THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

It is part of the confessional system of all the Protestant Churches that Holy Scripture is invested with divine authority and that in virtue of this fact it is "the only infallible rule of faith and practice". The truth of this statement may be seen by a consideration of the following citations. The Confessio Fidei Gallicana (1559), Article V, "We believe that the Word contained in these books (the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments) has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from him alone, and not from men. . . . Whence it follows that no authority, whether of antiquity, or custom, or numbers, or human wisdom, or judgments, or proclamations, or edicts, or decrees, or councils, or visions, or miracles, should be opposed to these Holy Scriptures, but, on the contrary, all things should be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them." The Confessio Helvetica Posterior (1566), Cap. I. 2, "And in this Holy Scripture the universal Church of Christ has, fully explained, whatever belongs both to saving faith and to life pleasing to God. . . . 3, We believe therefore that in these Scriptures are to be sought true wisdom and piety, the manner of reforming and governing the church, etc."

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1571), Article VI, "Holy Scripture conteyneth all thinges necessarie to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved therby, is not to be required of anye man, that it shoulde be believed as an article of fayth, or be thought requisite as necessarie to salvation." The Formula Concordiae (1576), Epitome Articulorum I, "We believe, confess, and teach that the only rule and norm, according to which all dogmas and all doctors ought to be esteemed and judged, is no other whatever than the prophetic and apostolic writings both of the Old and of the New Testament." The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), I, 4, "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."

There can be little doubt that the religious practice of the majority of the adherents of the Protestant Church is in accord with these confessional statements. The aggressively missionary and evangelistic section of the church maintains the authority of Scripture unimpaired, because, apart from other valid reasons, those who are engaged in the practical work of the Kingdom of God are soon convinced that the only word that will conquer the world for God is the word that possesses divine authority. Again it cannot be doubted that the multitudes who hear the Scripture read from Sabbath to Sabbath receive it as an authoritative statement of the Divine will. But it is also true that there is considerable doubt as to the validity of the orthodox position. The basis for Christian work is sought not directly in the command of God but indirectly in the needs of humanity. Not infrequently the text for the homily is stated only to be corrected and made the point of departure for a lesson that is ethical rather than religious. The views that take the Bible books as historical sources for the understanding of Christianity, not very different from other sources, and who see in the prophets and apostles, as Schlatter puts it,1 interesting characters from ancient religious history, or religious geniuses, have been popularized, and have contributed to the belief that in Scripture we have to deal with man's enlarging discovery of God, not with God's progressive revelation of Himself to man. There are many who agree with Harnack that in the development of modern science we have the greatest word that God has spoken to men since the Reformation2 and who accept the authority of Scripture only so far as their concept of the teaching of science will permit them. Furthermore the methods of investigation become more and more technical and for this reason beyond the

1 Das Christliche Dogma, 1911, p. 400.
2 So Süskind in the Theologische Rundschau, 1914, p. 5.
ability of the "plain" man to criticize. He finds himself therefore in the position of being forced to accept results which he finds uncongenial to his faith, because of his inability to attack the methods by which they are obtained. So like the one whom Thomas Aquinas describes, ne ab infidelibus derideatur, he keeps silence, unwilling to oppose science and yet desiring to maintain unimpaired his faith in the authority of Scripture. What we face then is perhaps not a complete abandonment of the authority of Scripture, but a shifting, so to say, of the centre of gravity, which results in emphasizing, beyond Scripture, other authorities to govern faith and practice. It may not therefore be amiss to consider once more the whole subject of authority, that topic of perennial interest, the theory of which, as Balfour remarks, ³ "has been for three centuries the main battlefield whereon have met the opposing forces of new thought and old".

It can be shown⁴ that from the dawn of Christianity the authority of Holy Scripture has been practically recognized. Jesus and His Apostles upheld it. The early Christians died by thousands rather than part with their copies of it. Even of the Middle Ages, which we consider so dark, von Dobschütz says, "The Bible was the leading norm, and it was recognized as such." It was not however until the time of the Reformation, under pressure of the controversy with Rome, that the doctrine of the authority of Scripture was definitely formulated.⁵ Over against the Romish doctrine of the church, the Reformers placed the doctrine of the Properties of Holy Scripture. These as finally recognized were four: Authority, Necessity, Perfection, and Perspicuity. The question at issue was not so much whether Scripture possessed authority as whether this authority should be considered first, above the church. The Reformers' position

⁴ The Foundations of Belief, 1895, p. 213.
⁶ Bavinck, Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, 1906, I. pp. 476-493, "Het Gezag der Schrift".

"Het Gezag der Schrift".
may be seen by reference to the Confessional statements already quoted as well as by examining the following quotation from Calvin,6 “But since we are not favored with daily oracles from heaven, and since it is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance, it obtains the same complete credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself. . . . But there has very generally prevailed a most pernicious error, that the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church; etc.” To the same effect Turretine7 “Colligimus scripturam sacram non esse librum humana industria elaboratum, sed specialis Spiritus Sancti ductu concinnatum, adeoque vere divinum et autopiston.” The view then was that while the Church can bear testimony to Scripture it cannot place authority in Scripture any more than the demonstrations of the geometer can confer upon the figures he describes the properties they bear. Holy Scripture therefore is the supreme authority to which all others must bow.

