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THE VALUE-JUDGEMENTS OF RELIGION.

I.

Expository and Historical.

(1) A twofold interest attaches to the theory of value-judgements, and affords a double reason for our consideration of this subject at this time. *Firstly*, this theory holds a prominent place and plays a decisive part in the Ritschlian Theology, and on the truth of the theory the worth of the theology largely depends. As the Ritschlian is the dominant theological tendency in Germany, and as the school of Ritschl has begun to attract considerable attention, and to excite general interest among students of theology in this country, an endeavour to understand one of its most distinctive features may not be altogether profitless. *Secondly*, the theory is an attempt to solve a problem of even wider significance and greater importance than any theological tendency or school can be, namely, what is the relation of religious knowledge to science and philosophy? On the one hand the man to whom religion is the chief good cannot but claim that in his knowledge of God and the soul he has the highest truth; and on the other science declares by the mouth of *Comte* that the theological stage of human thought has been superseded by the metaphysical, and that the metaphysical has abdicated in favour of the scientific or positive, or by the mouth of *Spencer* that in religion man expresses his reverence for the *Unknowable*; and philosophy asserts, with the voice of *Kant*, that Christian doctrine must be translated into the terms of the pure reason; or, with the voice of *Hegel*, that religion possesses only the *image* while philosophy alone has the *idea*. It may be an advantage to us, therefore, if we can form a more distinct conception of the nature, conditions, limitations, and relations of religious knowledge.

(2) The first of these two essays is intended to be expository and historical, and the second critical and constructive, In the *first* essay I shall endeavour to give an account of the theory of value-judgements as it is presented by *Ritschl, Herrmann,* and *Kaftan.* As their treatment leaves not a few obscurities and difficulties, I shall also try to give a summary of the books on this subject which have been written by *Otto Ritschl, Reischle,* and *Scheibe.* In the *second* essay I shall deal with some of the criticisms of the theory which have been put forward by English writers on the subject, and indicate my own position in regard to it. We should then be able to pass to the wider and greater problem of religious knowledge, and its relation to science and philosophy. As a result of the discussion it is to be hoped that we may not only gain a better understanding of the theory of value-judgements, but also a clearer insight into, a firmer assurance regarding, the truth and worth of our faith in the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

I. Ritschl, Herrmann, and Kaftan on Value-Judgements.

In dealing with the theory of value-judgements as presented by the Ritschlian school it will not be necessary to have any preliminary discussion of the views of religion held by its members; for while the material content of religious knowledge is affected by the conception formed of religion, yet the formal character of this knowledge is independent of these differences of opinion regarding the nature of religion, a proof of which is that while Ritschl, Herrmann, and Kaftan all agree in holding the theory, Herrmann emphasizes the consciousness of subjection to an absolute moral law as giving man his sense of personal worth, as Ritschl does not, and Kaftan not only seriously differs from, but even severely criticizes both in his treatment of religion. As we shall have quite sufficient matter for consideration in the theory of value-judgements as defining the formal char-

acter of religious knowledge, we shall not discuss its material content as determined by the conception of religion.

(1) *Ritschl* presents the theory of value-judgements in his great work on *Justification and Reconciliation* (vol. iii. sec. 28, pp. 193–201, Eng. Tr. pp. 203–211). In the first edition of this work Ritschl found the solution of the problem of the relation of religious knowledge to science and philosophy in a separation of sphere. Science and philosophy, whatever may be their intentions, have not at their disposal the material or the method for forming a valid conception of the world as an intelligible unity. Religion alone can represent the world as a whole; and science and philosophy, when they attempt this task, follow an obscure religious impulse. So long as they confine themselves to their proper province, the observation and explanation of the world in its parts, there can be no collision between their results and the contents of religious knowledge. In the third edition this treaty of peace is denounced. It is now admitted that while "philosophy fixes the special and universal laws of nature and spirit," it also "with this task combines the ambition to comprehend the universe under one supreme law," nay "even the thought of God, which belongs to religion, is employed in some shape or other by every non-materialistic philosophy." This concession, however, having served its purpose as a proof that separate spheres cannot be assigned to religious knowledge and science and philosophy, but that these kinds of mental activity must be otherwise distinguished, is again withdrawn, and, as before, it is declared that religious knowledge and philosophy can come into conflict only when "the latter claims to produce in its own fashion a unified view of the world. This, however," he continues, "betrays rather an impulse religious in its nature, which philosophers ought to have distinguished from the cognitive methods they follow."

