

Authority and Authorities in the Church of England.

III.

(*Concluding Article.*)

SECONDARY AUTHORITIES IN CHRISTIANITY.

WE return now to the pædagogic level and face the fact that the revelation of God often comes to us through human channels. Church and Bible are for all of us to the end of our days authorities in Christianity. But we must be clear at once that these authorities are not final and infallible, they are partial and fallible. No doubt some minds, wearied in the search for truth and mistrustful of themselves, crave for an infallible human guide. Church and Bible have both been said to be infallible, and there is great disturbance when they are proved to be otherwise. It is asked whether, in so vital a matter as the obtaining of Divine truth, God could possibly have left us in any danger of falling into error. The only answer is that as He allowed us to be liable in the moral region to fall into sin, so He allowed us in the intellectual to be liable to be in error.¹ The liability is for our good. As Salmon² wisely says, "With God our comfort is subordinate to our education. . . . God has made the very importance of religious truth, not a reason for releasing us from all pains of investigation, but a motive to stimulate us more intensely to discipline ourselves in that candid and truth-loving frame of mind in which alone the search for truth is likely to be successful."

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

Christianity does not exist in the world as a mere idea. It exists in the form of a society. This society is the creation of the Gospel of Christ, and is expressive of that Gospel. It is the trustee of the saving Word, and the organ for its extension among mankind. As such it carries a tremendous weight of influence. For all those who, for whatever reason, are in the catechumen stage, it possesses

¹ Of course the parallel holds good on the side of Divine permission only. On the human side the parallel breaks down. Men, though liable to sin, ought not to sin. Their intellectual mistakes are commonly unavoidable, and are due to the circumstances of time and place.

² "Infallibility of the Church," p. 106. Edition 1914.

a real if limited authority. It possesses it because it can speak as men to man with the force of personal conviction. "If ¹ the final authority is God in Gospel, the Church shares in that authority as the expert of the Gospel and the soul." It behoves the individual Christian reverently, though not unreflectingly, to "hear the Church."

For the most part there has been no disposition throughout the Christian centuries to deny to the Church an authoritative position. What controversy there has been—and unfortunately there has been much—has turned upon the question, Where is the seat of authority in the Church? On this subject three views may be clearly distinguished—

a. Since 1870 the Roman Church has made the Pope in person the final and infallible authority. "We ² teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that the Roman Pontifex, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, in the discharge of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine on faith or morals as one to be held by the whole Church, enjoys through the divine assistance promised to him in the blessed Peter that infallibility wherewith the divine Redeemer desired His Church to be furnished in defining doctrine on faith or morals; and therefore the definitions of the same Roman Pontifex are of themselves, nor in virtue of the consent of the Church, irrefrangible."

This theory suffers from two fatal defects. Historically it is utterly indefensible. Practically it is unworkable. Romanists themselves differ as to the conditions of an *ex cathedra* utterance, and admit that no infallible dictum has ever been given. When the decree was promulgated, it met with violent opposition from such men as Cardinal Newman ³ and was responsible for the secession of the Old Catholics. It is needless to deal further with the theory. It has been exposed in masterly fashion by the late Dr. Salmon in his "Infallibility of the Church."

β. Others hold that Church authority is expressed through General Councils. Now there is no doubt that these deservedly enjoy an influence. The decrees of Councils on matters both of

¹ Forsyth, *op. cit.* 369.

² "Conc. Vat. de ecclesia Christi," cap. 4.

³ His opposition was based on the ground of expediency. He always denied that he was opposed to the doctrine on principle.

faith and order were reverently received in the early Church. The Church of England respects at any rate the first four, and it is well known that the summoning of the Council of Trent was really an effect of the insistent demand of the early Reformers that a truly General Council should be summoned to discuss their grievances.

But wherein lies the authority of a Council? Bishops attended Councils as the representatives of their sees, and as witnesses to what was done or believed in them, and a Council's decrees possessed authority just so far as they truly represented the mind of the Church. Vincent of Lerins,¹ in his discussion of the subject, adduces the Council of Ephesus as an illustration. Its object was to find out from the bishops what was actually believed in the Church as to the Person of Christ. It follows from this that there is no test applicable at the moment to decide whether a Council's acts are authoritative or not. That depends on their subsequent acceptance by the Church. The events which followed the Council of Nicea are a standing witness to this. There would not have been fifty years of bitter controversy if even that peer among Councils had been authoritative *per se*. "Œcumenical,"² as applied to a Council, means lawfully called, truly representative, approved and received by the Church. A conciliar decree is only endorsed through œcumenical acceptance."

