THE VALUE-JUDGEMENTS OF RELIGION.

II.

Critical and Constructive.

In the first essay an effort was made to state the theory of value-judgements as it is presented by the founder of the Ritschlian school and his two leading disciples, and to supplement this exposition by an account of some later developments of the theory due to some of the less prominent adherents. In these developments some of the difficulties have been relieved, some of the obscurities have been illuminated, and some of the criticisms of the theory in its less developed form have been met. Before passing to deal with these criticisms, it will be helpful for us to recall the prominent and distinctive features of the theory, the agreements as well as the differences among its exponents. Religion has a practical interest for man, and is, therefore, more closely related to his emotional and volitional functions than his intellectual. In scientific knowledge the intellectual functions are exercised to the exclusion as far as possible of the others, and its purpose is to know the object as completely and accurately as means and powers will allow, as it is in itself, and not as it affects the feelings or wishes of the knowing subject. In religious knowledge, on the contrary, the personal interest is not only permissible, but even essential, and the relation of the object to the subject as affecting his weal or woe is the primary consideration. Science, then, deals with facts, things as they are; religion with values, things as they are related to personal emotions and volitions. Scientific knowledge is expressed in theoretical judgements. While all the exponents of the theory hold that value-judgements do belong to religion, yet difference emerges on the question whether religious knowledge consists of value-judgements. *Ritschl*, followed by his son, insists that it does, as what he is

concerned to emphasize is the personal, practical, interest which his knowledge has for the religious subject. *Herrmann* is not explicit, but his phrase about positing "objects as real, exclusively on the ground of their value," seems to put him nearer Kaftan than Ritschl. *Kaftan* expressly denies that value-judgements constitute religious knowledge, and definitely asserts that it is composed of theoretical propositions based on value-judgements. His purpose is to remove an ambiguity which belongs to Ritschl's statement. He desires to put beyond all doubt what Ritschl intended, but failed clearly to express, that religious knowledge deals with objects as real as those with which science is concerned, although the mode of knowledge is different, in religion dependent, as it is not in science, on the value of these objects for the religious subject. *Scheibe*, who is even more explicit in insisting that religious knowledge deals with realities existing independently of personal wishes or aims, substantially agrees with him, but uses the phrase "postulates on the basis of value-judgements." *Reischle* rejects the term postulates, as it suggests that the existence of the objects is assumed solely on the ground of their value, and calls attention to an important fact in describing the propositions of faith as "judgements of trust directed to the normative divine revelation." He, too, suggests a further refinement of the theory in distinguishing the three standpoints from which value-judgements may be regarded, and in coining for value-judgements from the *epistemological* standpoint the new term *thymetic*. He agrees with Kaftan that in but few cases are the propositions of faith value-judgements in form; but as he insists on their difference in origin from the theoretical judgements, he rejects Kaftan's phraseology as misleading. All these writers, with their superficial differences in phraseology, are agreed substantially that religious knowledge deals with realities, but that this knowledge is not gained by the exercise of the

intellectual faculties alone, but is conditioned by man's capacity to experience values in objects, a capacity which in religion is essentially related to his purpose of self-realization in conflict with nature, but in dependence on God. That this valuation of objects, although expressed in the form of individual feelings, is no arbitrary, artificial subjective process, is shown by *Herrmann* in representing all these values as dependent ultimately on man's sense of subjection to an unconditional moral law, and by *Scheibe* in describing this judging of values as the application to objects of standards or norms which are an expression of a universal spirit in man, and by *Reischle* in distinguishing the natural and legal value-judgements from the ideal, which can lay claim to more than an individual value, even to universal validity. While *Ritschl* himself does not explicitly offer a proof of the truth of Christian religious knowledge, and his son follows him so far as to maintain that it is our individual experience of the worth of Christianity that alone warrants our hope that its truth will at last be universally acknowledged, both *Herrmann* and *Kaftan* elsewhere than in their formal expositions of the theory offer such proof; and *Reischle* insists on the necessity of such proof, and, as also does *Scheibe*, offers a proof based on practical considerations, while both agree that the theoretical reason cannot by itself offer any such proof, for the truth of Christianity, as of every other religion, can be known only where its worth is felt. To *Herrmann's* statement that science and religion deal with different realities, that in each truth has a different meaning, and *Ritschl's* opposition of the Christian world-view to metaphysics, the other writers are unfavourable. Even Ritschl's son holds that if each confines itself to its own province, they cannot come into conflict as rivals, but may even be helpful allies. Kaftan asserts that there is only one truth, and tries to show how the ultimate conclusions of science may be subordinated to