His criticism of materialism and pantheism further shows that he admits theoretically the possibility of such collision, but practically denies its reality. But it is not necessary to dwell on this inconsistency. For our immediate purpose we must return to the question. How does Ritschl propose to distinguish religious knowledge from science and philosophy? As the difference cannot be found in the object, it must lie in the subject of knowledge. The mind appropriates the sensations aroused in it in a twofold manner. "Either they are determined, according to their value for the Ego, by the feeling of pleasure or pain," or they are through an idea "judged in respect of their cause, the nature of the latter, and its connexion with other causes." We may feel, or we may know, and although we cannot altogether separate the two functions, as they always go together, yet sometimes the one and at other times the other is the more prominent, and as it were gives its distinctive character to the complex mental fact. With the knowing function of the subject the theoretical judgements are connected, the value-judgements belong to its feeling function. As even science, however, is not altogether disinterested—for even the student of nature has a pleasure in his pursuit—"we have to distinguish *concomitant* and *independent* value-judgements." To the latter class belong "all perceptions of moral ends or moral hindrances, in so far as they excite moral pleasure or pain, or, it may be, set in motion the will to appropriate what is good or repel the opposite." In the class of value-judgements must also be included religious knowledge, but moral and religious value-judgements must be distinguished, as in some of its forms religion has no direct relation to morality; and even in Christianity, where the moral end and the religious good are identical, "we can distinguish between the religious functions which relate to our attitude towards God and the world, and the moral functions, which point directly to men, and only in-

directly to God." Accordingly the religious value-judgements "relate to man's attitude to the world, and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain, in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed him by God or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end." The contrast between the two most prominent and potent mental forces of the age, science and Christianity, is this: "Scientific knowledge is accompanied or guided by a judgement affirming the worth of impartial knowledge gained by observation. In Christianity, religious knowledge consists in independent value-judgements, inasmuch as it deals with the relation between the blessedness which is assured by God and sought by man, and the whole of the world which God has created and rules in harmony with His final end." Among value-judgements Ritschl mentions man's consciousness that "the worth of his spiritual personality transcends that of the whole system of nature," the believer's assurance that God secures to him the dominion over the world through participation in His kingdom, the Church's confession of the divinity of Christ on the ground of what He has effected for man's salvation, the Christian estimate of moral evil as sin, because due to "indifference towards God as the Benefactor and Governor of human life." This restriction of religious knowledge to value-judgements involves, on Ritschl's part, the rejection of the theistic proofs, as they do not yield the Christian idea of God, the exclusion from theology of the metaphysics, which does not recognize the difference in worth of nature and spirit, and the refusal to extend the range of theology beyond what God is for us to what God is in Himself. Although Ritschl has not expressly dealt with the topic of Christian apologetics, yet the evidence of the value-judgements of the Christian religion which he assumes is the historical person of Jesus, and the testimony of the Christian Church.