Further, the appeal to Scripture always lay near to hand. This is best seen by two quotations from Augustine. The first³ is from Cont. Maximin. Arian. ii. 14, "I must not press the authority of Nicea against you, nor you that of Ariminum against me: I do not acknowledge the one, as you do not the other: but let us come to ground that is common to both—the testimony of the Holy Scriptures." The second⁴ is, "Who could be ignorant that Holy Writ is so to be preferred to all writings of Bishops, that in the case of the former there can be no such thing as doubt or contention, but that the writings of bishops are liable to criticism by reason it may be of a wiser saying of a man better acquainted with the subject, and through the higher reputation of other bishops,

¹ Commonitorium xxx.

² Quoted in Ottley, "Incarnation," p. 676.

³ Quoted in Salmon, *op. cit.* 295.

⁴ Quoted in Karl von Hase, "Handbook to the Controversy with Rome," vol. I. p. 33. No reference given to the original.

and through Councils; and that the Councils themselves which are held in individual provinces should give way without any demur to the reputation of larger Councils, whose members come from the whole Christian world. In fine, even those earlier Councils themselves are often corrected by the later, if in the course of experience that which was closed is opened up, and that which was hidden brought to light." In a word, Councils have a real but limited authority, and there is always an appeal from them.¹

γ. Vincent of Lerins in his *Commonitorium* propounded his famous rule. "Also in the Catholic Church itself we must carefully provide that we hold what has been everywhere, always, and by all believed." We have seen that this was the ultimate basis of conciliar authority, as that was in its turn of Papal infallibility. But what does it come to in itself as Vincent states it? Taken quite literally it would reduce the body of Christian belief to a mere shadow, for it would hardly be possible to find any Christian doctrine which had not been at some time and in some place denied by some heretic who called himself a Christian. However, according to Bishop Gore,² "Vincent never meant by 'ab omnibus' what is held by all men without exception, or by all who call themselves Christians, but by the Church as a body, as opposed to individual teachers." He meant "the body of Catholic truth, held 'ubique,' that is, in all parts, as opposed to any one particular Church; 'semper,' always, as opposed only in recent ages; 'ab omnibus,' by all, *i.e.*, by the general body of the Church, not merely as the private opinion of particular teachers."

It is clear from this that the authority of the Church, though in principle it would be suicidal to deny it, is an exceedingly difficult doctrine to apply in practice. In any question of controversy Vincent's rule can give us very little help. Certainly it cannot

¹ It may be added that mediæval canonists take this view. Gratian clearly implies that at least in part canon law represents the authority of custom. He treats law, by whomsoever promulgated, as really invalid unless it is confirmed by the custom of those whom it concerns. He adds that custom is a source of law. Rufinus and Stephen, both twelfth century canonists, take substantially the same view. The *Decretals* of Gregory IX (i. 4. 11) say explicitly, "Sicut etiam longævæ consuetudinis 'non sit vilis auctoritas, non tamen est adeo valiturus, ul vel juri positivo debeat præjudicium generare, nisi fuerit rationabilis et legitime sit præscripta,'" cf. Carlyle, "Mediæval Political Theory in the West," II. 158 note 1, and p. 160 seq.

² "Roman Catholic Claims," pp. x. 43,²nd edition. He refers to the *Commonit.* 2, 3, 17.

point us to the existence of an infallible guide. A large measure of ultimate responsibility is left to the individual.

The Anglican view may be shortly summarized. Article XIX states that Churches err. Article XX allows to the Church "auctoritas" in matters of faith and "jus" in those of order, but adds that in matters of order nothing must be done contrary to the principles of the Bible, and in matters of faith the Bible contains clearly all that is necessary for salvation. In matters of order there have always been differences between Church and Church. There is no reason why there should not be.¹ In matters of faith the Church has a function of teaching, but is limited. It must not go beyond the Bible, and it must expound the Bible self-consistently. Its peculiar function is to be a witness and keeper of Holy Writ.