What is the ground and what is the nature of this authority? The ground is found in the fact that Scripture is inspired and in virtue of this fact bears a unique relation to God. The meaning of inspiration has been frequently stated, so frequently indeed that it has become the custom to dismiss it with the remark that “it is presupposed”, often however to leave doubtful what kind of inspiration is presupposed. Hence for the sake of clearness let us cover in brief outline the well trodden ground.8 Inspiration is, it should be carefully noted, in the first instance neither a theory nor an hypothesis in the sense in which these words are usually employed, as mental forms used in guiding in-

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6 *Institutes*, Book I, Ch. vii. 1.
7 *De S. Scr. auctoritate*, Disp. 2, § 5.
duction, but a fact which includes in itself a number of other facts. It is the essential attribute of Holy Scripture without which Holy Scripture would cease to be Holy Scripture and as such it presents itself to our faith to be intelligently confessed. The doctrine of inspiration is simply the intelligent apprehension of the fact of inspiration with all that it implies. What then is meant by asserting with 2 Tim. iii. 16 that Scripture is θεόπνευστος? We translate the word, not “God-breathing”, but “God-breathed”; not “inspira ta quia et quatenus inspirat”, but “spirat Deum et inspirat, quia a Deo inspirata”. We note next that the word is one of that circle of concepts employed by the Christian religion which become emptied of all meaning unless there is presupposed the immanence of God. The meaning of the divine immanence is that the outgoing power of God maintains His creation in existence from moment to moment and manifests itself through all that happens. The world however is not only one but many, hence, while the maintaining power is one the things maintained are diverse. So the Christian following Scripture confesses one Holy Spirit, but traces His work in such events as the coming of wisdom, knowledge, and art, in the world at large; and in revelation and inspiration, regeneration and spiritual gifts in the church in particular. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” Inspiration is thus not isolated from the other outgoing works of God, as if it alone were an activity of the Spirit, the others not; nor is it to be identified with them. Wherein is it different? In this, it is the work of the Spirit in virtue of which it can be said that Holy Scripture is “what is spoken by the Lord through the prophet”. Here then are two things to be considered if we would grasp the meaning of inspiration: the divine activity of the auctor primarius, the instrumental activity of the auctores secundarii. Now it has been said that the Christian theologian is the man who thinks of things “under the aspect of eternity”, which implies in large and small an earnest effort to keep the divine proportion. This lays upon us the duty of understanding in-
spiration in such a way that no violence is done either to the primary or to the secondary author. This rules out certain views of inspiration in which the Spirit's work is obscured or made secondary; such as, that inspiration is an awakening of religious feelings in the hearts of prophets and apostles, under the influence of which they composed Scripture; or that inspiration simply means that the church has approved what has been written before; or that in so far as the Scriptures do not contain what we call error they may be considered inspired. In all such views a human will intervenes between the divine will and the effect, the Holy Spirit has been denied His right. On the other hand all so-called mechanical theories, in which the secondary authors are thought of as torn loose from their environment and time, made unconscious and involuntary instruments, do violence to the secondary authors. It may be said that here is a great difficulty, but it is no greater than that of understanding the work of creation and providence, in one of which God gives the world a separate but not an independent existence, and in the other God maintains the world not in violence to but in harmony with the nature He has created. So in inspiration God makes use of the prophet and the apostle, neither annihilating his personality nor ignoring his environment, both of which He had prepared and controlled for this very purpose, but using all so that the result is "God's word through the prophet" for the salvation of His people.

This view of inspiration enables us to make clear certain matters often misunderstood or altogether ignored. Says one, "I can agree that where there is a definite command to write, what is written may be termed God's word; but what of the greater part of Scripture where there is no such command?" The answer is that the *impulsus ad scribendum* is to be more widely interpreted and that there is a necessity, on our view of God and the world, for so doing. Writing is a divinely ordained method of making spoken words the permanent possession of the whole world. The
prophetic call would imply the use of all the means necessary to accomplish the end in view. Again, we are enabled to understand how all the usual helps to composition: investigation, comparison, sources, etc., should have been used by the authors of Scripture; how each spoke the language and used the character of thought to which he had been accustomed; how all the ordinary literary forms: prose, poetry, history, epic, drama, oratory, letters, etc., should have been employed. The Scriptures did not arise outside but within history, and consequently the Spirit availed Himself of all as instruments serviceable for the end in view. Once more we can understand why Scripture in place of repelling investigation, really invites it. As Christ once commanded Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side”, so Scripture does not forbid either historical or dogmatic criticism; but further, as Christ also said, “Be not faithless, but believing”, so Scripture desires that this criticism shall lead men to the Scripture not away from it.9 There is one thing, however, that this theory, contrary to the opinion of many, does not allow and that is that Scripture is fallible. Here it is not otherwise than with the confession of the mystery of Christ’s person. We may confess all the details of His humiliation, acknowledge all the characteristics of His humanity, but if we see in Him sinfulness, He is and can be no longer our Saviour.10 He becomes a man like the rest of us


10 Cf. Professor Emerton, *Unitarian Thought*, 1911, p. 165, “‘Tempted at all points as we are and not without sin’ would seem to be the logical result from the doctrine of the complete humanity of Jesus. From this conclusion the Unitarian does not shrink. He is ready to admit with the utmost frankness that in all probability Jesus had his moments of opposition to the divine will which constitute the
and the good He does us is the good, not of the sinless only begotten Son of God, but of a human being coördinate with other human beings. So of inspiration, if it does not render the Holy Scriptures infallible their authority is no longer divine but human. What Leckie overlooks, when he argues that since it does not destroy human authorities to be fallible, it ought not to destroy divine authority, is that the very point of difference between divine and human authority is that while the latter may be fallible the former cannot be. As soon as our faith discovers fallibility in a supposed divine authority, straightway the authority takes its flight to some other resting place; as Leckie escapes from the fallible Scripture to the infallible Christ. Similarly Principal Forsyth says "For that age (the Reformation) the whole Bible was equally inspired. . . . But now we do not so read the Bible." According he takes refuge in something else which is divine and which for him possesses infallibility, "God's redeeming work in Christ".