the testimony of religion. *Reischle* denies that the theory destroys the unity of knowledge, and involves a dualism, as the two ways of knowing are harmonious functions of one personality, and even their results tend to converge in the unity of man's spiritual life. *Scheibe* is even more explicit and emphatic in showing how the two modes of knowledge supplement each other; and he recognizes that theology in intellectually formulating the contents of faith must employ some of the categories of theoretical thought, and must in so far be subject to its criticism regarding the correctness or otherwise of their use. A comparison of these writers leads to the conclusion that Ritschl and even Herrmann, as pioneers of this movement, left in their exposition ambiguities and perplexities, which their followers have discovered and sought to remove. With what measure of success I shall afterwards strive to show, when I have dealt with the criticism directed against the theory by some English theologians.

I. *Criticism of the Theory by English Theologians.*

(1) The first objection urged against the theory of value-judgements is that it surrenders the reality of the objects of faith, reduces them to imaginations, illusions. "In principle," says Professor Denney, in his *Studies in Theology*, "this attempt to distinguish between the religious and theoretic, to assign separate spheres to reason and faith—for that is what it comes to—amounts to a betrayal of the truth; it is really an attempt to build religious certainty on indifference to reason, or scepticism of it: and reason always avenges itself by keeping in its own power something which is essential to faith." He gives what he regards as three illustrations of the vice inherent in the theory. Because Ritschl rejects the proofs of speculative theism, and confines himself to the revelation of God in Christ, the conclusion is drawn that, according to the

Ritschlian theology, "God is a necessary assumption of the Christian view of man's chief end; but scientifically—in its bearing on the interpretation of nature and history, for example—it may be left an open question whether there is a God or not." Again, with respect to Ritschl's statement about the miracles recorded in the Bible, that it is not the task of science to show that these do or do not contradict the assumption of the connexion of all phenomena according to natural law, nor yet the task of religion to recognize these recorded events as divine operations contrary to the laws of nature, the charge is made, "It is doing no injustice to the whole school of writers, which has magnified the religious at the expense of the scientific conception of miracle, and declined to acknowledge any obligation to be scientific in the matter, to say that in point of fact they reject miracle altogether, in any sense which gives it a hold on man's intelligence or a place in his creed." He continues, "In point of fact, the scientific interpretation is regarded as the only objectively true one by those who write in this strain; the religious one is a mere pious opinion which the pious man may hold for himself, but which he has no right to impose, and no means of imposing, on others." Lastly, Ritschl's description of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ as a value-judgement is regarded as warranting this still more serious accusation: "Though Jesus has for the Christian consciousness the religious value of God, He has for the scientific consciousness only the common real value of man. He is, in truth and reality, to the neutral consideration of science, mere man like any other; it is only the Werthurtheil, the subjective estimate of the pious Christian, that gives Him the value of God." In these criticisms the Ritschlian position is completely misunderstood and misrepresented. One must, protest most strongly against the tacit assumptions in these statements, that the Ritschlian school is itself indifferent to

the reality of the objects of faith, the truth of the value-judgements of religion, that it shares the critic's preference for science as a mode of knowing the supreme realities with which religion is concerned to that knowledge which is given only when the value of these realities for man's life is recognized, that it admits that science can give an authoritative judgement on such questions as the nature and purpose of God, the relation of miracles to law, or the divinity of Christ, and that religious knowledge has less certainty that it possesses the truth than is given to science. It is quite certain that the school of Ritschl affirms that all these questions lie beyond the province of science, that, just because it is neutral, the consideration of science cannot reach such a truth as the divinity of Christ, that consequently the affirmations of faith in these matters need not fear any contradictions of science. It is equally certain that Ritschl and his followers do not regard the estimate of the pious Christian as subjective in the sense that it is an individual opinion, which is just as likely to be mistaken as not, for, what ought never to be forgotten, Ritschl himself and his disciples no less emphasize the dependence of the Christian consciousness on the divine revelation in Christ as preserved in the Holy Scriptures and the Christian community. The Ritschlian theology is not put forward by its advocates as a fancy, a guess, or even a jest and a fraud, as Professor Denney's criticisms seem to suggest, but as a serious and honest effort to exhibit the truth of the Christian religion. In the first essay it was shown how the theory of value-judgements has been developed in the school with this as a main object, to put beyond doubt or question the reality of the objects of faith, the certainty of the truth of the religious knowledge expressed in value-judgements. Of the critics who, like Professor Denney, deny that it is the intention of the school unequivocally to affirm the existence of the objects of faith, *Reischle* justifiably affirms

