

What was that authority ?

Faced with the question as to the source of this power, this authority, some said that he was appealing to the lustful , ~~great~~ greedy evil passions of man. He was linked with Satan. He was stirring people to revolt and plunder. Possibly it was under the cover of this explanation that judgement was secured against him, and his death assured. Such explanations always appear whenever a man of power appears upon the scene of human history

Others tried to explain the power , the authority of Jesus by asserting that he had some special and particular relation with Deity. By some unusual process he had received from God a supernatural power. He knew things that man could not know. He could do things that man could not do. He was a special agent of G

special agent of God. He was playing the game of life with human beings , but the dice with which he played were loaded by a peculiar power from God,-- a power that other men did not have and could not have. That explanation has made oft of Jesus the Christ of the creeds.

The real answer.

But the real answer as to the nature and source of Jesus power and authority is to be found, neither in the suggestion that he was in league with evil, nor in the explanation that he had some special super-human gift from God.

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III The test of Faith.

Some believed and some did not believe. With a great price he had gained his faith. With a still greater price was he to confirm it. There were people then as there are people now who want to gain to a certain and sure faith without paying the price that life requires ~~for~~ to attain that faith. The story of the Rich Ruler is to the point. He desired some assurance. He had kept the commandments, he had observed all the customs, and traditions; he had gone through all the forms from his youth up. But somehow his life lacked that zest, that glow, ~~buoyant~~ that buoyant, passionate ardor that comes only to those who have the

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~~courage to cast conformity to the winds and stake their life, as Jesus did, upon a faith and a conviction that they have made their own.~~ You know the sort of man this rich ruler was. Respectable, well mannered--careful observer of all the conventional standards of life--~~obedient~~ the ceremonial law, <sup>frequenter of</sup> the synagogue, a good-neighbor, ~~doubtless~~ kindly and <sup>generous,</sup> good. He had never doubted any of the traditions, never questioned the conventions. If he had sinned, he had sinned the conventional sins in a perfectly conventional way. ~~But~~ when he came in touch with Jesus he felt ~~in~~ that in Jesus there was a certain zest, a certain adventurous glow to life, that made his own ~~comfortable, respectable,~~ life of ease and luxury seem tame and deadly. He knew that his life lacked something that this obscure carpenter, and his obscure followers had found. ~~They had~~ got hold of something that was worth while, something eternal.

Jesus replied

"What shall I do," said he to Jesus, ~~the~~  
 "One thing thou lackest," You want faith. ~~It~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>the</sup> price.  
 lack

*of conventions*

~~What is the price?~~ Get out of these prisons you live in. Life is not deadly conformity, not the ~~respectable~~ perpetual round of ~~respectable conventions~~. Life is an adventure. Forget your ease, your luxury, your ceremonials, your traditions. ~~Cast them behind you.~~ Live one day for something that you believe true and eternal. Do something on your own faith. Be yourself for once, then you shall ~~have~~ have eternal life, ~~then you shall have tasted the water of eternal things.~~ Cast your wealth, your social position, your luxury, to the winds, come follow me." ~~Break the walls of your prison, and become a free man.~~ You seek from me an infallible guide to eternal life. There is no such infallible guide. You seek from me an infallible program that *you* may follow? There is no such infallible program. Life is adventure, Life is faith." "But" says the rich man "how do I know what you say is true." "You do not know." You never can know except as you try it out, and out of your own experience,

your own doubts, your own travail and pain, out of your own trials mistakes and errors, you find the kingdom of God for yourself.

Seek him and ye shall find Him, - and life eternal. There is no other way. You must pay the price for faith that faith requires.<sup>11</sup>

~~Some tried, and believed. Jesus spoke with authority because he had paid for his faith the price that faith requires,~~

~~You ask me to day for an infallible guide to eternal life and faith. There is none. There are helps. You may live the conventional religious life. You may go the rounds of custom and tradition.~~

~~But that is not the real great faith that Jesus had. It is not power at which the multitudes marveled. That power, that faith comes only as we test it, in full and free, in the laboratory of God's world. Jesus had done that, and some there were who understood and believed.~~

The Moral Courage of Jesus.