The nature of the authority of Holy Scripture is to be understood by reference to the fact that the present dispensation of God is gracious. God is sovereign and does exercise His sovereignty; God is and will be the judge of him who rejects Christ. At present however the divine method is one of entreaty and gracious invitation. The nature of the authority of Scripture is in accord with the characteristics of the present "year of love". He who comes into contact with Scripture is in the presence of "the new world of God" created for him by the Holy Ghost through the medium

attitude of 'sin'. Even our meagre and laudatory accounts of him give abundant support for this view." The result of this view for the "Saviourhood" of Christ is, page 172, "The Unitarian welcomes the whole conception of the 'salvation' of the race through a human interpretation of the divine to men. . . . The person of Jesus thus takes its place in Unitarian thought as one in a long line of revealers to men of the law by which they are called upon to live. He was not the first; he will not be the last."

"Authority in Religion, 1909, Chapter IV, "Authority and Infallibility".

"The Principle of Authority, 1913, p. 320."
of literary forms. This new world overflowing with the beauty of the divine life asks the aid of no secular arm nor civil power, seeks the help of no ecclesiastical might beyond that of faithful presentation; it does not rule by power or might; but invites a free and willing recognition which it itself brings to pass in an ethical way through the working of the Holy Spirit whose instrument it is.

The authority of Holy Scripture interpreted in this way has always had to maintain itself against opposing views. The reason is not far to seek. The exercise of faith, someone has said, is part of the cross which we carry in this world, and the bearing of the cross is not easy. All through the ages there have been stumbling blocks in the way of a humble acceptance of Holy Scripture and it is nothing wonderful that men have forsaken it for other bearers of divine authority under whose rule they imagine the task will be easier. Now since our thought embraces a world of action of which the individual is one limit, and humanity the other, it follows that when the authority of Scripture has been abandoned as untenable, now the individual, now the community is taken to be the seat of divine authority. The latter view is represented by the Church of Rome, the former by the varying nuances of the theology of consciousness.

The history of the Church of Rome has been an oft told tale and our only reason for repeating it here is the desire to account for its rise by the working, now beneath the surface, now above, of the effort to establish a visible society as the bearer of divine authority and so to make headway in the present world. There are two periods in the growth of the Church of Rome: the first when its course was almost merged in the general growth of the church universal; the second when it gathered to itself all that was its own and began an independent development which has continued to our own day. Let our method be that of summoning the witnesses, bearing in mind the fact that there is reciprocal action between great men and the times in which
they live. If they influence them, they in turn are also influenced by them. So the concept of the church gradually came to contain the qualifications of unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity.\(^{13}\) The first two arose naturally in contact with the physical oppression of the persecuting heathen and the intellectual attack of the Gnostics. The latter two are found first in the epistle of Ignatius of Antioch to the Smyrneans,\(^{14}\) ‘wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the catholic church,’ and ‘See that ye all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ the Father; and the presbytery, as the apostles.’ In themselves these expressions seem of no very great moment, but they mean this: the church was becoming conscious of itself as a unity embracing many individual churches, and this unity was using as organizing concept, the hierarchy. Our next witness is Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage, died 258) from whom we receive clear information concerning the advance of catholic ecclesiasticism. Individually the bishops are rulers clothed with divine authority; collectively they are leaders of the catholic church. Of the church as a visible organization he says, ‘He cannot have God for his Father, who does not have the church for his mother.’ In the Lord’s supper the bishop does what Christ did: offers His body and blood. In finding a basis for the unity of the church, Cyprian uses the words in Mat. xvi. 18, 19, and says ‘super unum (Dominus) aedificat ecclesiam et . . . ut unitatem manifestaret, unitatis eiusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate dispositur’. Our next witness is Augustine (354-430) who is an example of how deeply spiritual utterances may yet be used in the service of a crass materialism. In his view the church is catholic because it extends over the whole earth as Christ had willed that it should do. It is before the individual Christian, ‘Evangelio non crederem nisi me catholicae ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas.’ Its decision is decisive in matters of faith. How the decision was to be given Augustine does not


tell us. The answer still lay below the horizon. To Vincent of Lerins (about 440) we owe next the norma sensus catholici, one must not depart from quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. This norm not only tended to exclude the reforming efforts of individuals but also raised problems for later ages to solve: how is a consensus obtained and how can that which was concealed from the older church become catholic truth?

“The world and affairs,” said Wendell Phillips, “have shown me that one-half of history is loose conjecture, and much of the rest is the writer's opinion.” Here however we are not dealing in conjecture. We have before us, emerging as it were from the mist, the mountain tops by which we can trace the hidden hills in their windings until they come up beneath our feet. The first period of development prepared the material which the second period rapidly fabricated into the papal monarchy. Pope Leo I (died 461) claimed for the chair of Peter a “cura universalis ecclesiae”. Perhaps he did not mean that the earthly head of the church had the function of revealing truth and imparting salvation but the time was favorable for such a development. It was a period of great illiteracy and glowing imagination. The people of western Europe desired a heavenly presence in an earthly garb: the Lord sacrificed in the mass; the Lord living in His vicar; the Holy Spirit imparted in the ordination of the clergy; the gifts of the Spirit in the sacraments. The church met these expectations more than half way. Under Gregory VII (1020-1085) and Innocent III (1161-1216) the activity of the Roman See in securing rights and building better ideals among peoples naturally violent was remarkable in its success and contributed in no small degree to enhancing the authority of the church. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) supplied the needed reflective justification for the accepted papal supremacy and infallibility, and the power of the keys claimed by the individual priest.15 It will be noted that the papal concept of