Under the conditions prevalent during and since the Reformation period, the Church here practically means a local body in a manageable area, in England the National Church. But it includes all members of that body. It does not refer merely to the hierarchy (the Roman view).

Article XXI shows that Councils, 'like' Churches, err, and says that their decrees must have Scriptural authority. Article XXXIV adds nothing new.

Thus the Articles consistently teach that Scripture is the final test of doctrine and practice, and that the Church, in the discharge of her office of teaching, is to be guided and limited thereby. All this is directly opposed to what has come to be the Roman view.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

Like the Church, the Bible has been regarded by some as infallible in every part and on every subject. It was said that three stages in its construction could be distinguished, *impulsus ad scribendum*, *suggestio rerum*, *suggestio verborum*, the impulse to write followed by the miraculous revelation of the subject matter and language. It was believed that God Himself was responsible for the whole, and that nothing was left to human fallibility. There is a famous dictum of Chillingworth, written in 1638, "The Bible, I say, the

¹ Cf. letter of Pope Gregory to Augustine of Canterbury, printed in Gee and Hardy, "Documents illustrative of English Church History," p. 4. Bede I. 27.

Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Propose me anything out of this book, I will subscribe to it with hand and heart." This was the attitude of seventeenth century Protestant Scholasticism, to which it was driven by stress of the Roman controversy. The early Reformers appealed to the primitive Gospel in the Bible against Roman tradition. Their successors of the next century were led by their mechanical theory of Inspiration to appeal to the whole Bible indiscriminately, and finally they set up an infallible Book against an infallible Church. The growth of literary criticism and the comparative study of history and science have finally disposed of such an unfortunate exaggeration.

The early Reformers of the sixteenth century made four assertions about Scripture: that it possessed an authority Divine in origin and supreme over the Church; that it was sufficient as a guide to saving faith and holy life; that it was clear and intelligible on all essential points; that it was efficacious as a means of grace for the laity, thus making them in principle spiritually independent. But they agreed that these attributes applied not to all Scripture, but to its heart, to the Gospel within it, and that this central portion of the Bible might be used as a criterion of all the rest. "Those portions of Scripture in which Christ is most fully and clearly set forth are to be used as the key to and the touchstone of the whole," so wrote Luther.¹ In Scripture as a whole he asserted the presence of a human element, manifesting itself in three ways, in the secondary position of some writers such as the historians who depended on the prophetic inspiration, in the mixing of human ideas with the Divine word, and in the obscuration of the Gospel in some books, particularly in the Epistle of St. James and in the Apocalypse. Luther even desired to narrow the New Testament canon by an evangelical test, and though Calvin wisely prevented him from doing that, he changed the order of the books in his German edition of the Bible.

To what, according to the Reformers, is due the authority of the central portion of the Bible? It is due to the presence of the Holy Spirit therein, and this authority makes good its own claim over us. This is the famous principle of the "testimonium Spiritus

¹ Quoted in Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 405. Cf. a long quotation illustrating this by reference to particular books in Sabatier, "Religions of Authority," p. 158, and (substantially) in Paterson, p. 406.

Sancti," and can be illustrated by innumerable references. Luther ¹ wrote, "Not only has it so happened, not only is it so proclaimed in the Word of the Gospel, but the Holy Ghost also writes it inwardly in the heart." . . . "Even though an angel from heaven should preach against it, we ought to believe for the reason that it is God's word, and that we have an inward feeling that it is the truth."

The Westminster Confession ² states, "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God. . . . Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and Divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." It rightly adds also that "we may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church" to hold the Bible in great regard.

