

III. - Derived authority.

Know that the Lord is God; he hath made us (and not we) his people and the sheep of his pasture. PSALM 100:3.

The distinction between an authority of organic and an authority of mechanical character speaks most clearly in the contrast of the authority of a father and a guardian over the same child. The father's authority arose at the same time as the child was born and had its basis in that birth. In and with the life itself of the child the authority of the father was given. Very different is the situation with the guardian's authority. Between him and that child there does not even need to be any relationship of blood relationship or virginity. A guardian of a child can be someone who is wildly alien to that child and had nothing to do with that child. For him the authority over that child is neither born nor given by life itself, but is given to him by family agreement, by law, or by appointment of the judge. The bond of authority between father and child exists by itself; that between guardian and pupil is first established by another authority. Since what emerges from the process of life itself is organic and what is mechanically created by our invention, deed or order is mechanical, the father's authority is organic and the guardian's authority is mechanical. No king on earth rules unless the authority has been conquered by himself, or by his ancestors, or because it has been given to him by others. Neither the existence of his people nor the nature of his people automatically and necessarily gives rise to his royal authority. With the Lord our God, on the other hand, His sovereignty extending over everything is given to the very existence of creatures. The very existence of a creature without an absolute sovereign authority emanating from God over this creature is simply unthinkable. This sovereign supreme authority of the Creator is included in the very concept of creation.

However, according to the nature of the creature, a sharp distinction is made here. A star and an angel are both creatures of God and, consequently, the authority of God is absolute for both. Both belong to God, exist only for God's sake and His honor, and their mode of existence, operation and fate are determined by God. God gives the star its course, and the angel its path, and in the rich language of Scripture this is also applied to the star world in such a vivid sense that He is seen to be calling "the stars by their names/" and that the firmament is also called upon to give glory to God. Thus, in Psalm 103: "Praise Him all ye shining stars." There is no dead nature. All nature is carried from moment to moment by God's spiritual power, and it is God who thus commands supremely in all the realms of nature, enforces His law, and makes all things conform to His holy will. But however

richly this may be in all walks of life, you will nevertheless feel at once that the divine authority over a star has a wholly different character than the divine authority over an angel. With the rigid, and with the whole of the inanimate creation, God enforces His will and law with power, without any question of opposition or resistance. It is quite different, however, when you pass from the inanimate to the animate creation of angel or man.

It does not express itself as a blind force, but calls upon and awakens the spirit in man or angel to cooperate with God's action and to make itself an instrument of divine power. This automatically raises the possibility of resistance or deviation from the divine will, and it is this possibility which gives the government of God over the spirited creation its moral character. And although one can speak poetically and metaphorically of a divine authority over stars and the ocean to which they are subject, everyone feels that in the inanimate creation it is more the exercise of power and might, and that in a real sense authority only exists in the inanimate creation. Only the spirited creation can profess: "The Lord is our King, The Lord is our Lawgiver, The Lord is our Judge! But even though authority in a real sense only arises with animate creation, and therefore kingship can only exist with animate creation, the basis of this authority is and remains entirely the same as the basis of the supreme power over the inanimate creation. Hence Israel sings in its hymns: "For He has made us, and not we ourselves, His people and the sheep of His pasture.

From this distinction between the different character of the Divine Supreme over the inanimate and animate creation, another no less important consequence follows. We mean the possibility of the Divine authority operating by means of a derived authority which is granted by one creature over the other. We will not mention the angels here because so little has been revealed to us of their household, but merely note that the relationship of Satan to the other demons is sufficient proof that in the world of angels, too, there is a control of one more powerful spirit over other less powerful spirits. But leaving the angels aside, it is clear as day that the clearest evidence of such a derived, instrumental authority is to be found among human beings almost everywhere. That man, already by virtue of his existence, has power and authority over matter, plants and animals, is already apparent from the fact that man is fitted out to feed on what the earth produces; and furthermore, it appeared to us in the first series of these articles, how the dominion over Nature has been conferred on man by God, and this in an almost complete sense, and is now becoming more and more apparent through the

discoveries of natural science. But it does not stop there. Man has not only received dominion over the inanimate creation of this earth, but in the world of man there is also dominion of man over man. In itself it would have been quite conceivable that this would have been different. If every human being had been created like Adam, i.e., had come into being in an adult state, and had found everything he needed for life freely available, there would be no reason why one human being should have had any say over the other. There would not have been a family, there would not have been a nation, there would not have been a human race. There would have been no other than independent persons, all of equal right and without a bond that bound them together. There would have been no authority from man over man, and all authority would have been exercised directly, over each individual person, by God Himself.