15 Summa, Sec. 2, Quaest. 1, art. 10.
the church is not yet a dogma, not yet sanctioned by church decision. The time was not yet ripe since political power and national feeling opposed it as well as the individual bishop’s pride in office. The papal view however continued to make headway. Silvester Prierias (1456-1523) put the matter as follows: “ecclesia universalis essentialiter est convocatio . . . omnium credentium, virtualiter ecclesia Romana et pontifex maximus; ecclesia Romana representativa est collegium cardinalium, virtualiter autem pontifex summus”. These utterances refer to the struggle that was arising as to whether the bishops collectively or the Pope officially was the organ of divine authority. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) did not decide the question but after several centuries more of struggle the papal theory triumphed in the Constitutio Vaticana, “Pastor aeternus”, of July 18, 1870. It thus belongs to the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church that the organ of divine authority is the church, not the church in general however but “sharpened” so to speak in the Pope of Rome who in his official position is infallible “in definienda doctrina de fide et moribus”.

We are not concerned with the many subtle distinctions by which the dogma of papal infallibility is upheld,16 nor shall we trace the growth of the concept further. It seems to have been formed largely under the influence of practical motives. Our survey however would be incomplete were we not to notice how the concept impresses contemporary Romanists. For this purpose let us examine Wilfrid Ward’s justification of churchly authority.17 In the Hibbert Journal article the position taken is briefly as follows: “Those who know” build up a body of special knowledge to which the individual should defer. If genius stirs within him he should strive to correct and develop corporate knowledge, not to destroy it. In addition to reason man possesses conscience

16 Cf. Professor P. J. Toner’s article on “Infallibility” in Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII.
which also tells him of a vast world of reality. Conscience uttered its voice in holy men but most fully in Jesus Christ. This utterance of conscience is the revelation which it is the function of the Christian church to preserve. The authority of the church consists then in possessing the corporate reason of the society exercised on the highest existing knowledge of the particular subject-matter. The revelation of Christ is the highest point attained in spiritual knowledge, yet its application to the world is a necessarily continuing process. This also is the function of the church and here again the individual must seek to help and not hinder.

In the essay cited from *Men and Manners* the work of the church in promoting progress is skirted in the following way: "The first process, of resistance, is the work of authority, of Rome itself; the second, of assimilation, is the work of individuals, authority only tolerating it and not necessarily helping it, until it is so far tested that authority can more or less ratify what individuals have initiated."

Thus Ward's position seems to be that of Clough:

"Old things need not be therefore new,
O brother man, nor yet the new.
The souls of now two thousand years
Have laid up here their toils and fears
And all the earnings of their pain.
Ah yet, consider it again."17a

The utterances of Father Tyrrel on authority were so radical that they caused his excommunication. Nevertheless, as he tells us,18 he always considered himself "a member of the church according to the spirit". Father Tyrrel defines authority in a spiritual inward sense. "All she (the church) can say to me is, 'If you love me, keep my commandments', if I do not keep her commandments, she can say, 'You do not love me'; but she cannot coerce or

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17a Quoted by Leckie, p. 14.
18 In *Through Scylla and Charybdis, or the Old Theology and the New*, 1907, p. 81.
threaten me." His personal experience must have convinced Father Tyrrel that he had interpreted the authority of the church wrongly. Much as he disliked the "dictatorship of the Papacy" he had no desire to take refuge in the "anarchy of Liberal Protestantism", and so he gives out another interesting utterance, that authority is that which comes from "an agreement of individual minds". This again seems not the historical position of the Roman Catholic Church.

The authority of the church is therefore auctoritas or prestige. In this respect the Romish concept of authority is true to the genius of the great empire whose place she assumed. The subtle working of this notion is revealed in every department of her activity. Such features of the first age of the church as form material for prestige are retained, the others ignored. Such Scripture passages as Matthew xvi. 18, etc., where more than one meaning is possible, are always interpreted so as to enhance the prestige of the church. Prestige depends on recognition and so the methods of the propaganda in partibus infidelium are guided by the effort to gain the latter: whether it be the assumption of mandarin power in China, or costly buildings in the United States, imposing ritual, elaborate street parades, and official masses on public holidays. It would be a mistake to suppose that a concept of authority gained in this way is devoid of spiritual value. On the contrary it can satisfy such minds as those of Cardinal Newman at the one extreme and of the simple-minded Catholics at the other, whose faith we are told by one who ought to know, is of "an intensely supernatural character". But to the Calvinist whose view is diametrically opposed to this concept of authority there are some things which not even

19 Mediaevalism: A Reply to Cardinal Mercier, 1908, p. 65.
20 Cf. Professor Lobstein's moralizing article on the "lessons" of Modernism for Protestantism in the Hibbert Journal for October, 1912.
21 George Coore in his article on "Modernism and the Catholic Consciousness" in the Hibbert Journal for Jan. 1913.
22 As Melchior Leydecker said: "Inter nos et adversarios... hoc
God can do. He can not give His glory to another without ceasing to be God. For this reason, when the authority of the Church of Rome is earnestly reflected upon with the resolve to take all the data into consideration, which as we remarked in the foregoing ought to be the guiding principle of that "reflecting" faith which intelligent Christians should possess, it reveals itself at base as not different from that of other human societies.

