

The Supreme Authority

W. H. Westcott.

All authority as far as God is concerned is vested in the risen Saviour — all authority both in heaven and in earth. He said it before He went to heaven, for Matthew's Gospel does not carry us beyond resurrection, but it is no less true now that He has gone into heaven. He will infallibly secure all that God had purposed and promised for heaven and for earth.

There is no part of this universe that is not, by the will of God, put under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may go among all nations and claim people for Christ. The commission, as He gave it, is, "Go . . . to all nations." You may go into a monarchical country, civilised or savage, and while you seek to walk in subjection to the powers that be, you recognise that the Lord has sent you there to make disciples. What does it mean in a practical way? You might find that the authorities in either town or country may be inclined to resist the gospel. Our business is certainly not to be Socialists, or to defy the powers that be, but simple christians, the servants of the Lord, we should have this fact written will fire in our souls, that wherever we are He can make room for His own word. Whatever may be the difficulties that the christians are exposed to, there is always the appeal to the highest authority in the universe.

It so happens that for some years we have been working in and the authority we had to recognize was that of a well known State. We went as unknown individuals, known only to the Lord of Glory. As soon as we got there we found that the Roman Catholics claimed religious jurisdiction over all that section of the State where we proposed to settle, and they demanded our expulsion. Then it was rumoured that we were English spies, the consequence being that in addition to the religious influence of the Roman Catholics, we had the political powers of the State against us. The local commissaire said we must go out and find some other place. This was confirmed by the Vice-Governor in the capital. Eventually we had letters from the Governor himself to the effect that we should leave there. A Royal Commissioner came from the Sovereign. He investigated the correspondence and said, "I cannot find any reason why you should stay here; you must go."

Then, in order to gain by intrigue what they wanted for their own purpose, the Roman Catholics secured the passing of a decree by the King, the object of which was to oust us from the country. So, from the local official to the Government staff. then to the central authority itself, there was this authority of the earth demanding us to leave. By the grace of God we have continued our work there to this day. (1913 Ed.) God blew upon every intrigue.

At the time when we were in this state, crying to God to open the way the British Consul wrote us to say, "I write to you as a private individual, that if you will appeal to me as Consul I will see your case through." As much as to say, if you will only cast yourselves into the arms of the British Consul, he will use all the influences of Britain to gain your point. I replied, "It has been the habit of our souls to look to the Lord alone, but — while declining it — we thank you for your kind offer." Do you think God failed us?

Whatever may be the wall that is in front of you, yet, if you go forward in simple confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth. What He decrees all kingdoms have no power to resist. We can reckon upon the Lord. Whatever difficulties we have, threatening worse and worse, let us lay this to heart, that our resource is in Christ Jesus the Lord. "All authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth." Then we need not go outside of Christ to gain authority to go into any place or to work in any service, but we may appeal to Him immediately and

directly, and we may do this among all nations.

If you are here in these christianised lands, which are fast apostatising from the truth, with increasing difficulties for preaching the gospel, you need not look to worldly authorities, nor seek any earthly patronage or influence, but look simply and directly to the Lord. Every simple and true-hearted christian worker has immediate access to supreme authority. There is no need to conceal our christianity for the sake of diplomacy. You have got the authority of Christ, the Supreme Power in heaven and earth, to insist upon the performance of every part of His will.

He says, "I am with you always." The bright days, the dark days, until the end of the age. There is no diminishing of His authority. W.H.W.