But the creation of our humanity was not like that. Only the first man, in the full sense of the word, came into existence without the intervention of any other man; and it is remarkable how Scripture emphasizes that this was not already the case with Eve. Furthermore, everything called mankind is born of man, and therefore already in its creation and birth is related to other people. It is not man who stands apart from man, but it is one blood that unites all life. Family ties connect the groups. Not one stands alone as a separate human being, but all together form the one human family, and in that family an inequality comes to light that automatically gives one human being authority over the others. The fact that man comes into the world as a needy child automatically creates a superiority for the father and mother who nurture him. The parents begin to deal with their helpless child in exactly the way they think is right, just like the lioness does with her cubs. But with man, as an animated being, an entirely different element immediately interferes. Not of stronger natural love and care, for the care of a hen for her chicks and even of a tigress for her cubs often exceeds by far the care of a degenerate mother or of a selfish father for his child. No, what is involved is a moral element of authority. Not immediately, because at the beginning the child is not yet susceptible to this, but as soon as it grows up the I in the child gradually awakens to self-awareness. When the young cub is grown up, the old lioness no longer looks after her cubs, and all ties between her and her cubs are broken. But not so with man. When a child grows up, the duty of care and education becomes more and more powerful, and the child responds to this by obeying, i.e., by submitting to the authority placed over him. Thus, we are faced with the situation that God the Lord, in the very way in which He ordained the procreation of the

human race, made the father and the mother instruments through which He would exercise His high and divine authority over the child. The father's authority could not have been original, because even though he was the one who bred the child, the child did not receive life and conception from him, but from his God. Thus, the high and absolute authority over the child belongs to God alone. God can take away the child's father and mother in death without His high authority over the child being lost or diminished in the slightest. But even though God alone has the high command over every child that is born, in the ordinary course of life the birth and growth of that child is so ordained by Him that it begins by honoring its father and mother as bearers of the authority with which God has vested them; and this not first by a separate ordinance in the Fifth Commandment, but by the very manner in which the child was born to its parents in need of help. There are thus two kinds of exercise of divine authority, the first directly and immediately in the inanimate creation, the other through man as an instrument, i.e. derived and imposed, and manifesting itself first in the paternal and maternal authority.

The paternal authority is what one might call an authority, derived and instrumental, but nevertheless of a regulated order. On the other hand, from the inequality between man and man all kinds of other instrumental authority emerges, in which that regulated order is completely absent. The strongest authority of this kind comes from genius, talent and higher spiritual gifts. In this higher sphere of human life, too, a process of blossoming and development takes place, and here, too, laws or standards, forces and motives come to light; and once these have come to light, the less wealthy have no choice but to follow the example and initiative of the richer spirits. Especially in France it is customary to honor such rulers with the title of "master" not unwillingly but willingly; and nothing is more common than for a follower of such a mightier spirit to praise and address him in writings as "*mon maître*". In other ways one expresses the same intention by saying that such men of first rank "make school", which amounts to the same thing. This idea of schooling also implies that there is a master and that the others willingly join him as his students. All the blather about equality among people is bare nonsense. It would be fair to say that no two people are alike, for although the differences between man and man, especially in less developed countries, may sometimes be reduced to a minimum, every mother knows her children well, and the difference in outward appearance is always connected with a difference in character, disposition and disposition.

However, it is not only that there are all kinds of differences between people, there is also a never-ending difference in degree, and it is because of this that persons of a higher degree not only have influence but also authority over persons of a lower degree in the same qualities. This can already be seen among the boys in the street, how with the hope there is always one who gives the lead and is obeyed, because it is only through obedience that the majority acquires the character of authority. It is even like that with a group of thieves or a gang of robbers. There is never equality, always inequality, and from the inequality is always the exercise of authority on the one hand and submission to that authority on the other. This is most obvious at the school, and that is why in the old days the man in charge at the school had the honorary name of master, precisely to express that he did not just come to teach, but to be invested with authority. The newer trend has erroneously made the title of master obsolete and later abolished it, to speak only of teachers, at the most of Head Teachers. At last, however, they themselves have realized the error of this, and have therefore again chosen the name of Head; a new name that does not appeal to anyone, and has only created resistance among the class teachers. The old name of master was by far the best, because it expressed the idea of authority, and it is remarkable that the name of master, which was abolished for the common people's school, is still held in honor of the man of genius and talent in the finer circles of the highly gifted in France. Even a law graduate still writes "master" in front of his name, and the name "master" was also commonly used for doctors in the past. The lawyer exercises authority over his client, the doctor over his patient; authority which the client and the patient seek themselves, and which therefore exists by their own choice, but to which, once they have made that choice, they most willingly submit, and precisely that submission is also the mark of authority here. We speak of a prescription, but in Germany one speaks of an Order of the Doctor, and in France of a prescription.