We turn now to the examination of those views which recognize authority in the dicta of the believing consciousness. This notion has existed from the beginning of the Christian church but it will be most profitable to study it in those modern representatives in whose thought it has been most carefully elaborated. So we will begin with Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who developed the religious implications of the philosophy of Schelling and his associates. Against his predecessor Kant (1724-1804) who reduced religion to morality, and his contemporary Hegel (1770-1831) who considered it as thought not completely developed, Schleiermacher vindicated for religion an independent position, placing its seat neither in the understanding nor in the will but in feeling. In the second of his Reden über die Religion published in 1799, "Über das Wesen der Religion", we find religion described as an immediate consciousness on the part of the finite, of all being in and through the infinite, a thought which recalls Spinoza. This consciousness is neither knowing nor doing but feeling for an infinite which at this stage in Schleiermacher's development is not conceived as personal deity but is simply the world thought of as a whole. Thirty years later, in the Glaubenslehre published in 1830, we find this same view presented with greater precision. The feeling which is the essential feature of religion is differentiated from all other feelings in that it goes out upon the infinite God and is not
so much aesthetic as ethical in nature. Now pious feelings may be described, and the description guided by concepts. Thus a system of propositions concerning feeling may be formed into a "Glaubenslehre" but since these are merely descriptive of what by definition has no logical value, the system they compose is not to be considered scientific. On these principles the church is for Schleiermacher the "community of the pious". In describing its origin we must employ the concepts of Election and Participation in the Holy Ghost, the latter conceived simply as the common spirit of the pious community. The church expresses itself in literary form in the Scriptures which thus are the first of the long series of Christian writings differing from the rest merely in coming first and for this reason exuberant with the spirit of youth.

What becomes of authority in the system of Schleiermacher? At first glance it would seem that there was no place for it, since religion is based on feeling, and, as the history of thought proves, it is no easy task to show that this feeling must, qua feeling, apart from other non-affective considerations, have precedence over that. Schleiermacher deals with the problem by pointing out that we are here concerned with truth and error in the religious sphere, consequently of religious society exists, it is neither knowledge nor action, but a determination of feeling or of immediate self-consciousness". §4 the differents of religious feeling is "that we are our own, or, what means the same, in relation to God conscious".

24 §115 "Die Christliche Kirche bildet sich durch das Zusammentreten der einzelnen Wiedergeborenen zu einem geordneten Aufeinanderwirken und Miteinanderwirken".

25 §128 "Das Ansehen der heiligen Schrift kann nicht den Glauben an Christum begründen, vielmehr muss dieser schon vorausgesetzt werden um der heiligen Schrift ein besonderes Ansehen einzüräumen". §129 "Die heiligen Schriften des neuen Bundes sind auf der einen Seite das erste Glied in der seitdem fortlaufenden Reihe aller Darstellungen des christlichen Glaubens; auf der andern Seite sind sie die Norm für alle folgenden Darstellungen".

26 Cf. what is said in §153 under the caption "Von der Irrtüumsfähigkeit der sichtbaren Kirche in Bezug auf die Unträglichkeit der
quentely that in dealing with feeling we must find a substitute for the cognitive expressions, truth and error. This substitute is found in the concepts of purity and impurity. When however is a feeling pure? The answer is when it, like the religious feeling of Christ, tends completely to its object. The feeling of the church falls far below this but the tendency is towards a greater purity.

The thinker who clears up his system completely always runs the danger of clearing it away. Schleiermacher’s effort to find authority in feeling, even by making the feeling of our Lord the norm, was felt as an unsatisfactory solution. Man in his religious life cannot live on feeling alone, but on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. So the task was set for Schleiermacher’s followers of retaining what he had made a permanent possession of Christian thought and supplying what he had failed to establish. So far as the problem of authority is concerned this consisted in retaining the Christian consciousness as its basis but in avoiding the mysticism of Schleiermacher by introducing more historical and therefore less subjective sanctions. This work was carried out by Ritschl (1822-1889), and his successors. Ritschl’s aim, as one of his expositors says, was to replace the theology current in his day, based as it was

Unsichtbaren": “Wie in jedem Theil der sichtbaren Kirche der Irrthum möglich, mithin auch irgendwie wirklich ist: so fehlt es auch in keinem an der berechtigenden Kraft der Wahrheit”.

27 Cf. §110.3 “Von Anfang seiner Menschwerdung an Christus sich auf alle Weise naturgemäss aber stetig und ununterbrochen in der organischen Vereinigung mit dem ihn beseelenden Princip zum Dienst desselben entwickelte; keinem Andern aber, der seine Persönlichkeit aus dem Gesamtlleben der Sündhaftigkeit mitbringt, eine solche vergönnt ist.”

28 §153.1 “Daher es auch in jeder Kirchengemeinschaft Einzelne wenigstens giebt, die sich über die herrschenden Irrthümer erheben und die Keime einer bestimmenden Entwicklung der Wahrheit in sich tragen,” and §155 “Alle Irrthümer, welche sich in der sichtbaren Kirche erzeugen, werden durch die in derselben immer fortwirkenden Wahrheit aufgehoben.”