(2) *Herrmann* treats the theory of value-judgements in

his book on *Religion in Relation to Knowledge of the World and Morality*. In an earlier work on *Metaphysics in Theology*, his object was to show "that the values valid in the Christian community are not more deeply recognized, but lose their original meaning, when by means of metaphysics one seeks to make them objects of our knowledge of the world." He seeks in this later work to carry out "the fundamental idea that the objects of Christian faith do not fall into the province of the knowledge of the world." Here the same note is struck as by Ritschl; religious knowledge must be distinguished from science and philosophy. He bases his account of this distinction on the difference of "that activity of the representing consciousness" which is uninfluenced by "that content of the human soul which is active in feeling and willing," from that attitude of the knowing subject to its object, in which it meets them as not merely a representing being, but as a being "which in its feelings experiences values, and in its will believes that it possesses the ability to realize represented values." "The subject has in the feeling of pleasure and pain a means of establishing an order of values, which means something quite different from the order of representations in the consciousness. While those are fixed in value-judgements, the inner relations in such a value-judgement and the means of theoretical knowledge are altogether incommensurable." Even in the scientific knowledge of nature there are conceptions, such as the unity and intelligibility of nature, which "are formed and posited for their value for the practical purposes of the subject"; there are value-judgements, in which "man and the nature which surrounds him are compared with one another, and the latter is determined as a means for the former as the valuable end." Even in metaphysics no impartial view of the actual world is attempted, but the effort is made to interpret the world by ideas, "the content of which has no other ground

of validity than its worth for us." Value-judgements are distinctive of religion, for "the interest of religion does not attach itself to the representation of the actually-given existence of the world as a connected intelligible unity," which is the aim of science and philosophy; but "rather the concern of religion is to regard the multiplicity of the world as the orderly whole of means, by which the highest value of the pious man, which is experienced in feeling, is realized." It is as the subject of an unconditional moral law that a man knows himself to have an absolute value, and it is this consciousness which is his warrant for assigning a value to objects, as they further or hinder his self-realization, for it gives him the assurance that "the inmost essence of the world is in harmony with his own demand for self-preservation." This process of valuation is, therefore, no merely arbitrary subjective exercise of man's mental functions; but has an objective basis in the very nature of things. Accordingly the practical explanation of the world given in religious knowledge may claim to be absolute truth, although it may differ altogether from the theoretical explanation given by metaphysics. "When I seek to represent a world-whole, because I wish to comprehend the multiplicity of things in a never failing context of law, then I go in the way of metaphysics. When I seek to represent a world-whole, because I do not wish to lose myself as a person conscious of my highest good in the multiplicity of things, then I receive the impulse to religious faith." These two ways do not lead to one reality, but "even the meaning of the word 'reality' is in both cases different." For science and philosophy the reality of things means "standing in relations"; the real means the explicable. In religious knowledge the real is that which can be enjoyed by the self-consciousness, that which can be experienced as valuable for the ends of the self. Religion can afford to be quite indifferent to "the order established by the scientific explan-

ation of the world," for the extention of science in metaphysics involves an abandonment of strictly scientific procedure, and results in a " vain sport of fancy," to which religion can confidently oppose its value-judgements, as alone meeting the demand for a satisfying explanation of the world, which metaphysics may profess, but is incompetent to afford. The distinction of religious knowledge from all other knowledge is this. " It serves to complete the moral personality in itself, and to elevate it as final purpose over the world." This characteristic is possessed by Christian truth ; for " the religious judgements of Christianity do not profess to be any more than the exposition of the *one certainty* that blessedness is the meaning of all actuality." What alone belongs to the religious consciousness is what has value for the moral personality in furthering, and not hindering, the fulfilment of its purpose, to which the whole world is but a means. Reality is affirmed of what is thus valuable on the ground of its value, and the warrant for this affirmation is found in the certainty of the absolute worth of the moral personality. But this reality has another meaning than the reality which is affirmed by theoretical judgements, which rest on perception and inference. The certainty of the former is not less than that of the latter, but its value is greater.

