharisee's house. It was a strange place for Him, and His words at the table were also strange. For He first rebuked the guests, and then the host, telling the former to take the lower rooms, and bidding the latter widen his hospitality to those that could not recompense him. It was a sharp saying; and one of the other guests turned the edge of it by laying hold of our Lord's final words, 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,' and saying, no doubt in a pious tone and with a devout shake of the head, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.' It was a very proper thing to say, but there was a ring of conventional, commonplace piety about it which struck unpleasantly on Christ's ear. He answered the speaker with that strange story of the great feast to which nobody would come, as if He had said, 'You pretend to think that it is a blessed thing to eat bread in the Kingdom of God. Why, you will not eat the bread when it is offered to you.'

We all know the parable. A great feast is prepared; invitations, more or less general, are sent out at first; everything is ready; and, behold there is a table and nobody to sit at it. A strange experience for a hospitable man! And so he sends his servants to beat up the unwilling guests; whereupon, one after another, with more or less politeness, they refuse to come.

2. To a certain extent these men had all pledged themselves already to be present at the supper of

their friend. This, you observe, was the second invitation; the reminder sent round when everything was ready. The first invitation had been given some weeks before, and it is quite clear they had all accepted that. And no doubt they accepted it sincerely. They really meant to be present at the supper. If you had asked any of them on the day when they were first invited, they would have told you they were going, certainly. But when the hour came, none of them went. 'They all with one consent began to make excuse.' They had meant to go; they had even pledged themselves so far to be there. But when the time for action and for decision came, not one of them fulfilled the promise.

It is in question whether this double invitation is now, or ever has been, a practice in the East. The weight of authority seems to be on the affirmative side. Dr. Thomson, for instance, the author of *The Land and the Book*, mentions that in the Lebanon his party received an invitation like this, and then on the day of the feast, and towards the hour, a second invitation arrived to intimate that they were to come because all things were now ready. It would even appear that the second invitation is sometimes repeated, and the snobs of the Orientals—because that species seems to flourish there as well as in the West—actually allow the final and more urgent invitation to come before they put themselves in motion, just as, among ourselves, some people think that they add to their own dignity by coming in after the dinner-hour. But whether or not this double invitation has ever been customary on a large scale in the East, it is an undoubted fact in the spiritual sphere. There is a general invitation which comes to all who hear the Gospel. The dawn of every Sabbath brings it; it is repeated in every sermon; it comes to us in the reading of the Bible in public and in private; it is repeated in the lives of Christians, and in the religious institutions by which we are surrounded. And to this invitation all consent, just as all who received the invitation to the great supper accepted it. It is easy to agree that it is a good thing to be a Christian, and all intend