on a speculative interpretation of consciousness, with one firmly grounded on a positive interpretation of the history of salvation. Like all great thinkers Ritschl with his powerful genius is a gathering place of thought, into which set the tides of the past and from which issue those of the future. For our present task however it will be sufficient to select those of his thoughts which bear on the question of authority, and first his view of religion. Religion for Ritschl is a very real and definite sphere of human experience. Man is conscious of spiritual freedom and yet knows that he is dependent upon nature, the sum total of the objects and forces that environ him. Nevertheless nature is not the ultimate fact; it has a spiritual Author. In this is given the possibility of a religious escape from the world in that man may assure his spiritual freedom by means of fellowship with God. Religion therefore as a concrete thing is composed of all the human activities, institutions, etc., originating in the conflict of which man is aware and in which he desires that he and not the world may conquer by availing himself of God. Now revelation refers to all the means by which man may enter into fellowship with God, and for this reason religion and revelation are correlative terms. Where is this revelation to be found? Ritschl is more interested in Christianity than in any other religion and so he answers that the Christian revelation is in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the founder of the Kingdom of God, a "Kingdom of Ends" to which all else in the universe is as means, and in which man attains his spiritual freedom. This forms what may be called the religious data of experience on which theological reflection is to work. Ritschl however is not content with making his theology a mass of descriptive assertions like that of Schleiermacher, nor, under the influence of Kant, does it seem to him possible to make theoretical judgments concerning the religious life and the objects which it contains, so he avails himself of the distinction between judgments of truth and judgments of worth, claiming the latter as the material of theology. Historically
this distinction arose in Kant’s separation of theoretical and practical reason. In the former we have the constant forms of sense perception, space and time, which serve as \textit{principia individuationis}, and the constant categories of the understanding, cause, substance, unity, and plurality, by which the individuals of sense perception become the ordered world of the understanding: In the latter, the practical reason, an analogous solution would be the development of a system of pure volitional \textit{norms} to do for the world of will what the pure \textit{forms} had done for the world of intellect. What the volitional norms are Kant never satisfactorily enunciated. He died leaving the problem as a legacy for his intellectual children. Ritschl seized on the distinction but it always remained a distinction for him and nothing more, and the failure to analyze clearly the difference and to demonstrate a principle of authority in judgments of worth, if indeed such can be, is responsible for the unavoidable appearance of arbitrariness in the selection of the concepts by which he organizes his system. Take for example his famous definition of Christianity: “Das Christentum ist die monotheistische, vollendet geistige und sittliche Religion, welche auf Grund des erlösenden und das Gottesreich gründenden Lebens ihres Stifters in der Freiheit der Gotteskindschaft bestehe, den Antrieb zu dem Handeln aus Liebe in sich schliesse und in der Gotteskindschaft wie in dem Reich Gottes die Seligkeit begründe.”

Why are these concepts selected as of constitutive worth? They do not include all the data of Christianity. Wherein consists their authority for Christians? To Ritschl, as to many of his adherents, such questions may have appeared to belong to those “ungereimte Fragen” on which the sage of Königsberg poured such scorn, but, unreasonable or not, his system of thought contained no answer to them, and without an answer religious experience had no authority beyond looking into the mirror of experience and seeing—itself. For even if I say that Jesus is the object but assign

\textsuperscript{30} Recht. u. Ver. III. 14.
normativity merely to that which I select from his portrait because of its worth to me, how in the last instance have I gone beyond myself?

Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht. The subsequent development of Ritschlianism supplies all the criticism that is needed of the attempt to find an authority in judgments of worth. Let us pause a moment to consider the general problem. It may perhaps be granted with Garvie\(^3\)\(^1\) that to accuse Ritschl of illusionism or solipsism, as his first critics did, is extreme, for judgments of worth do not deny the existence of an object but assume it. But when Garvie proceeds to remark that the standard of worth is not subjective but objective, it is pertinent to ask what is the meaning of objective in this connection. He gives no clear answer to the question. Furthermore, investigation has shown that the concept of worth is much more subtle than it was supposed to be at first. Worth is an attribute neither of subject nor object but a functional relation between the two.\(^3\)\(^2\) This definition is not adequate however, for as has been pointed out\(^3\)\(^8\) meaning is also a relation of subject and object. Hence meaning may be regarded as a genus capable of division into two species, logical (or cognitive) and affective-conative. Value may then be taken as affective meaning, and purpose as conative meaning. The attempt has been made to ascertain whether there can be any absolute worth. Reflection shows that account must be taken of the "dispositional concept" so-called or the tendencies of the subject which make his worths this or that. These dispositional concepts are the product of individual and social causes so complex that they are not easy to analyze. Investigation nevertheless while not yet complete seems to show that all affective-conative values are dispositional values subject to empirical laws of mutation and hence neither in the indi-

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\(^3\)\(^1\) A Handbook of Christian Apologetics, 1913, p. 48.

\(^3\)\(^2\) Cf. Meinong, Psychologisch-Ethische Untersuchungen zur Wertetheorie, 1894, p. 29; Ehrenfels, System der Wertetheorie, 1897, p. 65.

\(^3\)\(^8\) Journal of Philosophy, Psychology etc. XI. 7, "Value in its Relation to Meaning and Purpose", J. S. Moore.
vidual nor in the social consciousness absolute in any proper sense of the term. In fact unless we take account of logical or cognitive worth, the very point which by assumption the Ritschlians exclude from the field, no absolute authority is to be found. But when logical or cognitive work is excluded, an empty place is left, which the Ritschlians attempt to fill by means of the other kinds of worth. This is the procedure of the ordinary unreflective or so-called evangelical popularized Ritschlianism of Great Britain and the United States. The Virgin Birth of our Lord has no cognitive value but great affective-conative value; Jesus died like any other man but "His soul keeps marching on"; the Resurrection of Jesus is an event about which we cannot be certain but the assurance is that His power is greater now than it ever was, that we understand Him better, etc. The work of Herrmann, Kaftan, and Wobbermin, is not of this unreflective character but the futility of their efforts to satisfy the demand of faith for an absolute authority while keeping merely to affective-conative values would seem to show that the self-created impasse cannot be surmountied. Thus Herrmann finds in the "inner life" of Jesus, the religious ethical greatness of the historic Savior, the other member for the support of our judgments of worth. Our affections go out to Him, our purposes to the worthy end, the Kingdom of God. At first sight this view is exceedingly charming clothed as it is in all the eloquence which the author knows so well how to employ. Further reflection however suggests some difficult questions. Why on the terms of the system has Jesus the position he has? Why should Christianity be isolated from the other world religions? Why, surrendering the distinctive position of religion gained by Schleiermacher, should Herrmann make it a department of the ethical? Kaftan also attempts to find an authority for religious experience. He recognizes a special revelation prepared in Israel and culminating in Christ and the sending of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{33a} He at once however