This kind of irregular instrumental authority too is derived, and flows just as much as parental authority from the source of all authority in God. It is He who wanted the inequality of man and mankind. It is He who gives birth to one poor in spirit and strength of mind and invests the other with the majesty of genius. Genius is not given to oneself, and even talent can be honed and developed, but not given to oneself. And by the simple fact of this very unequal allotment of gifts, God the Lord of His own accord establishes that authority in the spiritual sphere which has a far more far-reaching influence than the regular parental authority. Men like Luther and Calvin in the field of religion, like Vondel, Cats and Bilderdijk in the

field of poetry, did not set themselves up as authoritative spirits, nor were they appointed for that purpose by others, but they were what they were by the grace of God, *gratia Dei*. And it is true that also in this field there have always been obstinate spoilers, as you so often find among the children of a family endless rebukers, but the uniqueness of that authority of genius and talent is precisely that the best have always willingly recognized it and that in the end it has triumphed over all opposition.

But of course, it could not stop at this two-fold instrumental authority. The parental authority and the genius authority were not enough. Wider circles were gradually formed. Out of the family came the family, out of the family came the tribe, out of the tribe came the people. This gave rise not only to the family, but also to the family-group, the family-group, the family-group and the people-group, and these groups could not exist without laws, rules and discipline. First this developed patriarchally, according to primogeniture and age, and along that line the formation of the indispensable authority could continue as long as common descent and consanguinity dominated the formation of the association. But this possibility was lost when the separation between the sexes increased, and either necessity or an act of violence forced groups who were strangers to one another to live together in one national community. Initially, these unifications of distinct groups into one nation were small in size, so that upon Israel's arrival in Canaan, we often found kings for a single city and its appurtenances. Thus, Melchizedek was king only of Salem. But the nature of the matter meant that these small formations did not last and gradually dissolved into much larger groups, encompassing millions and millions. Here, too, especially here, a well-ordered relationship was needed; and this relationship was unthinkable without an effective man at the head; and so the kings of the nations arose. These kings, too, exercised exclusively the Divine Authority, but, and this was the fundamental difference from the parental authority, they were also the only ones who could exercise this authority.

difference from the parental authority, their authority was no longer organic in character, it became a mechanical institution. A situation was born out of it, as could not be imagined otherwise for a humanity sunk in sin, but then again, a situation that did not correspond to the ordinances of creation. It was not from the King that the people came forth. He was not the natural organic head of his people, but set up on the body of the people as their head. And it was the contradiction between this actual state and the original ordinance of God, which was expressed with Israel in Samuel's statement that the people sinned and rejected God by

wanting to have a King like the other nations had." God was the Lord over Israel because He had made it a people. That was the organic understanding. The Gentiles had kings, who had not made their people. That was the mechanical deviation.

Something else came with this. The division and splitting of our human race into separate and distinct peoples is the result of sin; but the fact is that in so doing the unity of our human race has been broken. Originally, the first Adam was vested not only with paternal authority over his family, but also with general authority over the whole human race; and after the Flood the same could partially be said of Noah. But since then, the unity of our people has been lost. There was no longer a general union of our whole family, and thus also no King of mankind, who could represent the divine authority over the whole family instrumentally and organically. And although attempts were made later to fill this gap by means of the Empire, which was also to be a world empire, as explained in the first article of this series, this was an act of arbitrariness and violence, which amounted to subjugating the weaker peoples to the dominion of one of the most powerful peoples. It was an absorption of the largest possible part of the peoples into the circle of life of one single people, not with the aim of achieving the harmonious development of the rich treasure of our entire human race, but in order that one single people, whose King possessed the most power, might rule over the other peoples. Even if it pleased God, and even if it still pleased Him, in the division of the peoples and in their development broken by sin, to use the mechanical instrument of an employed Kingship as an instrument of His rule over the peoples, it goes without saying that the high ideal that lay in the creation of our entire family from the same blood, could and can never be realized in this way. It is a deficient state, which derives its right to exist only from the continued existence of sin. This situation will one day come to an end. The ideal must and will be realized. And it is this realization of the ideal of mankind that demands and calls for a King, who is organically linked with his people, and who brings together, from all nations and tongues, that one people that can represent the whole of our human race. And that King is the Christ.