
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

prets his own experience and in interpreting it by itself regards it out of proportion. But the result has been to make the impression that a consistent doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not to be found in Scripture, and, which is still worse, that such fragments of a doctrine as are to be found there do not agree with our experience.

Dr. Downer has written on the whole subject within reasonable compass, with a fine command of the English language, as well as with a thorough modern knowledge of the doctrine and of all that is essential in its vast literature. His book, with all its modesty, will be found to be indispensable.

The chapter on the Old Testament Doctrine of the Spirit is shorter than the chapter in Mr. Adams's book. Like Mr. Adams, Dr. Downer starts with the Spirit as the Giver of life. He is the Giver of life (1) in Nature, (2) in man, (3) in grace, (4) in the Jewish nation, and (5) in the predicted Messiah. Thus the method is different from that of Mr. Adams; but there is no contradiction. As the Giver of life in man the Spirit of God makes His voice heard (*a*) in Conscience, (*b*) through the Prophets, (*c*) in the Law, (*d*) in the Types, (*e*) in the Great Lyric, and (*f*) in various Old Testament Characters. Dr. Downer is at one with Mr. Adams in representing the Holy Spirit's work of grace as foreshadowed in the Old Testament but fulfilled only in the New. And it is not simply that a fuller revelation came in with Christ, but that Christ Himself was the fuller revelation; and again, not in what He said or did but in what He was—in short, that He was Himself the abode of the Spirit.

The Aristocratic Element in Religion.

By the Rev. W. R. Thomson, B.D., Glasgow.

'The method of God is aristocratic,' says Mr. Joseph Leckie, in a timely and very interesting little book[1] on a subject whose pressure is always felt in an age of religious unrest. The raising of the question of Authority—its reality, source, and organ—is not necessarily a sign of scepticism. It may be a symbol of genuine religious interest and an effort of faith to justify its own certainties. There is, perhaps, no subject in regard to which the spirit of treatment counts for so much. It is here Mr. Leckie achieves real distinction. His work has not only literary merit of a high order, it comes to us out of an atmosphere of quietness. It may be said of this little book that it neither strives nor cries, that, while sensitive to all that is going on in the theological arena, it dwells in a region where the jangle of polemics is at least softened by distance. Too often the discussion of authority has been the attempt to pull down—with but scant regard for the sanctities of time and custom—the fabrics under which other men have sheltered. Mr. Leckie chooses, to our mind, a better way. For it is well to recognize that there is something at once inevitable and yet provisional in the shelters men rear for their spiritual security. The canopy of Church or Bible is only an evil when it is mistaken for the heavens.

The question of authority is only really relevant in a universe that is conceived to be intelligible, and that has at its heart ethical purposiveness. There can, in other words, only be authority to which a free spirit can be in bondage in a world where God is. In a universe construed in accord with the creed of naturalism, the question is hardly intelligible. For authority to be truly from within must be from above; and if there is nothing above man, there can be nothing but the coercion of force, or at the best a prudent regard for conventions which are more or less skilful makeshifts. No one has shown this more strikingly than Mr. Balfour in the earlier and critical part of his *Foundations of Belief*, where it is pointed out that neither the intuitions of art nor religion are explicable in a world where the spirit of beauty and goodness is but a chance product and not enthroned as a regal principle. It may be doubted, indeed, whether what is known as spiritual Monism admits of any satisfactory explanation of the fact of authority. Only a personality can recognize and yield to authority in the true sense of the word, and an authority which is held to be that of a divine principle to which we hesitate

[1] *Authority in Religion.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909.

to ascribe personality is, after all is said, something less than man. It may offer a fascinating problem to the intellect; whether it can constrain the will and touch the emotions to high issues is another matter. Hence Mr. Leckie frankly declines to discuss authority except on the assumption of Theism. The correspondences which man's spiritual life maintains with its environment are in essence of the nature of personal intercourse. However great may be the theoretic difficulties which confront the theistic view, the fact remains that the ecstasies of the artist and the construction of the philosopher, no less than the ardours of the prophet and the raptures of the saint, are personal responses to visions of beauty, truth, and goodness, which have only significance in the realm of personal life. In the simple language of religion, authority is God's power over the soul, to awaken faith and to constrain conduct. It is, from another point of view, the soul finding the universe 'convincing'—to make use of a too frequently used word—and conviction is always a personal experience.