that they "are fighting against a ghost of their own creation." As the question of the divinity of Christ is one of supreme importance, so that a theological school which did not honestly and confidently affirm the doctrine must forfeit its claim to the name Christian, we may dwell on it a little longer. It is surely a safe rule that we should try to understand a theory by means of its application in practice. Let us then see how Ritschl himself deals with the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. He is not content, as his critics seem to assume, to assert merely that Christian faith assigns to Christ divinity because He has for religious experience the value of God. He seeks to define the content and character of that divinity. May I be excused if I quote the summary which I have elsewhere given of Ritschl's teaching on the divinity of Jesus? "Be it noted that he maintains that the essence of God's love is fully and clearly revealed in Christ; that He in His teaching and life was independent of the world, owing nothing to it, and fearing nothing from it; that He was wholly successful in His work of reproducing in the members of His community His own consciousness of, and confidence in, God as Father; that, however, His relation to God was direct, whereas that of all others is mediated by Him; that His distinction from all others was in the original identity of His will with the purpose of God; that His life and work can be understood only as He is regarded as primarily, while His kingdom is regarded as secondarily, the object of the eternal knowledge and volition; that, consequently, as He is historically revealed to us, so He eternally exists for God." That this doctrine of the divinity of Christ is adequate I do not for a moment maintain, that it contains implications of thought which should have carried Ritschl nearer the doctrine of the creeds I have endeavoured elsewhere to show; but regarding it we may confidently say, that it is a great deal more than "the subjective estimate of the pious Christian."

This same charge is repeated in various forms by Professor Orr and Professor Mackintosh, but it is not necessary now more closely to examine their statements, as the same answer substantially can be given to them as has now been offered to Professor Denney.

(2) Another objection to the theory is this, that it divides the mind of man against itself. "We cannot have," says Professor Orr, "two kinds of truth with no sort of relation to each other. The mind cannot be divided into compartments, with its theoretic knowledge on the one side, and its religious knowledge hermetically sealed off from contact with the theoretic on the other." This is a moderate statement of the objection. This desirable virtue of sobriety of speech is quite thrown to the winds by Professor Wenley in a passage which is worth quoting as a specimen of the kind of criticism from which Ritschlianism has suffered in Britain. "From Monday till Saturday, knowledge dances among its phenomena, which it knows are not knowledge; on Sunday the other power moons among its realities, which cannot fail to impress it, but which may or may not exist. The knower of the lawful days doubts and cannot dream; the dreamer of the Sabbath believes and can never know. There is no possible appeal from Philip sober to Philip drunk. For this classical gentleman is now so constituted that he cannot but be always drunk and always sober at one and the same time." This may be show of wit; it is no proof of wisdom. That the mode of knowing changes with the object known is surely a simple fact beyond doubt or question; and why should Ritschlianism be so severely blamed for recognizing the fact, and giving expression to it? When Tennyson in the *Prologue* to *In Memoriam* distinguishes *faith* and *knowledge*, *knowledge* and *reverence*, *mind* and *soul*, he is with the less formal language of poetry doing what the Ritschlian school does more explicitly in this theory of value-judgements. When Christ requires the new birth as the condition of seeing as well as entering

into the kingdom of God, promises the vision of God to the pure in heart, makes knowledge of the doctrine dependent on doing of the will, when Paul declares that the spiritual realities are spiritually discerned, a distinction of modes of knowing is recognized. Is the Bible, too, to be charged with dividing the mind against itself? No knowledge is properly religious which is not the knowledge of a religious subject, and his religion cannot but affect his mode of knowing, impart to it a moral insight and a spiritual discernment which it would otherwise lack, bring within the range of his vision realities which the observation, experiment, and reasoning of science could not reach. The man who has never known the need, owned the worth, felt the power, and enjoyed the good of religion, is shut out of a realm of knowledge, which seems unreal to him, because he has not had any experience of it. He cannot pronounce judgement on the truth of Christianity because the organ of judgement is not yet developed in him. At the basis of the theory of value-judgements there lies a true recognition of a real difference in the modes of knowing. That the way in which the theory has been stated has always been above reproach cannot be maintained. Ritschl's exaggerated polemic against any admixture of metaphysics in theology, and Herrmann's extravagant contrast of two realities and two truths lend some colour to this charge, that the theory involves a dualism in knowledge. But, on the other hand, the other writers whose views have been discussed are at one in repudiating any such absolute separation of the theoretical and the value-judgements. They recognize that these are complementary functions of one personality, and that their results are not opposed, but harmonious. *Scheibe* recognizes that the teleological interpretation of the world, which we find in the value-judgements, is so far dependent on the causal, which is characteristic of the theoretical judgements, that for a complete definition of the objects of faith the former must use some of the categories of the