\textsuperscript{33a} Dogmatik, 1901, p. 34.
robs his position of any advantage it might have by inter­posing faith as the medium through which the revelation must come to validity. Revelation becomes then that from which faith may take what it pleases under the guidance of the practical ideas of the Christian religion, which are arbitrarily determined to be Atonement and the Kingdom of God. Finally Wobbermin recognizes that the content of our religious-ethical consciousness implies an objective authority which is to be found in the person of Christ who stood in unbroken fellowship with the Father and whose experience was never disturbed by sin. But this Jesus is known out of the sources from which a historical-psychological method is to derive the norms of a religious ethical life. Authority is thus placed in the validity of the method or if transferred to the content which the method discovers it is no more than ethical.

The worth-judgments of Ritschlianism therefore seem to be just as troublesome and just as indispensable as the Ding an Sich of Kantianism; retain it and it is the one thing that cannot be explained; exclude it and the system ceases to exist. Professor Troeltsch carries the development to its logical conclusions. Religion is to be looked on as a universal expressed in the historical religions and to be investigated by the religious-historical method. The elaboration of this method is Troeltsch's special contribution to the advance of theological thought. Its application may be seen by the following considerations. Christianity is not to be separated from the other religions but is to be classed with them. Nevertheless it is Troeltsch's wish to demonstrate that Christianity must come first and so the task is to find a norm by which to rank the various religions. This norm arises by assuming hypothetically the standards of Christianity and applying them sympathetically to the

35 "Es kann im Christentum kein anderes Wunder enthalten sein als im sonstigen Geschehen."
other religions. At once worths and ideals are recognized which involuntarily arrange themselves in series from highest to lowest. The only assumption in this we are told is that of the ability of our reason to recognize value when it is seen. The result of the investigation is that Christianity is found to be the highest religion hitherto developed and as such the basis for future developments. It cannot however be shown to be the absolutely unsurpassable religion. Now since in this there is no authority such as religion requires, it is not surprising that Troeltsch turns next to the problem of the religious a priori. The aim is to discover a specifically religious a priori different from the logical, the ethical, the aesthetic a priori, or in other words that the religious consciousness possesses its own specific law. Troeltsch’s formula is “Das Apriori ist die aus dem Wesen der Vernunft heraus zu bewirkende absolute Substanzbeziehung, vermöge deren alles Wirkliche und alle Werte auf eine absolute Substanz als Ausgangspunkt und Massstab bezogen werden.” This is clear enough as it stands but nevertheless discussion has arisen not so much perhaps as to what Troeltsch has in mind but as to what his words imply. Some, so Süsskind informs us, think that it is analogous to what Kant called the “Metaphysical tendency of the spirit.” He himself however does not agree with this interpretation but allies Troeltsch’s meaning with the concept of “purity” in Schleiermacher already mentioned in the preceding which consists in the relating of all that is and takes place to the activity of the universe or to the divine in its omnipresent efficiency. Is it then logical or psychological? If the latter we have not advanced beyond the preceding concept of authority, if the former it is not easy to see why the development has not returned to rationalism.

We have now traced the concept of authority as presented in the three historically important views of its ground and nature. Let us now reflect on the problem of whether a choice may be made between them. Let us put before our-
selves, for now we are in position to do so, what authority really means. "La définition", says Professor Doumergue, "contient tout le système". True! But we should end with it, not begin with it. Various definitions of authority are presented for our consideration by those who have written on the subject. Stanton defines authority as "that principle which is exhibited in all reasons for receiving, or assenting to, a truth, if such there be, which are external to the man himself, to his own observation, reasoning, or intuition, or which, if revealed internally, lie beyond the reach of his own verification." Sterrett flipantly enough makes authority equivalent to the "must" which Patrick told the priest he had left behind when he came to the new country. Monod borrows a definition from M. Edmond Scherer, "Tout ce qui détermine une action ou une opinion par des considérations étrangères à la valeur intrinsèque de l'ordre intimé ou de la proposition énoncée." Sabatier defines authority as "the right of the species over the individual". Leckie says "Authority is a power not self produced, which rules belief or conduct." Iverach calls authority "a power to enforce obedience". Forsyth apparently gives no formal definition but evidently considers it as that which has the right to rule the individual.