Authority must primarily be mediated through persons. It is here that the aristocratic element in religion is revealed. It is only in a derivative sense that an institution or a book or an official can be the organ of authority. God's greatest words are spoken through elect lives. God and the soul are face to face, and the condition of authority is communion. While this assertion carries with it the denial of an infallible Church or an infallible Scripture, it does not really detract from the authority of the Church as the home of elect souls, or from the sanctity of Scripture as the record of their utterances. Nor does it deny the validity of what may be called the democratic element in the Church. For the common consciousness of the Church gathers within itself and retains, though it may be in earthen vessels, the treasure lavished on it by prophets and saints. It may be said, indeed, that to regard the soul as the supreme organ of authority in religion is to take up dangerously subjective ground. Do we not require something more stable and abiding than an inward experience? But what is a Church or a Bible but just an embodiment of this inward thing, a vesture that clothes it more or less adequately, and derives all its worth from the life it reveals? Mr. Leckie quotes a striking saying of the late R. H. Hutton: 'That Christianity which alone can conquer the earth will be a faith neither so entirely rooted in mind and spiritual emotion as that of Luther, nor so studiously reflected in secondary organs and external institutions as that of Rome.' That is to say, we are warned against subjectivism on the one hand, and institutionalism on the other. But the subjective is soon corrected in the large world of spiritual life. Souls try souls, and experience tests all. The only thing that is more striking than the loneliness of a great soul is its capacity for communion and its power to inspire it, its power to enrich—one had almost said, to create—a common life that nourishes countless spirits. No man, and least of all the aristocrat in religion, lives unto himself. Nor does he die unto himself. His very cross becomes the heritage of mankind. There is nothing more intimate than a religious experience. But, on the other hand, there is nothing more expansive and inclusive than personality. It lives by sharing. 'He that loseth his life shall find it.' The rapture of the saint is attested most truly to be of God when it has been communicated to other souls. Prophets are few. But the Master's word must not be forgotten. We may receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, and so get a prophet's reward.

In these days when the fabric of Rome is being assailed by modernism, and when historical criticism has so transformed the Bible that it is no longer possible to declare inerrancy to be one of its notes, it is well to remember that the true strength of religion lies in the region of personal conviction and power. Indeed, the ideas of infallibility and inerrancy are more intellectual than religious. They are conceived with the object of buttressing religion from without. They arise in obedience to the demands of logic rather than of faith. They are in some degree abstract—abstractions from the rich concrete of religious experience. But religion must ever fear the abstract. This is not to say that the Church may not possess an august authority, mediated through her services and her teaching, and, in a secondary sense, through her creeds; or that the Bible may not speak with power to the hearts of men. But it is to say that the real testimony of the Church—the testimony that attests her as a true witness to divine things—is delivered in spite of her doctrine of infallibility; and, further, that men will more readily believe in the inspiration of the Bible,

because the Word has found and moved them, than begin with a hard-and-fast theory of inspiration and go on to accept what they regard as its logical consequences. The aristocratic element in the Church is not to be sought in her doctrine of infallibility, but in her sense of communion. The aristocratic note is heard less in the sonorous recitation of her creeds than in the prayers and aspirations of her choicer spirits. And since authority is personal and mediated through persons, its highest manifestation will be in the life that sustains the clearest and fullest communion with God. Mr. Leckie's chapter on the authority of Christ is full of reverence and wisdom. The Master, dwelling at the heart of things, has a wonderful power to bring us face to face with the realities of the spirit. There is something tremendously simple about the authority of Christ. The great doctrine of His Person is a noble attempt to account for that authority, but in regard even to the most august doctrines we are in the region of theory, where the categories of thought grapple with the transcendent facts of life. But faith has its reasons which the intellect may never fully formulate. It is for faith that Jesus is the supreme aristocrat, whose place is by the throne. To faith He speaks the last word on all that pertains to the essential life of mankind.

Contributions and Comments.

A Gaelic Gloss from Bobbio.

In the Latin Psalter of Columbanus of Bobbio, in which the marginal notes are in Gaelic, the comment on the words 'Mine ankles have not slipped' (Ps 18^{36}) is 'Weariness comes not to my bones, though I travel firmly and for ever.'

The ancient Gaelic Commentator appreciates the special importance which the Psalmist associated with the ankles. The Hebrews and other primitive races adorned the ankles with bangles or anklets, not merely because of the additional comeliness imparted to the possessor of it by a good ankle, and not entirely because of the refreshment which the wearied traveller on the rough mountain path received from the musical clink of the anklet ornaments (*vide* 'Anklet'—Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*), but also because of more substantial reasons. The ankle was admired as the seat of peculiar strength.

Luke, in his description of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, says, 'His feet and *ankle bones* received strength,' and he adds that 'he, leaping up, stood and walked; and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.' Among primitive peoples, a good ankle is still prized as an indication of vigour.

A native of St. Kilda recently crossed to one of the Hebridean Islands, in Oriental fashion, to woo a lady who had been recommended to him by his friends. He returned home, however, unaccompanied by a bride, and his simple but conclusive explanation was, 'She did not have the ankle.' The appreciation of a good ankle was more than a mere matter of æsthetic taste. The agility required for travelling over bogs, or through a rocky country, depended largely on a good ankle. The St. Kildan's expression is still employed as an equivalent for the lack of strength and endurance.

The strengthening of the ankles meant the imparting of strength and endurance. It was the experience of God's presence that gave both of these to the Psalmist. Men who appeared stronger and more fortunate in everything, except the enjoyment of the Divine presence, failed in the battle of life. Hittites and Hivites and other races, that knew not the Psalmist's God, have perished; but the Jewish race still manifests the characteristics of strength and endurance, and in the words of the ancient Commentator of Bobbio can say, 'Weariness comes not to my bones, though I travel firmly and for ever.'

The earlier Latin translators failed to see this point when they rendered the Hebrew words, 'Et (not sunt) infirmata vestigia mea.' Later translators gave the sense more accurately in the words, 'Neque vacillant malleoli pedum meorum.' Neither the King James' translators nor the more recent revisers ventured to give the words of the Psalm the peculiar significance recognized in them by the ninth-century commentator, although in both the