It is interesting to find exactly the same view stated by a modern theologian.³ "The authority of the Bible speaks not to the critical faculty that handles evidence, but to the soul that makes response. The Bible witness of salvation in Christ is felt immediately to have authority by every soul pining for redemption. . . . The true region of Bible authority is therefore saving certainty in man's central and final part—his conscience before God, and all its parts are authoritative in the degree and perspective of their relation to that final salvation." The latter thought—an exact reproduction of Luther's thought—can be easily worked out in detail. (i) In the Gospels we have the portrait of the Christ, which, as we have already argued, has its own constraining power. It is a portrait drawn by men who were steeped in apostolic theology, for it is an exploded notion that we can distinguish between the Christ of Paul and the Jesus of the Gospels. (ii) So we turn to the Epistles. They have an important place, because the act of redeeming revelation in Christ needed its exposition. "The fact ⁴ without the word is dumb, and the word without the fact is empty." Now the apostles were specially inspired to give this exposition.

¹ Paterson, *op. cit.* 405.

² *op. cit.* 408.

³ Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," pp. 178, 179. Cf. generally chapters v, vi.

⁴ Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," p. 160.

“Apostolic inspiration ¹ is a certain action stirred by the heavenly Christ in the soul by which His first elect were enabled to see the moral, spiritual and theological nature of the manifestation with a unique clearness, a clearness and explicitness perhaps not always present to Christ’s own mind in doing the act.” And again: “The Apostolic inspiration ² is the posthumous exposition by Christ of His own work.” In this exposition the Apostles stand over against the Church to which they give it: it was unique and final, and the record of it is written for permanent use. The Apostolic claim to such inspiration is suggested by such a passage as 1 Corinthians ii. 6–16, where St. Paul speaks of special knowledge given by the Holy Spirit to himself and Christian teachers. Upon the basis of it Apostles claim the obedience of the churches, and in some cases assign to their own words an authority equal to those of Christ. Is such a claim justified? For answer we may note that it is somewhat analogous to the finality and authority claimed by the Old Testament prophets; that it was in principle anticipated by Christ in such a passage as St. Matthew xvi. 19 taken in connexion with the promised work of the Spirit in St. John xiv. 26 and xvi. 13; but chiefly that it has been acknowledged by the churches then and since, for even in the sub-apostolic age men like Ignatius and Polycarp ³ begin to distinguish between themselves and their authoritative Apostolic predecessors, and eventually the distinction thus drawn culminates in the formation of the Canon. (iii) When we turn to the Old Testament, its parts are generally recognized to be more or less authoritative according to their nearness to the line of anticipation of redemption—a nearness which we can often measure by studying Christ’s own attitude to the Old Testament.

(iv.) How, finally, does it stand with those portions of the Bible which seem to be further from its evangelical centre? We have to bear in mind that redemption was wrought out amid scenes of contemporary history which matter little to us, and correspondingly the authoritative kernel of the Bible has its husk which does not always share its authority or its truth. Thus even the Apostolic exposition of Christ is sometimes clothed in the thought-forms of the day, and sometimes on a point, e.g. of science, may go astray.

¹ *Op. cit.* 176.

² *Op. cit.* 168.

³ Cf. Westcott, “Bible in Church,” pp. 87–89.

There is also in the Bible a vast amount of record of spiritual experience of individuals and nations which is of prime importance for instruction and edification, but which only indirectly yields any revelation.¹ In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* (vol. x, p. 235) Forsyth epigrammatically summed up the position thus. "The New Testament is the condensed register of the Apostles' spoken insight into God's meaning of His own action in Christ." This definition applies in principle to the Old Testament also. "Have we not three things in revelation? We have, first, God's pure fact and act of redeeming revelation in Christ and Him crucified. We have, second, His true but not pure word of revelation in the Apostles; and thirdly, we have one monument of that two-fold revelation in the Bible." The other monument is the Church, for Church and Bible are collateral products of the Gospel.

ROMANISM AND ANGLICANISM IN RELATION TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

The Roman Church considered the question at the fourth session of the Council of Trent in April, 1546. The decree states that the Gospel is contained in written books and unwritten traditions which have both come from Christ and His Apostles, and hence the Synod "receives² and venerates with equal affection of piety and reverence all the books of the Old Testament and New Testament, as also the said traditions, both those appertaining to faith as well as those appertaining to morals." The meaning of this seems to be that Scripture is responsible for some articles of faith and tradition for others, and similarly with the discipline of morals. Such an interpretation is borne out by some late developments in Papal doctrine such as the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which must rest upon tradition only, since no warrant can be found for them in Scripture.