(3) *Kaftan* deals with the theory of value-judgements in his book *The Essence of Christianity* (chap. i. pp. 37–50). He distinguishes two mental functions—representation, which gives us " the picture of another," and feeling, which makes " us aware of ourselves as living beings." These functions express the double relation which we have to the world, as on the one hand seeking to know it, and as on the other pleasurably or painfully affected by it. Consequently " all our simple judgements are of a double kind. Either they express a state of fact, which we represent, or they express a relation which we as human

beings assume to the represented. The theoretical judgements express a fact; the value-judgements give expression to our attitude to the same. A more accurate consideration shows at once that the theoretical propositions of religious faith are of another kind than the usual theoretical judgements. They are distinguished from these just in this: that they are the result not of an objective comprehension of the events and changes in the world, and just as little of an intelligent manipulation of the judgements so gained, but rather that value-judgements are their basis." Religious knowledge then, according to Kaftan, does not consist of value-judgements, as Ritschl affirms, but of theoretical propositions based on value-judgements. "Nowhere have I affirmed," he says, "that the religious judgements *are* value-judgements; but I hold this expression itself at least open to misunderstanding; nay, value-judgements are their basis, but they themselves *are* theoretical propositions." The difference between Ritschl's and Kaftan's position may be thus expressed. According to Ritschl religious knowledge consists of personal convictions, of which the person holding them is sure that they are true, but does not claim that others should recognize their truth. According to Kaftan, while religious knowledge has its origin in personal conviction, it must advance the claim to be accepted by all as valid. But to return to Kaftan's exposition of the theory, he recognizes three kinds of value-judgements: *natural,* concerned with weal or woe; *moral,* dealing with the good or the bad; and *aesthetic,* which distinguish things as beautiful or ugly. It is the first kind, the natural, which affords a basis for the theoretical proposition of religion, for it is not concerned with ethical ideals, but with good or with a highest good. "A good means, for man, what satisfies his demand for life, or advances him in the satisfaction of the same, or even holds in prospect for the

future such a satisfaction." Religion is never the result of knowledge of the world, but is always due to the attitude our personal interests lead us to assume to the world; it is a practical concern of the human spirit, belonging to "that side of our spiritual life where values and not facts ultimately decide." Religious knowledge must be distinguished from science or philosophy, for its propositions "historically arise in another way, the conviction of their truth is grounded otherwise subjectively, objectively they have also another measure of truth. And when we investigate this, their peculiarity, then we find it based on this, that they do not issue from observation of, and reflexion on facts, but that value-judgements are their basis." But these propositions of faith claim to be valid objectively as well as valuable subjectively; they profess to state not only the effects on us of the objects of faith, but also their nature in itself as shown in these effects. Man could derive no help or comfort from a belief which he suspected of being illusive, and of the truth of which he was not sure. "That we call the Christian knowledge true, means that the facts believed are real, and so constituted irrespective of our faith." For "truth is truth. It never means anything else, than that our judgements correspond to the objective state of matters, which is given regardless of us and our opinion. We cannot speak of a double truth." But both the way in which the truth is reached and the way in which it can be tested are different in religious and in scientific knowledge. In religion the conviction of truth cannot be forced by appeal to sound powers of perception or reasoning, but must be freely accepted in recognizing the same values. The test of truth in religion is not correspondence with facts, but "whether a religion is true depends primarily on this, whether it really gives the good which it promises, or commands to be striven for, that is, whether it rests on revelation."

In his companion-work on *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, Kaftan accordingly seeks to show that Christianity in the idea of the Kingdom of God meets man's demand for a chief good. These two kinds of knowledge do not come into conflict, for the highest truth cannot be reached by the way of scientific knowledge, as the world as a whole cannot be known by the exercise of strictly scientific method, and a metaphysics which claims to know the world in this way is an empty pretension. "Values, and not facts, are finally decisive in all questions of knowledge," which is but "a member which serves in the process of life, out of which, as a whole, religious faith arises." Such, in brief outline, is the presentation of the theory of value-judgements in Ritschl, Herrmann and Kaftan. Reserving all criticism meanwhile, we pass to consider some later and fuller developments of the theory in the writings of Otto Ritschl, Reischle and Scheibe in the hope that they may cast light on some dark, and may make smooth some rough, places.

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(To be continued.)