latter, and is subject to its jurisdiction as regards the use. *Reischle* recognizes that if historical investigation were to draw Jesus within the limits of mere humanity, so as to deny His unique nature, faith could not remain indifferent, but must disprove its right. Even *Ritschl* does not treat the theoretical judgements of science and philosophy as though they were hermetically sealed off from contact with his theology. He argues against materialism and pantheism as opposed to the Christian view of God and the world; in rejecting speculative theism he seeks to show the inadequacy of the idea of God its method yields. *Herrmann* and *Kaftan*, too, discuss the relation of science and philosophy to the religious consciousness, and subordinate their conclusions to the testimony it bears to the nature and purpose of the ultimate reality. If we do not confine our regard to a few verbal obscurities and difficulties in the statement of the theory, but view it as a whole as it is practically applied in the Ritschlian theology, we can convince ourselves that this objection is not justified.

(3) While I feel in justice bound to defend this theory against these two objections, my own attitude is by no means one of unqualified and unhesitating acceptance. I do most heartily welcome its emphasis on the fact that there is a realm of knowledge, which cannot be entered by those who are indifferent or hostile to religion, but which discloses its treasures and beauties only to those who fulfil the moral and spiritual conditions. I do also strongly hold with its advocates that faith does not live by the sufferance of science and philosophy, but has reasons of its own, and need not be alarmed by every conclusion apparently hostile to it, which may be advanced in their name, as when it cannot at once disprove these conclusions, it has its own inward assurance that it can get nearer to the heart of things than they can. In the statement of the theory, however, it seems to me some corrections are necessary, which, however, are not contradictory to its

real intention. (1) On the one hand it seems to me misunderstanding would be avoided, if it were made plainer that religious knowledge does not primarily consist of an appreciation of value, and secondarily of a perception of reality, but that there is a moral insight and a spiritual discernment of supersensuous eternal reality which is as sure an organ of knowledge as observation of, or experiment with, sensible objects, and that the exercise and development of this faculty of seeing Him who is invisible, and of living under the powers of the world to come depends on an interest in the higher ends of life, due to a recognition of their greater worth. There is an intellectual element in religious knowledge, which in the theory of value-judgements does not get justice done to it. Contemplation of and meditation on the objects of faith is as essential as valuation. There is a power of spiritual vision and there is a sense of spiritual value, and they are mutually conditioned. The worth of the reality, with which religious faith is concerned, cannot be felt until the sight of it is gained; but the exercise and development of the power of sight is dependent on the sense of worth. To assign religious knowledge to man's emotional and volitional functions, and to separate it from his intellectual, is, it seems to me, to give an incomplete account of it. If, however, we are just to mind as well as heart in religion, then in dealing with the objects of faith we shall recognize that there are intellectual as well as practical interests to be considered, that religion has a need and a right to as adequate and satisfactory a knowledge of the objects to which it directs its affections and aspirations as possible. Ritschl's theological method from this standpoint will be seen to stop short of that full investigation, and thorough interpretation of the objects of faith, which religious knowledge may claim as its own. The point most to be insisted on is that in religious knowledge there is a perception of reality as well as an appreciation of worth. The

merit of the theory of value-judgements in my eyes is, that it has not only recognized the latter element, for that had been done before, but that it has made this recognition more explicit and emphatic than it had formerly been; its defect is that the former element has not been distinctly enough asserted. (2) Misunderstanding on the other hand would also be avoided if elements of the theory already found in Herrmann, Reischle, and Scheibe were made more explicit. It should be made clearer that the faculty of estimating values is not an individual function, subject to no law but subjective fancy and whim, but that it is the realization in the emotions of ideals of universal validity. Although it is said that there is no disputing about tastes, and although one work of art may delight the multitude, and disgust the trained art critic, yet it is admitted that there is an ideal of beauty, to which art should conform. In the same way, although the actual practice of men varies indefinitely, yet there is also an ideal of goodness, which is finding realization in social customs and standards. The relation of man to God cannot be without its ideal, however discordant have been the forms in the religions of the world in which men have sought and striven to reach this ideal. It appears to me a mistake to subordinate, as Herrmann seems to do, religion to morality, or to reckon, as Kaftan does, the propositions of faith as based on natural value-judgements, which are concerned with man's weal or woe. Religion has its ideal realized in the consciousness of Jesus Christ, and Christians have not only a right, but even a duty to insist that the norm or standard of value in all religions is the mind of Christ. That there is a perception of reality, and that value is determined by an ideal in religious knowledge—these are the two elements in the theory of value-judgements that in my opinion need to be asserted.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

(To be continued.)