The Anglican Church protested against this teaching. We have already noticed the statement of Article XX. In Article VI we have the direct assertion, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation." Similarly the man who seeks ordination to the Priesthood has to answer the question, "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine

¹ At the same time it is the experience of the Apostles which gives them their authority.

² Conc. Trid. Sessio Quarta.

required of necessity for salvation?" We notice here a distinction between things that are essential to salvation and things that are not. The former the Anglican Church receives only from Scripture. The latter she receives also from tradition. In this she differs from both Romanist and from extreme Puritan. The latter refused to admit even customs which could not be proved from Scripture.¹ How is the Anglican position against Rome maintained?

(1) By appeal to Scripture itself. While of course in the New Testament there is no idea that a canon is being formed (save very vaguely in 2 Peter iii. 15, 16, referring to the Pauline epistles), yet there is a certain note of finality. Christianity and its exposition are regarded as something which crowned and finished off by fulfilment a long period of preparatory revelation. The note is particularly prominent in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Jewish Christians had Christ. What else could they possibly want? So also St. John regards his writings as containing all that was necessary for eternal life.

(2) By appeal to the early Fathers. The late Dean Goode of Ripon devoted two substantial volumes to the proof of this, bearing the title, "The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice." It would be wearisome to multiply extracts. Three may be selected as representing different parts of the Church. Irenæus speaks of "the most full statements of the Scriptures, admitting neither addition nor subtraction." Athanasius writes that, "The holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient of themselves to make known the truth." Augustine, referring to St. John xxi. 25, says that "Those things were chosen for writing which appeared to be sufficient for the salvation of those who should believe."

(3) By appeal to personal experience. The teaching of Scripture has a satisfying power. It can meet all the needs of the soul. It does not indeed tell everything we should like to know. For example, it leaves the whole subject of the future shrouded in deep mystery. But we know enough to live by, and enough to make life in the highest degree joyful. On the other hand, tradition, has had no contribution of value to make. Tradition in Rome has been but a source of increasing corruption and danger. Spiritual darkness has been—with some brilliant exceptions—the rule.

¹ The subject is argued in Hooker E. P., Book II.

THE INDIVIDUAL IN RELATION TO AUTHORITY.

As we enter upon this closing section of the subject, it will be well to remind ourselves briefly of the conclusions to which we have been led. We began by an inquiry into the nature of religion, which we found to involve a belief in the existence of God and a desire to approach and hold communion with Him. We then sought to discover by an induction from concrete cases the precise meaning of Authority, and were led to see that for all of us at some stages of life and for most of us in relation to most subjects at all stages of life authority—external authority—is a real and a valuable thing. At the same time we felt that submission to external authority as such is a mark of an elementary stage beyond which a man should always be striving to go, and that the characteristic of maturity in this matter is that the authority is recognized and accepted as convincing to the inner faculties of the human soul, and in that very act ceases to be external and becomes internal, a law of the man's inner life. We then examined the special case of Christianity, the highest type of religion, and found that the final authority therein is the historic Christ, the Incarnation of God. Further we recognized as subordinate authorities the Catholic Church, the society of Christian believers, and the Bible, the written record of the acts and sayings of Christ, and of the body of prophets and apostles who respectively anticipated and expounded His life.

Let us now emphasize a point to which brief reference was made at the close of the section dealing with authority in general. Over against the fact of authority we have to set the fact which we commonly term the right of private judgment. This fact has not been recognized equally clearly in all ages. It is a commonplace to remark that under the Old Testament dispensation, for example, the state, or at any rate the family, was, broadly speaking, everything and the individual nothing. Only very rarely, as in the two famous passages ¹ of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, did the independence of the individual assert itself. There is a very large amount of truth in the statement that it was Christ who discovered the individual. But when he was once discovered, he was never lost again, though his rights did not always receive the respect which we usually accord to them. The principle of private judgment was theoretically

¹ Jer. xxxi. 30; Ezek. xviii.