The remark has been made that the term authority "is used with the greatest indiscrimination, so as to include all the grounds, valid or invalid, for the acceptance of any content as true. In view of this the great need is a critique that will enable us to determine the place and value of authority in a scheme of knowledge and belief." If we understand Professor Ormond correctly his contention is

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36 The Place of Authority in Religious Belief, 1891, p. 12.
37 Reason and Authority in Religion, 1891.
38 Le Problème de l’autorité, 1892.
40 Authority in Religion, 1909.
41 Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, "Authority".
42 The Principle of Authority, 1913.
43 Professor Ormond, Foundations of Knowledge, 1900, p. 355.
that authority is not what he calls an "end-category"; its claim must be legitimated by grounds. Therefore our consideration of the term will be incomplete unless we notice the field of authority and the grounds on which it bases its claim in each field. Authority is to be seen in the methods and the results of science. In this field a body of positive knowledge has been built up the power of which to command assent is well nigh irresistible. The ground of this authority is truth, an assertion which is not invalidated by the difficulty of reaching a satisfactory definition of truth. For men do not waste time in defining that which has absolutely no relation to the subject in hand. A second field of authority is government, the expression of the collective will, which with its laws and offices we all regard as the highest authority in a certain great sphere of action. At first we may think that this authority is based on might but to reflection this reveals itself as not a final explanation; the might must be directed by the good. Here again there has been endless discussion of the meaning of the good but without causing most men to believe that the good exists both in the abstract and the concrete, and without invalidating the authority of government guided by the good. We also recognize authority in ethics and here it is the authority of the "ought". Once more men differ with respect to that which confers upon the "ought" its power to command, but once more the discussion is not a proof that the ought has no authority; rather that the domain of the human spirit is so vast that no one formula can exhaust it. Is it that the ought represents the voice of the reasonable, the universal, self? Or is it that which will bring happiness to all concerned? Is it the will of the compact majority, liable to change but authoritative as long as it lasts? Or is it the side of the expanding self, the one constant thing which it is our duty to follow through each changing moment of our life? Not every grounding of the authority of the ought has equal claim to recognition but each in its way is not intended to weaken the authority of duty but rather to strengthen it.
These considerations enable us to think clearly concerning authority in religion. Here again there must be authority and here again we may ask what is the ground of this authority. The unanimous answer is that it must be a divine authority. This calls for explanation however, if we are to grasp exactly the meaning of our assertions. We shall present one view of their meaning. Religion is a relation between God and man. God however is not an object to be investigated by man at man's good pleasure; God must take the initiative and enter into relation with man. God must make Himself known and this activity of God is His Revelation. Thus religion implies revelation. Now Christians believe that in virtue of the work of Creation and Providence, the entire world and all that takes place in it form a standing revelation of God. Notice that both Creation and Providence are standing activities, the former of which is the explanation of miracle, miracles being a creative way of God's making Himself known. For the Christian then all experience is capable of religious interpretation for it may lead him to God. It may also lead him away from God, because, since the world, as we have said, has been given a separate, if not independent, existence, there is the possibility of seeing the creature and ignoring the Creator. This is what has happened and so Christians know that they are sinners in need of salvation. They also believe that God has come near to them in order to save them, a revelation not different in source from the other mentioned above: no more supernatural, no more miraculous, no less providential, but with a special aim: to bring about the salvation of God's people.

The authority in religion therefore must be the authority

of God Himself—no other will suffice. The revelation of God wherever seen will also possess authority because it is the expression of God Himself, hence for Christians the authority of the true, the good, the ought, goes back to God the Creator and Preserver, and from Him as source obtain their power to control. For the same reason, and, considering our need, in a more urgent degree, the special revelation alluded to above will possess authority.

These considerations enable us to understand the confessional statements concerning the authority of the Holy Scripture. Its authority is not merely that it contains the true, that it expresses the good, that it instructs us concerning our duty; so do many other things; nor is it that it contains the original records of Christ for us to examine and retain what will stand our proving; but it is that it itself forms a part of the special revelation, prepared by the Holy Spirit in the manner we have already described, to be the permanent possession of the people of God. It possesses authority as source, not repetition; not merely as means of grace but as means of revelation; not merely the record of what grace did for far off peoples in the distant centuries, to be used by us as an occasional stimulus for feeble devotion; but the revealing to us personally, here and now, of that God whose word liveth and abideth for ever.

As a matter of course many objections are offered to this view. Some characterise it as Bibliolatry and others reëcho Lessing’s gibe about the “Paper Pope”. Proof is demanded, but in questions of fact the only proof possible is the presentation of the fact that the occurrence in question took place. Many are not content however; they point to the indirect testimony: that the “circumstances” of Scripture make it impossible for us to allow its claim of supreme authority as our forefathers did; that there are many internal contradictions; that many scripture books are not authentic; that we cannot reconcile scripture history with profane history; that we can no longer hold to creation or miracles; that the life and morals of the scripture characters are often very
bad; that it is full of myths and superstitions; that the original texts are lost and that those we have are not infrequently suspicious, and so on through all the familiar list. Scripture however still survives and the century of the fiercest attack has been the century of its farthest reaching conquests—not however by the aid of those who had lost faith in its authority but in the hands of those who upheld it.45

So we see many repeating in inverse order the procedure of which our Lord complains in John v. 39, 40. The Jews acknowledged the authority of Scripture but rejected that of Jesus Christ; the men of today acknowledge the authority of Christ but reject that of Scripture. Must we not however, if we come to Christ, come through Scripture? And if we bow to the authority of Christ, must we not also bow to the authority of the Book of the Spirit of Christ? If we yield however we must do so with all our heart. It must not be the obedience of those who say that although the Scripture is full of ineptitudes, errors, misconceptions, anachronisms, childish views; although it is merely the story of how the race groped up after God, nevertheless we still resolve to hold to it in view of the great good it does in the world. That is similar to the attitude of those who say that Jesus Christ was a poor weak sinful ignorant man like the rest of us, but notwithstanding we may still respect Him in view of His good intentions and the effect He has produced. Doubtless such an attitude is better than open enmity. But the homage that is due to God and to His Word in carne or in litteris simplicis is not the condescending respect of benevolence but the implicit obedience of the creature to the Creator.

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