"But," you are saying, "if disregard of the conventional standards of life is the secret of faith, and the open door to eternal life, then this generation is assured of its salvation. Is not that disregard of convention, that lustful wanton tampering with established standards, that open violation of law and order, the most striking characteristic of this generation?" The question has point, but also it misses the point. Jesus was a leader by virtue of his moral courage. Except you righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." I came not to mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. Some there are who break the conventions and established standards of life for the simple and sole purpose of a more unrestrained license. They are moved, not by a desire for truth

nor a desire for the common weal; They are moved solely by an unrestrained lust, greed, and selfishness. They seek not a faith for which they are willing to pay the price that faith exacts. They seek their own satisfactions regardless of the price that society may have to pay. Such we have with us always. Faith may support tradition, custom, established conventions. In fact much of the best faith of this day and all days has given its loyal, sincere, and unstinted devotion and support to tradition, to customs, to things established. But it supports them because it has measured them, doubted and tested them, and ~~found~~ made them its ~~own~~ own. How deeply we respect, love, and honor, those who honestly passionately, loyally and sincerely love the very customs and traditions that we ourselves have been compelled in our own life to abandon for conscience sake. No, the mere breaking ~~with~~ with convention, and the mere keeping the convention has not much

to do with the power of our faith. The real thing is to give our loyalty to that which we can wholeheartedly give it, not for our own advantage, but for truth's sake, for the sake of the brethren, for God.

That was the supreme quality in the life of Jesus , the quality that gave color and meaning to his knowledge and his insight. He meant business. He was not running about trying to compel others to be good. He was not seeking to force his opinions on any one. He was not asking anyone to do anything that he himself would not do. His alternative to the rich young man was the alternative that he had faced. He had left all to teach the way of life. The rich young man wanted such a faith as Jesus had. Follow thou me.

Here we come to the heart of the source of Jesus' Power.

It was not unique in him. There have been others along the way of human history that have passed over the same via dolorosa. To them we owe more than our poor lives can ever repay. For the sake of faith, in the fields of religion, of science and knowledge, and in the humble rounds of daily life, there have been those who have given their life for their faith, their loved ones, their duty, for God. It is no less wonderful in Jesus Christ because we acknowledge it as fact in other lives, and as a latent possibility in many more lives than we imagine. "Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for the brethren". Plenty of men will sacrifice some-one else's life than their own for what they believe to be true, or for some other reason. But we touch the garment hem of God's spirit when we come in touch with those who lay their own life upon the altar for the sake of brethren and the truth.

To this holy ground the trail of Jesus of Nazareth leads us. The garden of Gethsemene. Long it had been apparent to him that high priests of the established order, the heresy hunters, the spokesmen of special privilege sought his apprehension. Did he not speak with authority ? Did not the people listen ? Had he not said to many, - Follow Thou me. Now the critical hour had come. "Recant or resign". The last meal together with the disciples had taken place, -- those intimate friends with whom he had been so intimately connected. Can you imagine the thoughts that might have passed through his mind ? I have roused the hopes and established the faith of many. I have told them that this is the way of life that is eternal. Now I have come to the parting of the ways. My Father, thou knowest I love this life, these friends, these familiar fields, these roads, these haunts of my fathers; but "if this cannot pass away except ~~xx~~ I drink, thy will be

done." It is easy to declare our faith in the face of applauding multitudes ; it is easy stand in the church surrounded by precious memories, and dear friends and say that we believe in the moral values of life, and that we believe in God . But when the tide of approval runs out, and the angry tide of storm and violence is already crashing about the shores of our life's most precious possessions, then the test of faith comes. Do you still believe when the multitude has vanished, when friends have been left behind, and alone under God's open sky with only the stars to remind you of that infinite power, you have to make the decision of sealing the testimony of your faith with your very life's blood. Did you mean business, or were you just talking ? You are not condemning the heretic for his precious faith . You are not stoning some helpless soul for the sins of the flesh, You are not

You are not sending to prison some fellow-man because he has had the courage to declare what he believes to be true. No. Not any of these things. In the gardens of Gethsemene men are deciding whether they have the moral courage to go through the ignominy of trial, condemnation and death for the truth's sake, for conscience sake, for the conviction that the universe is honest, that the living God is, that the moral and spiritual values of life have eternal meaning. The supreme moment of Christ's life was in the Garden of Gethsemene. There he vindicated the faith that was in him. "You, rich young man, once asked me what you could do to inherit eternal life" You believed me not. Again I say to you, - Follow Thou me. I believe, I believe that the Father lives."

That was the authority, the power that Christ had and still has. The power of a faith tested in life, confirmed in death.