recognized even by that most tyrannical of bodies, the mediæval Church of Rome.¹ But it was at the Reformation that it came chiefly into prominence, at any rate so far as the truths of religion are concerned. Private judgment is indeed something which belongs to man in virtue of his human nature. He is in a thousand ways dependent upon others; in more ways than he ever suspects he is a child of his place and generation; the material for his thoughts is provided for him in sensation coming from the external world; but notwithstanding all this he is essentially personal; the faculties which go to make up his nature, his powers of thought and will and desire, are indissolubly linked together in the unity of a personal being; and the most marked characteristic of that personal being is that which we all experience though we find so difficult to explain, freedom. Because a man is rational and free, he cannot help exercising private judgment. There are some who have felt the responsibility of private judgment so heavily that it has driven them to flee from Protestantism and hand themselves over to an authoritative Church of Rome, but even so they have but exercised their private judgment in one supreme act whereby they have voluntarily suspended it during the rest of their lifetime.

Now what is the relation of private judgment to the authorities which we have seen to exist?

One point is clear at the outset with regard to the Church and the Bible. They both mediate Divine truth through human channels, and the channel is closely bound up with the contained truth. Just in so far as the human element is present in them, there is liability to error, and what man has said or written, man may criticize. We cannot take every precept in the Bible exactly as it stands, and regard the Book after the fashion of a legal code. There are the familiar differences between part and part, and consequently there has to be interpretation and discrimination. Nor again, can we accept without question every utterance of the Church, whether Catholic or local, whether on matters of faith or order, for the sufficient reason that churches have erred and do err. There has

¹ Carlyle, *op. cit.* ii, 248, quotes Innocent III as saying that there may be cases where a Christian may know that a certain action will be a mortal sin, though it may not be possible to prove this to the Church. In this case he must submit to excommunication rather than commit the sin. Innocent and the Canonists generally recognize also that while the judgment of God is always true, the judgment of the Church may often be erroneous, and a man condemned by the Church may be guiltless before God, and vice versa.

to be a larger or smaller amount of criticism. This is the province of the individual. But it is necessary to bear in mind what was previously said about the difference between the educated and the uneducated layman (Section on Authority, heading C). Only the educated man has the right to differ from the authority. It is another way of expressing the same thing if we say that the right to criticize Church and Bible belongs not to any man as man, but to him only as a member of the Church and student of the Bible. He must criticize from within, not from without.

Luther provides us with a classical instance of such criticism. The Church of the day came to him with a certain doctrine about the forgiveness of sins. As a member of the Church he considered it and was dissatisfied. He rejected the Church as an authority and declared himself as a rival teacher. He compared the books of the Bible in reference to the same matter. St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith satisfied him, while St. James' teaching did not. Accordingly he allowed himself to make disparaging remarks about St. James' Epistle. The justification for Luther's procedure lay in his power to convince others that he was right and the Church was wrong. But for the moment the responsibility lay with himself alone in the sight of God.

The same process in principle must be gone through whenever any one is faced by a problem in faith or conduct. He should begin by consulting Church and Bible. It is probable that he will be able to follow one or both of these guides. But he may feel obliged to strike out a line which is or seems to be new. If so, the responsibility is his, and his justification lies in the future.

What, finally, shall be said of the relation of the individual to the authority of Christ which is infallibly authoritative because He creates the new moral personality to which He appeals with the certainty of meeting with a whole hearted response? Here we notice that Christ's authority in the act of being accepted ceases to be an external authority at all. The seat of authority comes to be within the soul. The same holds of the authority of Church and Bible so far as it is accepted. It, too, becomes an authority within. As Martineau said in the passage which we have already quoted, "That which speaks to us from another and a higher strikes home and wakes the echoes in ourselves, and is thereby instantly transferred from external attestation to self-evidence." As it is

true that a man will find growing in himself a taste for a particular kind of art, and yet never realize that the art has developed the taste, so—and yet how far more deeply—is it true that we have within us the response to Christ which He Himself has made.

There are those who shrink from the word Authority, who cannot submit themselves to any dictation save that of their own conscience and reason, enlightened of course with rays from every possible luminary.

The difference between this position and that which the present writer has sought to establish is hardly more than verbal. The power which unites them is the presence and Person of the Holy Spirit. So far as it is possible to sum up in a single sentence the main thought of this essay, it is that the ultimate Authority in Christianity—the ultimate Authority therefore on the personal side for English Churchmen—is the Spirit of the historic Christ immanent within the soul.

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